

Bird Calls

Newsletter of the Evanston North Shore Bird Club

April 2023



Northern Shrike by Nancy Halliday

Woodcocks: an Early Spring Treat!

by Beth Gabriel



I am a new member of ENSBC and have been actively birding for about a year. I was excited to have an opportunity in mid-March to see and hear the woodcocks at Air Station Prairie on an outing led by John Leonard. My first and only time seeing a woodcock was last year, watching its fatal flight into a window in the city!

Before the sun set, we — 9 of us including 3 kids — looked for birds from the pavilion and saw Mallards, Canada Geese, grackles, Red-winged Blackbirds and a snipe! John played the sounds that we might hear from the woodcocks and explained their soaring and diving behavior. While the sun was going down, we walked out into the prairie and waited. After about an hour, we were lucky to hear about a half a dozen "peents" and almost as many soaring up and chirping. It was so special to see them in this habitat knowing how elusive they are and for such a short period of time. My vision of the woodcocks has been successfully replaced. I don't think I would have been as successful without John's knowledge of their behavior, location and most of all, patience!

**News from a Club partner:
Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary.**



This spring and summer, volunteers at CSBBS will be learning to recognize the 1500+ plants installed last fall with the help of our consultant Karen Glennemeier. Our bird monitors will look for birds in the adjacent park as well as those on the beach. And an exciting new development: CSBBS has been invited to participate in the Evanston Garden Walk in June, providing an opportunity to explain to a wide audience how fauna use the plants in the dune ecosystem.

*Want to help out as a volunteer at this special place?
Contact one of the CSBBS interim co-stewards,
Jerry Herst (jerryherst@gmail.com) or Libby Hill (libbyhill@comcast.net)*

A Rarely Seen Ross's Gull – here in March!

There's something special about Ross's Gull. Part of its allure is that it lives in the high arctic in inaccessible, rugged places that capture birders' imaginations. Part of it is the rarity. There is only one place and time that a birder can reliably see a Ross's Gull--the northernmost point of Alaska, Utqiagvik (formerly Barrow), for about a week or two every October.

When a Ross's Gull wanders into the lower 48 states and is found by birders, as happens every few years, it is a very big deal. Case in point: I don't love to drive very far to see an individual bird, though on occasion I do just that. The longest by far that I've ever driven to see one was a 20 hour round trip drive between Chicago and Fort Randall Dam, South Dakota to see, you guessed it: a Ross's Gull.

So, when one was reported by Dan Lory in Park 566 on Chicago's Southside on March 11, the birding world was understandably excited. It was only the third record ever for the Chicago area, and the first time one could be seen by many birders since 1978. I and many others rushed to this undeveloped stretch of Chicago lakefront and revelled in the beautiful Ross's Gull in front of us, a bird hatched in the summer of 2023 and now wandering around the southernmost point of the Great Lakes, probably wondering where it should go next.

The bird was not seen again until March 14 when a few people saw it; then it was seen again on March 15, this time by many. But at 1pm that day it vanished, not to be seen again, much to the disappointment of those birders who showed up minutes too late. This bird will live on in the memory of the hundreds who saw it and in Chicago's birding lore as one of the more exciting rarities ever seen here.



*Photo and narrative by Josh Engel
Founder and Guide, Red Hill Birding*

Field Trips Comin' Up!

Check out the Big Marsh trip on April 30 at [Field Trips | The Evanston North Shore Bird Club \(ensbc.org\)](#), and then ...

Our May calendar is chock full of trips to our favorite birding spots, plus some new locations. The Waukegan Beach trip harks back to the 60s and earlier when it was reliably on the schedule at least once a summer. For trips about an hour or longer from Evanston or at the request of leader, we ask you to register so we can contact you in case of changes.

We have scheduled some summer field trips to look for breeding birds with Isoo O'Brien leading. These trips are tentative and not on the website as Isoo finalizes his summer schedule, but the dates are:

Saturday, June 17 - Swallow Cliff. This location, a Cook County Forest Preserve site in the Palos area, is a great spot to look for forest breeding birds in a small area, requiring little walking. Time and parking instructions TBA. Numbers limited. Register with Libbyhill@comcast.net.

Sunday, June 25 - Orland Grasslands. This is a premier birding location for breeding grassland birds. Time and parking instructions TBA. Numbers limited. Register with Libbyhill@comcast.net. Since this trip is back-to-back with Josh Engel's Plum Creek trip on June 24, participants who wish to attend both may want to stay overnight in the south Cook County area.

Sunday, August 13 - Shorebirds! This trip is still in the planning stage.

For all trips, check out <https://www.ensbc.org> and watch for our eBlasts.

**Officers Nominated for 2023-24
ENSBC Board**

President:	Marcia Weflen
Vice President:	Open
Recording Secretary:	Nancy Halliday
Treasurer:	John Hochman
Membership Chair:	Kathy Stohrer
Bird Calls Editor:	Marj Lundy
Program Chair:	Libby Hill
Field Trip Chair:	Libby Hill
Publicity Chair:	Amanda Engel
Conservation Chair:	Leslie Shad
Ass't Conservation Chair:	Marianne Griebler
Archivist:	Sarah Miller

***Election of officers will be held at
our meeting on April 25th.***



***Eastern Bluebird at Ryerson
Woods, Lake County, by Lorra***

Good News about ENSBC meetings:

Like hybrid cars, we can have it both ways. At our February meeting, members asked if we might ever go back to meeting in person. We've arranged a compromise for our April meeting. Members who wish to attend face to face will meet in Barry's Room at the Levy Center, 300 Dodge Avenue in Evanston. Those still hesitant about in-person meetings can join us on zoom, and the program will also be recorded for those who miss the meeting. Something for everyone!

Our last program of the year!

Tuesday, April 25th – “Waukegan Beach: Local Birding Hotspot”, speaker Adam Sell

For bird watchers in the Chicago area, Waukegan Beach is a familiar name. It has been a favorite ENSBC birding spot for decades. Both new and veteran birders know Waukegan Beach as a migration hotspot in both fall and spring for warblers, shorebirds, and waterfowl. In winter, the harbors and open water of Lake Michigan host overwintering specialty ducks, gulls, and if luck is on your side, a Snowy Owl. Waukegan Beach is also renowned as a location for vagrants, with some highlights over the years including Gyrfalcon, Reddish Egret, and Arctic Tern. In his presentation, Adam Sell, a guide and tour manager for Chicago-based Red Hill Birding, has called Waukegan Beach his "local patch" for over 15 years. He will distill this knowledge into a thoughtful and engaging presentation on how to make the most of your visit to the Waukegan Beach area.

This talk is the second in our series about local birding hotspots, following last year's presentation on Big Marsh in Calumet.

And more good news...

Bird-friendly Evanston has consulted with the Ecology Center. The outcome of that meeting: protective film will be installed on all the Center's windows this spring! Are you concerned about birds hitting your windows? Visit <https://evanstonroundtable.com/2023/03/22/how-to-stop-birds-from-flying-into-windows/>

Upcoming events:

Earth Day, Saturday, April 22 — Earth Day in Evanston will be celebrated at the Ecology Center, 2024 McCormick Blvd, from 10 am to noon. There will be booths representing many of the city's conservation organizations, including ENSBC and Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary. John Bates will be at our booth with specimens from the Field Museum, always interesting for all ages. Visit us there and network with other environmentalists.

World Migratory Bird Day, Saturday, May 13 — World Migratory Bird Day is celebrated in the Northern Hemisphere in May, and in the Southern Hemisphere on October 14. The well-being of birds depends upon the health of their habitat during both breeding and non-breeding seasons, in addition to the habitats they cross during migration. This year's theme is "Birds and Water." Evanston's celebration will start off with our regular Northwestern Bird Walk at 8 a.m., meeting at the parking lot on south campus just north of the Visitor Center on Sheridan Road. At 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., the celebration will move to the Ecology Center with Evanston's Mayor Biss reading Evanston's Migratory World Bird Day Proclamation, followed by John Bates speaking about birds whose lives are associated with water. Some events, such as a bird walk by Owen Woodhouse at the adjacent Ladd Arboretum, are still in the planning process. Stay tuned. Wherever you are, celebrate "our" birds on May 13.

Conservation Corner:

Springfield Alert: Time to take action on carbon!

Two carbon dioxide pipelines are planned for Illinois, with many more to come. CO₂ is piped, in liquid form, at high concentrations. A leak will suffocate anything in low-lying areas, with short or long term consequences. CO₂ will become a much larger issue as the federal government moves to encourage carbon capture, and the pipelines and infrastructure to facilitate it. **A proposed Illinois bill to regulate CO₂ storage is seeking passage by May 31st. Ask your state representatives to co-sponsor [HB 3119/SB2421](#), "The Carbon Dioxide Transport and Storage Protections Act."** For more information, go to <https://noillinoisco2pipelines.org/support-hb3119/>

Make your voice heard by filing a witness slip...what's that?

In Illinois, witness slips can be submitted for a bill before it is considered by a committee in either the State House or Senate. Submitting a witness slip allows your voice and your opinion to be presented directly to all members of a committee as members determine whether the bill will go to a full floor vote.

But how do I file a witness slip? Go to [witness slip 0.pdf \(aclu-il.org\)](#). ENSBC will be alerting members to bills of concern coming before the state legislature. Stay tuned and watch for our eBlasts!



*Mute Swan, Independence Grove, Lake County,
by Matt Tobin*

New Members: Welcome to the Flock!

Michelle Costello	Evanston
Karen Davis	Evanston
Elizabeth Ester	Evanston
Joe Flanagan	Wilmette
Beth Gabriel	Chicago
Nancy and Ross Green	Wilmette
Jane Icenogle	Warrenville
Anita Lutkus	Wilmette
Dorothy Magid	Evanston
Marc McKernan	Evanston
Karin Nelson	Chicago
Jill Niland	Chicago
Claudia Pesenti	Chicago
Sigrid Schmidt	Chicago
Carolyn Zou	Evanston

*It's that time again: Don't
forget to renew your ENSBC
membership!*



Bird Calls is a publication of the Evanston North Shore Bird Club
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