We birders often lament the dreary days of winter and the sparse birding it affords. Of course, it’s more of a challenge to get out in the winter on snow-packed trails, car birding definitely has its limitations, and there are just fewer birds around. There’s one way to bird, however, that may be better in the winter—and that’s backyard birding. That’s right, studying the action at your feeders.

As I sit here on a gray and snowy Sunday afternoon working on my laptop, I frequently look up to check out the feeder action. I enjoy the daily visits of our “familiars,” the Downies and Red-Bellies who like my suet, the House Finches and American Goldfinches at the nyjer feeder, the Northern Cardinals at the sunflower seed station, and the Juncos and House Sparrows (and squirrels) patrolling the ground underneath. But I have also observed some fascinating behavior. For example, I’ve observed that the Pine Siskins are more territorial than the American Goldfinches and will chase their cousins away from the feeder. And during the Polar Vortex, some birds took shelter under my canvas deck chair covers.

Here’s another: two weeks ago I put up a mealworm feeder and have watched its slow discovery by the birds—first the Black-Capped Chickadees, then the Red-Breasted Nuthatches, followed by the White-Breasted Nuthatches. We shall see who else comes along. This afternoon I watched two Red-Breasted Nuthatches take mealworms and cache them under the bark of my crab tree. After stuffing them well under the bark, the Nuthatches then consumed them, or part of them. This went on repeatedly. Suddenly a Dark-Eyed Junco arrived and proceeded to raid the remains of a mealworm cache. Chased off by the Nuthatch, the Junco retreated to a nearby branch but returned at first opportunity and fed until again dispatched. I was mightily entertained and managed to get a couple of shots of this exercise for your enjoyment. Maybe the Junco will eventually figure out that there’s a feeder stuffed with mealworms that he can access without resorting to subterfuge.

SO, when winter birding is too challenging for you, remember that a few feeders outside your kitchen window can provide good observational opportunities and entertainment as you patiently wait for spring.

P.S. Since I wrote this a week ago, Red-Winged Blackbirds and migrating Sandhills have been reported, and this morning I had a flock of Cedar Waxwings and American Robins plucking berries from my crabtrees. It’s happening folks, spring is on the way!
**Spring Meeting Schedule**

**March 14 – Members Night**

Come out to see where DBC members have been birding in the past year. Each presentation will have about 10-15 slides and a short story. In the past, our members have been really creative in their photographic and video presentations. Some programs will give you a glimpse of a far away place and some might be bird antics right in our own backyard. In the past they have been both informative and entertaining. It’s always a fun night! Submissions for members night will be accepted starting on February 16. Watch for a DBC email blast with detailed instructions for submissions!

**Special Start Time:** Social time will start at 7:00 as usual, however, the meeting will begin at 7:15 so that we can squeeze in another presentation or two. All the more fun!

**April 11 – A Little Bird Told Me**

Criss-crossing the world has given Denis Kania an opportunity to witness conservation efforts that are very impressive considering they are taking place in developing countries with limited financial resources. Denis will talk about some of these amazing projects. We will also explore how choices that we make here at home have significant impact half way around the world. Lastly, Denis will talk about initiatives closer to home that give us all an opportunity to make the world a better place for birds. It all started with the pursuit of a little bird.

**Mini Tutorial – The Waterthrushes**

Starting with the April meeting we will be incorporating mini-tutorials before the main presentation that are meant to provide timely information on field identification or interesting birding locations. This meeting we will be discussing the finer points of visually identifying the waterthrushes.

**May 9 – Birding Haunts you Should Know**

It’s Spring and birding will be reaching a fever pitch. It’s sometimes hard to decide where to spend your birding hours. This meeting we will have some of our birding experts share their experience with their favorite birding sites in DuPage County. The sites featured will include Fermilab, presented by Dave Spleha, Springbrook Prairie Forest Preserve presented by Joe Suchecki and Waterfall Glen Forest Preserve presented by Vicky Sroczynski. Come find out where some of your target species can be found, best trails for exploring and, best time of year to visit.

**Mini Tutorial – The thrushes including Veery, Gray-cheeked, Swainson’s, Hermit and Wood Thrush will be discussed with field identification in mind.**
Annual Spring Bird Count
Saturday, May 4, 2019

Hold the date! The statewide annual Spring Bird Count will be held on Saturday May 4th this year. With Red-winged Blackbirds already showing up in DuPage County, it's not too early to start getting ready for spring migration and the waves of birds that will be coming back to nest or just migrating through. Each year the spring migration is documented throughout Illinois through the Spring Bird Count that is generally held on the first Saturday in May. The Club coordinates the count throughout DuPage County, and last year we found 188 species - an all time record. So, don't miss out on the fun and excitement this year. Look for more information about the count and how to participate on the website, in the next Drumming, and at our upcoming meetings.

Any questions - contact Joe Suchecki who is coordinating this year's count.

Gull Frolic, Wild Things Kick Off 2019 Outreach

The DBC kicked off our Outreach program by sponsoring two events in February, the annual Gull Frolic February 16 and the biennial Wild Things Conference February 23. Bonnie Graham, Joan Campbell, and Jane Jegerski trekked up to Winthrop Harbor to host our table at the Gull Frolic. Thank you, team!

While the Gull Frolic is a pretty low-key event, Wild Things is quite another story. More than 2,700 nature lovers converged to participate in more than 150 sessions devoted to a broad range of nature-related topics. The DBC was one of 60 exhibitors. We talked with an estimated 300 people and distributed our entire stock of brochures and almost all our checklists. We hope to see some of those new friends on our field trips and at our meetings! Thanks to John and Kathy Hebert who hosted our table (with a little help from their friends).

News Alerts from the Conservation Community

Two initiatives have been brought to our attention that you may have an interest in supporting.

The first is proposed legislation in the city of Chicago to reduce the mortality of migratory and resident birds as a result of window collisions. The ordinance would stipulate guidelines for architectural design, glass, lighting, site planning, and landscaping. The team at Bird-Friendly Chicago, which helped lead the successful Lights Out Chicago campaign, is actively enlisting individual supporters to show business leaders that the initiative is meaningful to voters. You can learn more here: https://birdfriendlychicago.org/partners/

The second is an Action Alert issued by the Illinois Environmental Council and supported by the Bird Conservation Network, of which DBC is a member. BCN is asking individuals to contact their state legislators to vote NO on HB2425/SB1336. This bill:

- Adds agricultural interests to the Endangered Species Protection Board
- Alters public notice requirements
- Weakens state regulations on "incidental taking" of federally endangered species

BCN believes this legislation will weaken protection of endangered species in Illinois. If you wish to take action, go to: https://ilenviro.salsalabs.org/hb5293copy1/index.html for a more detailed explanation and a simple form that will go straight to your state legislator. There is a pre-written message that you can modify if you desire.
Call for Volunteers

The Board would like to invite you to join the Club’s leadership team by considering one of our open posts. Our volunteers are the lifeblood of the DBC and without them, we’d cease to exist. So if you’ve enjoyed the benefits of membership and would like to give back, we’d welcome your participation.

• **Director**—Current Director Kevin Hlava is relocating and will be leaving the region. As a Director, you vote as a representative of the membership to ensure their interests are kept top of mind. The Board meets approximately 8 times a year to manage club business.

• **Webmaster**—With Kevin’s departure, we now have an open role for a webmaster. If you have web management experience, we need YOU! Monthly website updates occur and we have an interest in adding additional content to the site. The website is a vital part of our communication plan.

• **Forest Preserve Liaison**—This role involves monitoring Forest Preserve meeting agendas, attending their meetings when content is relevant to club interests, and sharing information with club members when appropriate.

• **Nominating Committee**—A recent bylaw amendment stipulated the creation of a Nominating Committee to help the Board recruit new members and committee leads each year. In a given year, the committee might be recruiting for 4-6 positions. We’re looking for 2-3 people to populate this team.

If you have an interest in any of these roles, please contact Diann Bilderback, DBC President, at dbilderback@dupagebirding.org or diann.bilderback@yahoo.com.

News from the Wacky World of the Web

**This superb owl can see with its eyes closed**
National Geographic

For those who prefer fauna over football, these birds of prey do not disappoint. [Read the full story](#)

**The gay penguins of Australia**
The New York Times

Two male penguins are raising a baby whose gender is unknown. [Read the full story](#)

**Exclusive video reveals half-male, half-female cardinal**
National Geographic

Birdwatchers in Erie, Pennsylvania, found an incredibly uncommon bird—in their backyard. [Read the full story](#)

**These birds have fleshy ornaments as long as their bodies**
National Geographic

Many male birds sport extra skin and flaps to woo females. [Read the full story](#)
March 2019 Field Trips

NOTE: All last-minute changes are posted on dupagebirding.org/field-trips

These early spring field trips target migrating waterfowl, raptors, passerines and shorebirds plus some returning breeders. We are offering a variety of field trips, including mid-week 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. Please remember that the weather can still be very cold, and trails can be muddy, so dress accordingly, wearing proper warm clothing and appropriate footwear.

Monday, March 4, 7:30 am
Bemis Woods South, Western Springs
Join us at Bemis Woods South for a morning of birding. This will be a walk for new birders. We will walk slowly and allow time for all to look at the birds. We will check out the late winter and early spring migrant birds. Meet by “Go Ape” course. Entrance is off Ogden Avenue between I 294 and Wolf Road. The trails can be muddy so wear appropriate shoes and warm clothing.
Leader: Lesa Hipes, 630-689-7463, lhipes@dupagebirding.org

Saturday, March 9, 7:30 am
Will County and Beyond (Advance registration required)
We will meet and carpool from the “Park & Ride” parking lot on Old Chicago Drive, on the east side of Rte. 53 about 1/4 mile south of I-55 in Bolingbrook (behind the Ramada Inn). We will start in the Wilmington area and work west along the rivers to Marseilles. Tag along for a couple of hours or spend the day. Pack a lunch or dine at one of the fine eating establishments along the way. ADVANCE REGISTRATION REQUIRED WITH THE LEADER BY MARCH 9.
Leader: Jeff Smith, 331-481-3362, jsmith@dupagebirding.org

Saturday, March 9, 8:30 am
Cantigny Park, Wheaton
Cantigny started a birding program in 2008 and offers regular walks on the 500-acre property. Please bear in mind that 25 or more birders is common. Enter through the main gate on Winfield Road (just south of Roosevelt Rd.) and tell the attendant you are with the bird walk. Parking is free. Meet at the Visitors Center.
Leader: Jeff Reiter, jreiter@wordsonbirds.com

Day Light Savings Begins Sunday March 10!

Sunday, March 10, 7:30 am
McKee Marsh, Warrenville
Join another morning walk to the marsh to check out early migrating birds. We hope to see migrant waterfowl. Bring a spotting scope if you have one. Meet at the visitor parking lot on the north side of Mack Rd., located between Winfield Rd. and Rt. 59 in Warrenville. Most of our walk will be on limestone and earthen trails; wear appropriate shoes and warm clothing.
Leader: Kathy Mineck, kmineck@dupagebirding.org
Tuesday, March 12, 7:00 pm
Woodcocks, Greene Valley Forest Preserve
Greene Valley Forest Preserve is known for its Woodcock displays, which begin shortly after sunset. Join us this spring on one of our walks. Walk will not be cancelled due to weather. **Meet at the west entrance parking lot, on the south side of 79th St. west of Greene Rd. in Naperville/Woodridge.
Leader: Jeff Smith, 331-481-3362, jsmith@dupagebirding.org

Saturday March 23, Registration Required
Mississippi River - Waterfowl Trip
Waterfowl, cranes, eagles and pelicans will be sought on this all day trip exploring spots along the Mississippi, both in Illinois and Iowa. In addition to the river, Lost Mound will be visited to search for Western Meadowlark and Northern Mockingbird. Please contact Jeff Chapman at jeffchapman1@sbcglobal.net for meeting time and location. We will caravan from the western suburbs.
Leader: Jeff Chapman, jchapman@dupagebirding.org

Sunday, March 24, 8:00 am
Palos Area-McGinnis Slough: Waterfowl and More – (Advance registration required)
This location is an Audubon “Important Bird Area.” Loons, grebes, and other waterfowl are targeted on this trip. Meet at McGinnis Slough, on the west side of LaGrange Rd. (US45), approximately 1/2 mile south of 131st St. Contact Karen and Bob Fisher to register. Finding waterfowl is associated with open water conditions. Karen and Bob will monitor conditions and may change the starting location in order to see more birds; so, ADVANCE REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED IN CASE OF BAD WEATHER CONDITIONS! This trip might extend past the noon hour. Wear appropriate clothing.
Leaders: Bob & Karen Fisher, 630-985-2956, kfisher@dupagebirding.org or Bfisher@dupagebirding.org

Thursday, March 28, 7:00 pm
Woodcocks, Greene Valley Forest Preserve
Greene Valley Forest Preserve is known for its Woodcock displays which begin shortly after sunset. Join us this spring on one of our walks. Walk will not be cancelled due to weather.
** Meet at the west entrance parking lot, on the south side of 79th St. west of Greene Rd. in Naperville/Woodridge.
** (You will have another chance to see Woodcocks in April, in case the weather doesn’t cooperate on this date.)
Leader: Jeff Smith, 331-481-3362, jsmith@dupagebirding.org
2019 Meetings

January 10
March 14
April 11
May 9
July 11
September 12
October 10
November 14