

Bird Calls

Newsletter of the Evanston North Shore Bird Club

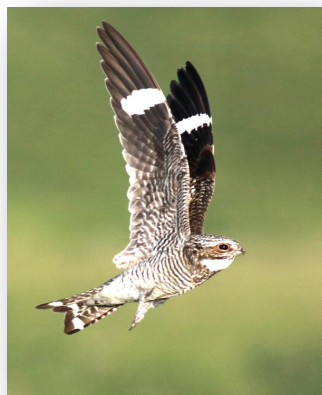
August 2026



Northern Shrike by Nancy Halliday

Plan your Backyard Habitat for Bugs that feed Birds

by Leslie Shad



Common Nighthawk

Many of us who love birds also want to encourage insects that feed birds. Summer is a good time to plan your garden. Then you can plant in fall or spring when the temperatures cool down.

Insect populations are in decline, and with them insectivorous birds are in decline. For example, the [North American Breeding Bird Survey](#) reports Common Nighthawk populations declined by over 1% per year between 1966 and 2019, for a cumulative decline of about 48%. Similarly, the 2025 State of the Birds report lists Eastern Whip-poor-will as a [Yellow Alert Tipping Point species](#), meaning that it has lost more than 50% of its population in the past 50 years.

The Chicago Bird Alliance points out that **planning a native garden** is your first step to providing a welcoming habitat for birds. CBA has many specific suggestions for plants for your yard. If you can add an oak, hickory, cherry or birch to shrink your lawn, they are top species supporting the widest diversity of caterpillar (all pollinators) species. But there are lots of options. Adding dwarf honeysuckle, coralberry, snowberry or wild currant can shrink your lawn and add a medium height shrub. Fall migrants are attracted to fruit-bearing plants like viburnum (nannyberry, blackhaw, maple leaved), elderberry, spicebush, chokeberry and ninebark. [Read more here.](#)

Planting bare root shrubs is an economical way to add a lot of habitat quickly. In Spring the [Illinois Department of Natural Resources Mason State Nursery](#) offers excellent quality shrubs and trees very inexpensively in bare roots. For fall, try [ColdStreamFarm.Net](#). PrairieMoon.com is also starting to carry bare root trees and shrubs.

Be sure to fence your new plants against rabbits and mowers. In winter, when food is scarce, rabbits will eat almost anything!

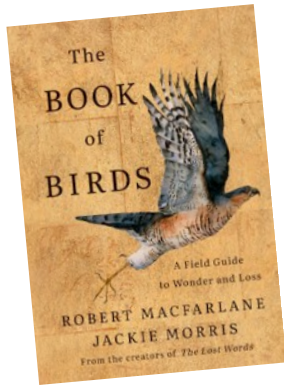
See page 4 for places to buy native plants.



Baltimore Oriole
by Peggy Reilly

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, at catbird3@comcast.net.



In his book review for the Wall Street Journal, David Mason says, “Imagine a world without birds....Robert Macfarlane and Jackie Morris tell us in The Book of Birds: A Field Guide to Wonder and Loss, ‘a great thinning of the skies is underway....Dawns and springs are quieter; the air emptier. An ancient avian orchestra is falling silent. ‘ “

A Britain-focused book, it features birds found in England including some found in the US. In the forward, the authors state, “There are three billion fewer birds in North America than half a century ago. Five hundred million in Europe. Seventy-three million in Britain.” But the book is a celebration of birds as well, presenting 49 species. Individual chapters describe the wonders of nest, eggs, beak, song, feather, flight and migration. “The unique thing about this book is that it is written from the bird’s perspective. Fascinating!” says Board member Anita Lukas. Seems like this is a book we all should read!

Field Trips Comin’ Up!

Sunday, August 23: Calumet Water Reclamation Plant. A long-time favorite August field trip to look for migrating shore-birds plus other migrants in the ponds at the Plant. Leader Tariq Shazad. Register with Libby Hill libbyhill@comcast.net

Thursdays, September 3, 10, 17, 24: Perkins Woods. Leader John Bates.

Fridays, September 4, 11, 18, 25: Birds and Coffee at Jarvis Bird Sanctuary. Red Hill Birding, Leader Josh Engel.

Sundays, September 6, 20 and October 4: Canal Shores north loop. Park on Maple Ave., Wilmette, west of the canal. Leader: Matthew Rooney.

Sundays, September 13, 27: Canal Shores north loop. Park on Lincoln St, Evanston, east of the canal. Matthew Rooney.

Tuesday, September 8: Waukegan Beach. Leader: Adam Sell.

Wednesday, September 9: Emily Oaks. Leader: John Bates.

Wednesday, September 16: West Ridge.

Saturday, September 26: Northwestern University south campus. Leaders: Libby Hill and Sarah Flax.

Saturday, October 10: Northwestern University north campus. Leaders: Libby Hill and Sarah Flax.

Check the website <https://www.ensbc.org/> for details on locations, times, registration information.

Breaking News: A New ENSBC Website is Under Construction!

This summer a small sub-committee of the Board and club members began working with a designer to build a new website for ENSBC. Although the current website has served us well, its operating platform and program is no longer supported and is being discontinued by the provider. With the help of the designer, we have selected Squarespace as the new website platform, an industry leader in website technology and support. Working with the designer, we are transferring and updating the content of our current website into vibrant, new looking pages with improved navigation and website functionality. We look forward to sharing this exciting new website with all of you this Fall.



***Least Flycatcher, Montrose
by Peggy Reilly***

The 2x4 rule for bird-safe windows: where did it come from?



By Libby Hill

How did the 2x4 rule governing the spacing of patterns on glass to make it bird-safe come to be? **Meet, Dan Klem, Jr., Sarkis Acopian Professor of Ornithology and Conservation Biology at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pennsylvania, and father of the rule.**

As a doctoral student in the Department of Zoology at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Dan needed a dissertation topic. The topic of birds flying into windows was nowhere on his radar, but research topics have a funny way of turning up. Which is exactly what happened when his professor described how his colleague, who lived in a modern house with plenty of glass, brought him 50-60 dead birds A YEAR, killed by the windows on his house. The carcasses were for display in the bird museum. To the professor's profound irritation, the colleague showed no evidence of ethical concern or responsibility. Result? He suggested Klem tackle birds and windows as a possible research topic. The next day at dawn, Klem positioned himself by the glass of the Chemistry building and witnessed a mourning dove flying full speed into the glass and dying. He found birds at other buildings, too. By his own admission, he was "hooked."

He set about documenting articles that had been published about bird mortality from flying into glass. With this research completed, he considered his dissertation finished. Until his professor told him an experimental component would be required. His pioneering experiments that led to the standard for bird-safe window patterns was the result of this unexpected requirement for an unanticipated doctoral dissertation topic.

Using his own money and gifted equipment until he could figure out how to get a grant, he set up two series of experiments -one in open fields and another using an outdoor flight cage. The experiments consisted of altering the appearance of the glass by adding objects such as owl silhouettes, windchimes, blinking lights, scary eyes and other objects that are considered to frighten birds. He also used white cloth strips in different configurations. He found four methods that, if uniformly covering the entire glass surface of a window, deterred bird strikes. Specifically, vertical strips separated by 10 cm (approximately 4 inches) and horizontal strips separated by 5 cm (approximately 2 inches) were effective. Hence, we have the basic 2x4 rule. (Which could have been the 5x10 rule if in centimeters).

New research results take time to be accepted. It took 10 years before any scientific journal was willing to publish Klem's research!

Programs you won't want to miss! *(In-person programs are at the Evanston Ecology Center.)*

September 22 (in-person), *The History of Montrose*. Bob Dolgan is a writer and filmmaker. He directed "[Monty and Rose](#)," a film about our Montrose Piping Plovers. He is a former Editor of [Meadowlark](#) (a journal of Illinois birds) and an official Ambassador for the [American Bird Conservancy](#). He received the 2022 Excellence in Environmental Reporting Award from [Chicago Audubon Society](#).

October 27 (in-person), *To Life: Jews Exploring Nature*. Interested in natural history since childhood, Joel Greenberg grew up with ENSBC. His career was spent in environmental protection, working for government and private entities. He has written numerous articles and books and authored/co-authored others. His new book offers a unique exploration of Jewish engagement with nature through compelling biographies of eight selected subjects.

November 24 (via Zoom), *Feathered Marvels: The Natural History and Extraordinary Lives of Birds* (book talk). Raised in northern Illinois, Dominic Sherony, an avid birder since 1972, has given many talks on birds. Prompted by questions from the audience, he only began to write up some of his talks in 2017. This blossomed into a book. He will highlight what was involved in producing a book and some stories related to the book's topics. These brief stories will include the natural history of birds, the advent of modern birds, adaptation, iridescence, nests, diversity and the need for habitat conservation. Here is a recent book review: <https://www.aba.org/the-age-of-loss/>

*For additional details, see
[The Evanston North Shore Bird Club](#).*



Registration for The Urban Birding Festival 2026 is officially open!

Festival hub: Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum
2430 N Cannon Dr, Chicago
September 18–20, 10 am to 4 pm.

The Urban Birding Festival is a celebration of avian wildlife within the city of Chicago and neighboring areas. Whether you're looking to explore local urban hotspots or join us for one of our highly anticipated boat trips, there is an adventure waiting for birders of all experience levels. We'll offer over 100 guided events and presentations! An amazing slate of speakers is lined up for programs at the festival hub Friday through Sunday.

Click here for registration and the [2026 Festival Guidebook on the Festival Schedule Page](#) with all the trips, workshops, events and more to help you map out your perfect weekend. This is a happening you won't want to miss!

Nancy Halliday Leaves the ENSBC Board

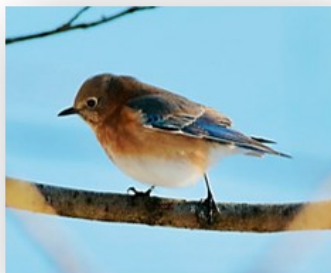
"ENSBC could always depend on Nancy," says Libby Hill. A stalwart in the Club for many years, Nancy joined the Board in 2001, serving as both Recording and Corresponding Secretaries. An award-winning artist, Nancy designed the banner for Bird Calls, redesigned the Peregrine logo for ENSBC's 100th anniversary and is helping with the logo for our new website. Nancy is a teacher and gifted scientific illustrator whose works have been publicly displayed in many venues. Her long and impressive career has taken her to the Smithsonian, museums and universities in Arizona, Florida and many other locations. Locally she has worked for the Forest Preserves of Cook County and the Chicago Botanic Garden.

An excellent birder, Nancy has regularly led ENSBC field trips to The Grove and Northwestern campus. She has been very active in environmental issues in Glenview. Nancy, we salute you and say a huge "thank you" for all you've done for ENSBC!

Continued from page 1...

Places where you can get native plants:

Agrecol.com
 Coldstreamfarm.net
 Izelplants.com
 Northbranchnatives.com
 Possibilityplace.com
 Prairienursery.com
 Shady Grove Wildflower Farm
 (Evanston Farmers Market)
 TaylorCreeknurseries.com
 Toadshade.com



*Bluebird at Ryerson Woods
by Laura Rudman*

Welcome to the Flock !



Mary Daley-Adamji	Evanston
Nancy Dann	Wilmette
Robin Gaston	Evanston
Mary Beth Molenaar	Evanston
Mel Oleary	Evanston
Janet Pierson	Evanston
Mitch Rosenfeld	Evanston
Mark Rund	Skokie
Kathryn Whittemore	Evanston