

Bird Calls

Newsletter of the Evanston North Shore Bird Club

March 2016 www.ensbc.org



A New Kind of Big Year...

ENSBC adopts Perkins Woods for the Cook County Forest Preserves

You might have seen the movie "The Big Year" and think a Big Year is all about personal competition. But this one — "Big Year 2016" — is all about cooperation, with some elements of competition thrown in. The idea is to introduce birding, help folks learn what it's all about and make new friends.

From March 1 to December 31, 2016, ENSBC will participate in a Big Year...with a twist: the preserves compete instead of the people! Preserve teams have two main objectives:

- **Find the most bird species** (must be accepted by [eBird](http://eBird.org) for the site hotspot)
- **Engage the most new birders** (to be determined by field trip attendance sheets).



Blue-gray Gnatcatcher by Mary Lou Mellon

ENSBC will lead a series of "Bird the Preserves Big Year" walks in Perkins Woods. The first two are Thursday, May 5 led by John Bates and Tuesday, May 24 by Josh Engel, meeting at 7:30 am at the corner of Ewing and Grant in Evanston. There'll be more to come this spring and fall. Visit [ENSBC](http://ENSBC.org) for updates.

Join us for the scheduled walks or just visit Perkins at the corner of Bennett and Grant, walk the woods, record your sightings to help us and the birds win the competition. Contact info@ensbc.org to learn how to participate.

GO TEAM!!!



Renew your ENSBC membership!

Club membership renewals are due in April. They can be made at our website or by email.

Renewal notices will also be mailed so keep a look out for yours!

Don't miss our April Program: It's Your Night! Tuesday, April 26, 2016

Members will share birding experiences with the group. Tell us about your most recent birding travels, a species or site that you monitor, a research project you have participated in. A few spaces remain open for the 26th; if you would like to give a 10 minute presentation, contact Jennifer Schmidt at jvs@uic.edu.

Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary...Update

Work Day Mulching Plants



Jerry Herst and Julie Dorfman are our official plant stewards and will schedule workdays to be posted in the Beach kiosk, on the ENSBC website and on [our Facebook page](#).

'Friends' will focus on the plants that most benefit and optimize the land for birds. As stewards for this newly established area, we will initially need to see what plants come up and how they do. The City is currently discussing a partnership with Northwestern to include maintenance, funding for new and replacement plantings, and research through the University's Institute of Sustainability and Energy. The City of Evanston will maintain the fence and the permanent watering system.

It's official! Formerly the "steering committee," we are now "Friends of Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary." We want to be inclusive, so if you'd like to join 'Friends', take a look at the volunteer responsibilities mentioned below and let us know what you'd like to do.

Acting as conservation ecologists, we will be responsible for sustaining the Sanctuary over the long term -- maintaining plantings, removing trash and letting the City know about issues regarding the fence. Monitors are checking the Sanctuary weekly for problems.

Want to help the Sanctuary in education, monitoring, taking photographs, or on workdays? Contact Libby Hill at libbyhill@comast.net to join 'Friends.' Ideas, volunteers and donations are most welcome. And speaking of donations, we now have an ENSBC special Sanctuary Fund. Simply write a check to ENSBC and be sure to put CSBBS on the memo line. Send the check to Libby Hill at 2715 Woodland Rd., Evanston. And remember to like us on Facebook!

Meet us at the Clark Street Beach House for important upcoming Sanctuary events.

Earth Day Celebration

Saturday, April 23, 2016, 3:30 pm for "Welcome Back Birds".
There'll be entertainment, plant and bird walks.

Birds and Bagels

Saturday mornings, April 30 - May 21, 10:30-11:30 am for
bird walks around the Sanctuary.



*Horned
Grebe*

*Semi-palmated
Plover*



Photos by Mary Lou Mellon



News of the Flock

Bird Calls Editor...Changing of the Guard

By Libby Hill

We are fortunate to have Marj Lundy as our new Bird Calls editor. Marj formerly edited the IOS (Illinois Ornithological Society) newsletter so comes to our Board with years of experience. She's an avid birder, gardener, cyclist, vocalist, conservationist and a volunteer with the Executive Service Corps of Chicago, so she will have a varied background to bring to the newsletter. Welcome, Marj.

And an enormous thank you goes to our retiring newsletter editor, Eleonora diLiscia. She brought exciting new dimensions to Bird Calls with her personal anecdotes and stories and dramatically changed the concept and appearance of Bird Calls. Thank you Eleonora and enjoy your "retirement" from the Board.

WELCOME...

to the following new members who have joined ENSBC since publication of the last directory:

Betsy Bouchard

Dale & Davida Kalina

Diane Bounds

Nora Lloyd

Wendell & Felicia Brown

Christopher & Isoo O'Brien

Jane Bunker

Judy Steinhaus

Kit Sullivan

Julie Dorfman

Remembering Ruth Lempert

By Joel Greenberg

For small organizations like the Evanston North Shore Bird Club to thrive, it takes dedicated volunteers willing to perform a host of often mundane tasks. We have been fortunate in having drawn such folks to the Club over the years. Ruth Lempert had long been a stalwart, serving for many years as membership chairman, ably assisted by her spouse Irv, who never was formally on the board. And when Ruth stepped down from her official board position, her work on membership issues continued unabated. She and Irv attended meetings and field trips, where their love of birds was evident. Dave Johnson remembers with fondness the "Three Ruths" (the other two being Ruth Pogders and Ruth Milgrom) who were regulars on his overnight trips to such destinations as Whitefish Point and Eagle Valley. Ruth and Irv moved to Portland, OR to be with children, and we were very saddened to learn that Ruth passed away last October.

ENSBC is On the Move...

with two new projects for all members — the "Big Year" in the Preserves and the Sanctuary.

Be an active participant!

Bluebirds, Bluebirds!

By Marj Lundy

We had cleaned out the Ryerson Woods nest boxes in March and checked for needed repairs. All was ready. And suddenly there it was: the first bluebird nest of the season, in early April! Would weather or some other catastrophe deny the bluebird pair success? We worried. Our team of monitors checked on progress weekly...in 7 days or so, 5 beautiful blue eggs; about 2 weeks later, 5 featherless chicks. Now the parents would spend busy days feeding and keeping them warm.

Meanwhile, other bluebirds located real estate and began setting up house. As Tree Swallows arrived, competition for nest boxes ensued. Paired boxes alleviated this somewhat, since the aggressive swallows generally would not let others

of their species nest within 25 feet. Eventually everyone settled in. Occasionally chickadees would nest in a box and later in the season House Wrens moved in. If House Sparrows dared to do the same, they were evicted (permitted since they are not native to the U.S.).



Now back to our first nesting. At each stage we counted and recorded our findings. Excitedly we watched the chicks grow, gain bluish feathers and fill the

nest box. About 18 days after hatching, all 5 fledged. Success! We were proud. And then as we guessed they would, the bluebird pair soon returned to the same box to nest a second time.

Not all nestings have such happy endings, but a great many do. What fun it is to be a part of the life cycle and know that nest boxes have helped bluebirds come back from the edge here in the Midwest.

Many north shore sites still need monitors; most volunteers already involved are happy to orient and train new monitors. Interested? Lake County especially wants your help. Contact Walt Sivertsen, at MCFWalt@yahoo.com.

ENSBC Elections

Every April, ENSBC elects a slate of officers. Thanks to their dedication, the Club offers excellent programs, great field trips, the annual Christmas Bird Count, special activities such as the 2016 Perkins Woods "Big Year" and more. We are always looking for new ideas and several Board positions are open. If you are interested, email Gary Hantsbarger, or call 847-374-8022. The current slate of nominees is:

President

Gary Hantsbarger

Treasurer

John Hockman

Conservation Chair

Lloyd Davidson

Vice President

Open

Program Chair

Libby Hill

Publicity Chair

Open

Recording Secretary

Nancy Halliday

Field Trip Chair

Libby Hill

Bird Calls Editor

Marj Lundy

Corresponding Secretary

Nancy Halliday

Membership Chair

Kathy Stohrer

Archivist

Sarah Miller