

# Bird Calls

Newsletter of the Evanston North Shore Bird Club

Spring 2020



Northern Shrike by Nancy Halliday



## Birding in the Age of Coronavirus

"I may have to shelter-in-place, but I am NOT going to miss spring migration, the absolutely best time of the year!" A few thoughts from fellow birders in early April:

**Dave Johnson, Buffalo Grove:**

*I simply love hearing spring bird song outside of our home. When I can do a little birding, I really like traveling around alone in Lake County with our dog Toby, looking at Loons and anything else I can find. I missed leading the Looney Trip a lot this spring. (And so did those of us signed up to go!) I also am vicariously enjoying other folks birding posts on Facebook and watching nature programs. Wonder when I'll be let loose?*

**Sarah Miller, Evanston:**

*Perkins Woods, the only Cook County Forest Preserve in Evanston, is a mile from my house, so I often walk there throughout the year. It's wonderful to have a small bit of forest nearby. In early April, the area was looking a little desolate, the result of culling infected ash trees. Soon, however, spring flowers will put on their annual display. And now migrants are beginning to return. Brown Creepers, sapsuckers, Eastern Phoebe, kinglets, Red-winged Blackbird, and gorgeous Wood Ducks are joining the year-round residents. Libby Hill saw the first Hermit Thrush on April 5<sup>th</sup>. That same day, she visited with a young healthcare worker finding solace on his day off, photographing birds. Spring migration is a special treat this year. Be sure to get outside to enjoy it.*



**Joel Greenberg, Westmont:**

*Conditions have certainly changed dramatically! It was just March 15 that Cindy and I met some birding friends in Kankakee River country and had dinner out at the end of the day. All this seems so wrong now. But there is a range of activities birders can engage in to enjoy the spring migration -- walks, biking or short drives. And as of April 8<sup>th</sup>, most properties of the Du Page, Cook, and Lake County Forest Preserve Districts remain accessible. While strolling through our neighborhood in Westmont, I was thrilled to discover, about a block from home, a large fenced-in grassy area that harbors boreal chorus frogs, being their charmingly loquacious selves -- not avian, but an example of treasures that scrutiny of home turf can yield. Be safe everyone and revel in the vernal glories as best you can.*

**Mary Ainger, Lincolnshire:**

*I've been keeping my feeders full, hoping to attract as many spring migrants as possible. This stay at home is certainly allowing me more time to watch birds. I'm fortunate because we get a good variety in our backyard. Finally, I've been watching the Decorah Eagle Live Camera online. The eagle has laid three eggs. One of them hatched this morning (April 5<sup>th</sup>) and the second has a pretty good-sized pip... should hatch in a day or two. The third is about a week behind the second. It's fascinating to watch. Once the chicks are ready to be fed, there will be plenty of fish being brought to the nest.*

**Jim LaRochelle, Evanston:**

*Backyard birding has become the mainstay of watching our feathered friends. The recognizable songs of cardinals, the trills of Red-winged Blackbirds, the chatter of chickadees and nuthatches -- oblivious to the silent killer that prevails among humans -- continue to bring us sounds of lives unaffected by the virus and the joy of life.*

**Field Trips and Programs— Please Note:** All ENSBC Field Trips have been cancelled through May 31. The program scheduled for April 28 was postponed. Check <http://www.ensbc.org/trips.html> for updated information on programs and trips.

**Other Outing Suggestions:**

Stop by *Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary* for a quick bird fix and help grow the Sanctuary's species list.

Try the *Northwestern campus* or other lakefront areas (but not in Chicago).

Walk along the *North Shore Channel* between Evanston and Skokie. Many parks along the way.

Visit *Calvary Cemetery* in Evanston or *Memorial Park* in Skokie.

Hike the *Lake County Forest Preserves* trails.

**And the 2020 Spring Bird Count on May 9 is still a go.**

For more information, contact Tara Beveroth, [bevero@illinois.edu](mailto:bevero@illinois.edu), Cook County compiler; Alan Anderson, [asreasearch@comcast.net](mailto:asreasearch@comcast.net), Lake County compiler; Adam Sell, [adamwardsell@gmail.com](mailto:adamwardsell@gmail.com).



*Harlequin Duck, Jarvis Beach,  
April 2020*

*By Heidi Levin*



**Calling All Young Wildlife Artists !**

This year, Mass Audubon's Museum of American Bird Art in Canton, Massachusetts will host its fifth annual juried youth bird art exhibition, "Taking Flight," for children ages 4-18. Submissions come from all over the United States and sometimes from abroad. The exhibition, to be displayed at the Museum this fall, is designed to foster the next generation of artists who love birds and wildlife.

The 2020 theme is "Your favorite bird, or what birds mean to you." Most non-digital mediums are allowed. The deadline for submissions is June 15<sup>th</sup> 2020. Check out the following [website](#) and [Facebook event](#) for more information, and pass this info on to any budding wildlife artists you know. Questions? Contact Dan Boudreau, Youth Education Coordinator, at [dboudreau@massaudubon.org](mailto:dboudreau@massaudubon.org) / [www.massaudubon.org/maba](http://www.massaudubon.org/maba).



Bird Calls is a publication of the Evanston North Shore Bird Club,  
P.O. Box 1313, Evanston, IL 60204, [info@ensbc.org](mailto:info@ensbc.org).  
Send ideas, articles, photos to Marj Lundy, Editor, [catbird3@comcast.net](mailto:catbird3@comcast.net).

# Belize Winter Getaway

By Libby Hill

To go or not to go, that was the question. My daughters reminded me of my age (as if I needed reminding), and the potentially lethal coronavirus. I reminded them that there was no virus in Belize and promised I would take care on the plane. With their reluctant agreement, I left on March 8 to see my Belizean friends and birds.

I spent four days birding by boat and on land with Julie and Jerry, stewards of Clark St. Beach Bird Sanctuary. After they left, I learned it might be possible to get a boat out to Half Moon Caye to the nesting area for the Red-footed Booby. I had wanted to go there since a cancelled trip in 1992. Finally, here was my chance.

For three hours, Captain James expertly steered his boat from Dangriga around immense waves that, as my Belizean friend/guide Wilfred Mutrie explained, come in 3s. It was a wild and thrilling ride! The caye is part of Lighthouse Reef, one of three atolls on Belize's coral reef. The most famous is Jacques Cousteau's Blue Hole. As we neared Half Moon Caye, the sky was dense with soaring Magnificent Frigatebirds, some males with their red throat pouches fully inflated. I hadn't known they shared the caye with the boobies, but it was logical. Frigatebirds don't capture their own food; they steal it on the wing from others, like the boobies. The scene reminded me of the Galapagos, only there the booby feet were blue.



*Red-footed Boobies*  
by Libby Hill

Because of all the cancelled vacations, we had the caye to ourselves. At the observation tower we found an amazing sight – just about every other zircote tree held a nest of either or both species. In the original sense of the word, it was “awesome.” However, the booby feet weren't red! They were pink, orange, tan. No red! Wilfred

explained these were juveniles, and we would need to come back in the morning when the adults came in to feed the young. We did, and there they were, red feet and all.



*Lovely Cotinga*  
by Wilfred Mutrie

After the realization of this dream came the land search for the Lovely Cotinga in Belize's Mountain Pine Ridge. Having tried and failed 3 years earlier, we reached the

same spot, but this time, very early in the morning. Almost immediately Wilfred motioned for me to hurry, quietly, and there, framed against the azure sky, was the blue and mauve cotinga atop a slender white snag! It stayed just long for Wilfred to capture it in all its glory on his camera. The rest of the morning was spent watching hawks and kites soaring over the stunning Black Slate Valley. Awesome!

If you are planning a birding trip to Belize, arrange to go with a local guide. The guesthouses where I stayed, except for Lighthouse Caye, are all owned by my Belizean friends whose livelihoods, like those everywhere else, are being severely tested by cancellations. I was fortunate to be able to support them for 10 wonderful days in a country that has become my second home.

## Welcome New Members !



Julianne Dieterich, Evanston  
Robin Gaston, Evanston  
Frank Grimm, Downers Grove  
Steve Heater, Urbana, IL  
Joanne Kalnitz, Chicago, IL

If you're into watching night migration go to <https://birdcast.info/live-migration-maps/>.

See the **mass songbird movement**, noted in a white "cast" on the screen after sunset, moving redline. Another cool thing: on each warm night beginning in May, check out the birds as they move up the Mississippi Flyway – that's our flyway. (Thanks to Mark Hurley, Lake County Forest Preserves District, for this tip.)

*Cellophane Bee at  
Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary  
By Callan Fromm*



## ENSBC Membership Renewal

Membership renewal notices will be sent out soon . We suggest you renew online at [www.ensbc.org](http://www.ensbc.org) , but checks are always welcome.

## Focus on Insects at Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary

*a new topic to be featured from time to time, by Callan Fromm*

One of Spring's finest tree and shrub pollinators is also one of its most unique. The cellophane bee (*Colletes inaequalis*), is so named because females secrete a natural polyester to create linings for their deep, pencil-wide burrows.

Stingless male cellophane bees emerge in April and congregate over the sandy, south-facing hillsides the species favors, waiting for females to emerge and often spooking humans with their low, searching flight. Females, though stingered, will die after stinging-- between that and the fact that each female tends her young and burrow solo, evolution has selected strongly for a more docile nature in the cellophane bee. They're so gentle that it's possible to do light gardening amongst the burrows and even overturn a female by accident without incident.

Unlike honey bees or bumble bees, the cellophane bee life cycle completes itself within around a month and a half at most. Males die a few days after mating in late March or early April (though not before a two- to three-day nectar binge courtesy of spring-flowering trees and shrubs), and females are almost entirely gone by the end of April. Their young, tucked away in their underground, polyester-lined cells, won't emerge until late March or early April of the next year to start the cycle again.

## Election of ENSBC Officers

Our bylaws require election of the Board by members at the April meeting. Club officers will continue in their respective jobs until we have a meeting to vote on the slate. Here is the slate offered by our Nominating Committee, including a new position, Education Director, requiring a Bylaws change, also to be voted on at the meeting.

**President** Jim LaRoche  
**Vice-President** Arden Davidson  
**Treasurer** John Hockman  
**Recording Secretary** Nancy Halliday  
**Corresponding Secretary** Nancy Halliday  
**Program Chair** Libby Hill  
**Membership Chair** Kathy Stohrer

**Conservation Chair** Suzanne Checchia  
**Field Trip Chair** Libby Hill  
**Assistant Field Trip Chair** Mark Vaughan  
**Bird Calls Editor** Marj Lundy  
**Publicity** Open  
**Archivist** Sarah Miller