

# Drummings February 2026

## President's Letter



### Next Meeting

March 12, 2026

In person and via Zoom  
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, all,

I hope you're all finding ways to stay warm—it's been a brutal week or so going into writing this letter. I've unfortunately had to deal with several non-DBC emergencies over the past few weeks, so this month's letter is going to be brief.

I know I've been begging and pleading for someone to step up and help out with the VP role. I want to offer a compromise role that I really hope someone would be willing to take on. The job is simply to coordinate the speakers for our club meetings this year. At this point, we've only got six more to do, one of which is Members' Night already in the works. While you're welcome to choose the speakers, I also have a wide range of suggestions from the membership that you can run with, so in many ways I'm just asking for some help with booking the speakers. You do not have to take on the responsibility of becoming President Elect, nor do you have to commit for any particular term. I'd just really appreciate some help to keep things going. Please consider pitching in, especially if you're among the many in our membership who enjoy attending the meetings. Like any other club function, meetings happen because someone's volunteering their time to make them happen.

Thanks,  
Matt

[crislermj@gmail.com](mailto:crislermj@gmail.com)

## Members' Night March 12: Call for Presenters

The DuPage Birding Club's annual Members' Night will be held on Thursday, March 12, in person and via Zoom. All DuPage Birding Club photographers are invited to share their favorite bird photos and stories with fellow members. The photos can be from anywhere, and any level of photographic expertise is invited!

Presenters will have the option of presenting in person or remotely via Zoom. Each presentation will be limited to 10 minutes, so please be selective and limit yourself to something you can cover in that window (typically 10-15 images is a good guideline). We will have time for up to 10 presentations, so it will be first-come, first-served for registration. If you've never presented live or in Zoom, don't worry! We'll have support available both leading up to

and during the presentation. To keep things organized, here's the process from registration to presentation:

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- Registration: Submissions are currently being accepted. Email Matt Crisler ([crislermj@gmail.com](mailto:crislermj@gmail.com)) with the presenter's name, presentation title and/or topic, expected number of pictures/slides, and a brief summary of what you intend to talk about.
- Matt will confirm you are registered assuming space is still available.
- Once confirmed, put your slide show together. PPTX (PowerPoint) format is strongly preferred; coordinate with Matt if you need to use an alternative format.
- Practice your presentation and verify you'll stay within the 10min limit! This is important to make sure we stay on schedule during the meeting.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to reach out to Matt. Thanks in advance to everyone who can participate, and we'll see you all on March 12th!

## **March 12, Meeting—In Person and Via Zoom: Members' Night!**

### **Presented by DBC Members**

Members' Night is a don't-miss meeting in which DBC members share their birding adventures both near and far in entertaining 10-minute presentations. Attend in person for the best experience or join via Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tCanUuazTL-HVyQeB2dJhQ>

## **In Case You Missed It: January 8 Meeting**

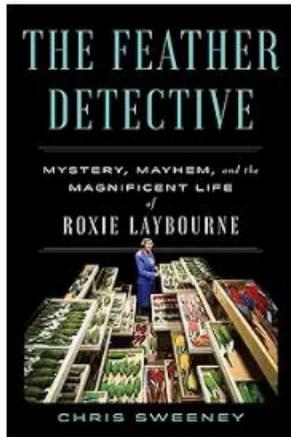
### **Motus: Using Radio Telemetry to Advance Our knowledge of Animal Movements in the Midwest**

While radio telemetry is a tool ecologists have used to study wildlife movement for the past few decades, the development of a collaborative network of antennas and projects across the western



hemisphere (Motus) is advancing the data we can collect on the movements of migratory species. View this presentation by Michael Avara, University of Illinois, for an overview of Motus, its current use and presence in Illinois, and examples of some of the data that has been collected to address scientific questions related to movement ecology: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oDVIT53n36Y>

## Now Reading—*The Feather Detective: Mystery, Mayhem, and the Magnificent Life of Roxie Laybourne*



Lauded by multiple sources as one of the best nonfiction books of 2025, *The Feather Detective: Mystery, Mayhem, and the Magnificent Life of Roxie Laybourne*, by Chris Sweeney, shares the fascinating biography of the world's first forensic ornithologist. Using nothing more than her microscope and bits of feathers, Smithsonian scientist Roxie Laybourne investigated deadly airplane crashes and helped prosecute murderers, kidnappers, and poachers. She broke down barriers for women in science and pioneered a new field in forensics. "A biography that reads like a novel," said The Wall Street Journal. This one promises to be a great read to start the new year!

For details on the meeting, contact Mike Warner at [mwarner2543@gmail.com](mailto:mwarner2543@gmail.com).

## Annual Membership Renewal Time: PAST DUE NOTICE

Your annual membership dues for 2026 were due on 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 2026 dues may now be paid in several 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.

## February 13 – 16 Great Backyard Bird Count

Launched in 1998 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, the Great Backyard Bird Count was the first online community-science project to collect data on wild birds and to display results in near real-time. Now, more than 160,000 people worldwide join the count to create an annual snapshot of the distribution and abundance of birds. To participate, tally the numbers and species of birds at a specific location for at least 15 minutes. You can count from any location, anywhere in the world, for as long as you wish! Learn more about the GBBC here: <https://www.birdcount.org/>. For a real treat, watch the world map light up as people submit checklists: [global map of real-time checklists](#).

## Make a Difference for Birds: Fermilab Workday March 14

*An invitation from Denis Kania*

I have been working on a restoration project at Fermilab for the past few years. We are restoring a once-productive shrubland that has become overgrown with invasives as well as trees. Neither is suitable for critical species such as Bell's Vireo and Yellow-breasted Chat. The area we are working on is approximately 47 acres. We are wrapping up the first section of the shrubland which is about 17 acres. There is a lot left to do! This is a great opportunity for birders to do something positive for our local bird populations.

**I would like to invite the DBC membership to come out for a workday on March 14 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at Fermilab.** We would be working in a public area which simplifies entry. All that would be required to get in the gate is a real ID or passport for everyone in the vehicle. All supplies would be provided as well as snacks. Bring your favorite work gloves and water. The activity will include using a hand saw or loppers to cut down invasive shrubs with a maximum diameter of 3 inches, hauling brush, and stacking brush.

**The work we are doing would make a world of difference for Bell's Vireo and Yellow-breasted Chat. These critical species would benefit as well as Gray Catbird, Brown Thrasher, Willow Flycatcher, Field Sparrow, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow Warbler, and other species.**

**No experience is necessary!** Fermilab ecologists will be on hand to share the benefits of this effort as well as guidance on species removal and treatment after cutting. It's meant to be an easy exercise that anyone can participate in. There will be plenty of helpful, knowledgeable people around to answer questions and provide guidance.

To sign up, please email me at [dikan36@gmail.com](mailto:dikan36@gmail.com). Once you sign up, I will provide instructions on entering Fermilab. I hope you'll decide to join me on March 14 for this important restoration work and enjoy an early spring morning in the field!

## Outreach

**Darien Garden Club, "Spring Gardening Inspiration" Event**

**March 7, Chuck's Chateau Orleans Banquets, Darien, 8:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m.**

DBC will host an exhibit table at this event, which features multiple speakers, a luncheon, and exhibits. Rob Thomas will represent the club. Darien Garden Club has more than 100 members. To register or learn more information about this event, visit: <https://dariengardenclub.com/events>.

## Welcome, New Members!

Joan Gumbel	River Forest
Frank Hayes	Westmont
Kathryn and Thomas Konopka	Naperville

Susan Lewis	Woodridge
Lori Overman	Naperville
Carl and Renate Slaughter	Brookfield
Karen Supel	Aurora

## Annual Financial Report from the Treasurer

Each February, DBC's Treasurer files a report with the DBC membership with an accounting of our financial status. This year's report prepared by Treasurer Rich Gaul follows.

<b>DuPage Birding Club</b>	
<b>2025 Treasurer's Report</b>	
<b>Income:</b>	
Dues	\$ 6,090
Donations received	650
Auction income	7,969
Other income	1
<b>Total income</b>	<b>14,710</b>
<b>Expenses:</b>	
Donations	150
Grants	2,462
Liability insurance	1,354
Meeting room rent	520
Zoom	160
Speakers	379
Website	2,016
PayPal	306
Auction expense	1,565
Member hospitality events	1,872
Post office box	170
Supplies	29
<b>Total expense</b>	<b>10,983</b>
<b>Net annual operations</b>	<b>3,727</b>
<b>Total assets, beginning of year</b>	<b>9,289</b>
<b>Total assets, end of year</b>	<b>\$ 13,016</b>

## 2025 Grants and Donations

In keeping with the DBC tradition of giving, the club provided \$2,612 in grants and donations in 2025. This included renewal of our coalition membership in the Bird Conservation Network and an IOS grant of \$2,462 to student Auriel Fournier, who will develop and test automated processing for recordings that can detect King Rails. Here is the full abstract of Auriel's proposal:

### Development of automated processing for recordings to detect King Rails

King Rails have experienced significant population decline over the past several decades, especially in the Upper Mississippi River/Great Lakes Region and action is needed to sustain King Rails across the region and in Illinois. It is challenging currently to evaluate habitat restoration and management impacts on King Rails because detecting King Rails if they are present at a site is difficult due to their secretive nature. Automated Recording Units can address some of these challenges, but they need to be tested for each species to assess their biases and effectiveness. I've done this work for other marsh bird species, and here propose developing a custom algorithm for King Rail that can be used to process many hours of Automated Recording Unit recordings. I am working with the marsh bird committee within the Upper Mississippi/Great Lakes Joint Venture where we want to increase the resiliency of King Rail populations (increase population and increase number of places with King Rails). In this proposal we would develop and then test an algorithm for detecting King Rails in audio recordings, which would allow the Joint Venture to monitor wetlands across the state and region and ultimately inform workshops with wetland managers. Link to full Project Proposal Document:

[https://drive.google.com/open?id=1ZBDNTqeTXIsdxmFsj2dIVxMvLDf1C\\_LV](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1ZBDNTqeTXIsdxmFsj2dIVxMvLDf1C_LV)

## The "Birder's Notebook," Life Lessons from Bob Andrini

The Chicagoland birding community lost one of its luminaries with the passing in November of Bob Andrini, birding enthusiast, educator, respected naturalist, and mentor to many. Bob was president of



Kane County Audubon 1996-2019 and was also a long-time member of DBC. In 2020, Bob was named an Illinois Audubon Society Hero, a distinction reserved for individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to conservation and education across the state. A hiking trail and commemorative bench at Hickory Knolls Natural Area in St. Charles honor both Bob and his late wife Kathy for their years of volunteerism and passion for birding and educating.

Bob began Birder's Notebook in 2016. Today, we bring you a final entry, courtesy of his daughter, Geri, who writes: "His legacy is not just in the photographs or the checklists, but in the way he showed us to keep looking, keep learning and keep sharing. We continue the story he began by pursuing nature, cherishing the birds and nurturing family and friends."

A PDF sharing Bob's life lessons accompanies this newsletter. We encourage you to have a look and enjoy his very wise counsel on living, birding, and appreciating the wonder of our world.

## 2025 Fermilab-Batavia Christmas Bird Count Results

By Jeff Chapman

On December 13, 2025, 112 birders and one feeder watcher counted every bird they could see and hear within the 15-mile circle during the 50<sup>th</sup> Fermi-Batavia CBC. Eighty-one species were observed in the count, below our 10-year average. We had record high counts for American Robin, Fox Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow and White-throated Sparrow! Thank you to all the area captains and counters in making this year another successful count!

3,383	Canada Goose	3	Northern Shrike
1	Trumpeter Swan	195	Blue Jay
3	Wood Duck	70	American Crow
2	Gadwall	255	Black-capped Chickadee
3,468	Mallard	6	Tufted Titmouse
36	American Black Duck	4	Horned Lark
2	Green-winged Teal	2	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
3	Ring-necked Duck	5	Golden-crowned Kinglet
153	Common Goldeneye	19	Red-breasted Nuthatch
1	Bufflehead	227	White-breasted Nuthatch
6	Hooded Merganser	44	Brown Creeper
53	Common Merganser	10	Winter Wren
1	Ring-necked Pheasant	2	Carolina Wren
1	Wild Turkey	3,294	European Starling
360	Rock Pigeon	49	Eastern Bluebird
399	Mourning Dove	10	Hermit Thrush
1	Killdeer	2,338	American Robin – RECORD HIGH (1,715 – 2013)
2	Wilson's Snipe	306	Cedar Waxwing
78	Ring-billed Gull	1,077	House Sparrow
112	American Herring Gull	278	House Finch
1	Double-crested Cormorant	15	Purple Finch
38	Great Blue Heron	2	Redpoll
1	Black-crowned Night-heron (TIED HC- 6 YEARS)	29	Pine Siskin
16	Northern Harrier	245	American Goldfinch
2	Sharp-shinned Hawk	5	Lapland Longspur
23	Cooper's Hawk	40	Snow Bunting
31	Bald Eagle	682	American Tree Sparrow
1	Red-shouldered Hawk (TIED HC – 4 YEARS)	33	Fox Sparrow – RECORD HIGH (30 – 2012)
75	Red-tailed Hawk	1,035	Dark-eyed Junco
4	Rough-legged Hawk	47	White-crowned Sparrow – RECORD HIGH (41-1998)
1	Eastern Screech-owl	428	White-throated Sparrow – RECORD HIGH (315-2004)
13	Great Horned Owl	50	Song Sparrow
3	Barred Owl	6	Swamp Sparrow
3	Long-eared Owl	1	Eastern Towhee
19	Belted Kingfisher	4	Red-winged Blackbird
4	Red-headed Woodpecker	1	Common Grackle
5	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	8	Yellow-rumped Warbler
253	Red-bellied Woodpecker	398	Northern Cardinal
222	Downy Woodpecker		
76	Hairy Woodpecker		
3	Pileated Woodpecker – TIED HC – 3 YEARS)		
43	Northern Flicker		
20	American Kestrel		

## 2025 Greene Valley Hawkwatch (GVHW) Results

By Bob Fisher

It was another successful year at the Greene Valley Hawkwatch! One or more of our dedicated volunteer counters/observers were on the hill for a record 640 hours during 2025; thanks especially to the indefatigable Jeff Smith, who personally logged 575 hours—up almost daily, scanning, counting, then logging/entering data in real time, providing eBird checklists of our nonfactor flybys. He was ably supported by the other counters and observers who weren't able to put in quite as much time but helped greatly in spotting and counting on many occasions. Our GVHW hawkwatching team registered an aggregated 1651 hours—a new record!



Juvenile Male Harrier. Photo by Jeff Smith

Viewing conditions were tough this fall—many blue dome days, many days with easterly winds, especially during the Broad-winged Hawk migration time window. We counted 1,779 raptors in 640 hours on the hill. Our 2025 total was 600+ higher than 2024's all-time low but well below GVHW's long-term running average.



Photo by Stan Zatarski

Excluding the variable year-to-year Broad-winged Hawk numbers, 2025's 2.72 raptors/hr. rate is 42 percent below the 20-year average of 4.66/hr. One new species high count was set in our 20<sup>th</sup> year of the GVHW, 114 Bald Eagles, two more than in 2019, our previous high. One all-time low: 202 Red-tailed Hawks! Even Turkey Vultures were less abundant than normal, almost 50 percent below their long-term average. Fortunately, inclement weather caused count cancellations on just one day (snowed out on 11/29).

On our snow-capped last day of the Count, two of us were rewarded for navigating the drifts and getting to the top of the hill: a mixed flock (300-500) of longspurs, buntings (lots of distinctive juveniles) and a few larks PLUS 7,000+ cranes (including 6 Whooping Cranes, 5 together in one small chain), and two Golden Eagles, both eagles loosely associating with the Sandhill flocks.



Photo by Stan Zatarski

The annual Greene Valley Hawkwatch is now up to 196 species recorded over our 20-year history, with two new species this year—Tennessee Warbler and American Coot. It also shows you that you can see a lot of birds just sitting in one place!

Gr. White-fronted Goose	Ferruginous Hawk	Downy Woodpecker	Nashville Warbler
Snow Goose	Rough-legged Hawk	Hairy Woodpecker	Common Yellowthroat
Cackling Goose	<b>Am. Coot</b>	Northern Flicker	Magnolia Warbler
Canada Goose	Yellow Rail	Pileated Woodpecker	Blackpoll Warbler
Mute Swan	Sandhill Crane	American Kestrel	Palm Warbler
Trumpeter Swan	Whooping Crane	Merlin	Pine Warbler
Tundra Swan	Black-necked Stilt	Gyr Falcon	Am. Redstart
Wood Duck	Black-bellied Plover	Peregrine Falcon	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Gadwall	Am Golden-Plover	Prairie Falcon	Wilson's Warbler
American Wigeon	Semipalmated Plover	Olive-sided Flycatcher	Eastern Towhee
American Black Duck	Killdeer	Eastern Wood-Pewee	American Tree Sparrow
Mallard	Spotted Sandpiper	<u>Least Flycatcher</u>	Grasshopper sparrow
Blue-winged Teal	Solitary Sandpiper	Eastern Phoebe	Chipping Sparrow
Northern Shoveler	Greater Yellowlegs	Say's Phoebe	Clay-colored Sparrow
Green-winged Teal	Lesser Yellowlegs	Eastern Kingbird	Field Sparrow
Northern Pintail	Upland Sandpiper	Northern Shrike	Vesper Sparrow
Ring-necked Duck	Hudsonian Godwit	<u>Red-eyed Vireo</u>	Lark Sparrow
Greater Scaup	Buff-br Sandpiper	Warbling Vireo	Savannah Sparrow
Black Scoter	Dunlin	Yellow-throated Vireo	Henslow's Sparrow
Common Goldeneye	Least Sandpiper	Blue Jay	Le Conte's Sparrow
Hooded Merganser	Pectoral Sandpiper	American Crow	Fox Sparrow
Common Merganser	Wilson's Snipe	Horned Lark	Song Sparrow
Red-br Merganser	American Woodcock	N. Rough-winged Swallow	Lincoln's Sparrow
Red-throated Loon	Bonaparte's Gull	Purple Martin	Swamp Sparrow
Common Loon	Franklin's Gull	Tree Swallow	White-throated Sparrow
Horned Grebe	Ring-billed Gull	Bank Swallow	White-crowned Sparrow
Double-cr Cormorant	Herring Gull	Barn Swallow	Dark-eyed Junco
Anhinga	Iceland Gull	Cliff Swallow	Summer Tanager
Am. White Pelican	L Black-backed Gull	Cave Swallow	Northern Cardinal
American Bittern	Great Black-backed Gull	<u>Tufted Titmouse</u> - heard	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Least Bittern	Caspian Tern	Black-cap Chickadee	Indigo Bunting
Great Blue Heron	Black Tern	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Dickcissel
Great Egret	Forster's Tern	White-br Nuthatch	Bobolink
Cattle Egret	Rock Pigeon	House Wren	Red-winged Blackbird
Green Heron	Eurasian Collared-Dove	Winter Wren	Eastern Meadowlark
plegadis Ibis sp.	Mourning Dove	Sedge Wren	Western Meadowlark
Turkey Vulture	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Marsh Wren	Yellow-headed Blackbird
Osprey	Great Horned Owl	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	Rusty Blackbird
Golden Eagle	Snowy Owl	Eastern Bluebird	Brewer's Blackbird
Mississippi Kite	Barred Owl	American Robin	Common Grackle
Northern Harrier	Short-eared Owl	Gray Catbird	Brown-headed Cowbird
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Common Nighthawk	European Starling	House Finch
Cooper's Hawk	Eastern Whip-poor-will	American Pipit	Purple Finch
Northern Goshawk	Chimney Swift	Sprague's Pipit	Red Crossbill
Bald Eagle	Ruby-thr Hummingbird	Cedar Waxwing	Common Redpoll
Red-shouldered Hawk	Belted Kingfisher	Lapland Longspur	Pine Siskin
Broad-winged Hawk	Red-head Woodpecker	Smith's Longspur	American Goldfinch
Swainson's Hawk	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Snow Bunting	Evening Grosbeak
Red-tailed Hawk	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	<b>Tennessee Warbler</b>	House Sparrow

For a deep dive on the raptors, check out the following analysis of sightings over the last 20 years. Red highlighting shows low counts, while green shows high counts.

Species	Turkey Vulture	Osprey	Bald Eagle	N. Harrier	Sharp-shinned Hawk	Cooper's Hawk	N. Goshawk	Red-shouldered Hawk	accipiters total	
2025	749	37	114	31	393	54	0	31	447	
2024	375	27	74	23	137	5	0	25	142	
2023	728	39	70	57	442	56	1	31	499	
2022	695	41	88	60	230	48	0	39	278	
2021	935	48	90	48	404	74	0	41	478	
2020	963	46	101	42	353	62	1	37	416	
2019	1021	79	112	58	444	57	2	24	503	
2018	935	70	86	48	331	69	1	27	401	
2017	841	36	69	32	313	91	3	23	407	
2016	546	47	91	47	593	102	2	21	697	
2015	658	43	52	64	340	94	3	29	437	
2014	605	44	100	64	472	82	2	22	556	
2013	1078	30	57	40	563	90	4	37	657	HIGH
2012	763	65	60	75	463	146	3	16	612	COUNTS
2011	512	44	35	52	646	117	5	22	768	IN
2010	306	36	22	69	486	94	6	14	586	GREEN
2009	650	17	21	45	574	124	5	24	703	LOW
2008	510	39	22	50	328	103	2	20	433	COUNTS
2007	471	17	12	60	682	164	10	13	856	IN
2006	185	16	12	45	236	113	2	7	351	RED
20yr total	13526	821	1288	1010	8430	1745	52	503	10227	
20 yr avg.	676	41	64	51	422	87	3	25	511	

Species	Broad-winged Hawk	Red-tailed Hawk	Rough-legged Hawk	Golden Eagle	Am. Kestrel	Merlin	Peregrine Falcon	Unknown raptor	TOTAL	Total minus Broadwings
2025	41	202	13	7	18	35	22	30	1779	1738
2024	26	321	10	3	17	16	14	27	1128	1102
2023	604	291	11	3	18	35	23	50	2462	1858
2022	3544	299	14	3	17	32	17	46	5174	1630
2021	98	472	10	3	16	42	39	50	2373	2275
2020	1868	547	14	2	9	40	31	69	4187	2319
2019	4993	433	10	10	5	46	61	72	7431	2438
2018	423	449	11	4	12	45	46	64	2625	2202
2017	56	656	17	3	8	38	45	63	2286	2230
2016	4271	651	12	5	17	71	70	82	6632	2361
2015	240	559	11	11	5	45	60	47	2261	2021
2014	1596	682	27	7	12	50	28	44	3837	2241
2013	36	986	16	8	8	66	46	54	3119	3083
2012	4432	848	7	5	15	40	19	51	7008	2576
2011	716	836	17	5	22	54	37	42	3162	2446
2010	48	643	31	11	14	31	30	48	1889	1841
2009	73	893	10	3	22	29	40	41	2571	2498
2008	1745	788	17	10	14	31	16	40	3735	1990
2007	687	838	14	3	25	33	32	38	3099	2412
2006	786	318	2	6	5	26	8	27	1794	1008
20yr total	26283	11712	274	112	279	805	684	985	68552	42269
20 yr avg.	1314	586	14	6	14	40	34	49	3428	2113

Here are a few other fun facts:

- Monarchs were seen in small numbers well into November, but no big dragonfly swarm. Green Darners and Black Saddlebags did go by in generally small numbers.
- Our faithful “winter bird companions” were back—Horned Larks, American Pipits, Lapland Longspurs, Snow Buntings; both the latter species kept us company daily in late November.
- 17,600 Sandies flew over during the season, 7,000 plus on 11/30, our last day. Six Whooping Cranes were also a last-day highlight, as were two Golden Eagles.
- Both accipiter species, Coops and Sharpies, bounced back after a very low numbers in '24.

As always, thanks to our dedicated team of volunteers, the DuPage County Forest Preserve District, and Waste Management, for their support of our Count! See you in 2026! Let’s put our eyes on the sky once again!

## More Year-End Reviews: A Look at DBC Field Trips

A DBC strong suit has always been the number and variety of field trips the club sponsors every year. We led 106 field trips in 2025 at 45 locations, making 2025 another banner year. **Shoutouts are due our standout Field Trip Coordinators, Sherry Courtney and Stephanie Cullerton, and to the 19 field trip leaders:**

- Matt Crisler
- Kyle Witkor
- Mike and Karen Warner
- Elena Nelson
- Will Pixler
- Joe Suchecki
- Bonnie Graham
- Bob Fisher
- Henry Mead
- Robert Perez
- Natalie McFaul
- Jeff Chapman
- Natalie McFaul
- Denis Kania
- Nancy Allured
- Vickey Sroczynski
- Thelma Hulka (at Bob's)
- Kathy/Steve Mineck
- Hazem Alkhan
- Mark Freeburg

We request that trip leaders file their trip lists with eBird and share with DuPage Birding Club. Most did, giving us a fascinating roundup of facts and figures from eBird (at right).

What species had the top count of sightings? You guessed it: Canada Goose, with 2,277 birds counted. American Robin was the most frequently reported species, showing up on 84 checklists.

Way to go everyone! Knocking it out of the park!

- ✓ 99 Number of checklists
- ✓ 73 Days with checklists
- ✓ 197 Species
- ✓ 20,736 Birds counted
- ✓ 227.2 Hours
- ✓ 181.8 Miles

## DBC Visits Magee Marsh—2026 Edition

Matt Crisler has generously offered to lead a second trip to Magee Marsh, Ohio, this spring, from **Thursday, May 7, 2025 through Sunday, May 10, 2026**. Magee is known around the world as one of the best places to experience the spring warbler migration but is also notable for the variety of other habitats in close proximity that allow you to see far more than just warblers. This trip is part of our “Special Trips” program, and since space is limited, all potential registrants must have a current membership with the club.

This trip will be less scheduled than last year, with more options to choose your interest and activity level. Matt’s plan is to “*Bird ‘til we drop*,” which means birding from sunrise-ish to sunset, and maybe beyond if there’s reason to. There will be a club group going throughout each day, and participants will have the option to drop in and out as desired. While we’re able to run the trip with one leader, if someone else is willing to volunteer, that’ll expand our options and variety of activities (plus volunteers are guaranteed entry!).

Potential hotspots we’ll visit include the world-famous Magee Boardwalk, Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, Metzger Marsh, Howards Marsh, Oak Openings Preserve, East Harbor State Park, and other places nearby (exact itinerary dependent on the birds!). This trip also coincides with the first week of the “Biggest Week in American Birding” Festival, so members who would like to register to attend any part of those events can do so. Here’s the link: [BWIAB - Home](#)

Additional Logistical Information:

- There is no club fee for this trip. However, travel costs are at the participant's expense. We are currently checking into discounted group rates for lodging, so feel free to ask if you want to know what to budget for.
- The first club event is expected to be the Magee Boardwalk around 7ish on the morning of 5/8. Plan to arrive in the Toledo area on the 7th. Note that the local area is in Eastern Time, so you lose an hour on the way out.
- The last club event is expected to be Oak Openings Preserve in the early afternoon on 5/10. From there, it is approximately a four-hour drive back to the DuPage area.
- Last year’s ebird trip report is here: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/369379>. While we cannot guarantee any particular sighting, this is generally representative of what we’ll be aiming to do this year.

In the interest of fairness to all members, registration for this trip will operate on a lottery system. Here’s the lottery information:

- You may register yourself and one additional person.
  - Entries submitted as pairs will be kept together in the drawing.
  - Exceptions to the pair rule can be made for families travelling with children.
- Each registration should include name, email address, phone number for each participant.

- You may also include your ebird information if you wish to be included on trip checklists
- All entrants must be current members of DBC with dues paid for 2026.
- The lottery is open until March 8th. The drawing will be conducted on March 9th and all entrants will be informed of status then.
- Lottery entries should be sent to Matt Crisler [crislermj@gmail.com](mailto:crislermj@gmail.com). You will receive a confirmation of entry.

Any questions, feel free to contact **Sherry Courtney**, Special Trip Coordinator, at [sherrycourtney10@gmail.com](mailto:sherrycourtney10@gmail.com).

## February (and a Few March) Field Trips

There are opportunities for all types of birders to participate and enjoy. As always, nonmembers are welcome to register after the first of the month. 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](http://www.dupagebirding.org).

**NOTE: When possible last-minute changes are posted on [www.dupagebirding.org/field-trips](http://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/>

### **Wednesday, February 11, 8:00 am – 10:30 am, Fullersburg Woods Forest Preserve, Oak Brook**

Registration with the leader is required. Limit 10 participants. Registration for nonmembers opens on February 1.

Let's visit Fullersburg Woods for a morning of winter birding. This location can be good for winter birds and has a nice trail system with wooded areas and open water most of the winter. Plan on snow and/or ice on the trails and use footwear accordingly.

**Leader: Nancy Allured, [nallured@gmail.com](mailto:nallured@gmail.com)**

**Saturday, February 14, 8:00 am – 10:30 am, McKee Marsh, Warrenville**

**No registration required.**

Join us for a walk around one of DuPage county's premier birding hotspots to look for resident and wintering birds. Hopefully, some waterfowl should be around. 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.

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/Bj3NzyY2zZiJ4L5X6>

**Leader: Kyle Wiktor, (708) 506-5186**

**Sunday, February 15, 3:30 pm – 6:30 pm, Lyman Woods, Downers Grove**

Registration with the leader is required. Limit 15 participants. Registration for nonmembers opens on February 1.

We will be looking for common woodland wintertime residents. Meet at the parking lot on 31st Street. We will conclude the trip with a brief search for the resident Great Horned Owls around and after sunset. Dress warmly as we may be stationary at times. A red flashlight or headlamp is recommended.

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/tY5mCckSims6dzF8A>

**Leader: Matt Crisler, [crislermj@gmail.com](mailto:crislermj@gmail.com)**

**Saturday, February 21, 10:30 am – 3:30 pm, Chautauqua and Emiquon National Wildlife Refuges on the Illinois river near Havana, IL**

Registration with the leader is required.

Snow Geese Spectacular! Chautauqua NWR (and Emiquon NWR across the Illinois River) typically hold tens of thousands of Snow Geese as a stopover point for these waterfowl as they journey northward for their spring migration in mid to late February. Other waterfowl, Greater White-fronted Geese for example, are also likely to be present in very large numbers. The trip starts at Chautauqua, then crosses the river in Havana to visit Emiquon NWR. The trip may also include a short meeting with Forbes Biological Station personnel to learn more about their work at Chautauqua. Lodging is available in Havana for those who wish to stay over. Little walking will be needed; bring warm clothes! Spotting scopes will be useful.

Note: The date is subject to change given information on waterfowl presence from the onsite Illinois Natural History Survey's Forbes Biological Station and weather conditions. Given the distance from DuPage County (an approx. 3 hour drive) CAR POOLING IS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED.

Meet at the entrance to Center Dike Rd off of N. Buzzville Rd. at Chautauqua NWR.

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/sPbWUdLfkDEcRPbM8>

**Leader: Bob Fisher, [bfisher928@aol.com](mailto:bfisher928@aol.com), (630) 985-2956**

**Saturday, February 28, 8:00 am – 11:00 am, Lake Renwick Preserve, Plainfield**

Registration with the leader is required. Limit 8 participants. Registration for nonmembers opens on February 1.

We'll be looking for migrating waterfowl and early nest builders (herons, cormorants and egrets) on the last day before they close the trail for the rookery's breeding season. There is also a pair of nesting eagles. Bring a scope if you have one. We'll be walking a couple of miles on easy, flat gravel and paved trails along Lake Renwick and Turtle Lake.

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/vuVA4cvKFFtRzxo6>

Leader: Elena Nelson, [ladylena76@gmail.com](mailto:ladylena76@gmail.com)

**Saturday March 14, 2026, Fermilab Workday, 8:30 am—11:00 am, Fermilab Natural Areas**

Registration with the leader is required.

Join a morning workday to restore a degraded shrubland at Fermilab and make a difference for birds. We will help clear invasives and restore habitat for Bell's Vireo, Yellow-breasted Chat, Brown Thrashers, and other shrubland birds. All that is required for Fermilab entry is a real ID or passport for each person in the vehicle. Further instructions will be provided upon registration. All supplies will be provided as well as snacks. Bring your favorite work gloves and water. The activity will include using a hand saw or loppers to cut down invasive shrubs with a maximum diameter of 3 inches, hauling brush, and stacking brush. No experience is necessary and there will be Fermilab wildlife specialists on hand to answer questions and advise us. Let's turn out in force and show how DBC members put their love of birds to work!

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/qq45tvw31Geoztq59>

Leader: Denis Kania, [djkan36@gmail.com](mailto:djkan36@gmail.com)

**Saturday, March 21, 6:30 am – 7:00 pm, Mississippi River Trip, Fulton, IL**

Registration with the leader is required. Limit 12 participants. Registration for nonmembers opens on March 1.

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 National Wildlife Refuge will be visited to search for Western Meadowlark and Northern Mockingbird. We will meet in Woodridge in the Jewel-Osco parking lot and caravan together.

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/dFzsVPsMrSN6XXee8>

Leader: Jeff Chapman, [jeffchapman948@gmail.com](mailto:jeffchapman948@gmail.com), (847) 456-2784

**Saturday, March 28, 8:00 am – 11:00 am, Van Patten Woods – Sterling Lake, Zion, IL**

Registration with the leader is required. Limit 8 participants. Registration for nonmembers opens on March 1.

Van Patten Woods is a Lake County Forest Preserve off I-94 just below the Wisconsin border and features Sterling Lake and the Des Plaines River. Grab your cameras and we'll stroll a couple miles on crushed gravel trails around the lake to see Common Loons, Horned Grebes and other migrating waterfowl. There will also be plenty of other returning migrants like Song Sparrows and Red-winged Blackbirds establishing their territories. If you just want to relax and enjoy the view there is also a

wheelchair accessible floating dock with benches. It's an easy, hour-long drive up the tollway. Let me know if you want to meet at the Sterling Lake parking lot or carpool.

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/7ULnk9kqBmx5fvWR7>

Leader: Elena Nelson, [ladylena76@gmail.com](mailto:ladylena76@gmail.com)

### **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.

Area Forest Preserves may have birding opportunities. Check out DuPage at <https://www.dupageforest.org/calendar-of-events>, Cook County at [www.fpdcc.com/events](http://www.fpdcc.com/events), and Will County Forest Preserves District at <https://www.reconnectwithnature.org/>. Area bird clubs also offer additional opportunities, for example, check out Kane County Audubon at <https://kanecountyaudubon.com/>.

**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:**

Stephanie Cullerton, [stephcullert@yahoo.com](mailto:stephcullert@yahoo.com)

Elena Nelson, [ladylena76@gmail.com](mailto:ladylena76@gmail.com)

Sherry Courtney (special trips), [sherrycourtney10@gmail.com](mailto:sherrycourtney10@gmail.com)

## **DBC's Winter/Spring '26 Photo Contest Is Now Open!**

The DBC's Photo Contest has changed from four times per year to two contests each year and is now looking for pictures of birds taken between January 1, 2026, and June 30, 2026. 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 so no categories have been predefined—every entry has a chance to win!

**Note: the judges\* ask that you limit the number of photos you enter to five or less. They usually do not give out more than one award to the same photographer 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.

Good luck! Winners will be announced in the August Drummings.

**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](mailto: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.

**\* We're always looking for more Photo Contest Judges. If you might be interested, email Mike Warner at [mwarner2543@gmail.com](mailto:mwarner2543@gmail.com). No experience necessary!**



## 2026 DBC Executive Committee Members

President: Matt Crisler  
Vice President: OPEN  
Treasurer: Rich Gaul  
Recording Secretary: Robert Perez  
Corresponding Secretary: Donnalyn Quint  
Director: Jim Mateski  
Director: Steve Constantelos  
Director: Elena Nelson

## 2026 Committee Chairs

Bird Conservation Network: Glenn Gabanski, Jim Green, Diann Bilderback, Glenn Perricone  
Christmas Count Coordinator: Jeff Chapman  
Communications: Diann Bilderback  
DBC Apparel: Steve Constantelos  
DBC Book Club: Mike Warner  
Drummings Newsletter: Diann Bilderback  
Email Distribution: Bob Fisher  
Facebook: John Cebula  
Field Trips: Stephanie Cullerton, Elena Nelson, Sherry Courtney (special trips)  
Flickr: Urs Geiser  
Forest Preserve Liaison: Dennis Streicher

## 2026 Meeting Schedule

January 8	July 9
March 12	September 10
April 9	October 8
May 14	November 12

Grants and Donations: Joe Suchecki, Carl Strang, Thelma Hulka, Elena Nelson  
Hospitality: Bonnie Graham  
Instagram: Henry Meade  
Membership Directory: Susan Kaley  
Outreach/Youth Education: Mike Warner  
Photo Contest: Mike Warner  
Spring Bird Count: Joe Suchecki  
Webmasters: Barb Dougan, Frederik Heller  
X: Vera Miller  
YouTube Education Channel: Denis Kania, Steve Constantelos