

Save the Dates for Upcoming Birding Festivals

First up is Chicago's **Urban Birding Festival**, now in its third year, which will be held September 18th – 20th, 2026. Whether you're looking to explore local urban hotspots or join up for one of their highly anticipated boat trips, there is an adventure waiting for all birders of every experience level. There will also be an amazing slate of speakers giving presentations Friday through Saturday at the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, which is the festival's hub. Check out the Festival Guidebook for deadlines and details at <https://www.theurbanbirdingfestival.org/festival-schedule>

Next up, the **Wild Things 2027 Conference** is being held February 27th, 2027, in Rosemont, Illinois.

Wild Things invites nature enthusiasts from across Illinois and neighboring states to learn about the flora, fauna, natural history, and management of the special ecosystems of the Midwest. Attending lets you be part of the community of scientists, volunteers, conservationists, and natural resource professionals who are making a difference for conservation in Illinois.

They are also calling for presentations so if you'd like additional information on that as well as information on the conference itself, all is available on their website at <https://www.wildthings@friendilnature.org>

Outreach News

A variety of organizations reach out to the DuPage Birding Club in search of presentations and programs about birds. The Outreach Committee's members try to fulfill as many requests as possible but find **we are always in need of volunteers**. You don't have to be a birding expert or a polished public speaker to play a role in Outreach activities. Many activities are field trips where a second helpful person would improve the experience for participants. Others give you a chance to engage with the public and share information about the club and the joys of birding.



Photo Courtesy of Mike Warner

Discover what others already know: outreach programs can be fun and rewarding—try it! If you would like to volunteer to assist on one of the opportunities below, please contact Mike Warner at mwarner2543@gmail.com.

Announcing DBC's Winter/Spring '26 Photo Contest Winners!

The winners of DBC's Winter/Spring '26 photo contest have been finalized! The entries were judged by Andie Duffy, Steve Constantelos, and Mike Warner. The committee would like to thank all the photographers for their entries. It was very difficult to narrow it down from 26 entries to these award

winners. We're on the lookout for more judges - if interested contact Mike Warner at mwarner2543@gmail.com.

Best of Show

Photographer: Jackie Tilles

Species: Eastern Towhee

Location: Maple Lake Nature Preserve, Willow Springs, IL

Narrative: My friend Donna and I visit the Little Red School House and Maple Lake every January to see winter birds. Some of the nearby residents feed the birds in a wooded area near Maple Lake. We were very surprised to see this visitor taking part in the feast. He should have headed south. It was a mostly cloudy, windy January day with temperatures in the single digits. Most birders were viewing from their cars. But I felt it was worth the effort to step outside and wait for the sun to emerge in order to capture the color and detail of this beautiful bird.



Brightening A Gloomy Day

Photographer: Laurie Lasseter

Species: American Kestrel

Location: Lockport Prairie, Lockport IL

Narrative: It was a gloomy day and this American Kestrel posed against the darkness of the recently burned prairie. I thought his colors really shone through in that setting.



The Sparkbird Award

Photographer: Julie Wettermann

Species: Roseate Spoonbill

Location: Orlando Wetlands Park, in Christmas, FL

Narrative: I've been trying to capture a good Roseate Spoonbill shot since I started birding in 2021. This guy was my spark bird—beautiful and weird looking and so fun to watch wading and fishing on shore! Adding an extra day to a conference trip to Orlando provided the perfect opportunity. This man-made park provides 1650 acres of excellent wetlands habitat, and an amazing rookery that was full of Egrets, Herons, Ibises, Wood Storks, Night Herons, and of course Spoonbills. I'd highly recommend a stop at this park if you're ever in the Orlando area—it's worth the drive from wherever you are staying! You'll be rewarded by miles of pathways, boardwalks, (occasional gators along the path), and an amazing array of beautiful birds! Maybe even your own spark bird gotcha moment as well!



“An SBC First” Award

Photographer: Diann Bilderback

Species: Lapland Longspur

Location: Northside Park during the Spring Bird Count

Narrative: It was late morning of the Spring Bird Count when I parked my car at Northside Park in Wheaton. I decided to leave my camera in the car since it was heavy and I didn't have high expectations for this busy suburban park. I was dutifully logging the geese, robins, swallows, and other usual suspects when I noticed a sparrow-like bird foraging in the recently cleared edges along one of the lakes. It had a strong rufous nape, black head, wide buffy brow, white belly--WOW. I knew I was on to something but wasn't sure what exactly. I snapped a series of pictures with my phone and then hustled a mile back to my car for my camera. When I returned, he was gone--of course! I searched for a while but had to hightail it back to the car so as not to be late for the lunch with fellow counters.

By now I had narrowed the possibilities and was pretty sure I had a Lapland Longspur. Despite my blurry and really awful pictures, my lunch companions thought so too. SO...I decided to return to the park after lunch with camera in tow. As I approached the location, my hopes cratered as I saw a picnicker had spread out his blanket and was lunching in the very spot where my bird had been. But as I approached, I saw a foraging sparrow-like bird...with a rufous nape! It was my bird and he had returned to the same spot, not 20 feet from the picnicker and where I'd seen him two hours earlier. I was able to get many good pictures of him, which was important since he is a bird rare enough on the SBC that he must be documented. Compiler Joe Suchecki said he is the first Lapland Longspur recorded on the SBC, and he was at Northside Park of all places. He was definitely worth the extra miles I walked that morning back and forth to my car!



Talk To The Tail

Photographer: John Obenland

Species: American Redstart

Location: Naperville, Illinois

Narrative: Many birds seem to be quite shy when it comes to having their picture taken. I have found this to be especially true of the American Redstart. Gorgeous color, but hard to capture in a photo. Why can't they be more like Red-winged Blackbirds, or Grackles, or Cardinals? I caught this guy at Seager Park in the spring singing his song but not really cooperating for a "headshot." So, I settled for what he gave me and counted myself fortunate to get that.



Scintillating Central America

Photographer: Sirimon Reutrakul

Species: Scintillant Hummingbird

Location: Costa Rica

Narrative: One of the smallest hummingbirds, weighing 2-2.3 grams



Free Lunch!

Photographer: Franz Burnier

Species: Brewer's Blackbird female

Location: Wild Winds Bison Preserve, Indiana

Narrative: A female blackbird feasts on a swarm of insects while a female bison rolls her eyes to see who's sitting on her head.



Spring Song

Photographer: James J. Goldsmith

Species of Bird in Photo: American Redstart

Where was the picture taken: The Morton Arboretum, Lisle, Illinois

Narrative: I am a Safety Patrol volunteer at the Morton Arboretum. This past May, while I was walking on the West Side, I first heard and then briefly saw a striking male American Redstart in some brambles by a small stream. I returned the next day with my camera to try to capture his image. After a while, I saw him deep in the brambles, darting from branch to branch. I waited several minutes for him to emerge, and when he finally did, I was able to capture this image before he disappeared back into the brambles.



Here's Looking At You

Photographer: Laurie Lasseter

Species: Canvasback

Location: Rock Run Rookery, Joliet IL

Narrative: I went to Rock Run Rookery in the winter hoping to spot a male Canvasback that had been seen there recently. I was on the boardwalk looking into the lake when suddenly it occurred to me to look behind me—and there he was! He stayed for a few minutes and allowed me to photograph him and then he slowly swam away.



“Billed” To Skim

Photographer: Daryl Kellenberger

Species: Black Skimmer

Location: Grand Isle State Park in Louisiana

Narrative: I was birding the beach looking at all the shorebirds. I was down on my knees in the sand and was focused on taking a photo of some plovers down near the water. Out of the corner of my eye I noticed some motion. I turned my head and was very surprised to see two Black Skimmers had landed on the beach 15-20 feet from me. I quickly turned my body and started snapping photos of them. They finally noticed me and took off in less than a minute. Fortunately, I was able to get some decent photos of them. I liked this one the best because its bill is open and you can really see the size difference between the top and bottom bill.



Master of Hide and Seek

Photographer: Mittman

Species: Common Yellowthroat

Location: Wheaton

Narrative: I have been chasing these little birds for a photo all spring. They always hop away, and as I am still learning how to use my camera, my pictures are always blurry. I could hear this one in the corner bush, and surprisingly I was able to "Pshh-psh-psh" it out! He was singing loud and hopping in and out of view for a good couple of minutes. Very fun to watch!



You can see all pictures posted to the DBC Website, including past Photo Contest Winners, by [CLICKING HERE](#).