

Bird Calls

Newsletter of the Evanston North Shore Bird Club

November 2023



Northern Shrike by Nancy Halliday

A Spectacular Event in Our Backyard: Sandhill Crane Fall Migration

One of Indiana's greatest wildlife spectacles takes place at [Jasper-Pulaski Fish & Wildlife Area](#) each fall. Thousands of Sandhill Cranes visit the area's shallow marshes from mid-October through mid-December. Crane numbers peak in late November or early December. DNR staff at Jasper-Pulaski make weekly crane counts during peak fall migration. The counts generally end the last week of December.

The crane spectacle is best seen from the observation platform at the Sandhill Crane Observation Area ([view map](#)). During the day, cranes can be spotted feeding and dancing in nearby harvested farm fields. Roosting marshes in the Waterfowl Resting Area are closed to the public so that migrating birds can rest without human disturbance.

While cranes may gather close to the observation platform, they are usually several hundred yards away. A few stationary viewing scopes are available, but bringing your own spotting scope, and of course binoculars, is recommended. If you are photographing cranes, your most powerful zoom lens will be handy, as trying to get too close to these birds will easily spook them.

Below you can see the 2022 count, and the count for 2023 thus far:

2022	Oct. 25: 4,881
Dec. 20: 17,432	Oct. 18: 3,804
Dec. 13: 21,827	Oct. 11: 3,485
Dec. 8: 31,970	Oct. 4: 2,069
Nov. 29: 24,208	
Nov. 22: 31,975	2023
Nov. 15: 7,250	Oct. 10: 2,078
Nov. 10: 6,044	Oct. 4: 744
Nov. 1: 3,782	Oct. 17: 3,255
	Oct. 24: 7,953.



You can keep up-to-date on the crane count on <https://www.in.gov/dnr/fish-and-wildlife/properties/jasper-pulaski-fwa/sandhill-cranes/>

If you haven't been to Jasper-Pulaski for this spectacle, you should make it a priority this fall.
It's truly wonderful!

Excerpted from Indiana Department of Natural Resources web site.

THE REMARKABLE RECOVERY OF THE SANDHILL CRANE

by Marianne Griebler

Sandhill Cranes have graced this planet for millions of years. However, nearly a century ago, the species was on the verge of extinction. In Wisconsin alone, only a few dozen breeding pairs remained. They had become so rare that conservationist Aldo Leopold lamented their impending demise in *A Sand County Almanac*. Thankfully, Leopold's predictions did not come to pass—habitat restoration and hunting reform ultimately saved Sandhill Cranes, allowing their populations to rebound in Wisconsin and throughout their range.

Today these once elusive inhabitants of remote wetlands, Sandhill Cranes can now be found thriving in suburban yards, athletic fields, and college campuses. [Read more about this conservation success story in the Sierra Club's magazine.](#)



Orchard Oriole by Matt Tobin

Welcome to the following new club members:

Shea Dettling	Wilmette
Marjorie Goran	Skokie
Kelly McKee	Wilmette
Peter Keller	Wilmette
Luke Stowe	Libertyville

Program Comin' up (on zoom)

(Zoom will open at 7:00 pm, and the program will begin at 7:30.)

Tuesday, November 28: Dan Klem: "Solid Air - Birds and Buildings." Daniel Klem is the author of Solid Air, Invisible Killer: Saving Billions of Birds from Windows. From editorial reviews by David Allen Sibley: "A thorough, important, and ultimately hopeful review of everything that is known about bird-window collisions, by the world's leading expert in the field. This book is filled with useful information that should help all of us tackle this insidious problem." Klem did the original research on bird-window collisions at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale beginning in 1974. He is currently Sarkis Acopian Professor of Ornithology and Conservation Biology at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pennsylvania, where, among other activities, he serves as technical consultant to glass manufacturers developing bird-safe sheet glass. Dan will provide an overview of his book as well as his sometimes surprising most recent work.

Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary Migration News

by Nancy Pinchar

Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary's mission is to provide habitat for migrating birds. It lies along the Great Lakes migration pathway and provides an essential stopover for birds to rest and refuel before continuing their journeys.

Because of our wonderful bird monitors who provide daily reports, in all kinds of weather, we now have five years of bird count data for spring and fall. Between late March and early June this year, our bird monitors observed 98 different species at the sanctuary and in the beach area. These included 11 species of warblers, 4 types of thrushes, 4 kinds of flycatchers and 10 varieties of sparrows. Many have been here again this fall on their migration south, notably Black-throated Blue and Orange-crowned Warblers, Hermit and Swainson's Thrushes, Least and Great-crested Flycatchers, and Lincoln's, Savannah and Chipping Sparrows.

There are new resources and tools available to learn more about migration along the Great Lakes and in the Chicago area. The "Bird Migration Explorer" is an interactive tool at <https://explorer.audubon.org/> with information about types of migrating birds, migration maps by species and challenges they face.

Another fascinating resource is "BirdCast," (<https://birdcast.info/>), which predicts nightly big migration events in your area.

Good News about the Common Tern!

by Marianne Griebler

Three floating nesting platforms anchored in a local harbor at the Naval Station Great Lakes are cited as contributors to the most successful nesting season in recent years for the Common Tern.

Listed as a species of concern by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and as endangered in the State of Illinois, the Common Tern faces ongoing challenges with fluctuating lake levels, habitat degradation and predation from hawks and minks, among others. This colony is the only one remaining in our state.

Brad Semel at the Illinois Department of Natural Resources built the floating platforms to create additional nesting habitat as well as to provide safe haven for eggs and hatchlings from predators. As a result, 39 surviving chicks were reported in June 2023 ... the highest number of chicks fledged since 2003 and a significant increase from zero surviving in 2022 due to predation.



Major Bird Collision Event in Chicago!

During the early hours of October 5, approximately 1.5 million birds migrated through the Chicago area, and nearly 1000 died at McCormick Place, attracted there by the lights. Birds that had been holding off migration because of southerly winds came through by the thousands as the winds shifted from the north, drove birds to the lake and rain drove them down toward ground. A petition was circulated and signatures are still needed. Click on [McCormick Place: Keep the Lights Out | Audubon Community Petitions](#) to sign.

On October 18, the Bird Friendly Chicago (BFC) coalition met with leadership from Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority (MPEA) and McCormick Place. These leaders expressed a commitment to solve the problem of bird collisions at their facility and indicated that this directive is coming from the highest levels of their organization. They consider this a high priority and have been researching solutions for effective building light reduction and glass protection for birds.

BFC expressed the urgency of having this in place by March 15, the beginning of next spring's migration. They could give no timeline because they are still researching and adjusting the budget, but promised to let us know when they could. In the meantime, the MPEA/McCormick Place leadership said that lights will be out or curtains drawn for the remaining evenings of this fall's migration

Once MPEA staff develop a plan and budget, board approval will likely be needed. We must show the board that appropriating funds for this is critical. The next MPEA board meeting will take place on Monday, October 30 at 9am at 301 E. Cermak, 5th floor. We encourage our community members to attend this public meeting, wearing your favorite bird themed apparel.

If you are unable to attend, you can submit comments at <https://www.chicagoaudubon.org/blog/2023/10/26/b2Opz8kiqa2j08oag1oi1xyf1n0zkw>

by Annette Prince, Edward Warden, Matt Igleski, Judy Pollock

Openlands Lakeshore Preserve in Highland Park reopened on August 30th!

by Amanda Engel

One of the last remaining ravine and bluff ecosystems in the Chicago area, the 71.55 acres of this site lie just south of Fort Sheridan. Acquired by Openlands from the US Navy, the Preserve was donated to Lake County Forest Preserves (LCFPD). Openlands also transferred \$1.3 million to the Preservation Foundation to support future conservation of the site.

Formerly part of Fort Sheridan Army Base, the Preserve was closed in 2021 when unexploded munitions were found there. The Navy has since reported that any additional explosives are unlikely, allowing the reopening.

Openlands Lakeshore Preserve has 3 trails, each about a mile long. All are paved and ADA accessible. Some areas have interpretive signage. This surely will prove to be a fantastic place to go birding, a sort of sister site to Fort Sheridan. The views of the lake atop the bluff are good for lake watches, too; the open sky is also great for seeing large numbers of birds migrating at a given time, such as Common Nighthawks in August/September.

Come and enjoy!



Christmas Bird Count 2023

The ENSBC annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC) will be held on Saturday, December 30. John Leonard, Compiler, will contact area leaders who will organize groups of field observers. The countdown will be on Zoom.

Joel Greenberg will again coordinate the feeder counts which enable us to gain more accurate numbers, since often birds are reported that were not seen by field parties. To participate, visit joelrgreenberg@gmail.com. Checklists will also be available at Wild Birds Unlimited in Glenview.

Additional CBC information will be posted at <http://www.ensbc.org> as it becomes available.



Bluebird by Lorra Rudman

An important invitation from BCN

The Bird Conservation Network (BCN) is a coalition of more than 20 organizations including bird clubs, Audubon chapters, ornithological societies and conservation organizations that share a common interest in conserving birds and the habitats they need to survive. Its groups' members total more than 35,000 people living primarily in the Chicago area, but also throughout Illinois, northeastern Indiana and southern Wisconsin.

BCN invites all of us, as individuals, to join the BCN mailing list for the latest news from its community. Joining will bring you the quarterly newsletter, advocacy alerts, plus updates on interesting BCN-supported projects like the ongoing Black-crowned Night Heron and Regional Grassland Birds Survey projects. ENSBC is a BCN member, involved in and strongly supporting the organization's work. We urge you to add your name to the BCN mailing list by clicking <https://www.bcnbirds.org/mailling-list/>.

HOW DID YOUR LEGISLATORS RATE ON THE ILLINOIS ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL'S 2023 SCORECARD?

by Marianne Griebler

Each year the Illinois Environmental Council (IEC), which the club supports, rates Illinois legislators based on their votes on key environmental legislation from the most recent session. They tally up the pro- and anti-environment votes to create a valuable resource for voters interested in protecting vital habitats for birds and humans.

In 2023, only 27 legislators scored a perfect 100. [Click here to see how your legislators did.](#) If you're happy with their performance on behalf of the environment, send them a thank you note! If not, reach out to encourage them to do better in the future.

Learn more about the IEC's efforts this year in [The 2023 Illinois Environmental Council Legislative Report](#).

Winter's on the way....



*Common Redpoll by
Jake Sullivan*



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