President’s Message

Birding—Different Strokes for Different Folks

Birding is a “sport” with tens of millions of enthusiasts around the world. And many more are casual observers and “friends of birds.” This entire spectrum is included in our club.

Some of us are interested in building our life lists—the list of all the species we’ve seen (or for some, seen or heard). The life list gives birding for them elements of a sport. These birders feel a strong drive to add new species to the list. This means increased travel to new habitats where new species may be present—of course at the proper time and season. And, of course, no sighting is every guaranteed, adding to the challenge. Some like to chase only rarities and vagrants to add to their list in a given area: county, state, or the ABA area, for instance, further adding to the excitement.

For others, their interest lies in birds closer to home. Some concentrate on a yard list. Others a county list or state list. Many keep a year list, starting off each year with a clean slate, seeing what birds they can see in their area this year.

For some, it’s a big day: how many birds can I see in 24 hours? And for many, the highlights of the year are the Christmas and Spring Bird Counts. And many of us enjoy participating in the yearly Hawk Watch, counting the fall migration of raptors. Also, many of us are bird monitors in various Forest Preserves and Wildlife Areas.

Many birders are also avid outdoor enthusiasts who enjoy hiking and camping. Hunters and fishermen take up birding, too, to give themselves outdoor recreation outside the hunting and fishing seasons.

A bird feeder provides the opportunity to attract and study a variety of species, even including an occasional rarity.

The beauty of birding is that there is nothing wrong with any of these approaches or any combination of them! We each can enjoy birding the way we like. I’m off to Thailand for most of the month of February, so you know what kind of birder I am.

The goal is that our club, your club, can support these approaches. If you have any suggestions as to how the club can improve in any area, please let me know. We’ll do our best.

JBaker@DuPageBirding.org

John Baker
President
Temps plummeted as Brookfield Zoo’s Molly Staley shared her dissertation research with the club in a presentation entitled “Understanding disease outbreaks in wildlife: what we can learn from studying wild birds.” Despite the cold outside, her talk generated a lot of positive energy from DBC attendees.

Molly began by explaining a bit about infectious disease outbreaks with a depressing catalog of them. The evening’s focus was on House Finch eye disease, an infection caused by the bacteria *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* (MG). Originally a disease of poultry, it first appeared in House Finches (HFs) in 1994 in the DC area, reaching Illinois in early 1996. It soon spread throughout the continental U.S., but there are pockets in the Southwest where HFs have not yet been exposed to the disease.

Molly explained the various ways scientists study and monitor diseases like MG, ranging from environmental cues (less birds), visible symptoms, pathogen screening, and citizen science programs. She explained how she traps HFs and takes throat cultures and blood samples, and how some diseases like WNV are best studied through their insect vectors or by “dead bird surveillance.”

Sick birds sit at feeders longer, plus HFs love to rub their faces on feeders, where it can linger for two days, making it that much easier to spread. Sick birds usually have conjunctivitis in both eyes, and are lethargic and sometimes even sight-impaired, making them much more subject to predation. We’re not yet not sure why, but looking across many bird diseases, about 20% of birds in a population are responsible for 80% of disease transmission.

The closely related American Goldfinch and Purple Finch can both get the disease in the wild, but appear not to spread it as much or suffer as much when they do contract it. Although not thoroughly studied yet, there appears to be no risk to humans and the disease has not been transmitted back to poultry populations yet, likely thanks to genetic changes in the HF version of the disease.

Evolutionary responses of both birds and the disease make its future unpredictable, but, happily, East Coast HF populations have stabilized, albeit at a lower level than before the outbreak. Molly pointed out that built-up resistance and other measures often control a disease outbreak, and sometimes the pathogen itself can change to a softer form—killing one’s host outright is bad for the virus as well as its victim.

Molly fielded all of our many questions, and we learned that the great majority of symptomatic HFs are juveniles, that chickens and turkeys are the main Gallinaceous birds known to show symptoms, and that surviving HF males are more likely to be strongly red-breasted rather than having more orangey or yellowish breasts.

Thanks to Molly for the fascinating presentation. She’s certainly given us more to look for and think about as we watch—and make sure to regularly clean—our feeders throughout the coming year!

For more about her research and to keep the conversation going, visit [https://mollystaley.wixsite.com/research](https://mollystaley.wixsite.com/research) or email [Molly.Staley@czs.org](mailto:Molly.Staley@czs.org).

--Steve Constantelos
DuPage Checklist

The ‘Checklist of the Birds of DuPage County’ is due for review this July. Several additions and changes have been suggested below.

Thus far the following 10 species have been recommended for addition to the list of accidental visitors:

- **Red-throated Loon** - recorded twice at the Greene Valley Hawkwatch
- **Swainson’s Hawk** - recorded 3 times at GV hawk watch
- **Prairie Falcon** - two records from hawk watch and one other via ebird
- **Gyrfalcon** - one record from hawk watch
- **Barn Owl** - Jan. 2012 through July 2014  *Breeding Record
- **Rufous Hummingbird** - Karen and Bob Fisher’s feeders
- **Ash-throated Flycatcher** - Greene Valley F.P.
- **Mountain Bluebird** - Fermi Lab 4/17
- **Varied Thrush** - Arboretum 11/9/12
- **Sprague’s Pipit** - Greene Valley 10/28/09

Recommendations for changes to the Regular List include:

- Addition of **Whooping Crane** - countable as of 2005
- Addition of **Trumpeter Swan**
- Move **Pileated Woodpecker** from accidental to regular
- Move **Blue Grosbeak** from accidental to regular
- Removal of **Thayer’s Gull** since being lumped into Iceland Gull
- Move **Surf Scoter** to accidental list
- Move **Lesser Black-backed Gull** to accidental
- Move **Glaucous Gull** to accidental
- Move **Loggerhead Shrike** to accidental
- Move **Evening Grosbeak** to accidental

The current checklist can be found on the club’s website under Resources. If you have recommendations for additional changes please send documentation to Denis Kania  dkan36@wowway.com
February 2018 Field Trips

The coming months are the time to see winter birds. Some species are only seen this time of year. We are offering many field trips. There are opportunities for all types of birders to participate and enjoy the season. We encourage everyone to enjoy birding in a safe manner. Dress warmly, wear winter footwear, and be prepared for winter weather and winter trail conditions. This trip list and lots of other club information is on our DBC website at http://www.dupagebirding.org/.

Friday, February 2, 4:20 pm
Know Your Neighborhood: Bensenville
The first of a series in the 'Know Your Neighborhood' trips, exploring hidden gems, odd and under-birded hot spots in DuPage County, we will be checking O'Hare Airport for Snowy Owls and other winter birds. Meet at the Bensenville McDonalds on Irving Park Rd. two blocks west of York Rd. where we will consolidate vehicles. We will leave promptly at 4:30 pm. We should be back no later than 5:30 pm.
Leader: Glenn Perricone, 630-687-2921, Gperricone@dupagebirding.org

Saturday, February 3, 8:00 am
Morton Arboretum, Lisle
This will be a walk for new birders. We will walk slowly and allow time for all to look at the birds. We will be looking for winter birds, such as Red tailed hawks, Cooper’s hawk, Black-capped Chickadees and more. Meet at parking lot #33 on west side. Go under bridge to get to the west side, turn left to parking lot. Maps are available at the gates. The Arboretum is located just north of I-88 off Rte. 53. There is a per-person charge for nonmembers. Admission is $14.00 per adult and $12.00 for 65+. Note: The Arboretum does not open its gates until 7 am. Wear appropriate clothing and shoes.
Leader: Bonnie Graham 630-204-8750, Bgraham@dupagebirding.org

Sunday, February 11, 7:30 am
McKee Marsh, Winfield
This site remains one of DuPage County’s premier birding spots. Walk around the marsh with us to check out winter birds. Meet at the visitor parking lot on the north side of Mack Road (Mack is south of Roosevelt and north of Butterfield), located between Winfield Road and Rte. 59 in Warrenville.
Leader: Kyle Wiktor, (C) 708-506-5186, Kwiktor@dupagebirding.org

Friday, February 16, 3:20 pm
Know Your Neighborhood: Lemont
The second of the 'Know Your Neighborhood' trips, exploring hidden gems, odd and under-birded hot spots in DuPage County, we will be walking the Centennial Trail along the Des Plaines River in search of winter waterfowl. Meet at the 101st St. Waterfall Glen parking lot off of Lemont Rd. where we will consolidate vehicles and depart promptly at 3:30 pm. We should be back no later than 5:15 pm.
Leader: Glenn Perricone, 630-687-2921, Gperricone@dupagebirding.org
Saturday, February 17, 2:00pm
Fermilab: Advanced Registration Required
We’ll start at 2:00pm and go until dark. We will meet at the Red Barn by Lake Law on the east side. The trip limit is 12 people. No last minute tag-alongs will be permitted! Please see contact info below to sign up. If conditions are right, we will look around for open country birds, such as longspurs and Horned Larks. However, our primary focus will be on open water, looking for waterfowl. As the sun goes down on Ring Lake, there are usually large concentrations of Common Mergansers and Common Goldeneyes, while Northern Harriers hunt over the wetlands. It can be quite a spectacle! A stressed reminder that only 12 people are allowed on this trip. This limit is set by Fermilab, so no extras will be allowed.
Leader: Denis Kania, Dkania@dupagebirding.org

Friday, February 16 thru Monday, February 19
Great Backyard Bird Count
We encourage those who are able to participate in the Great Backyard bird count. Go to BirdCount.org for more information. Have fun counting your backyard birds.

Saturday, February 24, 9:00 am
Fox River Preserves, Batavia & North
Enjoy leisurely walks looking for winter residents and early migrants starting at Red Oak Nature Center, 2343 S River St, Batavia, IL. Directions: Take Hwy 56(Butterfield Rd.) west to Hwy 25(east side of Fox River), drive north on Hwy 25 approx.1 mile to the Red Oak Nature Center. Meet at the Visitor Center Building. We will visit a few sites further north. A lunch stop completes the trip.
Leaders: Bob and Jean Spitzer, 630-222-3307, Bspitzer@dupagebirding.org

Sunday, February 25, 7:00 am
Mississippi River Eagles & More: Advanced Registration Required
This will be an all-day trip to visit several sites along the Mississippi River to see eagles, other raptors, gulls, and waterfowl. Meet at 7am in the parking lot west of the main building of Yorktown Mall (facing Highland, near the Carson Pirie Scott store) in Lombard. Bring walkie-talkies if available, scopes, and dress for the cold.
NOTE: This trip is limited to 20 people (6 cars). Please register with the leader after Feb. 2.
Leader: Urs Geiser 630-310-9443, Ugeiser@dupagebirding.org

Other Birding Opportunities: For additional birding opportunities check out the Illinois Birding Calendar at http://www.illinoisbirds.org/calendar-2/

Call us if you have questions about the trips or if you would like to lead a trip. Leaders do not have to be birding experts, just familiar with the location. There is no need to register for trips unless otherwise indicated. Visitors are always welcome. We do not charge fees for birding trips. Field trip information is also found at: www.dupagebirding.org

Field Trip Coordinators:
Nancy Allured and Jessica Becker
DBCFieldTrips@gmail.com
News from the Wacky World of the Web

Year of the Bird - National Geographic Society  www.nationalgeographic.org  Read the full story

Australian Birds "Intentionally" Light Their Prey on Fire   Inverse
Three species of birds in Australia have been observed spreading fire throughout various regions of the country, according to a new study. Read the full story

These bird feathers are so black your eyes can't focus on them   Popular Science
We wanted to know more about these birds’ super-black plumage and how it works. What mechanism do these feathers employ to be so effective at absorbing light? Read the full story

Arctic Fox and Snowy Owl Filmed Doing Strange 'Dance'—But Why?   National Geographic
Is it play or predation? Experts weigh in on a curious video of two Arctic denizens meeting on the snowy tundra. Read the full story

DuPage Birding Club

The club exists to provide fun and camaraderie between birders of all skill levels and ages while enjoying some serious birding experiences.

Member Benefits include:

• Meetings featuring regional and national speakers
• Field Trips throughout the year
• Informative Club Website
• Illinois Spring Bird Count
• Christmas Bird Count
• DuPage County Checklist
• Lending Library of bird-related videos & books
• Biennial Auction of birding items

Contact Us at:

President: John Baker JBaker@DuPageBirding.org
Vice President, Programs: Pat Eggleston PEggleston@DuPageBirding.org

Send your articles and photos to chipnotes2013@gmail.com for inclusion in DRUMMINGS.
2018 Meetings

January 11
March 8
April ??
July 12
September 13
October 11
November 8