

Wooded Island Bird Walk Report for Saturday, May 11, 2013

Hello to All,

After last week's Spring Bird Count, it was a nice breather not to have to count every single bird of every single species. Mark Webster helped to fill in the gaps and numbers for this report.

This has been a great year for continued sightings of RED-HEADED WOODPECKERS on Wooded Island. In a small City park across from my home, where I maintain feeders, I saw a Red-headed Woodpecker doing chin-ups on the base of the feeder. A couple has continued to remain in or near the park for several days. At the end of this report I have gathered some information about this gorgeous "Flying Checkerboard" creature.

BIRDERS: 30. Karin C., Phil, Jennie, Leo, Carol, Zachary (Zack) 11 years old and a great spotter, Yolanda, Laurie, Mike, Sally, Mary, Renate, Diana, Sara L. who was visiting her son at U of C and his family from the East Coast, Andy, Ken, Thomas, Carole, Charlotte, Eric, Matthew, Mary M., Ernesto, Liz, Bruno, Gisela, Hal, Mark, Joanne and Pat.

TIME: 8:00 a.m. to Noon

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

WEATHER: Cloudy, cold and windy. Temperature 47 – 57 F. West winds 20 to 30 mph.

TOTAL SPECIES COUNT: 75

Canada Goose – X.

Wood Duck – 2. A female was perched 12 feet above ground on a tree limb south of the Japanese Garden. The male was swimming nearby in the East Lagoon.

Mallard –X. In the water in male/female pairs.

Blue-winged Teal – 1. West Lagoon

Red-breasted Merganser – 1. Seen by Mark W. out on the lakefront.

Double-crested Cormorant – 100's on the Lake in large rafts. Frantic feeding. Short flights to keep up with the school of fish.

Great Blue Heron – 1. Fly over of lagoons.

GREAT EGRET – 1. Seen around 7:30 a.m. in the North Lagoon.

Green Heron – 3. Lagoons.

Black-crowned Night Heron – 7. Note: Ask Jennie Strable to do the count on Heron Island. I look and see only two. Jennie scans and finds seven, then proceeds to point out every one. Jennie is a Master of the Heron Rorschach Test.

Red-tailed Hawk – 1. An immature. Harassed and feathers nipped by crows over LaRabida Hospital.

American Coot – 1. East Lagoon near Wooded Island shore.

SOLITARY SANDPIPER 1. Along the shore of Heron Island. A good sized shorebird with a noticeable eye ring and spotless belly, and alone as its name suggests.

Ring-billed Gull – X. Fly overs.

Herring Gull – X. Several were feeding with Double-crested Cormorants on the Lake

Caspian Tern – 1 over the lagoons and several more were close to the lakeshore at the entrance to the 66th St. Outer Harbor, diving and fishing.

FORSTER'S TERN – 1. Lakefront shoreline east of LaRabida Hospital. Mark noticed the tail "streamers."

Monk Parakeet – 1. At home on the light fixture near the golf driving range.

Chimney Swift – X. Increasing numbers in the sky.

Hummingbird – buzzed by. Too fast for good look.

Belted Kingfisher – 1.

RED-HEADED WOODPECKER – 2. No one could leave the Rose Garden until everyone helped each other get a good look at these handsome happy birds.

RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER – 1 to 2. Reported by Mark.

Downy Woodpecker – 3.

HAIRY WOODPECKER – 2. Reported by Mark.

Least Flycatcher – 2.

Yellow-throated Vireo 1. Hal, Mark and Joanne reported this sighting.

Warbling Vireo – 4.

Red-eyed Vireo – 1.

American Crow – 5.

Purple Martin – X.

Tree Swallow – X.

N. Rough-winged Swallow – X.

Cliff Swallow – 2.

Barn Swallow – X.

Brown Creeper – 5.

House Wren – 4.

Marsh Wren – likely. East of LaRabida Hospital on the rock pile.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet – 10.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher – 10.

Veery – 4.

Swainson's Thrush – 4.

Hermit Thrush – 1.

WOOD THRUSH – 1. Central area of Wooded Island.

American Robin – X.

Gray Catbird – 2+.

Brown Thrasher – 2.

European Starling – X.

Orange-crowned Warbler – 1.

Nashville Warbler – 1.

Northern Parula – 1.

Yellow Warbler – 4.

CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER – 1. Spotted by Liz on the east central side of Wooded Island between the paved path and the shore.

Magnolia Warbler – 8.

Yellow-rumped Warbler – 3.

Palm Warbler – X.

Blackpoll Warbler – 3.

Black-and-white Warbler – 4.

American Redstart – 1.

Ovenbird – 2.

Northern Waterthrush – 3.

Common Yellowthroat – 5.

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW – 1. Reported by Hal, Mark and Joanne.

Song Sparrow – 4.

LINCOLN'S SPARROW – 6.

Swamp Sparrow – 2.

White-throated Sparrow – X.

White-crowned Sparrow – 5. There was a massive movement through Chicago's lakefront on Thursday, May 9th.

Northern Cardinal – 3.

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK – 10. Great looks for all birders of both male and female on Wooded Island, starting in the Japanese Garden and south through Wooded Island.

Red-winged Blackbird – X.

Common Grackle – X.

Brown-headed Cowbird – 5.

Baltimore Oriole – 8.

American Goldfinch – X.

House Sparrow – 1.

RED-HEADED WOODPECKERS: Populations in Illinois have decline due in part to the loss of nesting holes in dead trees. Its' current status is Near Threatened. The population has been declining almost 3% per year since 1996, according to the American Breeding Bird Survey. That adds up to a 70% decline. The Great Lakes Region has suffered a severe loss. Their migratory range in confined to North America. They are the only woodpecker that maintains a pantry of stored foods and even covers the food in wood, under bark, in fence posts and under roof shingles. They are smart house hunters, and like dead trees lacking bark to discourage snake predation of their eggs and young. Red-headed Woodpeckers would once again join the urban habitat if only dead trees would be left standing for nesting holes.

For daily pictorial reports on birds, bugs and plants, as well as the disturbance and change in habitat on and near Wooded Island, please visit a blog maintained by Hal Cohen, retired college professor of ecology and biological sciences. Hal visits Wooded Island daily and has a lot of information to share, and not all is heartening. Look for **woodedisland.blogspot.com**

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