

Bird Calls

Newsletter of the Evanston North Shore Bird Club

April 2024



Northern Shrike by Nancy Halliday

Cicada - Mania!!

The alarm clock is ready to ring for periodical cicadas all over Illinois. The previous mass emergence of these impressive bugs in 2007 set the alarm for 2024. During spring and summer, 17 years ago, millions of cicadas tunneled out of the soil, crawled up trees, sang, mated, laid eggs, and completed their life cycle. 2024 will be a magical year for their offspring!



Cicadas, often mistakenly called locusts, overwinter in the soil as nymphs. After completing the 17-year cycle below ground, the full-grown nymphs make their way up to the surface where they crawl up a convenient vertical object such as a tree trunk. They emerge in Northern Illinois in late spring and are present for about 4 to 6 weeks. The outer covering (exoskeleton) of the nymph splits open, and the winged adult emerges, leaving behind the hollow skin casing. The adult cicada lives for 20-25 days. They feed briefly, then mate and lay hundreds of eggs. The eggs hatch in six or seven weeks. The nymphs fall to the ground and burrow into the soil, seeking suitable roots to which they can attach their mouthparts. They will remain there for 17 years, starting the cycle all over again. There also are so-called annual cicadas which spend 2 to 5 years below ground, but because of overlapping broods, emerge every year, in much fewer numbers than the periodicals.



Nymph emerging

This is a phenomenon to be celebrated. Yes, they're raucous in their mating ritual and may crunch underfoot sometimes, but they really aren't here for very long. Consider some of the positives: cicadas provide a food bonanza for other animals. I monitor Bluebird nest boxes at Ryerson Woods, and one of the very best years my monitoring team had in terms of the number of successful fledglings was 2007. Plenty of food for growing hatchlings; the evidence was cicada wings and other pieces in the nests after the young fledged. Also, the nymphs' emergence tunnels in the ground act as a natural aeration of the soil. And after they die, their decaying bodies contribute a massive amount of nitrogen and other nutrients to the soil.

Just in case you are adventurous -- periodical cicadas are best eaten when they are still white; they taste like cold canned asparagus. Like all insects, cicadas have a good balance of vitamins, are low in fat, and, especially the females, are high in protein. English settlers here in the 1700's equated the massive "locust" emergence with plagues. They'd heard that John the Baptist and others ate them, and we know that cicadas have also been a part of the Native American diet.

So, let's welcome these interesting and noisy critters. They are truly amazing!

(Sources: NBC program, Morton Arboretum, Lake County Forest Preserves District)

**Slate of Officers for 2024-25 ENSBC Board
To be voted on at the April 30 Meeting**

President:	Joe Flanagan*
Vice President:	Tom Younkin*
Recording Secretary	Anita Lutkus
Corresponding Secretary	Nancy Halliday
Treasurer:	John Hochman
Membership Chair:	Rebecca and Ed Rice*
Bird Calls Editor:	Marj Lundy
Program Chair:	Libby Hill
Field Trip Co-Chairs:	Libby Hill
	Nancy Pinchar
Publicity Chair:	Amanda Engel
Conservation Chair:	Leslie Shad
Archivist:	Sarah Miller

See bios of new Board members * below.

President:

Joe Flanagan was born and grew up on the north shore and raised his family here. Before retirement he was in film post-production. Now he embraces adventure through triathlon training and volunteering, while nurturing his love for birds and nature. Joe is a volunteer bird monitor at the Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary.

Vice President:

Tom Younkin recently moved here from Rhode Island. He is a semi-retired professional in the software industry. While in RI, he served on the Board of The Ocean State Bird Club for 4.5 years and was President from April 2021 to December 2023. Tom has a lifelong passion for birding and is an enthusiastic photographer.

Membership Co-Chairs:

Rebecca and Ed Rice have been ENSBC members for fifteen or twenty years. In the past year or two, they began leading ENSBC field trips to Skokie Lagoons. When not working or birding, they enjoy rock climbing (gym and outdoor), kayaking, exploring nature and traveling. Empty nesters living in Northbrook, they are the parents of Ari Rice who recently presented his research on hybridization to ENSBC.



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

This past winter, volunteers at CSBBS have been working with members of the Evanston community to beautify the area north of the Clark Street Beach House. They have removed young ash and hawthorne trees that had crowded into the area. Lincolnwood Garden Club of Evanston designed a native garden that will be planted this May. A Northwestern student from Shephard Hall designated her \$250 grant money to plant a small garden under the elm tree, also near the Beach House. Volunteers are needed to join in the planting. Contact co-stewards Rob Linsenmeier (r-linsenmeier@northwestern.edu) or Hill (libbyhill@comcast.net) to offer your help.



**Earth Day and Birthday Celebration with
the Evanston Ecology Center!**

Come join us on Saturday, April 20 from 12 to 3 pm at Ingraham Park, Leonard Place on the grounds of the Evanston Civic Center, just off of Ridge Avenue.

The Ecology Center is turning 50 after a half-century of environmental stewardship and community empowerment. Organizations will offer eco-friendly crafts and games, volunteer activities and more. ENSBC will be among those groups hosting a table. Help us celebrate this milestone and important day at this free event!



Great Blue Heron by Cha Cha Chang

Our deep and hearty thanks to outgoing Membership Chair, Kathy Stohrer, who has served in that capacity for 9 years! Thank you, Kathy. And to our outgoing President, Marcia Weflen, who ably stepped into the position two years ago and shepherded us through the end of the pandemic. Thank you Marcia!

Important Conservation Issues

Bird-friendly Construction in Chicago – a MUST!

The Chicago Department of Planning and Development is unveiling its Sustainable Development Plan on April 15 or thereabouts. After months of promising that bird-friendly portions of the plan would be mandatory, we have suddenly learned from the Chicago Bird Alliance that will not be the case.

Chicago has been proven to be the country's most dangerous city for migrating birds, killing tens of thousands of migrants annually. While New York, San Francisco, and even Evanston and Skokie, require bird safe construction as a basic standard, Chicago has not done so. It's time to mandate bird safe construction!

We need to help make that happen! Below is a sample email to send to Mayor Johnson:

To: letterforthemayor@cityofchicago.org
angela.tovar@cityofchicago.org

Re: *Time to mandate bird safe construction*
Dear Mayor Johnson,

Killing tens of thousands of migrating birds each year is not ok. Chicago has been proven the country's most dangerous city for migrants, and yet it cannot accomplish even this very basic level of protection. Chicago needs to keep up with what New York, San Francisco, and even Evanston and Skokie, have done: require bird safe construction as a basic standard.

Please include MANDATORY bird-friendly provisions in the Sustainable Development Plan.

Respectfully submitted,
[your name]

Many thanks for taking this important step!



Mike Jacker's beautifully filmed story of his relationship over several years with a Great Horned Owl family in his neighborhood. 37 min. long; even if you watch only part of it, it's worth it! Click on [**The Great Horned Owls and Me.**](#)

ENSBC Opposes Sale of Public Land for Waukegan Airport Expansion

ENSBC has signed a letter opposing the Lake County Forest Preserves proposal to sell 52 acres of savannah to Waukegan airport for a 7,000-foot runway. You can read the letter [Here](#).

The expansion would sell public land for private purposes. It would allow private planes (not cargo or commercial) to be loaded with enough fuel and weight to make long-haul flights beyond Europe, according to the Sierra Club-Lake County. Planes taking off from the airport already can make long-haul flights to Europe.

We will deliver the letter to Lake County Forest Preserves on April 10. If you know of other organizations that might want to sign on, please email

Habitat@NaturalHabitatEvanston.Org

To oppose the sale as an individual, click [this link](#).



American White Pelicans at Fox River Forest Preserve by Matt Tobin

Program You Won't Want to Miss! Tuesday, April 30: Please note Date Change

Chris Whelan, University of Illinois at Chicago Biology Department: "Nests and Nesting Ecology"

Chris will discuss the diversity of nests, review what is known about bird nest-construction behavior and highlight the importance of nesting ecology in the life history of birds. Further details at <https://www.ensbc.org/>.

This meeting is in person at the Crown Center.

Field Trips Comin' Up!!

The following trips require registration with libbyhill@comcast.net:

Saturday, April 13: "Woodcock Walk", Air Station Prairie, Glenview

Sunday, April 30: Big Marsh Park, Calumet

Wednesday, May 1: Waukegan Beach (rain date Friday, May 3)

Sunday, May 12: Jackson Park, the Lakefront and Wooded Isle

Wednesday, May 22: Ryerson Woods, Riverwoods

Saturday, June 8: Openlands Nature Preserve, Highland Park

Sunday, August 4 and 25: Calumet Water Reclamation Plant

Details on these and many additional trips around the north shore and to Montrose Point are at <https://www.ensbc.org/>.

Please welcome these new members to the Flock



Gerald Batsford	Lincolnshire
John Hawes	Evanston
Joan Oshaughnessy	Waukegan
Janet Pellegrini	Evanston
Jessica Westbrook	Evanston
Thomas Younkin	Northfield



Celebrate World Migratory Bird Day with Evanston North Shore Bird Club, Evanston Public Library and the Ecology Center !

The 2024 theme is "Protect Insects, Protect Birds", and we've turned the Day, May 11, into a week-long community celebration, May 7 through 13.

- * Throughout the week, join one or more of Evanston North Shore Bird Club's bird walks listed at <https://www.ensbc.org/>.
- * Check out the continual slide show and activities at the Library's Crown Branch.
- * Learn how to draw birds from specimens from the Field Museum collection with Peggy Macnamara, Artist in Residence at the Field -Museum, and Field Ornithologist, John Bates, Saturday, May 11, 1:30 to 3:30 pm at the Levy Center.
- * Bird by boat with the Ecology Center, Saturday May 11, noon to 1 pm.

For details go to <https://tinyurl.com/3dtmfkpa>.

To register for *Birding by Boat* and *Drawing with the Field*, scan this QR code:



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