

Drummings December 2024

President's Letter



Next Meeting

January 9, 2024

Via Zoom

Hello, fellow birders! When it comes to bird news, most of what I learn comes from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's quarterly magazine, *Living Bird*. Because of this, I'm usually behind a little when it comes to birding news. It turns out that it wasn't until last month that I learned about the updates to the standardized list of North American birds...

For many longtime birders, you're surely familiar with the American Ornithological Society (AOS). For new birders, this may be the first time you've heard of this organization. AOS is responsible for keeping the official, standardized list of North American bird species. As a result, they make yearly updates to the list in light of new research on bird biology. The most obvious changes come when a new species is discovered or one goes extinct. However, there are two other categories: lumping and splitting.

Lumping generally refers to the idea of two separate species being merged into one. The most famous example is the Audubon and Myrtle Warblers becoming the Yellow-rumped Warbler. Splitting is the opposite—taking one species and creating two. This happened with Traill's Flycatcher, which became the Alder and Willow Flycatcher. An even more extreme example was the Solitary Vireo, which was ultimately split into three species: Blue-headed Vireo, Cassin's Vireo, and Plumbeous Vireo.

With all this in mind, I was quite shocked and a little disappointed to see that two of our winter migrants had been lumped into one species. If you haven't heard the news, let me break it to you... the Common Redpoll and Hoary Redpoll are now one species—Redpoll. There are still two different "races" of Redpoll, but only one species.



Redpoll (Hoary)
Buffalo Grove, IL (03.05.2022)
Taken by Robert Perez



Redpoll (Common)
Buffalo Grove, IL (03.05.2022)
Taken by Robert Perez

This was disappointing because I've technically lost a bird from my life list. Looking back into my list, I recounted the first time I had seen both species. On January 8, 2018, I traveled to Montrose Point Bird Sanctuary with a friend to see what was there. Snowy Owls had been reported (as is common during the winter months), so I thought I'd test my luck. While I didn't see any Snowy Owls on the trip, I did run across a new bird: Common Redpoll! I had been after this species for the past couple years, so I was pretty happy to find a little flock in the pine trees there. Aside from that, the day was pretty horrendous. It was around zero degrees and the wind whipped at your face as soon as you left the sanctuary. Since then, I've been lucky to see additional Redpolls at the Carol Stream Water Treatment Facility, Morton Arboretum, Memorial Park Cemetery in Skokie (another good place for winter birds), and Sax-Zim Bog.

The Hoary Redpoll I've only seen once. Unlike its cousin (or its brother? I'm not sure...), the Hoary Redpoll is much paler than the Common. It looks like a frosted Redpoll. I was lucky enough to see one up in Buffalo Grove, in some random person's backyard. Soon after I joined the Illinois Birding Discord group, I was alerted to a Hoary Redpoll that was visiting a backyard feeder in Buffalo Grove. At that time, I was working in Lincolnshire, so the drive was less than ten minutes. During lunch, I snuck away and was able to watch the Hoary Redpoll feeding alongside a multitude of Common Redpolls.

Despite the reclassification, I don't think I'll update my bird list quite yet. Leaving some of these older species in my life list highlights the developments in bird biology and allows me to recollect some of the exciting bird journeys I've been on. So, despite the changes, if you come across a flock of Redpolls this winter, keep an eye out for an especially "frosty" Redpoll.

To learn more about the taxonomic review of birds, see the article submitted by Urs Geiser in this issue. Urs provides the context for the annual review process and highlights some of the more significant changes. Thank you, Urs, for this insightful story!

Finally, I hope your holidays are full of happy moments and good cheer. See you in 2025!

Robert Perez
President, DuPage Birding Club
robertperez787@gmail.com

January 9, 2025, Meeting Via Zoom, with In-Person TBD: Dr. Gary Sullivan, Senior Ecologist, and Peter Goodspeed, Restoration Program Director, Sue and Wes Dixon Waterfowl Refuge

The DuPage Birding Club is honored to host Dr. Gary Sullivan and Peter Goodspeed from the Sue and Wes Dixon Waterfowl Refuge as our first speakers in 2025. Even if you haven't had the chance to visit Dixon Waterfowl Refuge, you won't want to miss this presentation! In 2001, The Wetlands Initiative (TWI) began restoring Hennepin & Hopper Lakes in north-central Illinois along the Illinois River, transforming it from drained farmland back to high-quality native ecosystems.

Today, nearly 25 years later, the Dixon Waterfowl Refuge is a 3,000-plus-acre natural treasure containing more than a dozen rare, highly diverse habitat types. The Refuge is designated as a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance, and its large trail system is open to the public 365 days a year.

Named for the hundreds of thousands of migratory waterfowl that visit the lakes in spring and fall, the Dixon Waterfowl Refuge is a popular birding destination with a checklist of 280 species.

Dr. Gary Sullivan has been Senior Ecologist at TWI since 2001, primarily responsible for designing and managing the implementation of habitat restorations at the Dixon Waterfowl Refuge, Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, and the Calumet region across Chicago's Southeast Side and Northwest Indiana. Dr.



Sullivan has worked on aquatic and wetland ecosystems in New York, California, Oregon, and Illinois since 1988. With Dr. Sullivan retiring in early 2025, Peter Goodspeed recently joined TWI as their incoming Restoration Program Director after serving as Director of Natural Resources with the Champaign County Forest Preserve District. Peter and Dr. Sullivan will present on the history and process of ecological restoration at the Dixon Waterfowl Refuge, more-recent land additions and conservation projects at the site, and the rich biodiversity it supports.

The meeting will be held via Zoom. Weather and other events permitting, our speakers may be able to join us in person. You'll be alerted if an in-person meeting becomes an option. To register for the virtual meeting, click here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZlvcOmrqTguHd3ltQg-UzRwAtxdrb7yXG-u#/registration>

In Case You Missed It: A Close Look at Gull Identification

Amar Ayyash, Gull Identification Expert and Author of *The Gull Guide*

Chicago's own gull expert, Amar Ayyash, shared his deep knowledge of gull natural history, plumage changes, and behaviors in a fascinating review of the finer points of gull identification. With the publication of his authoritative new book, *The Gull Guide*, there's no reason to feel hopelessly lost as you take on gull ID challenges. See the full video here: <https://youtu.be/Ejm8UvswjwHY>

Come February, attend the annual Gull Frolic at Winthrop Harbor and test your new knowledge with Amar at your side. See next story!

Annual Gull Frolic Set for February 16

DuPage Birding Club will sponsor the 23rd annual Gull Frolic on February 16, 9:30 a.m., at Winthrop Harbor. The marina has been a regular wintering site for a variety of gull species and wintering ducks. Sponsored by the Illinois Ornithological Society (IOS), the Gull Frolic is a great place to hone your gull identification skills with the help of seasoned gull experts like Amar Ayyash by your side. Amar will also speak on the finer points of gull identification in a special session. Admission includes lunch. Register early because the event typically sells out in early February: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/23rd-ios-gull-frolic-2025-tickets-1018522276547>

December 7 Deadline for Christmas Bird Count Signup

It's not too late to join the DBC-sponsored Christmas Bird Count on December 14 covering the Fermi circle, one of several count circles in the region. You have until December 7 to let compiler Jeff Chapman (jeffchapman948@gmail.com) know you are interested in participating. You don't need to be an expert birder to join as you will be part of a team of folks who spend the day counting all the birds they hear and see within assigned areas—community science at its best! Data collected provides invaluable insights into winter bird populations plus it's a great opportunity to connect with fellow birders. The count will be followed by a fun dinner and species rollup at Lou Malnati's in Naperville (cost: \$20). If you plan to attend, you must register with Sherry Courtney at sherrycourtney10@gmail.com. See the Field Trip listings below for additional information. NOTE: If you participated last year, you're already on the list and will be contacted in early December regarding your counting areas.

DBC Volunteer Luncheon November 16 at St. James Farm



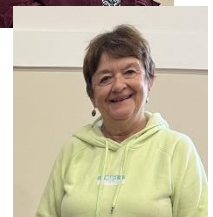
The Volunteer Luncheon held at St. James Farm hosted 20 volunteers. It was a cold and cloudy morning for our bird walk and the birds were few. But at the very end, heading in for lunch, our hardy volunteers were rewarded by a very cooperative Merlin perched near the parking lot!



Photo by Bonnie Graham



Volunteers had hot soup and sandwiches and played a Volunteer Trivia game. It was a fun way to learn about all the things DBC volunteers do. There are over 50 people who volunteer their time to make the DBC work and the game highlighted some of the work they do. Posting on our media sites, putting together the Drummings each month, creating the Members Directory every year, keeping things current on our webpage, presenting at Outreach events, serving on the



Board, and leading field trips are just some of the things our volunteers do. This year there were 122 field trips to 36 different sites thanks to the 22 field trip volunteers.

Thanks to organizers Natalie Mc Faul and Andie Duffy

The game may be called Trivia but there is nothing trivial about our volunteers. They keep the DBC the great Club that it is!

Let's Welcome the 2025 DBC Executive Committee!

DBC members, here's your new Executive Committee for 2025. Please give them your hearty support by renewing your dues on time, attending our meetings and field trips, volunteering to help, and sharing your ideas for making the DBC a birding club you're proud to belong to.

Thelma Hulka (President)

Thelma Hulka has been a member of DBC for the last 20 years or so. She primarily joined to go on field trips and learn more about birds. She's had a long-time interest in birds, dating back to her grammar school days. Since retiring from nursing in 2019, Thelma has dedicated more of her time to birding and hopes to add more to the Club by serving on the board. Thelma has served as Vice President of DBC for the past half year.

Matt Crisler (Vice President)

Matt is one of the many "pandemic birders" out there, and joined DBC looking to learn more about where to go and what to look for in the area. Over the last few years, Matt has been amazed at all the opportunities that the club has helped him connect with, from bird counts to field trips to monitoring. While Matt may not be the most experienced member, with the club having the need for a VP he is more than happy to step up and help make sure the same opportunities continue to be available for others via the club.

Rich Gaul (Treasurer)

Rich first became interested in birds during his youth in rural Illinois. He earned the Bird Watching merit badge as a Boy Scout. While serious birding decreased as other interests grew, he still enjoyed seeing new birds (including nearly driving off the interstate in West Virginia the first time he saw a Baltimore Oriole). One of those interests was accounting and he's been a licensed CPA in Illinois for over 35 years. He recently got back into birding and is trying to combine it with his love of photography.

Donnalyn Quint (Corresponding Secretary)

Donnalyn became interested in birds in the late 1990s. Various factors led to her interest in birds such as visits to her grandfather (who did mostly bird taxidermy), colleagues at work who discussed birds, and her husband, who would always tell Donnalyn about unusual birds he saw. Taking that interest to the next level, she enrolled in an ornithology class at the Morton Arboretum where she gained field experience. Donnalyn joined DBC in 2003 and appreciates the educational meetings, field trips, and friendly birders. Donnalyn has previously served as Recording Secretary in past boards, as well as on the Outreach Committee.

Mark Freeburg (Recording Secretary)

Mark Freeburg has always enjoyed being outdoors. While working as a mail carrier for 34 years, he became interested in all the birds that appeared while walking his route. A little over seven years ago, he joined a DuPage County Forest Preserve Bird Walk during spring migration. After that eye-opening experience, he was on a solid path toward being a fledgling birder. He joined the DBC shortly after and now leads bird walks. Mark has served as Recording Secretary for the past year.

Rob Thomas (Director)

Rob Thomas is a lifelong birder starting at age eight when his father would boost him up a tree with a nest in it so Rob could report what was in the nest. He had a burst of birding when his parents moved from Berwyn to Westchester between his Freshman and Sophomore years. Because of the move, he didn't have any friends so he spent his spare time in nearby Brezina Woods with a beginner Golden Bird Book. He joined DBC around 1992 at Hal Cohen's invitation. Karen and Bob Fisher were very helpful at honing his birding skills. Rob's first experience with DBC leadership is when he took over field trip coordinating. In this capacity, he helped put together DBC's first trip to McKee Marsh as well as a trip to Michigan to see Kirtland's Warblers. Rob has served as a Director for the past year.

Lindsay Vacek (Director)

Lindsay is passionate about protecting birds and their habitats and is active in conservation projects in the Chicago area. Currently she manages stewardship and wildlife protection programming at a large corporation. She holds a master's degree in environmental management from Duke University and has served as Field Trip Chair on the board of Chicago Bird Alliance since spring 2022.

Jim Mateski (Director)

Jim has been a member of DBC for almost 12 years. Although he grew up in DuPage County, he didn't start birding until he was in Utah working at Hill Air Force Base. Outside of birding, Jim volunteers at the Illinois Aviation Museum utilizing his experience as a USAF jet and helicopter pilot.

Finally, but no less important, is a big THANK YOU to outgoing officers, which includes President Robert Perez, Treasurer Jane Barnett, Corresponding Secretary Natalie McFaul, Director Pamela Martyn-Nemeth and Director Steve Mineck. Thanks also to **Karen Warner** who has co-chaired the Field Trip committee for the last two years and will be stepping down. \You have all served us well! Thank you for dedicating your time, commitment, and fresh thinking to the DBC. Your leadership has kept us a strong and vital community organization.

Exciting News: Fermilab Welcomes Back Birders!

Closed since the pandemic began in 2020, Fermilab Natural Areas are now reopened for birding. This includes the trails and lakes around the Red Barn, the Prairie near Wilson Hall, and the Bison herd along the main road into Fermilab. Admittance requires a Real ID or passport. Here's a link to access guidelines and available birding locations: <https://fermilabbirds.com/wildlife/access.shtml>

In addition, the Fermilab Natural Areas team has launched a Facebook page. Follow them for up-to-date information on sightings: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61568595275271>

Annual Membership Renewal Time

It's time to renew your dues for next year! **Your annual membership dues for 2025 are due by December 31, 2025.** Dues remain \$20 for individuals, \$30 for families and \$10 for students. Please note that any new member joining on or after September 1 is automatically registered for the following year. Your dues fund our annual operations and support a broad range of activities, including field trips,

interesting speakers, research grants, and proactive community outreach. Help us stay strong! Your 2025 dues may now be paid in any of the following ways:

1. On-line through our website using PayPal or credit card, at this link:
<https://dupagebirding.org/renew/>
2. By mailing a check to: DuPage Birding Club P.O. Box 3381 Glen Ellyn, IL 60138.
3. Giving cash or a check in person to a board member Thank you for your support and membership.

December 2024 Field Trips

There are opportunities for all types of birders to participate and enjoy our resident birds. As always, non-members are welcome. There are no fees for birding trips. Please remember that the weather can be variable, so dress accordingly. We expect everyone to enjoy birding in a safe manner by being careful and prudent. Field trip information is also found at: www.dupagebirding.org.

NOTE: When possible last-minute changes are posted on www.dupagebirding.org/field-trips.

Participants are welcome to contact the leader if they have any questions. Our field trip leaders can help you find the trip's starting location if you need additional directions.

NOTE: For trips with a participant limit, registration with the trip leader is required. In those cases, you are NOT registered until you receive a confirmation from the trip leader.

Trips will observe a few guidelines to ensure that birding is safe and comfortable for all:

- Anyone not feeling well should stay home.
- Attendees of DBC field trips and other events under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a responsible adult.
- All field trip attendees should be aware of and follow the <https://dupagebirding.org/aba-code-of-ethics/>

Friday, December 6, 8:00 am – 10:00 am, DuPage River Greenway Trail, Bolingbrook

No restrictions on number of attendees.

We will meet at the trailhead, which is located on Royce Rd., just off Rt.53. We will walk the 2.5 mile trail, that follows the East Branch of the DuPage River to Whalon Lake and back. We will look for winter residents and any migrants that happen to be passing through.

Leader: Mark Freeburg. Please call or text if you have any questions. 630-661-1521

Saturday, December 7, 8:00 am – 10:30 am, Whalon Lake, Naperville

Pre-registration with the leader is required, limit 15 participants.

Whalon Lake can have great diversity of waterfowl, so we will be looking for goldeneye, mergansers, etc. Please meet in the parking lot off Royce Road that is east of the dog park by the boat launch dock.

Leader: Henry Meade. Please register with henrymm21@icloud.com

Tuesday, December 10, 8:00 am - 10:00 am, Fullersburg Woods, Oak Brook

Pre-registration with the leader is required, limit 10 participants.

This field trip will include winter birding in wooded areas as well as some open water sections. Join us to look for a good variety while walking about 2 miles on uneven trails. Prepare for possible snow and/or ice depending on current weather. Meet in the main parking lot on Spring Road.

Leader: Nancy Allured. Please register with nallured@comcast.net

Thursday, December 12, 8:00 am - 10:00 am, Danada East/Rice Lake Forest Preserve, Wheaton

No limit to the number of participants, but please email us to let us know you are coming and for any updates.

Join us as we take a casual walk and look for winter birds and possibly some waterfowl on the lake.

Danada is located at 3S507 Naperville Road, south of Butterfield Road and north of I-88 on the east side of Naperville Road. Meet in the parking lot by the horse corrals. This is an approximately a 1.5 – 2 mile walk mostly on limestone paths with some dirt paths.

Leaders: Karen and Mike Warner, mwarner2543@gmail.com 630-640-2450

Saturday, December 14, All-Day Event

Christmas Bird Count, Fermilab Circle, Batavia

Cutoff for registration to assist in the count is Saturday, December 7.

Join us for the DuPage Birding Club sponsored Christmas Bird Count. This is your chance to contribute to an important community science opportunity. Data collected provides invaluable insights into winter bird populations. It's also a great opportunity to connect with fellow birders. If you participated last year, you are already on the list and will be contacted in early December. If you are new to the Bird Count, please contact the compiler, Jeff Chapman, for details and to be assigned to a location and area captain. Remember you'll be grouped with a team, so no need to be an expert.

Contact: Jeff Chapman, jeffchapman948@gmail.com

Saturday evening, December 14, from 5:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Annual DBC Christmas Bird Countdown dinner, in private room, at Lou Malnati's Pizzeria, Naperville
Deadline to register is December 7. Space is limited to 40 members. Cost per member \$20.

Following the DBC Christmas Bird Count we will be having our first in-person countdown dinner since before the pandemic. Come join us as we watch the totals from the day's bird count, and feast together on pizza, pasta, salad and drinks in a private room at Lou Malnati's in Naperville. A cash bar will be available. Gluten free and vegetarian options are also available.

If you have any questions, and to register, contact Sherry Courtney at sherrycourtney10@gmail.com

Sunday, December 15, All-Day Event

Christmas Bird Count, Lisle-Arboretum Circle

Cutoff for registration to assist in the count is Sunday, December 8.

Birders of all skill levels are welcome on the Lisle-Arboretum CBC. The Chicago Ornithological Society (www.chicagobirder.org) sponsors this count where sub-teams are assigned to various locations. Even if you cannot go out in the field, there is another way to contribute: DBC members who live in the count circle can participate as a feeder-watcher.

For details and sign up: <https://www.chicagobirder.org/events/2024/12/15/lisle-christmas-bird-count>

Wednesday, December 18, 7:30 am – 10:30 am, McKee Marsh, Warrenville

Registration not necessary.

Join us for a morning walk around one of DuPage County's premier birding hotspots. This trip will be about 3 miles long on limestone and earthen trails. This site often has a good selection of wintering species including the Northern Shrike, American Black Duck, and other waterfowl, various raptors, and other birds. Meet at the visitor parking lot located on the north side of Mack Road, east of Route 59, and west of Winfield Road.

Leader: Kyle Wiktor. 708-506-5186 (text or call if you have questions regarding weather cancellation)

Thursday, December 19, 4:10 pm, Springbrook Prairie, Naperville

Pre-registration with the leader is required, limit 15 participants.

Join Joe Suchecki at Springbrook Prairie in Naperville to look for Short-eared Owls. Short-eared Owls frequently winter at Springbrook Prairie and can be seen as they come out to hunt over the preserve at dusk. Meet at the Model Aircraft Field Parking Lot on Plainfield-Naperville Rd., south of 75th St. in Naperville. We will walk a short distance off-trail to wait for the owls to appear. Dress very warmly since we will be standing in one place as the sun goes down. Note that the owls are generally pretty far away and often appear just as the light is failing, so this trip does not offer a photo-op. The trip will last about 30-40 min.

Contact Joe if you plan on attending. The owls do not always winter at Springbrook and the trips will be canceled if they are not around or in the event of inclement weather.

Leader: Joe Suchecki. Register via email: dbcsec2020@gmail.com. Phone: 630-369-5570

Wednesday, January 1, 9:00 am – 11:00 am

Annual New Year's Day Birding at the Morton Arboretum, Lisle

There is no limit to the number of participants, but please email us to let us know you are coming and for any updates.

The bird club has a tradition of New Year's Day birding, so come one, come all to the Morton Arboretum to start the new year right! We will gather at parking lot P13, Big Rock on the east side,

<https://mortonarb.org/visit-the-arboretum/maps-guides/>. We will walk about 2 miles on mulched paths.

Non-members (aka, guests) can't enter the Arb until 9:00 am, so we will start gathering at 9:00 am and begin birding at about 9:15. Nonmembers will need to pay an entrance fee. If you want to follow us in

and pay the guest fee of \$5.00, please let us know when you email. Here is a link for reserving an entry pass: <https://buy.acmeticketing.com/events/480/list>

Leader: Karen and Mike Warner, mwarner2543@gmail.com

SAVE THE DATE!

DBC Members Magee Marsh, Ohio Field Trip, Wednesday May 7, 2025 – Sunday, May 11, 2025.

Joe Kubal and Sherry Courtney are organizing a Spring migration field trip to “The Biggest Week in American Birding.” <https://www.biggestweekinamericanbirding.com/>

Magee Marsh is a 4 ½ hour drive from Naperville, and is one of the best locations in the country to see a wide variety of warblers. In the surrounding areas, we are also likely to see terns, eagles, swallows, waterfowl and shorebirds, and perhaps Lapland Longspurs, Black-necked Stilts, pipits, Orchard Orioles, titmouse, Carolina Wrens, and many more.

This trip will include four nights, each morning beginning on the Boardwalk at Magee Marsh, where we will be able to see a variety of birds up close, followed by day trips to nearby birding areas which will include: Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, Metzger Marsh, Howards Marsh, East Harbor State Park, along with some off-the-beaten path places and stops.

We are hoping to accommodate two groups of 10 members, dependent on whether we have enough leaders. We will let members know when registration opens up, as soon as the itinerary is formalized. Stay tuned!

Special thanks to Denis Kania for helping us plan this trip.

Additional birding opportunities:

Cantigny Park in Wheaton posts Accessible Birding walks and related events several months in advance on the calendar pages of [Events | Cantigny](#). For that reason, the events are often at capacity by the time DBC publishes its monthly calendar. To ensure your spot on a Cantigny walk, check the park’s website and follow the sign-up instructions.

Area Forest Preserves may have birding opportunities. Check out the DuPage and Cook County forest preserves: <https://www.dupageforest.org/calendar-of-events>, www.fpdcc.com/events.

Questions/Comments: Email us if you have questions, would like to lead a trip, or have an idea for a trip. Leaders do not have to be birding experts, just familiar with the location.

Field Trip Coordinators:

Sherry Courtney, sherrycourtney10@gmail.com

Stephanie Culleton, stephcullert@yahoo.com

Welcome, New Members!

Franklin and Helen Chow

Lisle

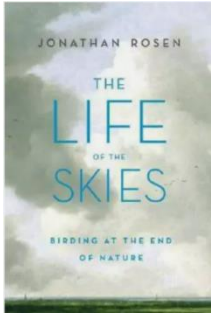
Frederik Heller

Downers Grove

Nancy Strutzenberg

Clarendon Hills

DBC Book Club Meets December 3



The DBC Book Club is reading *Life of the Skies* by noted author Jonathan Rosen. Described as part birding history, part travelogue, and part exploration of man's relationship to nature, it's a stimulating read. If you've read the book or want to join a lively conversation to inspire you to do so, join fellow DBC members on Tuesday evening, December 3, to share some holiday cheer and talk about the book. For details on the meeting, contact Mike Warner at mwarner2543@gmail.com.

DBC's Fall '24 Photo Contest Closing Soon!

The DBC is looking for pictures of birds taken between September 1, 2024, and December 1, 2024. Entries will be accepted until **December 7**. All photos are welcome: amateur, funny, imperfect, high-quality. The "story behind the shot" is taken into account when judging. The judges want this to be a fun contest; no categories have been predefined for award winners so every entry has a chance to win!

Note: the judges ask that you limit the number of photos entered to five or less. They usually do not give out more than one award to the same author if they submit multiple images.

If you would like to look at past DBC Photo Contest winners [CLICK HERE](#).

The contest is open to DBC members only. Photos may be taken anywhere (not just DuPage/Illinois). If a picture includes people, the submitter must have permission from those people to publish their image on the DBC website. Photographs will be judged by a small team of DBC members.

There are two ways to enter your bird photographs:

If you have a Google Account (you have one if you use Gmail) click the link below:

[DBC Photo Contest Entry Form](#)

If you do not have a Google Account, email your image as an email attachment to dupagebirdingclub@gmail.com. In the body of your email include:

- a) Your name.
- b) The species of the bird(s).
- c) Where the picture was taken.
- d) A Catchy Caption - Enter a caption or title you would like displayed with your pictures. (Optional)
- e) Narrative - Tell us about your picture - what's the story behind the shot? Include any information the judges might need to fully appreciate your shot.

Good luck! Winners will be announced in the January Drummings. Look for information regarding the Winter '25 Photo Contest in the same issue.

The 2024 Bird Taxonomic Updates

By Urs Geiser

Every late summer to fall, major ornithological entities publish their taxonomic updates. Updates include newly added bird species, which may be newly discovered species, or more commonly the elevation of subspecies or subspecies groups to species ranks. The latter is referred to as a “split.” The updates also include a number of “lumps,” where it is decided that two or more species are not sufficiently different from each other, and therefore better treated as subspecies or other forms of a single species. If listing is your game, splits have the potential to increase your list total, while lumps can decrease it. However, species splits and lumps are not the only updates that are published. They also include new ways to arrange species into higher taxonomic ranks, such as genera, families, and orders. While this type of update does not affect the species number, it can result in a change in species sequence and scientific name.

In the following, I will summarize the recent decisions made by two ruling bodies. The first is the North American Checklist Committee (NACC) of the American Ornithological Society, which published its update in the journal *Ornithology*, volume 141, pages 1-21. This is the 65th supplement to their originally published checklist, in the following abbreviated as the “AOS list.” The coverage of the AOS list is North America north of the Panama-Colombia border and also includes Greenland and the Hawaiian Islands. (The AOS also has a South American Checklist Committee, which operates independently and not always arrives at the same decisions.) Taxonomic changes to the AOS list are usually accepted by the American Birding Association for their own ABA checklist. Updates to the AOS list also include the addition of vagrants from other parts of the world; these are not the subject of this article.

The other checklist update that I will discuss here is the one that applies to eBird. It is based on a world checklist that was published by James Clements and updated several times before his death in 2005. It has since been taken over by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology but is still referred to as the Clements list. For North America, the Clements list often follows decisions made by the AOS NACC, but there are some discrepancies, as you will see below.

There are other checklists of worldwide coverage, such as the IOC World Bird List, the Howard & Moore Complete Checklist of the Birds of the World, and the list by HBW Alive/Bird Life International. I personally do not follow these; therefore, I will not mention them further.

So, what are the splits and lumps that affect us at the local and regional levels?

The bad news first: AOS and Clements agree that Hoary **Redpoll** is no longer a species. All forms of redpoll (Common, Hoary aka Arctic, and Lesser Redpoll) have been lumped into one species just called Redpoll (*Acanthis flammea*) with subspecies groups that still represent the former species. Those of you who struggled with identifying a Hoary Redpoll in a flock of commons may be glad, but many Illinois listers will lose a species here.

If your focus is only Illinois, you will not gain list numbers from the splits even though they affect what species are called. The most notable ones are:

Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*), which occurs on many continents, has been split into three forms. As a result, the New World form is now called American Barn Owl (*T. furcata*). In the Old World, we now have Western (*T. alba*) and Eastern (*T. javanica*) Barn Owl, with a boundary approximately between the Middle East and the rest of Asia. This split is recognized by the AOS and by Clements.

House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*) has long been anticipated to split, and it finally happened in both the AOS and Clements lists. Not only did they split it into the northern (*T. aedon*) and the southern (*T. musculus*) forms on the mainland, but they also spun off five island forms. Our species is now called the Northern House Wren. The species in Central and South America (south of approximately central Mexico) is predictably called the Southern House Wren.

A split that was only adopted by Clements, but not (yet) by the AOS, is that of **Herring Gull** (*Larus argentatus*) into four species, three of which have potential to occur in North America. The nominate form in Europe is now the European Herring Gull (*L. argentatus*). It probably occurs in small numbers on the American continent. The species that breeds in North America and is normally encountered here is the American Herring Gull (*L. smithsonianus*), and the form breeding along the western Pacific rim is Vega Gull (*L. vegae*). This latter form is occasionally found in North America and should be looked for as a rarity. The fourth split species is Mongolian Gull (*L. mongolicus*) of Inner Asia, which is unlikely to wander to North America.

The final split of a species occurring in Illinois is that of **American Pipit** (*Anthus rubescens*). No change will be noted locally, but Siberian Pipit (*A. japonicus*) of East Asia is now a separate species. It wanders in small numbers to Alaska and along the American Pacific coast.

On a worldwide scale, the number of species on the Clements list has increased by 128, with 141 species gained by splits and 16 lost by lumps. I don't have space to list them all and will just name a few noteworthy splits:

- **Burchell's Coucal** (*Centropus burchellii*) split from White-browed Coucal (*C. superciliosus*)
- **Cory's Shearwater** split into Cory's Shearwater (now *Calonectris borealis*) and Scopoli's Shearwater (*C. diomedea*, which was the scientific name of the combined species)
- **Cocos Booby** (*Sula brewsteri*) split from Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*)
- **Plain Xenops** of the American tropics split into three: Northern Plain-Xenops (*Xenops mexicanus*), Amazonian Plain-Xenops (*X. genibarbis*), and Atlantic Plain-Xenops (*X. minutus*)
- **Eurasian Nutcracker** split into Northern Nutcracker (*Nucifraga caryocatactes*) and Southern Nutcracker (*N. hemispila*)
- **Rock Martin** of Africa and the Middle East split into three: Pale Crag-Martin (*Ptyonoprogne obsoleta*), Red-throated Crag-Martin (*P. rufigula*), and Southern Crag-Martin (*P. fuligula*)
- **Red-rumped Swallow** split into European (*Cecropis rufula*), African (*C. melanocrissus*), and Eastern (*C. daurica*) Red-rumped Swallow.
- **Island Thrush** (*Turdus poliocephalus*) of the South Seas is split into no less than 17 species!

As mentioned above, splits and lumps are not the only changes in the updated taxonomies. Some reshuffling of species within taxonomic units also results in a different sequence, and often a different scientific name. However, even higher-level changes are possible. At the highest level, separate orders for the nightjars (Caprimulgiformes), potoos (Nyctibiiformes), Oilbird (Steatornithiformes), frogmouths (Podargidiformes), owl-nightjars (Aegotheliformes), and swifts, treeswifts, and hummingbirds (Apodiformes) were resurrected by Clements, after they had been grouped in a single order (Caprimulgiformes) for several years. The AOS kept them as separate orders all along.

Orders that were moved around include flamingos (Pheonicopteriformes) and grebes (Podicepidiformes), both of which now follow the last family in Charadriiformes, i.e., gulls and terns (Laridae). Within the order Pelecaniformes, the families were shuffled and now follow the sequence of ibises and spoonbills (Threskiornithidae), herons (Ardeidae), Hamerkop (Scopidae), Shoebill (Balaenicipitidae), and pelicans (Pelecanidae).

Clements added two additional families to its list: A new family, Erythroceridae, was created for three species of African flycatchers, and two species of Spotted Creeper (from Africa and South Asia) were moved from the treecreepers (Certhiidae) into their own family, Salpornithidae.

Changes at the genus level are much more numerous, and I will mention only one family, where the changes are relevant to local species. In the hawk family (Accipitridae), the genus *Accipiter* was split into five by Clements but not AOS. This means that Cooper's Hawk and American Goshawk are no longer members of the genus *Accipiter*, but of *Astur*. In addition, the sequence of genera was updated, with harriers (genus *Circus*) now after the *Accipiter* group, and Mississippi Kite (genus *Ictinia*) after the sea eagles (e.g., Bald Eagle), among others. This family is one where Clements and the AOS list continue to disagree.

Finally, there are English name changes that are not driven by systematic changes but adaptations by the America-centered organizations to local use. Few of these affect North American species, but examples that might be familiar to some of you are Sargasso Shearwater (from Audubon's Shearwater), Reed Cormorant (from Long-tailed Cormorant), Eurasian Bittern (from Great Bittern), Purple Roller (from Rufous-crowned Roller), and White-crested Helmetshrike (from White Helmetshrike). Furthermore, all species in genus *Amazona* now carry the epithet of Amazon instead of Parrot (e.g., Red-crowned Amazon instead of Red-crowned Parrot).

I realize that many birders are not fond of these taxonomic changes. Losing species on lists to lumps is not fun. Learning new names takes time. However, we need to embrace the fact that the bird taxonomy of the present is just a snapshot of scientific knowledge based on existing data that continues to evolve. The field of molecular genetics is generating an increasing amount of new data that leads to new interpretations every year. Follow the science!

Outreach Team Wraps Up a Big Year

Well, it's not a Big Year the way birders think of a Big Year, but it was a Big Year for the Outreach Committee nonetheless—the committee supported 13 outreach events hosted by community organizations and reached an audience of more than 525 people ranging from first graders to senior citizens and everything in between. In a typical year, a variety of organizations reach out to the Club in

search of presentations and programs about birds, and the Outreach Committee's 28 members try to fulfill as many requests as possible. Congratulations, team, well done!

February 17 - 22nd Annual Gull Frolic. Conducted by the Illinois Ornithological Society. Robert Perez and Pamela Martyn-Nemeth hosted a table at this sold-out event at North Point Marina. (200 attendees)

February 20 - Birds Can Fly, Why Can't I?. Presented for the Lemont Library by Natalie McFaul and Andie Duffy to 10 first- through third-graders. (30)

February 24 - What a Tweet - Winter Birding Chat. Presented for the Lemont Library by Bob Fisher. (15)

March 16 - Fullersburg Forest Preserve Field Trip. Presented for the Hinsdale Public Library and led by Steve Constantelos, Sirimon Reutrakal, Natalie McFaul, and Andie Duffy. (10)

May 18 - Fullersburg Forest Preserve Field Trip. Presented for The Well Spirituality Center and led by Mike Warner. (2)

June 3 - Birds of Dupage County. Presented for the Itasca Library by Mike Warner. (50)

June 18 - Birding 101. Presented for the Glenside Public Library by John Cebula. (12)

July 22 - Birds of Dupage County: Four Habitats, Four Seasons. Presented for the Wheaton Public Library by Mike Warner. (25)

August 2 - Birding the Morton Arboretum. A booth as part of the Arboretum's "Birdies and Brews" event. Mike Warner, John Cebula, Elena Nelson, Sirimon Reutrakal, Matt Crisler, Laurel Ahlenius. (60)

September 14 - Birding Basics. Presented for the Hinsdale Library by Sirimon Reutrakal. (15)

September 18 - Birding DuPage County. Presented for the Windemere Assisted Living facility by Mike Warner. (18)

October 1 - Attracting Wild Birds In The Winter. Presented to the Crestview Garden Club by Mike Warner. (30)

October 18 - Birding DuPage County. Presented for the Windemere Independent Living facility by Mike Warner. (60)

If you know of an organization looking for information about birds, please contact Mike Warner at mwarner2543@gmail.com. If you'd like to volunteer your time to help with Outreach programs, contact Mike as well.



2025 DBC Executive Committee Members

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Vice President: Matt Crisler
Treasurer: Rich Gaul
Recording Secretary: Mark Freeburg
Corresponding Secretary: Donnalyn Quint
Director: Rob Thomas
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Christmas Count Coordinator: Jeff Chapman
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DBC Apparel: Steve Constantelos
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Outreach/Youth Education: Mike Warner
Spring Count Coordinator: Joe Suchecki
Twitter: Vera Miller
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YouTube Ed Channel: Denis Kania, Steve Constantelos

2025 Meeting Schedule

January 9	July 10
March 13	September 11
April 10	October 9
May 8	November 13

