

Wooded Island Bird Walk Report for Saturday, April 13, 2013

Hello to All,

Richard Filley, a professor from Arizona State University, made extraordinary effort to join the walk this morning. The cold and flurries were not the welcome one would like to extend to a birder from the southwest. Richard found the best bird of the day: A BEAUTIFUL EASTERN MEADOWLARK in Bobolink Meadow. The white outer tail feathers in flight caught his eye.

The NORTHERN SHOVELERS have remained in good numbers in the lagoons. They were joined this morning by several PIED-BILLED GREBES. A pair of WOOD DUCKS made a brief splashdown and takeoff near the Japanese Garden. Later a quick departure of a wood duck was seen near the South Bridge.

ADULT PURPLE MARTINS, called “scouts” in years past, circled the trio of white houses, northeast of Darrow Bridge. I saw one go inside an apartment. Martins were first reported along the lakefront on April 8th, according to the Purple Martin Conservation Association Scout Arrival Study. With the weekly monitoring by two volunteers of the Purple Martin Houses, the breeding success has soared over the past few years. It is reasonable to assume that the first returning adult birds are showing “site fidelity.” It is always a happy sight to see our first Purple Martins, even with snow flurries blowing. Weather is expected to warm up tomorrow and gradually thereafter this coming week, so insects will be more abundant to sustain them.

A pair of BELTED KINGFISHERS was making the rounds on the lagoons. It would be great if they would stay for the summer. It has been a couple of years since our male Belted Kingfisher met its demise at the end of fishing tackle.

Good numbers of YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKERS, NORTHERN FLICKERS, and EASTERN PHOEBES were seen.

Mark and Phil spotted an elusive WINTER WREN near the south side fence of the Japanese Garden.

An adult WHITE-WINGED SCOTER was found in the Outer Harbor, plus a HORNED GREBE.

I kept reminding myself and everyone else that “bad weather means good birding.” My words did not relieve the agony of the weather conditions, but the sight of the glorious Eastern Meadowlark, and the rest of the birds enduring the same conditions, made the effort to get up and get out in the morning worthwhile.

BIRDERS: 12. Richard F. from Arizona, Jennie, Jennette, Al, Mariam from Indiana, Rick, Karin C., Kathleen, Mark, Phil, Harry, and Pat.

TIME: 8:00 a.m. to 11:0 a.m.

PLACES: Wooded Island, Bobolink Meadow, and 66th St. Outer Harbor

WEATHER: Cloudy with intermittent snow flurries. Temperature in the low 30's F. Windy.
Winds from the WNW 15 – 25 mph

TOTAL SPECIES COUNT: 45

Canada Goose – X.

Wood Duck – 2.

Mallard - X

Northern Shoveler – 15.

Lesser Scaup – 6. Outer Harbor.

WHITE-WINGED SCOTER -1. Adult. Outer Harbor.

Bufflehead – 8. Outer Harbor.

Hooded Merganser – 2. Outer Harbor.

Red-breasted Merganser – 14+ Outer Harbor and lagoons.

Pied-billed Grebe – 9. Lagoons and harbor.

Horned Grebe – 1. Outer Harbor.

Double-crested Cormorant – 3. Two in flight and one in the East Lagoon.

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON – 2. Adults. Heron Island.

American Kestrel – 1. Spotted by Al while in the east parking lot.

American Coot – 13+. Outer Harbor and lagoons.

Ring-billed Gull – X

Herring Gull – 2.

Caspian Tern – 2.

BELTED KINGFISHER – 2. A male and a female. Possibly three birds.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker – 15.

Downy Woodpecker – 2.

Hairy Woodpecker – 1.

Northern Flicker – X.

Eastern Phoebe – 5.

American Crow – X

Purple Martin – 5 near Darrow Bridge, plus 3 fly overs of the Outer Harbor.

Black-capped Chickadee – X

Brown Creeper – 2.

WINTER WREN – 1. South end of Japanese Garden, south side of fence, at water's edge.

Golden-crowned Kinglet – X

Ruby-crowned Kinglet – X

Hermit Thrush – 5. Increasing numbers.

American Robin – X

European Starling – 10.

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER – 2

American Tree Sparrow – 1.

Fox Sparrow – 2 +

Song Sparrow – 7.

LINCOLN SPARROW – 1. Found by Mark along the Bobolink Meadow fence.

White-throated Sparrow – 2. Wooded Island.

Northern Cardinal – 4.

Red-winged Blackbird – 4.

EASTERN MEADOWLARK – 1. Bobolink Meadow.

Common Grackle – 1.

Brown-headed Cowbird – 12. A flock was seen on the golf driving range.

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