

Wooded Island Bird Walk Report for Saturday, August 17, 2013

Hello to All,

As we anticipate the migration of birds, we experienced the migration of birders this morning. There was a decided British accent to this human migration.

Phil Webster, father of birder extraordinaire Mark Webster, joined our group. Phil is a dedicated birdwatcher in his own right, and likely could be among the illustrious group of birders known as “Twitchers.” Phil does maintain a Life List that is worldwide. He joined right in, finding and identifying birds along the way, with the rest of us.

Matthew Morrow, from Nottingham, came for our Walk for the last time. After a two year stint of teaching at the University of Chicago, Matthew will be moving on to teaching position at the Hausdorff Center of Mathematics, Bonn. Putting aside Matthew’s enormous academic achievements in the field of mathematics, we came to know Matthew as an astute and concerned birder. During migration season, Matthew would arise before dawn, to transport himself downtown and join the dedicated group of Bird Collision Monitors. These volunteers have saved the lives of many a stunned bird found on the sidewalks of our canyoned City. All the birds are treated with respect and a profound sense of care. We will miss Matthew and look forward to a return visit, as his travels take him afar in the pursuit of his professional goals.

BIRDERS: 19. Jennie, Karin C., Kurt, Mark Webster and his father Phil from the UK, Adam and his fiancée Anna, new birders, Erica and Wylie, Gerry, Sandra, Hal and Joanne Cohen, Leo, Carol, Matthew Morrow, Eric and Tobias Ginsburg, and Pat.

TIME: 8:00 a.m. to 10:25 a.m.

PLACES: Wooded Island and Bobolink Meadow

WEATHER: Sunny. Temperature in the 70’s F., Winds from the East 5 -10 mph, Relative Humidity 53%.

TOTAL SPECIES COUNT: 32

Mark Webster shared his list of sightings for this report.

X = commonly seen and/or not counted.

1. Canada Goose – X
2. Wood Duck – 4. Female and juveniles. East Lagoon and in flight.
3. Mallard – X

4. Double-crested Cormorant – 5. On favorite snag - southeast end of Wooded Island.
5. Great Blue Heron – 2.
6. Green Heron – 1.
7. Black-crowned Night Heron – 2. Juveniles. South end of East Lagoon.
8. COOPER’S HAWK – 1. Wooded Island. The birders in the rearguard caught sight of this raptor in the center of Wooded Island. Its’ presence bothered the potential prey, who hurled avian insults at the hawk.
9. Ring-billed Gull – X. Fly overs.
10. Caspian Tern – 1.
11. ROCK PIGEON – 1. Fluttering around Heron Island. Feathering mostly white. We don’t usually see Rock Pigeons on our circuit.
12. Chimney Swift – X. Always a few overhead.
13. RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD – 1. Female. Possibly two. On Wooded Island. Perched along enough on a branch near the center of the Island to allow most birders to see it.
14. Downy Woodpecker – 3.
15. GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER – 2. In and around Rose Garden.
16. Eastern Kingbird – 4.
17. Warbling Vireo – 1.
18. Red-eyed Vireo – 1.
19. Barn Swallow – X. A few are still around.
20. Black-capped Chickadee – 3 seen and others heard.
21. WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH – 1. Center of Wooded Island.
22. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher – 1. About fifty yards from the nest site, along the north end of Bobolink Meadow’s chipped path.
23. American Robin – X.
24. Gray Catbird – X. Vocal.
25. European Starling – X.
26. Song Sparrow – 2 and others heard.
27. Northern Cardinal – 2.
28. Red-winged Blackbird – 3. One male and two females/juveniles on the Cormorant snag.

29. Common Grackle – 4.
30. Baltimore Oriole – 1. Male.
31. American Goldfinch – X. In fine summer plumage.
32. House Sparrow – 8. On Wooded Island and on the Music Bridge.

Tobias Ginsburg kept a bug list. Of note was the presence of a *Widow Skimmer* and *Blue Dasher*. Tobias recently returned home from a naturalist trip to Ecuador. I well recall a summer's day, almost a decade ago, when Tobias, then a very young, soft spoken lad, causally pointed out a Praying Mantis on a reed along the path through Bobolink Meadow. Upon our request, he gave us a short presentation of the life cycle of this most interesting, but easily overlooked insect.

Not sure where the *Koi* are in the Japanese Garden. The pond water is very murky and we did not scare away herons from the surrounding rocks today. The *Purple Martins* seem to have left for the season. *Frogs* were heard occasionally. A *dinner-plate size turtle* sunned itself on a log at the south end of Wooded Island.

For twice a week 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 several times in the week has a lot of information to share. 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

