

# Bird Calls

Newsletter of the Evanston North Shore Bird Club

September 2016

[www.ensbc.org](http://www.ensbc.org)



## *Barnswallow — A Haven for Raptors and Songbirds*

*By Marj Lundy*

***“What a beautiful place!”*** I wonder how many times Linda Breuer, who created and runs “Barnswallow,” -- a wild bird rescue, rehabilitation and education center -- has heard this exclamation. Barnswallow is located in a beautiful country setting next to an Illinois nature preserve outside Wauconda, Illinois. When you come up the drive to this very special place, you are at once aware of the lovely, natural gardens and the cacophony of bird songs all around you. But this is just the beginning of a visit you will long remember.

Barnswallow, a private facility and nonprofit organization, is dedicated to the rehabilitation of injured and orphaned raptors and songbirds with the goal of restoring them to freedom in the wild and helping the public become aware of these amazing birds. It includes a clinic with medical care and food preparation specific to the species admitted; a space where interns can stay while helping out; and numerous out buildings where wild birds are housed as they recover or mature to a point where they can be released. Those that are not able to be released, because of permanent disabling injuries or human imprint, “live with me” (Linda’s words) with permission of the USFWS and IDNR. They are part of the extended Barnswallow family and serve as educational ambassadors or foster parents to orphaned or injured of their species.



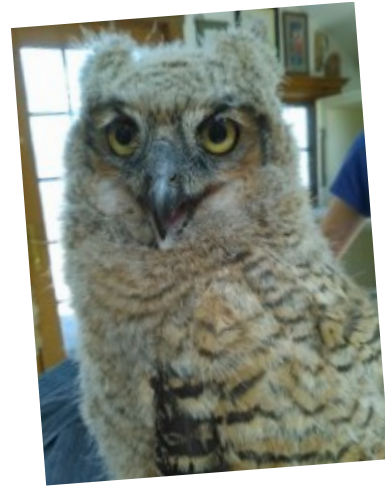
One very special resident was Emily, a Great Horned Owl who lived at Barnswallow for many years. She fostered innumerable rescued great horned nestlings. Her tender loving care enabled them to grow, mature and be released wild. Another special member of the “family” was Lily, a sociable Red-tailed Hawk who was a regular at many of Linda’s educational presentations. And then there is Carson, an American Kestrel who has been with Linda for 13 years. An imprint confiscated by IDNR from someone who had him illegally, he was very ill due to an improper diet. Now healthy and happy, Carson hangs out in the clinic and greets all visitors. He is definitely one of my favorites.

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Linda takes all comers except water fowl and mammals and either nurses them along or finds other centers that can take them. At my last visit I was introduced to Henry, a Great Horned Owl 4 to 5 weeks old who was brought to Linda at 10:30 PM one Sunday night last winter. Feeding this growing owl was no small feat – 5 to 6 whole mice a day. And this is just a small sample of the special formulas specific to the species admitted that are fed to the birds housed at Barnswallow.

Volunteers and interns are vital to the center. There have been many over the years and they have given their time and energy with kindness and dedication; they keep Barnswallow running.

Visiting the Center is an amazing and endlessly interesting experience. I've been back many times, taking family and friends. ***Please be aware that visits are by appointment only.*** Barnswallow became Linda's life work several decades ago, and her dedication to its mission and the birds is inspiring to say the least. We salute her for her commitment, caring and invaluable service to bird rehabilitation and conservation.



**Henry**  
**Winter 2016**  
**Photo by**  
**Marj Lundy**

***Thank you, Linda!***

<http://www.barnswallow.net/Barnswallow-About.htm>

### ***In Memory of Betsy Buckles***

**Betsy**  
**and**  
**John**



*Bird Club member Betsy Buckles passed away on June 28, 2016, following a short illness.*

*Betsy and her late husband, John, joined the Bird Club in 2004 and were participants on several of its trips into the tropics. She and John were long-time members of the Natural History Society of Barrington and also active with an*

*informal northwest suburban group that birded every Tuesday.*

*Both Betsy and John were delightful companions on trips. It did not matter whether it was a local day-trip or two weeks in the tropics. They were gentle, unassuming fellow travelers and always-cheerful contributors to the project at hand.*

*While Betsy held wide interests in the natural world, her passion was for orchids, birds ranking only slightly less. She had an exceedingly inquisitive mind, always eager to learn as much as she could on many topics. She was most generous in sharing her own knowledge with others, as well as her time and energies.*

*While all those who knew Betsy will miss her greatly, they can be grateful for the opportunity of knowing this kind and gentle lady.*

*By Chuck Westcott*

*Photo at right:  
ENSBC Field Trip, June 2016  
to McHenry Dam  
by Suzanne Checchia*

## Update on the Sanctuary

*by Libby Hill*

Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary has provided lots of surprises this summer, some good and others challenging. The good news: our rainy spring and summer, through July, provided enough moisture so that we lost few plants. The city of Evanston got a watering system working, a great help during the dry August days. Watering plants down by the lake has been Zen-like, very peaceful in a lovely setting.

To our delight, some volunteer native beach plants dot the sanctuary: sea rocket, sand reed grass, dogbane, switchgrass, grass-leaved goldenrod, silverweed, winged pigweed and trailing wild bean. In early summer, the planted coreopsis flowered beautifully and provided seed for flocks of goldfinch. Blazing star bloomed in mid-August, and milkweed throughout the sanctuary has attracted monarchs. Small oaks are generating throughout.

Big challenges are invasive black locust and crown vetch, as well as native sandbar willow; the city will herbicide these. Volunteers have filled bags and bags with white sweet clover and native but aggressive horsetail, cut back grapevines and are now dealing with non-native bouncing bet. Come to the Sanctuary to volunteer, make new friends, monitor the fall migration and watch our garden grow. Thursday afternoon workdays are at 4 pm and monitoring for birds, any time.

To volunteer at the Clark Street Beach Sanctuary, contact one of our wonderful stewards, ENSBC members [julie.dorfman@gmail.com](mailto:julie.dorfman@gmail.com) or Jerry [Herst.@gmail.com](mailto:Herst.@gmail.com). For migration bird monitoring, contact [libbyhill@comcast.net](mailto:libbyhill@comcast.net).



### ***Field Trip Highlights, Fall 2016***

*Details and more trips at <http://www.ensbc.org/>*

**September 5, 2016 – Monday, Labor Day,  
7:00am—Chicago Botanic Garden.**

Expect fall passerine migrants and some shorebird species. Meet at the Garden Visitor Center. RSVP [isooman22@gmail.com](mailto:isooman22@gmail.com).

**Saturdays, September 10 & 17, 2016, 8:30 am**

**Northwestern University Campus.** It's long been a stopover for migrants headed south. After NU, we'll bird the Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary. Leaders: Libby Hill and others.

**September 18, 2016 – Sunday, 7:00 am**

**LaBagh Woods.** See the effects of the restoration work done this year specifically for migrant birds. Fall migration should be well underway, with warblers at their peak and sparrows already making an appearance. This site is notoriously muddy, so wear old boots, or preferably rubber knee-highs. Contact [jpbobolink@gmail.com](mailto:jpbobolink@gmail.com).

**November 20, 2016 – Sunday, 8:00 am**

**Fall Specialty Trip! North Shore lakefront.** 47th Annual Jeff Sanders' Fall Specialty Trip – Northwestern, Gillson Park, Maple Park, Tower Road Park, Park Ave., Rose Beach in Highland Park, and more. Meet at Gillson Park Beach House in Wilmette. We'll carpool from there. Bring scopes; dress for cold lake wind. [yellowstart@yahoo.com](mailto:yellowstart@yahoo.com) for details.





### ***Will Monarchs Survive?***

*by Lloyd Davidson*

As most readers here know, monarchs are increasingly endangered. In fact, their numbers in Mexico, where many of the butterflies in this area migrate over several generations each winter, have decreased by 2/3 over just the last dozen or so years due to global warming, illegal logging and the widespread use of insecticides. Along with these problems, there has been a significant decrease in their primary larval food source, milkweeds. This is due largely to the widespread use of herbicides, especially on farms.

The caterpillars of monarch butterflies grow on milkweed plants for good reason: the plant's tissues are filled with bitter cardiac glycosides that are transferred into their bodies and the butterflies then become poisonous. This, in turn, successfully protects them from many predators. Nevertheless, wasps, mice and many birds (e.g. Cassin's Kingbird, towhees, Chestnut-backed Chickadees, starlings, orioles, and scrub jays) can tolerate these poisons, and for them monarchs provide an important though diminishing food source.

In 1996 the migrating monarchs covered over 44.5 acres of forest trees in Mexico. Last year they only

filled 1.65 acres. This winter their numbers rebounded slightly, up to 2.79 acres, but unusually cold weather and snow in that area are now killing many of these.

Suddenly a new threat to their existence has appeared. According to a recent article in the NY Times (*A Mine vs. a Million Monarchs* by Dan Fagin, April 29, 2016), "Now those monarchs are facing another potential calamity. One of Mexico's largest corporations is close to winning government approval to reopen a sprawling mine in Angangueo, right next to the most important winter habitat of North America's most iconic insect. In a region where butterfly tourism isn't doing much to ease pervasive poverty, the mining proposal has plenty of local support, even as it alarms biologists." Should this plan be implemented, which is quite likely, it's not impossible that monarchs could begin to disappear completely.



One of the more important groups supporting the conservation of insects and other invertebrates is the Xerces Society, [www.xerces.org](http://www.xerces.org).

An excellent web site in the U.S. for insect information and identification is BugGuide ([www.bugguide.net](http://www.bugguide.net)), which hosts photographs of American and Canadian insect species. You can find good images of some Chicago area insects by searching there for the images posted by John Balaban and Lloyd Davidson.

### ***Fall Monthly Programs (4th Tuesday, 7:30 pm, Ecology Center in Evanston)*** ***Details and more programs at <http://www.ensbc.org/>***

#### ***September 27, 2016: The Color of Birds - In Celebration of a Passion.***

Kevin Loughlin has spent decades photographing the natural world, especially birds. Join him on this photographic journey from the icy waters of Antarctica to the mountains of Ecuador and across the globe.

#### ***October 25, 2016: Life at the Top.***

Shane DuBay will talk about the amazing ways birds survive at extreme high elevations, where temperatures are cold and oxygen is low. He'll transport you to the Hengduan Mountains of southern China and the highest peaks in Asia.

#### ***November 22, 2016: Evolution of Bird Migration: From Field to Theory.***

Migratory birds can travel thousands of kilometers from their breeding grounds towards their wintering grounds, requiring unique physiological and morphological adaptations. Valentina Gómez-Bahamón will share her field research in the Argentinian Pampas and Colombian Llanos.