

DBC Hotspot

Lyman Woods Forest Preserve, Downers Grove



Lyman Woods Forest Preserve is in central DuPage County. The entrance to Lyman Woods and parking is accessible on the south side of 31st Street, just east of the Highland Avenue intersection. It is bounded on the north by 31st Street and on the west by Highland Avenue.



Habitat type/site overview



Lyman Woods occupies 150 acres of oak woods, prairie, and marsh habitats that support over 300 species of native plants and wildflowers. It is operated by [Downers Grove Park District](#). In accordance with the Illinois Nature Preserve Commission, there are no dogs (excluding service dogs), bikes, or cross-country skis allowed in Lyman Woods.

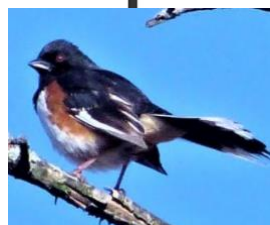
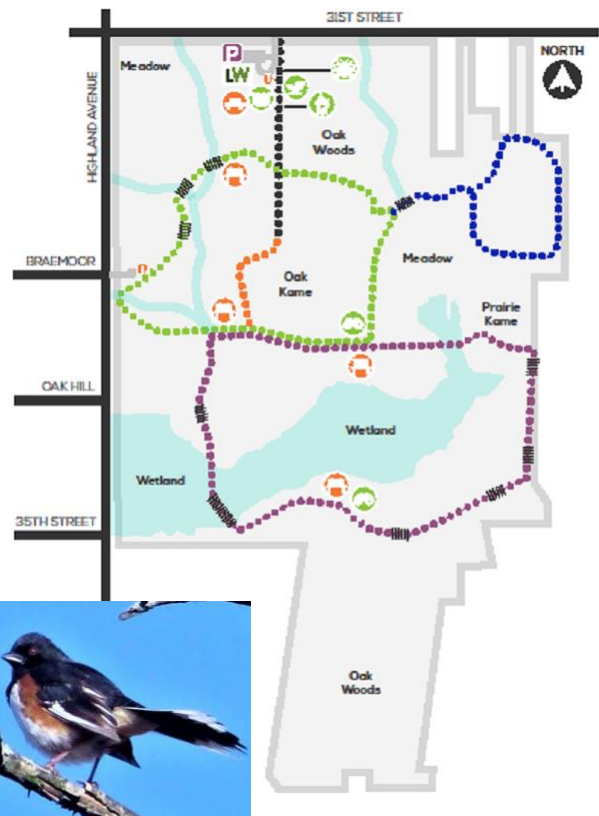
Topography

During your visit, you'll find three rare kames, glacially deposited hills of gravel, which support native prairie and oak woods. The most outstanding feature is a 19-acre oak woods that has remained undisturbed since it was purchased by the Lyman family in 1839. Today it serves as one of the few examples of the pre-settlement landscape that dominated the Downers Grove area. It is also very birdy! **Please note: this area is prone to mud and flooding.**



Not even the muddy trails of Lyman Woods can stop Joan from getting her target bird. Just look at those boots!!

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DBC Hotspot

Birds

Birds are abundant throughout the preserve. Because of the mixture of habitats, a large variety of bird species come and go from Lyman throughout the seasons. At least 205 species have been reported.

Warblers



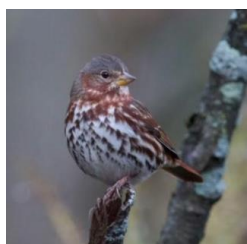
Not surprisingly, spring migration is the best time to visit. The vast majority of regularly occurring DuPage County warblers show up, but anything is possible, including rarities like the occasional Cerulean and Kentucky Warbler. This year, a rare Mourning Warbler hung around, actively singing in the south woods, through June 14.

Marsh Birds



The marsh hosts a never-ending parade of birds: A nice mix of swallows: Tree, Bank, Barn, Northern Rough-winged and occasionally Cliff. Other marsh birds include Belted Kingfishers, Osprey, Double-crested Cormorants, Great Egrets and Great Blue Herons, Green Herons, and a wide variety of ducks (at least 12 species) including the nesting Mallards and Wood Ducks, which can also be seen from the Wood Duck Overlook north of the big marsh, plus Pied-billed Grebes, and American Wigeons. Also appearing in the marsh are Sora and Virginia Rails, plus in April 2014-- a King Rail and American Bittern.

Sparrows



DuPage Birding Club, 2020

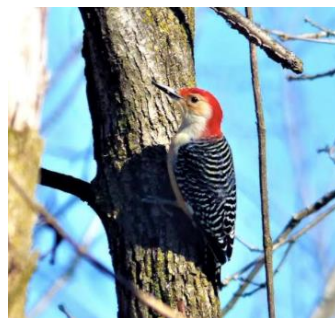
DBC Hotspot

At least 11 species of sparrows have been reported, primarily in the grassland northeast of the marsh, and also on the trail and boardwalk leading to the south side of the property: Song, Swamp, Lincoln's, American Tree, Chipping, Field, Fox, White-throated and White-crowned, Savannah and Junco. Occasionally a Clay-colored or Harris's shows up too.

Breeding Birds



Both Black-billed and Yellow-billed Cuckoos are regular visitors (usually seen and heard in the trees along the trail heading south along the grassland, heading over to the beaver boardwalk), as well as Scarlet and the occasional Summer Tanager. Orchard and Baltimore Orioles are welcome breeding bird species as well. They are frequently seen and heard close to the parking lot. Great-crested Flycatchers are seen and heard along the west edge trails (parallel to Highland Avenue) and in the Oak Woods south of the big marsh. Eastern Wood Pewees can be seen and heard through



DBC Hotspot

A reliable mix of woodpeckers is always available: Downy, Hairy, Red-Bellied are most plentiful. It's possible that Red-headed Woodpeckers are nesting this year (mostly seen near the children's camp area near the Interpretive Center). Pileated have been spotted but not nesting.



Other regular nesters are White-breasted Nuthatches; Marsh, House, Carolina and Sedge Wrens; Indigo Buntings; Cedar Waxwings; Eastern Kingbirds; Robins; Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and Cardinals.

Owls and Raptors



Lyman is a known nesting site for Great Horned Owls. This year there were nesting Eastern Screech Owls as well. Occasionally a Barred Owl shows up.

There are at least two resident Red-tailed Hawks soaring over the property.

Best time to go



April through mid-June is the best time to visit Lyman Woods. Early morning seems to yield the best variety and number of species.



Amenities

Immediately south of the parking area is the William F. Sherman, Jr. Interpretive Center (the center is open Saturdays, June 1st – August 31st from 9AM to 4PM and 1PM to 4PM on Sundays). Inside the eco-friendly center you will find changing exhibits and activities, programs, restrooms, drinking fountains, and first aid. The center provides a look into the history and natural elements of Lyman Woods.



DBC Hotspot

Access

Lyman Woods and parking is accessible on the south side of 31st Street, just east of the Highland Avenue intersection. Please note that parking lot is small, accommodating only about 22 cars.

Site contributors

Content and photography by Joan Campbell and Bonnie Graham. All images were photographed at Lyman Woods.

