

Bird Calls

Newsletter of the Evanston North Shore Bird Club

November 2022



Evanston is Officially for the Birds!

by Libby Hill

September 12 marked a milestone for birds in Evanston, particularly for those migrating through. City Council unanimously passed an ordinance amending Title 4 of the City Code, "*Building Regulations*," by adding Chapter 24 – *Bird Friendly Building Design*.

Some background: Evanston's downtown has many residential and commercial buildings with glass exteriors. So does Northwestern University. In both locations, residents and volunteers with Chicago Bird Collision Monitors have long been collecting dead birds near buildings designed without attention to bird safety to expose the danger posed by glass facades.

Concerns were raised initially in 1972 when birds began hitting reflective windows at a building on Northwestern's north campus, but there was no research showing how glass could be made safe for birds. Some thirty years later, a researcher at Southern Illinois University illuminated the problem and suggested solutions. If trees and shrubs are reflected in glass, birds see a place to rest, find food and shelter; they don't see glass. But, if glass is patterned with small spaces between patches, or continuous dots, birds see it and veer away. And people can still see through the glass. It's a win-win situation.



Gray Catbird by Mark Vaughan

Other problems with building design became clear -- glass railings, see-through corners on buildings and windows reflecting landscaping on parkways. Even indoor plants visible through glass deceive birds, appearing to them as a safe haven. And lighting is an enormous problem. Attracted by light, birds fly toward it, slamming into glass. Environmentally friendly green roofs attract birds and pose problems if the surrounding walls are made of glass.

Passing the ordinance is an exciting accomplishment. It means that new developments will be designed to foster safe passage for birds through Evanston. Developers have indicated they would welcome standards upfront to guide them. Bird-friendly Evanston (BFE), the group that began meeting in 2016 to address these building issues, looks forward to continuing to work with city staff, developers, architects, building designers, landscape architects and any others responsible for new construction in Evanston to implement the ordinance.

See Page 4 for another bird safety effort in Evanston, with petition to sign.

Field Trip Comin' Up

Sunday, November 20, 8:00 am: Jeff Sanders' 52nd Annual Fall Specialty Trip to the North Shore Lakefront. Gillson, Maple and Tower Road Parks, Park Ave., Rose Beach in Highland Park, and other areas as time permits. Meet at Gillson Park Beach. Want to see way out onto the lake? Bring your own scope. For details and to register, contact Jeff Sanders at yellowstart5@yahoo.com.

We are expanding our field trip offerings to new locations and would welcome recommendations.

From American Birding Association's recent issue of Flight Calls

"The 2022 State of the Birds for the United States was released this week and paints a picture that is urgent, but not without hope.

Thirty-three science and conservation organizations and agencies, including the American Birding Association, contributed to the report. It is the first look at the nation's birds since a sobering 2019 study showed the loss of 3 billion birds in the United States and Canada in the last 50 years.

The report finds that more than half of U.S. bird species are declining, with grassland birds the most imperiled. The report also found 70 newly identified "Tipping Point Species," defined as those that have declined by 50% or more in the last 50 years and are on track to decline by another 50% if nothing changes. These include familiar species like Rufous Hummingbird, Prairie Warbler, and Ruddy Turnstone.

The report emphasizes the need for proactive conservation across habitats and species, and urges the creation and expansion of the sort of private/public partnerships and incentives that have been successful in the past."



***Rusty Blackbird at Ryerson Woods, Lake County
by Lorra Rudman on Oct. 24***

Important Reminder for Cook County Residents

On November 8th, vote YES! on the referendum for a tax increase to help the Cook County Forest Preserves. You'll be doing your part to protect our water sources, air quality and wildlife habitat, as well as reduce flooding and expand the forest preserves. It's important to all of us!

2022 Christmas Bird Count

The ENSBC annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC) will be held on Monday, December 26. John Leonard, Compiler, will contact area leaders who will organize groups of field observers. 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 joelgreenberg@gmail.com. Sign-up sheets will also be available at Wild Birds Unlimited in Glenview. We will hold a Zoom countdown as we did last year. Additional CBC information will be posted at <http://www.ensbc.org> as it becomes available.

The CBC is the premier community science project, running now for 123 years. We send our data to a central repository at the National Audubon Society, and one can easily view historical trends at their website (<https://www.audubon.org/conservation/where-have-all-birds-gone>).



Magnolia Warbler at Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary, Sept. 2022, by Scott Judd

Welcome to these new members of the flock:

William Berndt	Evanston
Michael Blanski	Evanston
Aivva Camras	Skokie
Sharon Chefitz	Skokie
Jayne Doyle	
& Elizabeth Monk	Evanston
Elita Fine	Skokie
Peter Gutzmer	Wilmette
Robert Hollister	Evanston
Jeffrey Lomax	Evanston
Lee Pantuso	Chicago
Kathryn Whittemore	Evanston

ENSBC Costa Rica Trip

The Costa Rica trip has been postponed until March 2024. Most of those who had expressed interest are participating in postponed 2020 trips this year and in 2023.

Programs you Won't Want to Miss! (Zoom)

November 22: Taylor Hains, "Parrots!" Parrots are celebrated in song and story. But what do we know about them other than that they can talk, and sometimes have a salty vocabulary? Taylor Hains has had a life-long fascination with parrots, a pantropical family of almost 400 species. He also has a passion for genomics. As a graduate student with the Committee on Evolutionary Biology at the University of Chicago, he is combining these interests. He will discuss the diversification of New World parrots and how genomics can be used as a tool to conserve them in the future.

December: No program scheduled. Christmas Bird Count is December 26.

January 24: Matthew Cvetas, "Bird ID with Merlin." "What's that bird?" Ask Merlin, the innovative bird identification app from Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and like magic, it will help you solve the mystery. Unlike other bird apps, Merlin is powered by eBird, the world's largest database of bird sightings, sounds and photos. It offers four fun ways to identify birds: answer a few questions, upload a photo, record a singing bird, or explore birds in a region. Join Matthew Cvetas, eBirdData Reviewer and former president of both Illinois Ornithological Society and Illinois Young Birders, to learn more about what Merlin offers and how it works.

February 28: Leslie DeCoursey, "Zoonotic Diseases." Diseases transferred from animals to humans are called "zoonotic" diseases. We have all become familiar with Coronavirus, but there are others, like rabies, Lyme disease and salmonella, to name a few. Leslie DeCoursey, from the Forest Preserves of Cook County Wildlife Division, will share what we need to know about zoonotic diseases. *(Fuller description coming soon.)*

March 28: Renata Biancalana, "All About Swifts." Considered by many the most mysterious birds on the planet, swifts are currently also one of the most threatened avian groups. Some species have long migratory routes, including the North American Black Swift and the Chimney Swift, which winter in South America. Renata Biancalana, ornithologist from Museu Paraense Emilio Goeldi, will talk about the results of her field work and expeditions studying these and other swift species in different parts of Brazil.

April 25: Adam Sell, "Waukegan Beach: Local Birding Hotspot." Birders in the Chicago area know Waukegan Beach as a fall and spring migration hotspot for warblers, shorebirds and waterfowl. In winter, the harbors and open water of Lake Michigan host overwintering specialty ducks, gulls and, if you're lucky, a Snowy Owl. Adam Sell, a guide and tour manager for Chicago-based Red Hill Birding who has called Waukegan Beach his "local patch" for over 15 years, will tell us how to make the most of a visit to this site. *(This program is the second in our series about local birding hotspots, following last year's presentation on Big Marsh in Calumet.)*

Petition to Make Mudd Library at Northwestern University Bird Safe

Every year, over 700 birds are killed or injured by flying into buildings at Northwestern University as they migrate in the fall and spring. One of the most problematic locations for birds today is the northeastern/eastern segments of Mudd Library. Mudd alone accounts for over 14% of bird deaths on campus each year. Applying patterned window film to this portion of the building would dramatically reduce these deaths.

Students on the Green Campus Subcommittee, part of the student government's Sustainability Committee, see students as a powerful force to address the issue of bird deaths caused by Northwestern buildings. Vlad Nevirkovets, a junior and avid birder who is majoring in environmental sciences, is a member of ENSBC and sometimes leads our field trips at Northwestern. He joined the subcommittee specifically to initiate the bird-safety project. To that end, the group has prepared a petition to influence the university administration to add [bird-safety measures](#) to Mudd Library. Please sign this petition to express your support for implementing more campus bird-safety measures.

The group is urging current students, faculty and staff, university alumni, and members of the Evanston community and beyond to [sign the petition](#) to lobby Northwestern to prioritize bird-safe buildings in its budget. ENSBC has signed as an organization, but individual signatures are needed as well

What's New?

In August, the journal Nature reported the discovery of a new bird species, the Subantarctic Rayadito. It lives in extremely remote islands -- the Diego Ramirez Archipelago -- off the southern tip of Chile. "There are no bushes and no woodland species — literally in the middle of the ocean a forest bird has managed to survive." Amazing! Take a look.



A look to the future from the board

In January a nominating committee will be named to create a slate of next year's officers. Watch for an announcement of how to contact committee members. This is an opportunity to join the ENSBC board and we would welcome your involvement!



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