



CHICAGO AUDUBON SOCIETY
5801-C N. Pulaski Road Chicago, IL 60646-6057

Periodicals

COMPASS

Navigating the world of birds and nature

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JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2012

Discover great places, great people and great birds at Chicago Audubon's Birding America IX! This symposium is your opportunity to get the "inside information" on some of the most rewarding places to bird locally, nationally and internationally (with some butterflies thrown in, as well!). Local and national experts will help you plan birding trips and vacations around hotspots, highlighting resident birds as well as migrants. Locations to be presented range from Chicago to Panama. In addition to the scheduled presenters listed below, we are still finalizing lecturers and topics, so please check our website at www.chicagoaudubon.org for the most up-to-date information.

BIRDING AMERICA IX SATURDAY, MARCH 17, 2012

by Joe Lill, Birding America Chair
Chicago Audubon Society



Scarlet Macaws. Photo by Roy Toft.

Throughout the day vendor booths will be on display with birding books, field equipment, and other birding-related items. We have adjusted the schedule this year to allow for more time between presentations and more additional question-and-answer times at the close of each lecture.

Registration for Birding America IX is \$40 for Chicago Audubon Society members and \$50 for non-members. This fee includes all sessions. Lunch is

available for \$12 but will NOT be available for those registering after March 9th.

Resplendent Quetzal, Costa Rica.

Photo by Ralph Padnessa.



BIRDING AMERICA IX

Saturday, March 17, 2012 – 9:15 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
North Park University, 3225 West Foster Ave., Chicago, Illinois

Symposium Schedule:

8:30 a.m. to 9:15 a.m. Registration and refreshments.

Keynote Address: 9:15 a.m.

Keynote Speaker: **Dr. Erik Johnson**

Dr. Erik Johnson is Audubon's Gulf of Mexico and Mississippi Flyway conservation biologist. Dr. Johnson holds a Ph.D. from Louisiana State University, for which he examined effects of forest fragmentation on Amazonian bird communities. At Audubon, Dr. Johnson works to understand baseline populations and trends of birds of conservation concerns in the Gulf of Mexico and the Mississippi Flyway. He is also an integral part of the conservation team working on conservation planning and implementation for this vital region. During the Deepwater Horizon oil disaster, Erik, along with another Louisiana State researcher, worked to organize a citizen science monitoring program in Louisiana to track the extent and frequency of oiling of waterbirds. Audubon expanded a modified version of the survey protocol as the Audubon Coastal Bird Survey. These combined efforts have created the only independent dataset of oiled bird survey data from the Gulf oil spill.

10:30 a.m. *Presentations*
11:45 a.m. *Lunch*
12:30 p.m. *Presentations*
1:45 p.m. *Presentations*

3:00 p.m. Closing Speaker: **Greg Miller**

Greg Miller has been birding for over 50 years in all 50 states and much of Canada. In 1998, his sightings of that year passed the 700-species mark—an achievement many birders aspire to in an entire lifetime. His competitive quests, along with those of two other people who passed the 700 mark in that same year, are documented in the book, *The Big Year*, by Pulitzer Prize winning author, Mark Obmascik.

Other presentations will include:
Chicago's Peregrine Falcons - Mary Hennen
Birds of Costa Rica and Panama - Dr. Agustin Zuniga
Goose Pond Fish & Wildlife Area, Indiana - Lee Sterrenburg
Butterflies of the Chicago Region - Doug Taron
Pacific Pelagic Birding - Todd McGrath
Indiana Dunes State Park, Indiana - Brad Bumgardner
Josh Engel - (topic to be determined)



Peregrine Falcon. Photo by Keven Law.

Check our website for updates to the schedule. More presentations will be added soon!

Registration for BIRDING AMERICA IX

Saturday, March 17, 2012 from 9:15 a.m. to 4 p.m.
North Park University, 3225 West Foster Ave, Chicago, Illinois

Please complete the form and mail to the address below:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please register _____ attendees at the price(s) of:

- \$40 each (Chicago Audubon Society or National Audubon members) _____
- \$50 each (Non-members) _____

Please specify Audubon Chapter: _____

Also _____ lunches at \$12 each (must be ordered by March 9).

Total \$ _____

Send form with check made payable to:

Chicago Audubon Society
5801-C North Pulaski Road • Chicago, Illinois 60646-6057
Phone: (773) 539-6793

OR you may register at our website: chicagoaudubon.org

Driving Directions to North Park University at 3225 West Foster Ave, Chicago:

From the north:
Take I-94 eastbound (Edens Expressway) to the Cicero (to Foster) exit. Take Cicero south to Foster Avenue, turn east (left) on Foster and continue to Kedzie, about two miles.

From the south:
Take I-94 westbound (Dan Ryan Expressway) and proceed northwest on I-90/94 (Kennedy Expressway). Exit at Kimball Avenue. Travel north (right) on Kimball about two miles to Foster Avenue and turn east (right). Proceed two blocks, to Kedzie.

From the west:
(Or from O'Hare Airport) take I-90/94 eastbound (Kennedy) to the

Austin (to Foster) exit. At the end of the exit ramp, turn east (left) and follow the curve to reach Foster. Turn east (left) on Foster and continue to Kedzie, about three miles.

From the east:
Take Lake Shore Drive (from either direction) to the Foster Avenue exit. Travel west on Foster and continue to Kedzie, about three miles.

For more information, contact the Chicago Audubon office at (773) 539-6793 or go to chicagoaudubon.org. Parking is free in the University lot on the southeast corner of Foster and Kedzie.

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BIRDSEED SALE A HUGE SUCCESS!!

Chicago Audubon's birdseed sale in October was a huge success! and the pickup day on November 12 was equally successful only because of our incredible Volunteers at both locations. We could not do this without our wonderful Volunteers. Thank you, thank you, thank you!! AND MORE GOOD NEWS -- Nature House (Erva Tools), which generously hosted our Chicago birdseed pickup location (3100 West Grand in Chicago) is having



an UNBELIEVABLE sale through March of 2012. Everything from Baffles to Birding guides has been discounted beyond belief -- lots and lots of bird houses and birding equipment of all kinds. And if you mention Chicago Audubon when you make a purchase, Nature House (Erva Tools) will generously donate a percentage of the sale to Chicago Audubon. And in addition to all that good stuff, you'll meet such nice people!!



Our Happy Volunteers at the Good Earth Greenhouse & Cafe in River Forest on birdseed pickup day, November 12. Photo by Les Szcwcyk.



More Happy Volunteers at the Nature House in Chicago on birdseed pickup day, November 12. Photo by S.J. Wolters.



Some of our quality birdseed on pickup day at Nature House in Chicago and Good Earth Greenhouse & Cafe in River Forest. Photo by S.J. Wolters.



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Report sightings to: (773) 539-6793

Report injured birds to Chicago Bird Collision Monitors: (773) 988-1867

Activity line: (773) 539-6793, press 1

Website: www.chicagoaudubon.org

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Program Chair: Joe Lill, (773) 631-3154, trptjoe@aol.com

Snowbirds



Dark-eyed Junco.

Photo courtesy of animal.discovery.com



Dark-eyed Junco.

Photo by Mary Elliott.

In human terms, a snowbird may conjure up many images. Perhaps you know one, or perhaps you *are* one—splitting your time in Chicago for part of the year, then migrating to a warmer part of the country when it gets cold. A true snowbird, at least in birding terms, migrates from the north or surrounding areas and finds that Chicago is a rather decent “southern” place to live.

Surviving winter and finding food are goals for bird species whether they make annual migrations of long or short distances, or they suddenly decide they need to make a change in plans (called invasions or eruptions), or move within close range of their year-round homes when conditions are harsh, temperatures are too cold, and food is lacking.

Juncos are commonly considered *The Snowbird of all Snowbirds*. Their arrival is thought to be the Harbinger of Winter, and their grey-colored feathers contrast beautifully with the white snow. They primarily feed on plant seeds which they obtain from dried grass stems. They will land on a stem and then, using their body weight, slide down the stem and pluck the seeds. It’s called “riding” and, even though it’s the serious business of gathering food, it also looks like a lot of fun! Juncos (who, by the way, belong to the sparrow family) will often mingle with other

common winter birds, some of whom are year-round residents—nuthatches, chickadees and woodpeckers. Collectively, this is a very talented group of winter birds. They all have strong beaks and an interesting array of acrobatic skills, all of which have enabled them to develop their own unique strategies to find food.

~You’ll know the nuthatch as it creeps down a tree trunk to meet you, face down. Their primary method of food gathering is to find a seed, place it in a crevice of tree bark, and hammer away until it opens. Nuthatches keep many caches of food, similarly placed in crevices between strips of bark, stored in multiple trees.



White-breasted Nuthatch. Photo by Jim Paris.

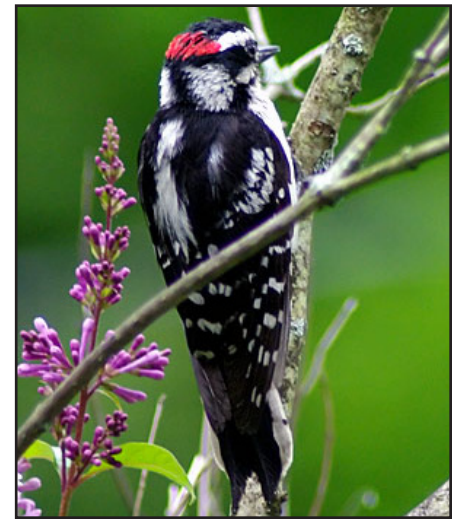


Black-capped Chickadee.

Photo by Robert Eriksson.

~Chickadees have specialized feet that allow them to grasp dried grasses and wildflowers. They peck at plant stems and galls to catch insects, sometimes while hanging upside down!

~Woodpeckers are known for pecking into wood to slurp up burrowing insects and other invertebrates. They also enjoy the berries of poison ivy plants!



Downy Woodpecker.
Photo by Byard Miller.



Downy Woodpecker.
Photo by Steve Russell Smith.

Many other year-round bird residents can be observed all over the city in winter: Robins, cardinals, blue jays, crows, ducks at the lakes and rivers, and the nocturnal great horned and screech owls in the woodlands. Each of these birds has its own unique talent for getting through the cold weather.

So, if you haven’t done so, please consider going outside and enjoying some winter birding. It is one of the best ways to experience the sights and sounds of our cold weather friends. So, put on your layers, eat a warm meal, and head out to discover what it’s like to be a Snowbird in Chicago!

Reprinted from *The Urban Naturalist*, courtesy of the Chicago Park District.

The Annual Great Backyard Bird Count is the perfect opportunity to help people discover the joy of birding while learning basic birding skills. The event is hosted by National Audubon, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and Canadian partner Bird Studies Canada. The results provide a snapshot of the whereabouts of more than 600 bird species.

Anyone can participate in this free event and no registration is needed. Watch and count birds for at least 15 minutes on any day of the count, February 17-20, 2012. Enter your results at birdcount.org, where you can watch as the tallies grow across the continent. The four-day count typically records more than 10 million observations.

“When thousands of people all tell us what they’re seeing, we can detect patterns in how birds are faring from

The Annual Great Backyard Bird Count



Cassin's Finch. Photo by Gary Botello, Arizona 2011, GBBC.

year to year,” said Janis Dickinson, director of Citizen Science at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

“The Great Backyard Bird Count is a perfect example of Citizen Science,”

says Audubon Chief Scientist, Gary Langham. “Like Audubon’s Christmas Bird Count, volunteers help us with data year after year, providing scientific support that is the envy of many institutions. It’s also a lot of fun.”

“We’re finding that more people are taking part in our bird count programs every year—and the more that take part, the better it is for the birds,” says Richard Cannings, Senior Projects Officer for Bird Studies Canada.

The 2011 GBBC brought in more than 92,000 bird checklists submitted by participants from across the United States and Canada. Altogether, bird watchers identified 596 species with 11.4 million bird observations.

Results from the 2011 GBBC included:

- Increased reports of Evening Grosbeaks, a species that has been declining;
- A modest seasonal movement of winter finches farther south in their search for food;
- The Eurasian Collared-Dove was reported from Alaska for the first time, more evidence of an introduced species rapidly expanding its range.

Although it’s called the Great “Backyard” Bird Count, the count extends well beyond backyards. Lots of participants choose to head for national parks, nature centers, urban parks, nature trails, or nearby sanctuaries. For more information, including bird ID tips, instructions, and past results, visit birdcount.org.

The count also includes a photo contest and a prize drawing for participants who enter their bird checklists online.

Chicago Bird Collision Monitors

Bright lights from buildings, along with reflective or transparent glass in windows and lobbies, are hazards for birds migrating through Chicago.

Last fall more than 1000 collision-injured birds were rescued – all from a relatively small area downtown. With your assistance, more birds can be saved.

YOU CAN HELP BY:

- Joining **morning rescue teams**
- Monitoring buildings** where you live or work
- Transporting birds** to wildlife rehabilitation centers
- Supporting **collision prevention** work
- Assisting in **public outreach** and awareness programs



Visit www.birdmonitors.net or call 773-988-1867

New Year's Greetings to Everyone from Chicago Audubon

We deeply appreciate your support in these difficult times.

We wish all of you the very best for the coming year.

Happy New Year!!



Dark-eyed Junco. Photo by Darin Ziegler.



Downy Woodpecker. Photo by Kip Ladage.



Black-throated Blue Warbler. Photo by Michael L. Peters. Sighted at Millennium Park, McDonald's Cycle Center, 239 East Randolph, December 28, 2011, 12:45 p.m.

This is one of a number of recent sightings of the Black-throated Blue Warbler. It is believed that the December sightings could perhaps be a state record for latest time of sighting for this species. A bird of the deep forest, the Black-throated Blue Warbler breeds in the northeastern United States and southeastern Canada. On migration to its Caribbean wintering grounds it can be seen in a variety of habitats, including parks and gardens.

Calendar of Events

January/February 2012

Workdays, Birdwalks, Special Events

Skokie Lagoons Workdays. 10:00 a.m. every second Saturday. These workdays are continuous throughout the year.

The Chicago Audubon Society sponsors regular monthly workdays at Skokie Lagoons every second Saturday of the month. Activities include buckthorn cutting, brush pile burning, and other management activities. Wear work clothes. Meet at the Tower Road parking lot, east of the lagoon bridge. For further information, please call Dave Kosnik at (847) 456-6368. Everyone is welcome!

Montrose Point Magic Hedge Stewardship Workdays will begin again in early Spring. Volunteers will be needed to help with weeding, mulching, planting native shrubs and trees. We have

also been establishing a prairie! Wear work clothes. For information about work dates, to sign up, and for directions, please contact David Painter: (773) 383-0721 or email at dvdpaint@yahoo.com. Everyone is welcome!

Wooded Island Birdwalks. Jackson Park. Every Wednesday at 7:00 a.m. and every Saturday at 8:00 a.m. These wonderful walks continue throughout each year up to New Year's Day. Bring binoculars, field guides, and dress for the weather. Meet at Clarence Darrow Bridge, just south of Museum of Science and Industry. For details and directions, contact Pat Durkin at pat.durkin@comcast.net. Everyone is welcome!

The 11th Annual Gull Frolic scheduled for Saturday, February 18, 2012, to be held at the Winthrop Harbor Yacht Club is NOW FULL. Registration is closed at this time. However, the good news is that there are still two ways to possibly get into this wonderful all-day event:

(1) People do cancel. If you would like to be placed on the waiting list, please email Eric Secker, Gull Frolic Coordinator, at frolic@bcnbirds.org (phone: 730-808-1947).

(2) If your organization would like to be a sponsor this year, there are still have some reserved spots for sponsoring groups available. Please contact Eric Secker at frolic@bcnbirds.org (phone: 630-808-1947).

If you have already registered, more information about the event can be found on the Illinois Ornithological Society website at illinoisbirds.org.

Birding America is coming! Saturday, March 17, 2012. See Page 1 of this issue for details. Be sure to plan on attending our 9th biennial Birding America—a day of exciting and informative workshops led by speakers who are experts in all aspects of birding from all over the country and internationally.

Eagle Optics Day is coming! Saturday, April 7, 2012. 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at North Park Village Nature Center, 5801-D North Pulaski Road. **SAVE THE DATE** for our annual visit from the largest independent dealer of high quality binoculars, scopes, and all types of optic equipment. Experts will be available all day to help answer questions or help you make decisions about binoculars and all other types of optic equipment. Light refreshments will be available and there is plenty of free parking. Eagle Optics generously donates a percentage of their sales on this day to Chicago Audubon. More details will be in the next issue but be sure to mark your calendars now!

*We lose our souls if we lose the experience of the forest,
the butterflies, the song of the birds ...*

Thomas Berry (1914–2009)
Writer, Scholar, Voice for the environment.