

Bird Calls

Newsletter of the Evanston North Shore Bird Club

May 2022



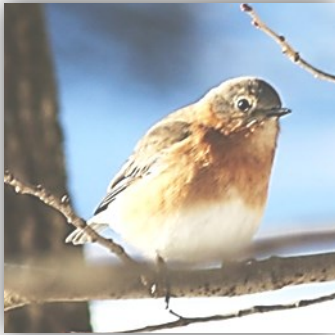
Northern Shrike by Nancy Halliday

Ryerson Woods, a Very Special Place

by Marj Lundy

Spring migration is underway and every year when that happens, I head for Ryerson Woods. Located in south Lake County and known officially as Ryerson Conservation Area, it is a very special place. One of the Lake County Forest Preserves, half of its 560 acres is a dedicated Illinois Nature Preserve. Permanently protected by state law, nature preserves are the last remnants of the Illinois wilderness and contain rare plants, animals or unique natural features.

More than 215 bird species and nearly 600 species of flowering plants -- including the endangered Purple Fringed Orchid -- have been found in Ryerson. Located on the Des Plaines River, the preserve has 5.6 miles of trails and contains a variety of habitats including prairie, wetland and northern flatwoods forest



Bluebird at Ryerson Woods
Lorra Rudman, March 2022

Ryerson is a magnet for birders during April and May. On a good day, you can see large numbers of warblers as well as flycatchers, Bluebirds, Baltimore Orioles, Scarlet Tanagers, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and more. On a great "fall out" day, the preserve is unbelievable; as many as 22 species of warblers can be sighted in a single day, a magical experience for beginning and veteran birders alike.

But migration is not the only time to visit this special place. I'm lucky enough to live near Ryerson and visit often. My first recollection was in winter when, while exploring on a beautiful snowy day, a small flock of cardinals flew right over my head. And then in early spring, walking along one of the trails by the Des Plaines River, migrating Sandhill Cranes flew over, almost close enough to touch (well, a slight exaggeration). Now I was totally hooked! Last summer a nesting pair of Piliated Woodpeckers drew many birders to Ryerson; toward the head of the same trail, a male Hooded Warbler sang and, if you were lucky, made an appearance as well.

From April through July, I and a team of volunteers monitor Bluebird nest boxes at Ryerson. What a privilege it is to see newly built Bluebird nests, beautiful blue eggs, tiny newborns, nestlings developing blue feathers and finally, fledglings leaving the nest. Some boxes are occupied by Tree Swallows, House Wrens and occasionally Black-capped Chickadees so we get to watch their young develop as well.

The Ryersons and several other families acquired land and built weekend retreat cabins in what is now the Preserve. In 1966 these families began donating and selling their land to the Lake County Forest Preserves District. Ryerson became the educational center of the District in 1976. The Ryersons built a lovely home, Brushwood, in 1942; it is now Ryerson's arts and cultural center. In 2006, the Welcome Center was built -- an excellent example of "green" architecture. Throughout the year, events are held including maple syruping, Halloween Hikes and nature-oriented programs for school children. A bit of a "farm" with sheep, chickens and bees still exists, an extra treat for families.

Join John Leonard for a walk in Ryerson on May 4 (see p. 2). And put Ryerson Woods on your list of birding hotspots. You won't be disappointed!

SPRING FIELD TRIPS COMIN UP!

Tuesdays, Montrose: May 12 and 19 -- Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the handicapped parking near the entrance to the nature preserve. Leaders: Nancy Halliday and Libby Hill.

Wednesday, Ryerson Woods, Riverwoods: May 4 -- Meet at 8:00 a.m. at Brushwood Center parking lot for this spring migration walk. Register at libbyhill@comcast.net. Leader: John Leonard.

Wednesday, The Grove, Glenview: May 18 -- Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot. This is a great walk for spring migrants. Stay afterward to see exhibits at the renovated Interpretive Center. Leader: Nancy Halliday.

Thursdays, Perkins Woods, Evanston: May 5, 12, 19, 26 -- Find warblers and other migrants as well as a great display of spring wildflowers. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the corner of Ewing Ave. and Grant St. Park along Ewing Ave. Leaders: John Bates and/or Josh Engel.

Fridays, Skokie Lagoons, Northbrook: May 6, 13 and 20 -- These trips pack a great list of warbler species during spring migration. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at Erickson Woods Forest Preserve. Turn north into the parking lot from Willow Rd. just east of the Edens Expressway. Leaders: Ed & Rebecca Rice, Libby Hill.

Saturdays, Northwestern University, Evanston: May 14 and 21 -- A stopover for migrants of all kinds heading north in spring. Meet at 8:00 a.m. Park on the lake side, upper deck of parking lot north of Clark St. beach. Leaders: Libby Hill, Sarah Flax and TBA.

Saturday, Plum Creek Forest Preserve, Southeast Cook County: June 4 -- Meet at 7:30 in the main forest preserve parking lot, on the east side of Burnham Ave., south of Sauk Trail. Look for Henslow's and Grasshopper Sparrow, Dickcissel, Bobolink, Scarlet Tanager, and Tufted Titmouse. Detailed directions will be provided. Leader: Josh Engel. Limit of 10. Register with libbyhill@comcast.net.

Saturday, Big Marsh, Calumet: June 11 -- Join ENSBC and the Chicago Ornithological Society at an exciting habitat restoration project. It hosts important marsh birds and depending on water levels, a variety of shorebirds and other wetland visitors. The walk, on crushed gravel or paved surfaces, is 2-3 miles. Meet at 7:00 a.m. in the parking lot (directions to come). Leader: Carl Giometti. To register, contact libbyhill@comcast.net.

Sundays, Canal Shores, Evanston: May 1--29 -- Walk either the south or the north loop on alternate Sundays. Location for each Sunday is on the ENSBC calendar. Registration required. Register with Matt Rooney matthewarooney@gmail.com.

Sundays, Gillson Park, Wilmette: May 8, 15, 22 and 29 -- Sponsored by our partner Go Green Wilmette. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Wildflower Garden near the Coast Guard Station. Parking available for non-residents of Wilmette through May. For information, contact [Go Green Wilmette](#).

And still more trips....

September 29—October 3: Cape May Migration Madness Red Hill Birding: Special for the Evanston North Shore Bird Club

Tour leader: Jason Weckstein

\$1775 per person sharing; \$420 single supplement

Maximum 7 participants. For more information: [Cape May Migration Madness — Red Hill Birding](#)

March 17-25, 2023 Costa Rica :

In 2021, ENSBC made a contribution of \$500 to the Monteverde MoSI station in Costa Rica. MoSI is a collaborative network of bird banders and biologists across Latin America working to conserve North America's migratory birds on their non-breeding grounds, where over half of North America's birds spend more than 6 months of the year. This contribution enables staff at Monteverde to continue banding and monitoring species such as Ovenbird, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Wilson's Warbler, Swainson's Thrush, and more.

The 6 participants will see how Monteverde has used our contribution and help determine if ENSBC should continue support. We will spend one morning mist-netting with the staff biologist and researcher and learn more about Monteverde's activities. With local guides, we will visit the Monteverde Cloud Forest, Carara National Park, and Santa Elena Cloud Forest Reserve. We'll stay at Pocosol Station — part of the Children's Eternal Rainforest — a couple of nights. For cost and more details, contact libbyhill@comcast.net

Forest Preserve District of Cook County Referendum: Vote YES!

Election Day, November 8, may seem far away, but there will be a very important referendum on the ballot that you should be aware of now.

Cook County voters will be asked to vote on a referendum to approve a property tax increase of 0.025% for the Cook County Forest Preserves. That amounts to less than \$1.66/month for the vast majority of homeowners – a small price to protect, restore, and expand our forest preserves, ensure cleaner air and drinking water, reduce flooding and allow wildlife to thrive in their native habitats.

ENSBC is among the Cook County community groups endorsing a YES vote to invest in restoration and stewardship of 30,000 acres of Forest Preserve land. To see the list of supporting organizations, visit [Coalition Members \(voteyesforestpreserves.org\)](http://voteyesforestpreserves.org)

Are you part of an organization that hasn't yet pledged support? This is an opportunity to persuade your group to join in.

**Please vote YES in November
and encourage friends, family and colleagues to do the same.**

ENSBC's newly elected 2022-2023 Board of Directors

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>President:</i> | <i>Jim LaRochelle</i> |
| <i>Vice President:</i> | <i>Marcia Weflen</i> |
| <i>Recording Secretary:</i> | <i>Nancy Halliday</i> |
| <i>Corresponding Secretary:</i> | <i>Nancy Halliday</i> |
| <i>Treasurer:</i> | <i>John Hockman</i> |
| <i>Membership Chair:</i> | <i>Kathy Stohrer</i> |
| <i>Bird Calls Editor:</i> | <i>Marj Lundy</i> |
| <i>Program Chair:</i> | <i>Libby Hill</i> |
| <i>Field Trip Chair:</i> | <i>Libby Hill</i> |
| <i>Assistant Field Trip Chair:</i> | <i>Pamela Feldman</i> |
| <i>Publicity Chair:</i> | <i>Amanda Engel</i> |
| <i>Conservation Chair:</i> | <i>Leslie Shad</i> |
| <i>Archivist:</i> | <i>Sarah Miller</i> |



*Cedar Waxwing,
Lincolnshire,
Lake County*

by Lorra Rudman

Avian Flu: Should you take down birdfeeders?

For two different opinions: **for No**, visit [Avian Influenza Outbreak: Should You Take Down Your Bird Feeders? | All About Birds](#). **For YES**, Illinois Department of Natural Resources “*recommends halt to use of bird feeders, bird baths through May 31 until spread of avian influenza subsides.*” See the following link to Libby Hill’s article in the Evanston Roundtable [Guest essay: Bird feeders and bird flu - Evanston RoundTable](#).

May is membership renewal month.

This past year, your ENSBC membership supported a variety of projects: a contribution to Monteverde in Costa Rica where folks are banding neotropical migrants on their wintering grounds; a beautiful outdoor mural and bookmarks highlighting endangered birds; and support of the Illinois Audubon Society, Illinois Environmental Council and other organizations that watch out for environmental legislation and conservation opportunities. **Renew today by going to <https://www.ensbc.org>.**

**Tree Swallow,
Ryerson Woods,
April 2022
By Lorra Rudman**



Welcome New Members!

| | |
|--------------------|----------|
| Mary Anne Diehl | Evanston |
| James Edgren | Evanston |
| Marianne Griebler | Evanston |
| Scott Judd | Chicago |
| Patricia Lundman | Oak Lawn |
| Petra MacIntosh | Winnetka |
| William Marvin | Skokie |
| Sara McMurray | Evanston |
| Diane Mielnikowski | Wilmette |
| Angela Mitchell | Skokie |

Get started with Birdwatching!

by Libby Hill

(Excerpted from *Evanston Roundtable*, Feb 8th, 2022)

Is birdwatching in your future? If you're not sure and are reluctant to invest in binoculars to try it out, just borrow an Evanston Public Library birdwatching kit.

Packed inside a comfortable backpack is everything you need to get started: two pairs of lightweight, easy to adjust Celestron binoculars; directions on how to use them; birding resources in both Spanish and English; a folding pocket guide to birds of Illinois and a field guide with outstanding photographs; and special materials for cleaning the binoculars. (Two pairs of binoculars mean you don't have to explore birding alone.) The birdwatching kit is Evanston's first example of the "Library of Things," a new trend in library loans.

Since March 2020, according to Tim Joyce at Wild Birds Unlimited in Glenview, there has been a 30% increase in people enjoying birds. New birdwatchers told Joyce: "I didn't realize how relaxing birding is – it's a distraction from the turmoil of the issues in the world"; and "I've found birding to be an opportunity to connect with nature." Joyce further explained: "Birds show us the interconnectedness of the world. Watching a bird that has been wintering in the tropics, that has flown through Chicago on its way to the boreal forest to breed, is very humbling."

Borrow a kit and try out the binoculars from home, practicing on squirrels, rabbits, trees or anything else from your window; and then bring them with you on the local spring migration walks with Evanston North Shore Bird Club, Go Green Wilmette and Canal Shores Golf Course. Beginners and experienced birders alike are welcome. Visit <https://www.ensbc.org> for a list of planned walks.

To borrow a birdwatching kit, go to the [Evanston Public Library website](#). Click on "Find," Type in "bird kit" and "Evanston Public Library Bird Watching Kit" will come up, allowing you to place a hold. An EPL library card is required. Pick up your kit at either the Main Library or Crown Center branch. And enjoy!



**Grey Catbird
by Mark Vaughan**

***Bird Calls is a publication of the Evanston North Shore Bird Club, Marj Lundy, Editor
Send ideas, comments, articles and photos to catbird3@comcast.net.***