

Bird Calls

Newsletter of the Evanston North Shore Bird Club

APRIL 2011 www.ensbc.org



Northern Shrike by Nancy Halliday

A REGION OF SPLENDORS: BUENOS AIRES, PATAGONIA, TIERRA DEL FUEGO AND SOUTHERN CHILE. *By Lloyd Davidson*

As my wife Arden and I learned on a trip to Patagonia last January, the worldwide reputation of Patagonian gales is not exaggerated. Early mornings are often quiet, but by noon, winds are often 50 mph or more, and one returns from every walk or bicycle ride thoroughly buffeted and exhausted from fighting their force. We found they can virtually stop bicyclists in their tracks. Still, the effort spent battling them is more than repaid by the overall splendor and variety of this remarkable austral region. Even the local beer is

extending over 5400 square miles, and is one of the few major deltas that empties into freshwater, the Río de la Plata, rather than directly into an ocean.

The Buenos Aires region has a pleasant semitropical climate and lies about 2000 miles south of the equator

“Later, a healthy hawk attacked me, but I bravely stood my ground, as would any battle-hardened photographer.”

and is filled with palm trees and other temperate and tropical plants. Among the many birds we saw in this area was the Caracara Vulture, which sports a wonderful geometrically shaped head that is both menac-

ing and authoritarian, one that would look quite at home on an Egyptian tomb wall, although this forbidding aspect did little to protect it from an air-raid attack by a three inch bird that went straight for its eyes and drove it away.

From there we flew to Calafate to see the Perito Moreno glacier, one of the few left on earth that isn't retreating yet. There I managed to photograph high-flying Andean Condors with their distinctive white neck ring. Our second day was spent bicycling along the shore of the

CONSERVATION COLUMN: WIND GENERATORS, BIRDS AND BATS: CAN'T THEY ALL JUST GET ALONG?

By Lloyd Davidson

It's been known for years that wind turbines have a significant drawback in that they pose a danger for birds and bats. While it's true that far more birds die from collisions with windows, cars, tall buildings, power lines and from feral cat predation than from wind generators, that is in part due to the small number of wind generators currently existing across the U.S. There is no excuse for not making these huge windmills as safe for birds and bats as can be. However, just as asking auto makers to voluntarily improve safety and gas mileage had little effect until such changes were made mandatory, the only way to assure that wind generators will become more bird-and bat-friendly is to mandate that they become so.

The EPA has now posted guidelines intended to further such needed changes. These guidelines are quite mild in content and intent, merely asking for minimal assessments of the likelihood of fatalities and habitat destruction during facility construction, for the continued monitoring of

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Two Banded Plover by Lloyd Davidson

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SPLENDORS CONTINUED FROM COVER

glacially-fed Lake Argentina upon which this town is built. I was lucky enough to discover a Two-banded Plover on her nest of three eggs. She protected her nest by spreading her wings out on the ground and staying completely immobile. I've never seen better camouflage. When sitting still on her nest, she is completely invisible to the naked eye unless you exactly know her location.

Also in Calafate, we watched male lapwings displaying and battling one another, no doubt males fighting over a contested female. I photographed their strutting and parrying in flight.

Within the reserve I discovered a hawk, most likely a Chimango



Broken legged Hawk
by Lloyd Davidson

Caracara, with a broken leg, a very affecting sight. It tried balancing on one foot on a tree branch, using its left wing and tail as braces. Later, I saw it on the ground, unusual behavior for a hawk except to feed on carrion, where I observed another hawk attack the injured one, apparently in an effort to make a dinner of it. However, the injured hawk defended itself with vigor and drove off the aggressor. Later

a healthy hawk attacked me, but I bravely stood my ground, as would any battle-hardened photographer. Black-faced Ibises were also in the Calafate reserve, along with the common but striking lapwings and Upland Geese, handsome Brown-hooded Gulls and Shovel ducks.

Flamingos were common in that area and in much of Argentina, even in the far south where it is still cool in the very early summer. Flocks occupied the many scattered salt lakes that we passed in the immense Argentine grasslands during a 15-hour bus ride over gravel roads from Calafate to Ushuaia.

During this ride, we crossed the Straits of Magellan in a car ferry while watching dolphins swimming by. Our driver spent

Black-faced Ibises
by Lloyd Davidson



most of the trip exchanging sign language signals with the bus's deaf conductor, only occasionally looking up to see where we were going. And you thought texting and driving was dangerous!

From Calafate, we traveled to El Chalten, a small frontier-type town that served as our home base for hikes to view the famous Fitz Roy mountain and other area splendid peaks and glacial lakes. In route to see Fitz Roy, we saw our first famous and surprisingly tame Magellanic woodpecker, a quite large bird, the male of which sports a magnificent red head.

Puerto Natales, Chile borders on a marine, or at least brackish water, fjord, filled with mussels, barnacles and fish. There, we saw Blackish Oystercatchers, Imperial Cormorants and a variety of gulls. The nearby Torres del Paine national park contains some of the most magnificent scenery in the world, although it takes a good hike to see the best of it; about 12 miles round trip with approximately a 3000 foot elevation change. Believe me, it was worth the effort.

In Ushuaia, in the Tierra del Fuego region, we saw our one Magellanic penguin, swimming off our boat's prow during a trip we made into the Beagle Channel to visit some of the islands there, on which we also saw kelp geese, several skuas, and large colonies of rock cormorants, together with sea lions. Over this trip, my wife and spirited companion, Arden, identified about 60 bird species, with little or no help from me. I was simply there as her photographer.

To see more photos, go to: <http://bit.ly/PatagonianBirdsEtc>



Torres del Paine, Patagonia
by Lloyd Davidson

GET ALONG CONTINUED FROM COVER

fatalities during operation, and to try to mitigate fatalities when possible. Unfortunately, even making such facility owners follow the guidelines is unlikely to do very much in the short term to decrease bird and bat deaths, because the guidelines themselves are somewhat weak and equivocal. However, it's better to have such a set of well-intentioned guidelines in place than none at all. As our understanding improves on how various procedures affect bird and bat deaths, the guidelines can be made more specific.

Here is an example of the language in the mitigation section of the guidelines:

The following are operation measures to be considered as opportunities to reduce adverse effects:

Changes in blade cut-in speeds have been shown in some cases to reduce bat collision and/or barotrauma [injuries to bats caused by the strong turbulence behind each blade] by up to approximately 90 percent (Baerwald et al. 2009, Arnett et al. 2010). How this may benefit migratory birds, especially night migrating songbirds, remains unknown. Refining this operational tool for reducing bat mortality is ongoing.

Remember that these are guidelines, not requirements. Even if every wind farm operating company was required to follow them, there are no mandated requirements within the guidelines to force company owners to change their operating procedures. Indeed, the full consequence of something as seemingly straight forward as changing blade cut-in speeds (whatever that is!) is obviously not well studied or fully understood. Nor do the guidelines address issues like how such a change might affect the noise, efficiency or maintenance cost of a wind generator's operations.

Considering the lack of teeth in the guidelines and their generally conservative tone, it seems to me that the minimum such companies should be required to do is to be forced to follow these guidelines, especially the monitoring portions, at the very least as a way of establishing a baseline for improving bird and bat safety in the future, even if these recommendations do little at present to mitigate the effect of such generators on at-risk flying animals.

The Bird Conservation Network has asked that birders (and bat lovers) go to <http://www.fws.gov/windenergy/>, read the guidelines and post comments to windenergy@fws.gov. Donnie Dann, BCN Advocacy chair suggests something along the lines of "I strongly recommend that the recently promulgated Wind Energy Guidelines be made mandatory". I would urge people to follow his advice and to vary your comments as much as possible. Thousands of identical comments have little affect in such campaigns, while thoughtful individual comments of substance are at least sometimes listened to. All comments must be received by May 19, 2011.

NEWS OF THE FLOCK

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS:

Thomas I. Nakic, Jeffrey C. Wilson

Jim La Rochelle, Kathi and Fred Lieb

UPCOMING ENSBC BOARD ELECTION

The following members have been nominated to serve on the ENSBC Board. This slate will be voted on at the April 26, 2011 program night. Anyone wishing to have their name submitted for a position, please contact Tim Wallace at 847-548-2654.

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|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| PRESIDENT: | Tim Wallace |
| VICE PRESIDENT: | Gary Hantsbarger |
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| FIELD TRIP CHAIR: | Sulli Gibson |
| ARCHIVIST: | Jennifer Schmidt |
| WAYS AND MEANS: | Paul Kallman |
| PUBLICITY: | Phyllis Reynolds |
| CONSERVATION CHAIR: | Lloyd Davidson |



Long-tailed Duck by Tim Wallace

PROGRAM NIGHTS

Club programs are held on the fourth Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at the Evanston Ecology Center, 2024 McCormick Blvd., Evanston.

April 26, 2011 – Women out Birding: A panel of well-known local women will discuss how they personally came to birding and the history of women in birding/ornithology. A sequel to last year's "The Nature of Birding," during which four men discussed aspects of their personal birding history, this panel will be composed of women birders and ornithologists: Carolyn Fields, Nan Buckhardt and others TBA. Moderator: Libby Hill

FIELD TRIPS

APRIL 16, 2011 – SATURDAY

North Glenview. A tour through the better birding areas that North Glenview has to offer by local birder, Sulli Gibson. We will most likely bird Techny Basin Conservation Area, Lake Glenview, and The Air Station Prairie for early migrants and lingering waterfowl. Techny Basin is located west of Waukegan Rd., south of Willow Rd., and east of Ravine Way in Glenview. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the gravel parking lot on Ravine Way. The trip will last approximately 3.5 hours but you are welcome to leave at any time. Leader: Sulli Gibson.

APRIL 24, 2011 – SUNDAY

Jackson Park and Lakefront – Wooded Isle. A perennial favorite among club members, this trip is excellent for early migrants. Meet at 7:30 a.m. Park south of the Museum of Science and Industry after driving on the east side of the building. Leader: Dick Young.

APRIL 30, MAY 7, 14, AND 21, 2011 – SATURDAYS

Northwestern Lakefill and Sailing Beach. This area has long been a stopover for migrants of all kinds headed north. Park on the lakeside of the upper deck of the south parking lots off of Sheridan Rd. and Clark St., north of Clark St. beach, at 8:30 a.m. Leaders: Sue Roberts, Libby Hill, and others TBD.

APRIL 30 AND MAY 1, 2011 – SATURDAY AND SUNDAY

Perkins Woods Garlic Mustard Pull. Help rid the woods of this aggressive non-native weed. Perform a good deed, be among friends, and enjoy birds and wildflowers. Come for an hour or a morning, 10 a.m. to 12 noon each day. Perkins Woods is at Colfax and Ewing between Central St. and Golf Rd. in Evanston. Leader: Libby Hill.

MAY 2011 – A WEDNESDAY

Foley Pond. Check IBET, Bird Calls, or ensbc.org for exact date. Tucked between the 1st and 2nd holes of the Sunset Valley Golf Course, Foley Pond is encircled by a woodland path and is a good stop for migrants. Meet at 7:00 a.m. at approximately 1268 McDaniels Ave. in Highland Park. From Green Bay Rd., turn left on Bob-o-link Rd. and then left on McDaniels. A sign for Foley Pond is about 100 feet on the right. Park on the street. Trip will last about an hour. Leader: Donnie Dann.

MAY 6, 13, AND 20, 2011 – FRIDAYS

Skokie Lagoons. These Friday trips pack a great list of warbler species during spring migration. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the Forest Preserve parking lot north of Willow Rd. just east of the Edens Expressway. Leaders: May 6 and 13: Lynne Carpenter, May 20: Joel Greenberg.

MAY 7, 2011 – SATURDAY

Illinois State Spring Bird Count. Contact Joel Greenberg for Lake Co. assignments (630-725-6660). Contact Alan Anderson for Cook Co. assignments (casresearch@comcast.net or 847-390-7437).

MAY 8, 2011 – SUNDAY

The Grove, Glenview. Expect warblers and other passerines. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at The Grove: east side of Milwaukee Ave., just south of Lake Ave., in the second parking lot that leads to the Interpretive Center. Leader: Ari Rice

MAY 2011 – THREE THURSDAYS

Ryerson Conservation Area. Check IBET or Birdcalls or www.ensbc.org for exact dates. Join these early morning trips to help start your work day. Meet at 7:00 a.m. at the Ryerson parking lot in front of Brushwood (the old visitor's center) off Riverwoods between Rt. 22 and Deerfield Rd. Leader: Gary Hantsbarger.

MAY 10, 17, 24, 2011 – TUESDAYS, 5:30 P.M.

"The Evanston Express (and Skokie Swift)". A series of trips for when you don't have much time and can't go far from home. Each trip starts at a different location and the leader may choose to go to more than one park. May 10: Perkins Woods: Perkins is located at the corner of Grant and Ewing. Park on the street and meet on the Northeast corner. May 17: Harbert Park: The parking lot is east of the North Shore Channel on McDaniel off of Main. May 24: Emily Oaks Nature Center (Skokie): Meet in the parking lot. Turn north on Knox (east of Skokie Blvd.) and make a left at the T intersection to the Emily Oaks parking lot. Leader: Eleonora diLiscia.

MAY 15, 2011 – SUNDAY

Gillson Park. The Illinois shoreline juts farthest into the lake at this Wilmette park and is an excellent spot to observe migrant passerines in the tall trees and wildflowers in the park and shorebirds on the beach. This trip is co-sponsored by ENSBC and Go Green Wilmette. Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the top of the Wallace Bowl, near the Lakeview Center. From Sheridan Rd. just north of Wilmette Harbor, turn east at the Gillson Park sign. Take the immediate right turn onto Harbor Dr. At the fork in the road, go left onto Middle Dr toward Lakeview Center. Park along Middle Dr. The Wallace Bowl is to the north of Lakeview Center. Leaders: TBA.

MAY 22, 2011 – SUNDAY

Jackson Park and Lakefront – Wooded Isle. Look for migrating passerines at this park. Meet at 7:00 a.m. Park south of the Museum of Science and Industry after driving on the east side of the building. Leader: Brian Herriott.

JUNE 5, 2011 – SUNDAY – NEW TRIP!

Swallow Cliff Woods, Palos. This half-day walk will target summer specialties such as hooded, blue-winged, and chestnut-sided warblers in addition to Acadian flycatchers, white-eyed vireos, and summer tanagers. The entrance is on LaGrange Rd. (Route 45) south of the intersection of LaGrange and Route 83. Meet at 7:00 a.m. in the first parking lot as you enter the park. Leader: Amar Ayyash.