

Wooded Island Bird Walk Report for Saturday, November 9, 2013

Hello to All,

“The trees are in their autumn beauty”, as W. B. Yeats wrote of Coole Park in 1917. It happens every year, and the living take note, with a pleasure tinged with a touch of sadness. Even if the species count would be low, we were glad to walk outside, surrounded by this year’s autumn beauty.

A *Pied-billed Grebe* swam near Darrow Bridge as we gathered at the start of the Walk. The *Great Blue Heron* was discovered in its favorite early morning spot, along the shore at the south fence of the Japanese Garden.

On the road across the Music Bridge, Karin D. found two **Wooly Worms, a.k.a. Wooly Bear Caterpillars**. Tobias and Karin D. moved them gently to safety along the side of the road, to help them in their search for a place to overwinter under bark or inside the rock cavity. Come spring they will transform into an Isabella tiger moth. These gorgeous creatures are winter forecasters, according to folklore; the wider the orange/brown band, the milder the winter. I would say we will have a mild winter. (photos)

Aside from the juvenile *Red-tailed Hawk* (photo) that kept a short distance ahead of the birders, the Island and Meadow were quiet. Our Walk will now include a trip to the 66th St. Harbors and lakefront until the boats return in the spring. It was at these locations that the rarities were seen.

A *female Common Merganser* was found in the Outer Harbor, along with over two dozen *Buffleheads*.

A *female Surf Scoter*, discovered earlier this week by Paul Clyne, and relocated by Randy Shonkwiler the next day, was diving in the Inner Harbor at the south end. We were able to get inside the fenced area of the harbor and set up a scope. Eric kept calling out hawks flying south above the tree line to the east. Then Eric spotted a great sight: *Five Sandhill Cranes*, bugle voices silent, were aloft along the lakeshore. Eric posted on IBET as we continued to look at the Surf Scoter.

BIRDERS: 15 Sally, Eric, Tobias, Jennette, Rick, Mark, Sandra, Jennie, Mary, Chris, Julie, Chris H., Leo, Karin D. and Pat

TIME: 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

PLACES: Wooded Island, Bobolink Meadow, 66th Street Outer and Inner Harbors.

WEATHER: Sunny. Cool. Moderate Winds. Temperature 50”s. Winds WSW 10 – 20 mph

TOTAL SPECIES COUNT: 25

X = commonly seen and/or not counted.

1. Canada Goose – X.
2. Mallard – X. Lagoons and Harbors.
3. SURF SCOTER – 1. Female. South end of the Inner Harbor.
4. Bufflehead ~ 30 in the Harbors. Male & Female.
5. COMMON MERGANSER – 1. Female. Outer Harbor.
6. Pied-billed Grebe – 2. One in the East Lagoon and the other was in the Inner Harbor.
7. Great Blue Heron – 1. East Lagoon, just south of the Japanese Garden. Flushed into flight by “Copper”, the swimming golden retriever.
8. Sharp-shinned Hawk – 1. Flying over the south end of the East Lagoon.
9. Cooper’s Hawk – 1. Seen near Darrow Bridge by Mary and Chris.
10. Red-tailed Hawk – 3. One juvenile was actively hunting along our route from Wooded Island to the golf driving range. Another caused the starlings to swarm in flight over the Outer Harbor. A third was seen flying south over the lakefront as we scanned the Inner Harbor.
11. SANDHILL CRANE – 5. Spotted by Eric as we stood along the west side of the Inner Harbor. The group were flying low, and heading SSE. BTW, I was at Jasper Pulaski Wildlife Refuge on Thursday, November 7th. Over 8,000 cranes are reported in or near the Refuge. At dusk approximately 2,500 socialized in the pasture near the observation tower.
12. American Coot – X. Harbors and 1 in the East Lagoon.
13. Ring-billed Gull – X. Fly overs and gathered on docks in the Outer Harbor.
14. Downy Woodpecker – 1. On Wooded Island. Reported by Tobias.
15. American Crow – 7+.
16. Black-capped Chickadee – Heard and then seen in the Rose Garden.
17. Golden-crowned Kinglet – 3. Reported by Tobias.
18. American Robin – 2.
19. European Starling – flocks on the soccer field and along the lakefront harbor.
20. Fox Sparrow – 1. Reported by Tobias in the Rose Garden.
21. White-throated Sparrow – 3.

22. Dark-eyed Junco – 1.
23. Northern Cardinal – 1.
24. American Goldfinch – X. Heard.
25. House Sparrow – 20. Near feeder placed on the east side of the Outer Harbor.

This is a group report, with many birders contributing to the list. Most of the birds were seen by a least several or all the birders.

Corrections, additions and comments are welcome.

This report will be recorded on eBird as a group report for the Wooded Island Bird Walks.

The Walks are free and open to one and all. They are held year round. Birders always show up on Darrow Bridge at the start times. Newcomers are warmly welcomed.

The Walks start at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, and at 7:15 a.m. on Wednesday.

Birders gather on Darrow Bridge, which is located south of the Museum of Science and Industry. Ample parking is available east of Darrow Bridge and is accessible from South Lake Shore Drive at 58th Street (labeled Science Drive on a small blue street sign). There is a Stop Light at 58th Street. Make a turn at the Stop Light towards the Museum. Turn Left (south) at the intersection of Science Drive and Columbia Drive. Go through the parking lot to the west end near Darrow Bridge.

Best of Birding to All,

Patricia Durkin

Chicago Audubon Society Representative

Wooded Island Bird Walks