

Drummings May 2025

President's Letter



Next Meeting

May 15, 2025

Doors open at 6:30 p.m.
Presentation at 7:00 p.m.

College of DuPage
Health Science Ctr, Rm 1234
425 Fawell Drive
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137

Premeeting Dinner

5:30 p.m.
Ellyn's Tap and Grill
940 Roosevelt Rd.
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137

Hello, DBCers,

We're coming to the end of April and if you're reading this, chances are you've already gotten the fever and have started to look for those spring arrivals – the migrating warblers, thrushes, waterfowl, and all the other birds that we can only spot for a brief period each year. Chores go undone or are put off, alarm clocks are moved up, meals are skipped and ebird reports are scanned hourly. Are we all nuts?

Well, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in 2016 some 45 million Americans considered themselves to be birders and in 2022 that number was closer to 96 million or about 20% of us. Birding is estimated to be a \$41 billion economy in the U.S. – and then there is the money spent by our international birding crowd that boosts the economies around the world.

So if you just started last week or you've been birding since kindergarten, you're part of a huge society of people who appreciate our feathered friends, and by extension, the world in which they – and we – exist. Thus, it lies on our shoulders to protect and defend that world. There are ever so many societies and groups working to preserve every aspect of the natural world. I'd encourage you to pick one most meaningful to you and support it through your time or finances to ensure that future generations will be able to feel that same thrill we are all experiencing now.

Check further down in The Drummings for our field trip list. We have lots of field trips coming up in the next few weeks. And take a nonbirding friend out into the woods, loan them a pair of your binoculars, and you may emerge with birder 96,000,001!

Birdly,
Thelma Hulka, President
scubabird@gmail.com

**May 15 Meeting, In Person and Via Zoom:
Birds of the Grand Canyon State—South and
North—which you won't find (probably) in DuPage
County**

**Margaret Dyekman, Author of *Backyard Birding in
Northern Arizona***

Arizona is a goldmine for birders who come to see species they can't find in much of the U.S., with the added bonuses of great weather and nonstop flights from O'Hare and Midway. Even short visits to metropolitan Phoenix or the Flagstaff and Grand Canyon areas can produce additions to your life list without much effort. Margaret Dyekman will share beautiful photos and interesting facts about 45 bird species in Arizona that are "visitor friendly."

Margaret has watched birds in Arizona from her backyard for 20 years and spent those years documenting her experiences and those of other backyard birders in entertaining and informative print articles and blogs. She is an accomplished writer and speaker, published in professional magazines, and a frequent conference presenter. She recently published *Backyard Birding in Northern Arizona*, a beautiful text and photo book, where she took real-life experiences and turned them into vignettes about bird identification, showing the reader how to make the most of backyard birding.

Margaret is a member of the Northern Arizona Audubon Society, White Mountain Audubon Society, Desert Rivers Audubon Society (board member), Arizona Field Ornithologists, and American Birding Association. Some of her most fun birding experiences have been on golf courses, where it was easier to find a rare bird than get a birdie on the course she was playing.



Acorn Woodpecker. Photo by Margaret Dyekman

Please note that the meeting is on May 15, a departure from our usual second Thursday schedule. Register for the ZOOM meeting here: [link](#)

Annual Spring Bird Count, Saturday, May 10

If you act fast, you can still participate in the Spring Bird Count in DuPage County on Saturday, May 10!

The Spring Bird Count is held annually throughout Illinois around the first weekend in May and is intended to provide some information and data on early spring bird migration throughout Illinois. The Spring Bird Count also is a great opportunity for birders of all skill levels to get out in the field and look for all those great and colorful spring migrants moving through northeastern Illinois. The DuPage Birding Club coordinates the spring count efforts in DuPage County, and last year we recorded 170 species on spring count day. Results from past counts can be found on the DBC website.

All you veteran counters will have been contacted by your Area Captain by now and should be all set. If you have not participated previously and would like to join the fun this year, contact Joe Suchecki at dupagesbc@gmail.com and he will put you in touch with an area captain for the count.

Last year 165 participants counted birds on the spring count in DuPage County. We would like even more people to participate this year. So, don't miss out on the fun and excitement of the great Spring Bird Count on May 10.

May 2025 Field Trips

May is such an exciting time, as the birds are making their way back through our greening forests. Our field trip leaders have become quite creative with offering some fun, unique, and interesting trips for us this month. We have something for everyone, whether you like to bike & bird, drive and explore new places, bird sit in beautiful settings with friends, or walk down earthen paths while sharing the joy of our feathered visitors. And don't forget, May 10 is the Spring Bird Count. See details below.

There are opportunities for all types of birders to participate and enjoy. As always, nonmembers 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 ABA Code of Ethics at <https://dupagebirding.org/aba-code-of-ethics/>

Thursday evening, May 1, 5:30 pm - 8:00 pm, Wood Dale Reservoir, Wood Dale

Registration with the leader is required. Limit 15 participants.

Shorebirds after work! Wood Dale Reservoir offers great viewing opportunities for several species of migrating shorebirds. Spotting scopes can be useful here; trip leader will have one. Shorebird IDs can be difficult at times. The trip leader will be happy to help people who may be new to it, but it will help to review field guides, eBird/Merlin, and/or some of the DBC YouTube content (Yellowlegs and Similar Waders, Peeps) ahead of time. We will meet at the parking lot at the end of School Street (298 School Street in Wood Dale if using GPS).

Leader: Matt Crisler, crislermj@gmail.com

Saturday, May 3, 8:00 am - 11:00 am, Lake Renwick Heron Rookery, Plainfield

Registration with the leader is required. Limit 20 participants.

The Heron Rookery Preserve at Lake Renwick is a limited access preserve where it is possible to view nesting egrets, Great Blue Herons, and Double-crested Cormorants. The rookery itself is located on an island in Lake Renwick. This trip will include hiking less than 1 mile to viewing areas on natural surfaces and uneven terrain. If there is time, we may also walk some of the trails at the rookery. We will meet our guide at the visitor center at the Renwick Road entrance. Bring your cameras and scopes! Dress for the weather. Bring water and bug spray. Heron Rookery Nature Preserve is located at 23202 W. Renwick Road. (On Renwick Road east of route 30/Lincoln Highway and West of the I55 overpass in Plainfield.)

[LINK](#) **Leader: Natalie McFaul, natcatcher7@gmail.com**

Sunday, May 4, 8:00 - 10:00am, Montrose Point Bird Sanctuary, Chicago

Registration with the leader is required. Limit 20 participants.

Montrose Point Bird Sanctuary is one of the premier birding hotspots in the state. Located next to Montrose Beach along Lake Michigan in Chicago, Montrose Point Bird Sanctuary offers a variety of habitats for a large number of birds. The group will explore the entire sanctuary, including wooded areas, prairie, beachfront and the dunes area. Some trails may be muddy, so dress appropriately.

Targets will include migrating warblers and shorebirds.

Leader: Robert Perez, robertperez787@gmail.com

Monday, May 5, 7:30 am - 10:30 am, McDowell Grove Forest Preserve, Naperville

Registration with the leader is required. Limit 10 participants.

This morning trip will focus on woodland migrants passing through our area. This is a popular migrant hotspot in both spring and fall. If birds are on the move, we will be in a great location to view them. Meet in the first parking lot after entering the preserve. The entrance is at the intersection of Raymond Dr. and McDowell Rd. where there is a stoplight.

Leader: Denis Kania, dikan36@gmail.com

Monday evening, May 5, 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm, Elsen's Hill, Winfield

Registration with the leader is required.

Come check out a popular birding hotspot at a less-often visited time of day, an evening at Elsen's! There should be plenty of migrant birds around, as well as resident species. Hopefully we could also encounter some crepuscular or nocturnal birds and other wildlife. This trip will be approximately 2 miles on earthen trails which might be muddy or even have standing water if there has been a lot of rain lately. Meet at the Elsen's Hill parking lot in West DuPage Woods located on the north side of Gary's Mill Road, west of Winfield Road, and east of where Gary's Mill intersects Roosevelt Road.

Leader: Kyle Wiktor, 708-506-5186 (text or call to register)

Wednesday, May 7, 7:00 am - 11:00 am + lunch. Waterfall Glen Sawmill Creek Area, Lemont
Registration not required.

We'll walk at least 3 miles searching this watershed for all the spring migrants, summer breeding birds, and a couple of resident specialties. PLEASE be prepared for rocky, root-filled trails along the creek, and hills throughout. Bring lunch so we can eat together in the picnic shelter afterwards. Park in the large new parking lot just southeast of the intersection of Cass and Bluff. (Enter from Bluff Rd. and listen for nesting Pine Warblers singing.)

Leader: Vicky Sroczynski, 630-297-9512 (text with any questions)

Thursday, May 8, 7:30 am - 10:00 am, Springbrook Prairie Forest Preserve, Naperville
Registration with the leader is required.

The trip will look for spring migrants in the wetlands, grasslands, and wooded areas of Springbrook Prairie. Trip will focus on spring migrants in a variety of habitats. Meet at Model Aircraft Parking Lot on the west side of Plainfield-Naperville Road about 0.5 mi south of 75th Street. Wear appropriate footwear to go off-trail and bring/use insect repellent for ticks and possibly mosquitos.

Leader: Joe Suchecki, dbcsec2020@gmail.com.

Saturday, May 10, Spring Bird Count, DuPage County

A hundred or more birders will fan out across DuPage County to identify all the bird species they can find at the Spring Bird Count on Saturday May 10. A group of birders will be in the field somewhere near your home. Come join us; we need more birders to make it possible to cover as many locations within the county as we can. You don't have to be an expert birder to participate; all skill levels are welcome. Even if you can only bird for part of the day, we can use you. And if that's your preference, you'll probably be able to look for birds close to home, since we divide the county into 16 areas, with teams scouring each area. To volunteer or find out more information email Joe Suchecki.

Email Joe Suchecki at DuPagesbc@gmail.com

Tuesday, May 13, 7:00 am - 11 am or 12 pm, Birding Hotspots of Northeastern DuPage County
Registration with the leader is required. Limit 10 participants.

On this trip, we will be driving to different locations that offer a variety of habitats including mudflats, lakes, woodlands, and more. There should be a large variety of bird species found. Our exact route within northeastern DuPage County may be determined based on recent sightings. Participants can continue as long as they wish. Expect approximately 3 miles of walking on limestone or earthen trails. Meet at the parking spots for Wood Dale Reservoir located on School Street as far as you can go west of Wood Dale Road. The exact meeting spot can be viewed in the following link: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/K8LmfNm3HyigkVmP7>

Leader: Kyle Wiktor, 708-506-5186 (text or call if you have questions, and to register)

Tuesday, May 13, 9:00 am – 11:00 am, Centennial Trail, Lemont

Registration with the leader is required.

This trip will check out the river and the Barrow Pit and then follow along the trail looking for spring migrants and new summer arrivals. We will meet at the bike trailhead on the east end of Canal Bank Road. If using navigation, search for 15112 Canal Bank Rd, Lemont.

Leader: Mark Freeburg, Cell: (630) 661-1521, freebs59@sbcglobal.net

Wednesday evening, May 14, 5:45 pm - 8:30 pm, Lyman Woods, Downers Grove

Registration with the leader is required. Limit 10 participants.

Warblers (and other spring migrants) after work! Meet at the parking lot on 31st Street. We'll conclude the trip with some dusk birding looking for the resident Great Horned Owls. A red flashlight or headlamp is recommended. Lyman's trails are almost always muddy regardless of weather. If rain occurs ahead of the trip, expect areas with standing water. Be prepared with appropriate footwear.

Leader: Matt Crisler, crislermj@gmail.com

Thursday, May 15, 7:00 am - 9:00 am, Bird Sit at Isle a la Cache, Romeoville

Registration is not required. If you want to be informed of any last-minute changes, email the leader with your contact information.

This is a small park on the Des Plaines River. This field trip is for anyone who finds the long walks of our regular field trips too difficult or who would just like a less vigorous birding experience but still share the camaraderie of fellow birders. Bring your folding lawn chairs, binoculars, and field guides. Dress for the weather, bring bug spray, and water. We will meet at the visitor center parking lot; when entering the park turn left into the parking lot. Isle a la Cache is located on the Des Plaines River about a mile east of Route 53 on Romeo Road/135th St, Romeoville. [Isle a la Cache Website](#)

Leader: Natalie McFaul, natcatcher7@gmail.com

Thursday, May 15, 8:00 am - 10:00 am, Goose Lake Natural Area, McHenry County

Registration with the leader is required. Limit 20 participants.

This unique spot in northern McHenry County is a great spot for sought after marsh birds. The walk will focus on finding the site's nesting Yellow-headed Blackbird population, as well as species such as Black Tern, King Rail, Marsh Wren, and others. There is roughly a mile walk on a straight gravel path before we hit the marsh area. We may venture off trail into tall grass, so dress appropriately and bring bug spray and sun protection. The parking lot is behind the Hebron Township Building in Hebron, Illinois (10206 Seaman Rd, Hebron, IL 60034).

Leader: Robert Perez, robertperez787@gmail.com

Friday, May 16, 7:30 am - 10:00 am, Seager Park, Naperville

Registration with the leader is required. Limit 12 participants.

Meet at the main parking lot, 1163 Plank Rd. This relatively small area is rich in varied habitat, which increases the number of species we may observe. We will be in search of migrants (especially warblers),

Red-headed Woodpeckers, and other woodland birds.

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

Tuesday, May 20, 7:00 am - 10:30 am McKee Marsh, Warrenville

Registration not required.

Join us for a morning walk at one of DuPage County's premier birding hotspots to look for spring migrants and breeding species. The walk will be approximately 3 miles on limestone and earthen trails; wear appropriate shoes and clothing. Meet at the visitor parking lot on the north side of Mack Road, located east of Rt. 59, and west of Winfield Road.

Leader: Kyle Wiktor, 708-506-5186

Saturday, May 24, 7:30 am - 10:00 am, Big Sit, Bob Fisher's Backyard, Downers Grove

Registration with Thelma Hulka is required.

Bob's backyard is a bird sanctuary, with a creek running through it that attracts many migratory birds. Come relax and share a birding experience with other club members in a private environment. We are unsure what we will see. There are surprise birds on occasion. Participants should bring their own lawn chair. Park on the street. Restroom facilities available nearby. Oldfield Oaks FP is a short distance away, and Bob's property borders on Meyer's Woods, a Darien Park District parcel comprising a mostly natural area. This Big Sit event is, of course, weather permitting.

Leader: Call or text Thelma Hulka at (630) 738-0720 to register, and for Bob's address

Saturday, May 24, 7:30 am - 11:00 am, Lyman Woods, Downers Grove

Registration with the leader is required by email. Limit 10 participants.

Our primary targets will be warblers, but we'll explore most of the preserve in search of any of the recent spring arrivals. On the expectation of plenty of activity, this will be a longer walk than typical. Meet at the parking lot on 31st Street. Lyman's trails are almost always muddy regardless of weather. If rain occurs ahead of the trip, expect areas with standing water. Be prepared with appropriate footwear.

Leader: Matt Crisler, crislermj@gmail.com

Sunday, May 25, 7:30 am - 9:30 am, Bird Sit at Elsen's Woods, West DuPage Woods, Winfield

Registration not required. If you want to be informed of any last-minute changes, email the leader with your contact information.

This is a field trip for anyone who finds the long walks of our regular field trips too difficult or who would just like a less vigorous birding experience but still share the camaraderie of fellow birders. Bring your folding lawn chairs, binoculars and field guides. We will meet and sit as a group and look for spring migrants and any birds that come to us! Birders of all levels are welcome. Elsen's Hill is part of West DuPage Woods. We will meet at the Gary's Mill Road parking lot. Take Winfield Rd. to Gary's Mill Rd. Go west on Gary's Mill Rd. to the Preserve parking lot entrance on the north side of the road. Bring a lawn chair, water, bug spray and dress for the weather. [West DuPage Woods](#)

Leader: Natalie McFaul, natcatcher7@gmail.com

Sunday, May 25, 7:00 am - 10:00 am, Springbrook Prairie Forst Preserve, Naperville

Registration with the leader is required.

The trip will look for late spring migrants and grassland birds. We will concentrate on finding late spring migrants such as Mourning and Connecticut Warblers as well as the grassland birds that nest at Springbrook. Meet at Model Aircraft Parking Lot on the west side of Plainfield-Naperville Road about 0.5 mi south of 75th Street. Wear appropriate footwear to go off-trail and bring/use insect repellent for ticks and possibly mosquitos.

Leader: Joe Sucheki, dbcsec2020@gmail.com

Monday, May 26, 8:00 am - 11:00 am, Bike & Bird, Greene Valley, Naperville

Registration with the leader is required. Limit of 10 participants.

Greene Valley has a lot of great habitats in it, but you can't really cover more than one in a typical field trip due to distance. We will bike around the preserve to hit as much as possible in one run. There will be a slight emphasis on areas more likely to have migrating warblers. Expect to ride about 5 miles with a few light hills (no overlook). We will be sticking to the limestone/paved trails. Meet at the north end of the Greene Road parking lot near the information sign and trailhead.

Leader: Matt Crisler, crislermj@gmail.com

Wednesday, May 28, 7:00 am - 10:30 am, Waterfall Glen/Poverty Prairie, Lemont

Registration is not required.

We'll be looking for shrubland/grassland birds on a walk of 2.5-3 miles on limestone trails only, through the prairie and savanna. Optional continuation through the oak woodland-kettle pond area for later migrants. Hat, water bottle and snack highly recommended. Meet at the Lemont Rd parking lot at 101st Street (Google Maps Waterfall Glen Parking Lot #3.) Text or call leader with any questions.

Leader: Vicky Sroczynski, 630-297-9512

Sunday, June 1, 8:00 am - 10:00 am, Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, Will County

Registration required. Limit of 20 participants.

Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie is one of the premier grassland birding spots in the area. The area is littered with abandoned munitions bunkers, as well as fantastic grassland species such as Henslow's Sparrow, Bell's Vireo, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Blue Grosbeak. This walk will primarily take place on gravel trails but may venture into tall grass. Dress appropriately and bring bug spray and sun protection. We will meet at the Iron Bridge Trailhead on Route 53 in Elwood, Illinois. The entrance to the trailhead parking lot is about a mile south of Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery and the intersection of Hoff Road and Route 53.

Leader: Robert Perez, robertperez787@gmail.com

Thursday, June 5, 7:00 am - 10:00 am, McKee Marsh, Warrenville

Registration is not required.

Join us for a walk around one of DuPage county's premier birding hotspots to look for resident birds, waterfowl and spring migrants. This approximately 3-mile walk will be on crushed limestone and earthen trails; wear appropriate shoes and clothing. Meet at the visitor parking lot on the north side of

Mack Rd., located between Winfield Rd. and Rt. 59 in Warrenville.

Leaders: Steve and Kathy Mineck, cell for same day questions: 630-254-4077

SAVE THE DATE!

You Are All Invited to the DBC's 40th Birthday Party!!

DBC members, it is time to celebrate! Newest members, founding members, and all the members in between, come and celebrate the DuPage Birding Club's 40th Birthday! There will be lunch. There will be cake! And there will be the Forty Birds in Forty Minutes Scavenger Hunt!

Date: June 14, 2025

Time: 9:30 am - Forty Birds in Forty Minutes Scavenger Hunt

11:30 am - Lunch served

Place: Blackwell Forest Preserve, North Shelter

Please RSVP by June 8. [CLICK HERE TO RSVP](#)

We will meet at 9:30 am at the Blackwell Forest Preserve's North Shelter for the first ever Forty Birds in Forty Minutes Scavenger Hunt. This will be a fun birding adventure for all levels of birders. Don't forget to bring your binoculars!

We will serve a hot dog lunch at 11:30. If you cannot make the Forty Birds in Forty Minutes Scavenger hunt at 9:30, you are welcome to come just for lunch. Though why would you want to miss a scavenger hunt??

Please come! Wouldn't it be fun if all 350+ DBC members, your fellow birders, came together to celebrate forty years of field trips, meetings, and the joy of birding?

Any questions contact: Andie Duffy aduffy99@ameritech.net

Directions:

Use Blackwell FP main entrance on Butterfield Road (about ¼ mile west of Winfield Rd.) To get to the North Shelter take the Main Drive to the north end of Silver Lake (past the boat rental place). The shelter is located just before the campground entrance. [Blackwell FP Webpage](#)

Additional birding opportunities:

Accessible Bird Walks at Cantigny are open to birders of all levels and abilities. If you enjoy a leisurely walk on beautiful grounds, there is plenty of capacity! Check the Cantigny calendar every month for dates at <https://cantigny.org/events/>. A parking fee of \$6.00 will apply; no fee for the walk itself.

May walks are scheduled for May 8, at 3:00 pm and May 14, at 8:00 pm.

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.

Will County Forest Preserves District offers birding events: <https://www.reconnectwithnature.org/>

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 Cullerton, stephcullert@yahoo.com

First of the “Birding Adventures” Series Now Live



Plate-billed Mountain Toucan
Photo by Mike Warner

Take an armchair birding tour of Ecuador in the first of our new Birding Adventures series, now live on the DBC Education Channel at: <https://youtu.be/p6qQPFUaB7U>

The series will feature a travelogue of trips that members have taken recently, including photos, details on logistics, guides, lodging and dining, and more to help you plan your own version of the trip. The initial Birding Adventure comes from Mike and Karen Warner, who spent 10 days birding in Ecuador this year.

We invite you to share your Birding Adventure too! Please contact Mike Warner at mwarner2543@gmail.com and let's get started!

Next Up on Birding Adventures: Costa Rica May 22

We're excited to announce the next installment in our Birding Adventures series will be Costa Rica. Costa Rica is a great country to visit either as a first-time tropical birder or a seasoned tropical veteran. Although it may be a small country, it has a lot to offer in terms of both environmental and species diversity. Denis Kania will be our presenter. Denis has taken several trips to the country across a wide variety of formats and in addition to information about the country in general will be including

comparisons of the different ways you can explore it. This meeting will be presented online via Zoom only. Register using the link below. We hope to see you online on May 22!

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/knyfW5hwTSy6FsyJIGSWwg>

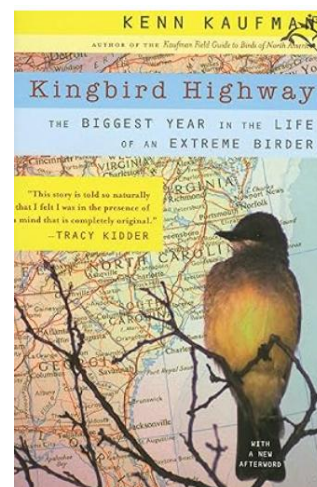
Welcome, New Members

Mike Carroll	LaGrange Park
Lauren Foster	Wheaton
Laurie Lasseter	Woodridge
Dennis Lyons	Glen Ellyn
John and Kathy Redding	Naperville
Kristi Rice	Bloomington

DBC Readers to Discuss *Kingbird Highway*

The DBC Book Club's next read is *Kingbird Highway: The Biggest Year in the Life of an Extreme Birder*, the much-praised account by Kenn Kaufman of his yearlong "Big Year" adventure as a teenager exploring America in the '70s. A unique coming of age story, the memoir recounts how the "thrill of the chase" evolved into a quest to connect with nature on a deeper level.

The Book Club will meet June 10. For details on the meeting, contact Mike Warner at mwarner2543@gmail.com.



Member Musings on Birding and Nature, Part 2

The March read, *The Comfort of Crows* by Judith Renkl, was a big hit with DBC Book Club members. Several members contributed musings of their own to share with the group. They are so delightful to read and with content that resonates, so we're going to reprint them in the next few issues of *Drummings*. This is the second of three musings:

Donna Kubik: Conk-la-ree!

It's late February when a piercing *conk-la-ree* cuts through the chilly morning air. My heart soars – I instinctively think, *It's spring!*

Conveniently, I forget that in a few months, I'll be adjusting my usual route to avoid the Red-winged Blackbirds' nesting area, steering clear of their inevitable dive-bombing—or worse, a sharp peck from their impressively pointed black bills. Still, I can't help but admire the males for their fierce devotion to protecting their families.

One summer, I was lucky enough to spot a fledgling in a marsh I often visited. Much later in the season, once I was certain nesting was long over, I donned my hip waders and took a closer look at the abandoned nests. Up close, I could see the female's meticulous craftsmanship, how she wove coarse materials around several upright cattail stems, layering more on top to form a sturdy, cup-shaped home.

This season has barely begun, yet I'm already looking forward to that first *conk-la-ree* of next year!



Photos by Donna Kubik

Emma Robinson: Winter Changes

(based on The Knothole, from The Comfort of Crows)

"Why don't we go for a hike today?" My father asked when he introduced me to winter. Together, we laced up our boots, donned hats, scarves, and gloves, and left our suburb behind for a metro park.

From that day, winter became the season for hiking. A hike may end with achingly cold fingers, and wind-chapped cheeks, but there was always a warmth to be found in time shared together. Winter was for snow making the world glimmer, for seeing birds on bare branches that I had never seen between summertime leaves. It was the season in which the world seemed, for once, blissfully quiet.

It's been a decade since I first met winter as that time for quiet wonder. Since then, she is far less reliable, a season not just for snow boots but for rain boots, not just for insulation but for a complex system of laying winterized outer layers over clothes normally not seen until spring. The thaw comes not at once, but is interspersed between periods of deep, bracing cold.

For 23 years I have been building my life. Childhood, school, dreams. I always imagined the building of a nest, adventures to faraway places, and expeditions to the mundanities of a career. But I enter the next quarter of my life on tiptoes.

In some ways, I have become a caretaker, an emotional support to a father who suffered a stroke and received two cancer diagnoses within a single year, within the same year I graduated college and moved

away. I have lived enough to see how the body and mind can betray someone seemingly healthy, how our bones are our forever resting place, our testament to mortality.

I still have so much work that matters to me. So many friends to meet, so many wonders still to witness. Yet with each 50-degree day in January, I watch these wonders slip away. With every unnatural disaster... each wildfire, every inch of acidifying seawater creeping on the shore trying to reclaim its wildness. Every pigeon left behind in the rapture of domestication, every creature whose final breath was relinquished between headlights and screeching tires. My hope slips when my father looks to our backyard trees he's tended to for 25 years, observing, "something's not right," when the leaves bud, burst, crisp, and shed out of sync with the time he has known.

Pursuing wonder, I moved away from those childhood trees, and commune with the local forest preserves, instead. On most early winter mornings, I drag myself from my sleepy haze and drive to a park by my apartment. Instead of hiking, I run, my new practice of meditation. The rhythm of pounding foot under pounding foot as the sun rises over the creek is what I would consider a spiritual experience. It is my time to simply be, and bid "good morning," to my new neighbors, the oak trees.

This winter has been especially long and dark. It has been harder to find warmth in a place so far away from family.

But at the end of my first winter in Chicago, now when I run in the parks, and greet the oaks, I hear hope again. The Song Sparrow sings at dawn, reminding me that, "for all that has changed, I'm still here."

DBC Auction to Return October 9, Seeking Volunteers

A DBC tradition returns in 2025 with the DBC Auction to be held Thursday evening, October 9, at Cantigny Park. The last auction was 2019, just before the pandemic arrived and shut down in-person meetings and social gatherings.

The primary goal of the auction is to raise funds that can be put to use for programs like Outreach and to fund our generous Grants and Donations program, which typically funds \$2,500-3,500 a year in scholarships and conservation projects. A secondary goal is to have a boatload of fun bidding on birdy artwork, gift baskets, feeders and gear; to buy chances in a fun raffle; and to browse the Birding Bazaar, where gently used member-donated items can be had for nominal amounts. Socializing with friends is lively, and everyone can go home with something!

This year's auction team will be led by Diann Bilderback and Jeff Reiter, who are recruiting for the core planning team right now. Planning activities include soliciting donations from area vendors, collecting and sorting member donations, thinking through logistics, creating the auction booklet, and supervising the event volunteer team. The team will start planning in earnest in July. **If you'd like to be part of the planning team, contact Diann Bilderback at diann.bilderback@yahoo.com or Jeff Reiter at jreiter@wordsonbirds.com.**

In the meantime, save those gently used birdy items you are ready to pass on for the bazaar tables. We'll collect them in September.

Refresh Your Warbler ID Skills on the DBC Education Channel

The DBC Education Channel library has multiple titles in its collection that can help you refresh your warbler identification skills just in time for the May 10 Spring Bird Count and the busy migration season. Check it out!

Yellow Female Warblers – Hooded Warbler, Wilson’s Warbler, and Yellow Warbler females can be somewhat difficult to tell apart. You’ll find some useful tips in this tutorial.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EpYh2FIdurY>

Thrushes – One tutorial will walk you through the finer points of visual identification and the other will help you to sort through the thrush vocalizations.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hluC2VcGAi8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MX9Po8ZiWBM>

Connecticut Warbler vs. Mourning Warbler – With a bit of luck you will have an encounter with one of these skulking warbler species. Be ready to make a positive ID even if you only have a fleeting look.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0tOnsZWWFX8>

Vireos – Another group that can be a bit confusing both visually and by vocalization. Fortunately, there are two tutorials in our library that can answer many of your ID questions.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NbQG9MzNhD8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xoznOErXUCU>

Spring '25 Photo Contest Now Open

The DBC is looking for pictures of birds taken between March 1, 2025, and May 31, 2025. 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.

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:

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

[DBC Photo Contest Entry Form](#)

2. 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.

If you would like to look at past DBC Photo Contest winners [CLICK HERE](#). Good luck! Winners will be announced in the July Drummings.

News from the Forest Preserve

Warrenville Trails: Design, funding and implementation projects are proposed for three trail connection projects involving Blackwell and McDowell Grove through communities in Warrenville. The trail projects are basic widened sidewalks as connecting links.

1. Batavia Road Extension would be on the east side of Batavia Rd connecting the Cenacle Trail to the Senior apartment complex at the corner of Batavia Rd. and Butterfield Rd.
2. Diehl Road Extension would connect along the south side of Diehl Road at Cantera west across the bridge traversing the West Branch River. This connects the restaurant/shopping area to the West Branch DuPage River Trail.
3. Maple Hill to Fox Hollow would connect the subdivision through the Forest Preserve property south to the local road and up to Mack Road. There is a second option for this trail that would be along Rt. 59 as well.

The Forest Preserve is not the lead agency on these efforts. They will however waive fees, and the District will also review and approve trail plans and provide details. Warrenville will take the lead on projects 1 and 3 while the county would be project 2. These plans will be completed over the next 10-20 years.

Blackwell and West DuPage Woods: An exciting connection between Blackwell and West DuPage Woods Forest Preserve crossing both the West Branch of DuPage River and Roosevelt Road is well under the phase II engineering and planning stage. Some private properties were acquired to complete the planning. IDOT must approve plans which have been ongoing for over 5 years. The hope is that all approval will be completed by fall 2025 to begin the initial phases of work. A concern is that costs may have increased since initial grant approval. Staff will be submitting final plans to IDOT in July to determine cost estimates.

30 years of Bird Monitoring at Springbrook Prairie: Joe Suchecki has been monitoring Springbrook Prairie for over 30 years, creating very valuable data and research in the process. Joe monitors early in the morning in early June when it is the peak of breeding season. There are seven species of grassland

birds in the study: Bobolink, Henslow's Sparrow, Sedge Wren, Grasshopper Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, and Dickcissel.

Grassland birds are important to monitor because they are declining more quickly than other groups of birds. Declining numbers of birds in general has been seen less at Springbrook than other areas that are also monitored such as Midewin Tall Grass Prairie. The study looked at "cool fields" and "restored fields." Some birds didn't show a dramatic difference while some such as the Bobolink showed improvement in restored fields. Grasshopper Sparrows, although highly diminished in mowed fields, show slight increase in some sightings. Tree and shrub removal is key to making their preferred habitat. In summary: fields dominated by short grasses with at least 50 acres open around the edges are best for these grassland birds. Avoiding the placement of trails through their nesting areas is preferred as well.



2025 DBC Executive Committee Members

President: Thelma Hulka
Vice President: Matt Crisler
Treasurer: Rich Gaul
Recording Secretary: Mark Freeburg
Corresponding Secretary: Donnalyn Quint
Director: Rob Thomas
Director: Lindsay Vacek
Director: Jim Mateski

2025 Committee Chairs

Audio-Visual Coordinator: Robert Perez
Bird Conservation Network: Glenn Gabanski,
Jim Green, Diann Bilderback, Glenn Perricone
Christmas Count Coordinator: Jeff Chapman
Communications: Diann Bilderback, Steve Constantelos
DBC Apparel: Steve Constantelos
DBC Book Club: Mike Warner
Drummings Newsletter: Diann Bilderback
Email Distribution: Bob Fisher
Facebook: John Cebula
Field Trips: Sherry Courtney, Stephanie Cullerton

Flickr: Urs Geiser
Forest Preserve Liaison: Dennis Streicher
Grants and Donations: Vera Miller
Hospitality: Bonnie Graham
Instagram: Henry Meade
Lending Library: Jeff Smith
Membership Directory: Susan Kaley
Outreach/Youth Education: Mike Warner
Photo Contest: Mike Warner
Spring Bird Count: Joe Suchecki
Twitter: Vera Miller
Webmasters: Barb Dougan, Nancy Allured
YouTube Ed Channel: Denis Kania, Steve Constantelos

2025 Meeting Schedule

January 9	July 10
March 13	September 11
April 10	October 9 (Auction)
May 15*	November 13

*Date change