

# Bird Calls

Newsletter of the Evanston North Shore Bird Club

Summer 2020



Northern Shrike by Nancy Halliday

## A Special Spring Treat in Evanston

Northwest Evanston had several unexpected lockdown guests this spring! A pair of Great Horned Owls decided to raise a family in the area. While humans were “sheltering-in-place”, many were able to watch three owlets shed their downy fluff and begin to develop adult plumage and behaviors. There was a regular early evening pilgrimage as neighbors socially distanced to observe the owl family.

A big help spotting the owls was a murder of crows. They cawed wildly, encouraging the owls to find a different home. As the trees leafed out, the owls were nearly invisible, and the juveniles gradually gained adult plumage. By studying the area where the crows were most vocal, with a little luck you could spot one or two members of the family.



One evening some neighbors sent a text message that the owl family was in their backyard and easily visible. Trekking over there with optical gear, we spotted two rabbit’s feet high in a tall tree. How could a rabbit have climbed that high? Just then an owl peered around the trunk with a beak-full of gray fur, and the mystery was solved.

Let’s hope the owls will become permanent residents and continue to provide entertainment to birder newbies and the local regulars.

**Photos and article By Mark Vaughan**

For more Evanston GHO photos and sound recording, visit Cornell Lab of Ornithology at <https://search.macaulaylibrary.org/catalog?taxonCode=grhowl&userId=USER325815&q=Great%20Horned%20Owl%20-%20Bubo%20virginianus&user=Mark%20Vaughan>.



*Bird Calls is a publication of the Evanston North Shore Bird Club,  
P.O. Box 1313, Evanston, IL 60204, info@ensbc.org.  
Send ideas, articles, photos to Marj Lundy, Editor, catbird3@comcast.net.*

## Field Trips 2020

*We have set up a new protocol for Field Trips during this coronavirus period. Until further notice, pre-registration will be required and will be members only. The number of participants is limited to 12 plus leaders. To register, email [libbyhill@comcast.net](mailto:libbyhill@comcast.net) at least 2 days before each trip. First come, first served, so please register early. Masks and social distancing are required.*

**Thursdays, Sept. 3, 10, 17, 24 — Perkins Woods.** Look for fall warblers, thrushes, and other migrants. Meet at 7:30 a.m. corner of Ewing Ave. and Grant St., Evanston. Leaders: Josh Engel and John Bates.

**Saturdays, Sept. 5 and 19 — Northwestern University Campus.** The NU campus has long been a stopover for fall migrants headed south. Park on the lakeside of the upper deck of the south parking lot off Sheridan Rd. and Clark St. at 8:30 a.m. Leaders: Libby Hill and co-leaders: Sarah Flax, Sept. 5 and Nancy Halliday, Sept. 19.

**Sunday, November 22 — Jeff Sanders' Fall Specialty Trip. North Shore lakefront:** Gillson Park, Maple Park, Tower Road Park, Park Ave., Rose Beach in Highland Park, and more. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Gillson Park Beach. Preregister with Jeff Sanders, [yellowstart5@yahoo.com](mailto:yellowstart5@yahoo.com), 847-675-7172. Carpool only with other members of the same household. Bring your own scope since leader will not be scope-sharing



*Monarch on thistle,  
Middlefork Savanna  
by Jamie Godshalk*

### Fall 2020 Programs

*Our programs for the remainder of the year will be on Zoom. Zoom invitations and instructions will be emailed to members. If you know people interested in an upcoming Zoom program, invite them to join the Club at [www.ensbc.org](http://www.ensbc.org) to receive the invitation, or you may forward the invitation to them.*

**September 22: Josh Engel, "Wildlife Wonders of Brazil's Pantanal."** Brazil's Pantanal is home to both an enormous diversity of birds and one of the densest concentrations of large mammals anywhere in the Americas. It is a vast mosaic of wetlands, grassland and lush forest. On his 2019 tour, Red Hill Birding's Josh Engel and ENSBC trip participants tallied 340 bird species (including Hyacinth Macaw, Pale-crested Woodpecker, Agami Heron, Helmeted Manakin, Sunbittern and Guira Cuckoo) and 22 mammals (including multiple views of Jaguar). Josh will share highlights of that magical experience.

**October 13, 2020: Jim Wright, "The Real James Bond," co-sponsored by Lake-Cook Audubon.** When Ian Fleming was looking for a name for his fictional British secret agent, he looked at the cover of his birding bible, *Birds of the West Indies*, saw the author's name and simply stole it. The real-life James Bond was an ornithologist, naturalist and adventurer from Philadelphia and expert on birds of the Caribbean. Jim Wright, New Jersey-based author of *The Real James Bond*, will discuss Bond's iconic field guide, his identity theft, and his solo expeditions to the Caribbean. Wright will also discuss the birds Bond discovered/helped popularize and his connection with ornithologists who became spies during World War II. His other books include *The Nature of the Meadowlands*, *Jungle of the Maya*, and *Hawk Mountain*. He is birding columnist for

The (Bergen) Record and marsh warden at a nature preserve in northern New Jersey. *The Real James Bond* is available at <https://www.realjamesbond.net/2020/06/how-to-get-a-copy-.html>

**October 27, 2020: Tamima Itani and Louise Clemency, "How Monty and Rose took Chicago by Storm - Piping Plovers in the Great Lakes."** In the spring of 2019, a pair of endangered Piping Plovers nested on Montrose Beach, the first such event in Chicago since 1955. They and their chicks wove themselves into the hearts of birders and non-birders alike, becoming stellar ambassadors for their species. For ten weeks, volunteers monitored them from sunrise to sunset, a unique opportunity for observation and learning. To widespread joy, Monty and Rose returned to Montrose to nest again in 2020. Tamima Itani, Volunteer Coordinator and Board Member, Illinois Ornithological Society, and Louise Clemency, Field Supervisor of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Chicago Field Office, will describe Piping Plover life history and how the Great Lakes Piping Plover Recovery Effort is bringing these birds back. They will share anecdotes from their Chicago experience.

## A Second Successful Summer for Monty and Rose

*By Sydney Larson*



*Plover chick  
by Judy Cheske*

After 8 long months apart, Monty and Rose, Chicago's famous Piping Plovers, were spotted together at Montrose Beach on May 1<sup>st</sup>, much to the excitement of the whole birding and Chicagoland community. The pair successfully fledged two chicks at Montrose Beach in 2019 and returned to try for another summer. On May 22<sup>nd</sup>, three eggs were found in a nest scrape, and on May 25<sup>th</sup>, the clutch of four eggs was complete. After 24 days of incubation, four adorable Piping Plover chicks were hatched on June 18<sup>th</sup>. Sadly, one of the chicks was not strong enough to make it past two days old. Luckily the other three chicks continued to feed and grow. After a couple of days, Monty and Rose decided to move the family to a part of the beach with better feeding, and an epic territory battle with a Killdeer ensued.



*Esperanza, Red Star chick, by Ann Gunkel*

This year the decision was made to band these chicks to better understand where they will go on their migration South in the fall and back North again in the spring. On June 29<sup>th</sup>, the 11-day old chicks were banded by the Great Lakes Piping Plover banding crew. Each chick was given a metal USGS band with a unique band number on its upper left leg, a violet band on its lower left leg, and an orange band with either a blue, red or yellow star on its upper right leg. The individual chick's band combinations are X,V:O-(Blue Star, 001); X,V:O-(Red Star, 002); and X,V:O-(Yellow Star, 003). Because the chicks were now individually identifiable with their star colors, it only felt right to give them unique names like their parents.

The naming form was available for public submissions, asking for names that reflected Chicago's heritage, culture and diversity. The submissions were then reviewed by a panel of individuals from many organizations and narrowed down from 300+ submissions to the three winners. Blue Star is named "Hazel" after Hazel M. Johnson. Hazel was an environmental activist who worked with a young Barack Obama to remove asbestos from Altgeld Gardens, a Chicago south side development for black military veterans; she is considered the mother of the environmental justice movement. Red Star is named "Esperanza", meaning "Hope" in Spanish, reflecting what we all want and need for the future during the current pandemic and social movements in Chicago. Yellow Star was named "Nish", highlighting the direct relationship and contributions of The Council of the Three Fires (Potawatomi, Ojibwa, and Odawa) to what is now modern-day Chicago. Nish is a colloquial expression for Nishnabe'k (Potawatomi) and Anishinaabe (Ojibwa and Odawa). (*Editor's note: "Nish" was suggested by ENSBC member Amy Lardner.*)

The chicks grew so fast and reached fledging age as of July 11<sup>th</sup> at 23 days old. Once just fluffy little new-borns, the chicks were almost as large as their parents by July 14<sup>th</sup>, flying around exploring other parts of the beach. Each has its own personality, with one being the boldest of the group, one following close behind and one more interested in feeding and resting than exploring. As of the 14<sup>th</sup>, Monty and Rose were expected to leave on their fall migration any day. We wish the chicks well on their first migration, and we hope Monty and Rose return to Montrose next year for their third summer there!

*Sydney Larson is a University of Minnesota intern with the Fish & Wildlife service who coordinated the Piping Plover volunteer effort this summer. Many thanks, Sydney, Tamima and all the volunteers.*

Programs continued from page 2...

**November 24, 2020: Gustavo Ustariz, "Honduras: Birding and its Relationship to Coffee, Climate & Economic Development."**

Gustavo Ustariz has a BBA and MBA in Tourism Management and has worked in tourism development for over 15 years, mainly with communities and local governments in Honduras, his native country. His work includes promoting community-based tourism with a local NGO on the north coast of Honduras and developing tourism and guide-training projects there, including birding tourism. He will discuss the importance of Honduras' extraordinary diversity of birds, including many migrants familiar to bird club members. In recognition of the important contribution of tourism to Honduras, ENSBC and Josh Engel of Red Hill Birding will be offering a birding trip to Honduras, March 11-20, 2021.

*Mating Cooper's Hawks by  
Lloyd Davidson*



*Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Evanston,  
by Lloyd Davidson*

**Meet Another Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary Visitor**

Big, green, and truly incredible eating machines, the larvae of many large moth species are some of the most impressive caterpillars you'll ever encounter outdoors. Of those, the White-lined Sphinx moth is perhaps one of the prettier examples, decked out in spring green with bright, red-and-yellow spots edged by black. A voracious eater of a wide variety of plants, individuals at CSBBS have been found munching away at the leaves of common evening-primroses.

The adult insect is no less striking once spotted. Its body is sturdy and sleekly furred, with the eponymous white lines along its thorax, head, and its powerful, narrow forewings. A brilliant splash of black-bordered pink fills its smaller, rounded hindwing. With both wings working in concert to provide agile, hovering flight during its dusk to dawn search for nectar, it can resemble nothing so much as a strange, streaky hummingbird while in motion.

Although the larvae can be tremendously destructive in high numbers, adults are consummate pollinators of a wide variety of plants, including jimsonweed, bee balm, phlox, cardinal flower, columbine, thistle and blazing star.

**Welcome new members!**  
**We're so glad you've joined the Flock!**

Callan Fromm, Evanston  
Patricia Handley, Lake Forest  
Hannah Maendel, Evanston  
Anne Ryan, Kenilworth  
Susan Salaba, Skokie  
Matthew and Havala Teaman, Chicago



**Remember to renew your ENSBC membership.**  
**Do it at [www.ensbc.org](http://www.ensbc.org).**



*White-lined Sphinx moth larva at CSBBS,  
photo and article by Callan Fromm*