



COMPASS

Navigating the world of birds and nature

VOLUME 27, ISSUE 6

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2013



*A Feeder
Favorite
of
Those
Long
Winter
Days ...*

The Dark-eyed Junco

Dark-eyed Junco. Photo by Vincent Mistretta.



Dark-eyed Junco. Photo by Dave Van der Laar.



Dark-eyed Junco. Photo by Nick Kontonikolas.

These elegant “snow birds” are easy to recognize by their crisp (though highly variable) markings and the bright white tail feathers that constantly flash while in flight. Dark-eyed Juncos are one of everyone’s favorite feeder birds and they are also one of the most common birds in North America, ranging across the entire continent—from Alaska to Mexico, from California to New York. They flit about on the forest floors of the western mountains and Canada and then flood the rest of North America for the winter. A recent estimate put the total population of the Junco at approximately 630 million individuals.

In the wild they prefer the seeds of chickweed, buckwheat, lamb’s quarters, and sorrel for about 75% of their year-round diet. Their favorites at feeders are the seeds of millet, black oil sunflower, and safflower, plus pea-

nuts and peanut butter suet cakes. During breeding season they will also eat insects including beetles, moths, butterflies, caterpillars, ants, wasps, and flies for a necessary boost in their nutritional levels. They breed in coniferous or mixed-coniferous forests across Canada, the western U.S., and in the Appalachians. The Appalachian residents have shorter wings than the migrants that join them each winter. Of course, longer wings are better suited for flying long distances, a pattern difference commonly noted in other studies of the differences between migratory and resident species.

When a male courts a female he fans or flicks open his wings and tail, hops up and down, and picks up pieces of nesting material to show her, most likely as a token of enticement. In spite of this material offering, females seem to prefer males that show more white in the tail—a fact of birth that all his courtship efforts can hardly overcome!



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*Dark-eyed Junco in flight.
Photo by Gerry Sibell.*



*Dark-eyed Junco.
Photo courtesy of visualphotos.com*



*Dark-eyed Junco.
Photo by Mary Elliott.*



Whooping Crane. Photo by Klaus Nigge, National Geographic.



Whooping Cranes. Photo by Laura Erickson.



Whooping Cranes. Photo by Larry Ditto.

This is migration time ... just a friendly reminder...

What to do if you see a Whooping Crane

Please keep the following guidelines in mind when viewing a Whooping Crane.

The Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership asks anyone who encounters a Whooping Crane in the wild to please give it the respect and distance it needs:

Do not approach birds on foot within 600 feet; remain in your vehicle; do not approach in a vehicle within 600 feet or, if on a public road, do not approach within 300 feet.

Also, please remain concealed and do not speak loudly enough that the bird can hear you. Finally, do not trespass on private property in an attempt to view Whooping Cranes.

Also, to keep the amount of attention it receives to a minimum, please do not report the bird on a birding list such as In-bird or IBET or any social media or to the news media.

To safely report a Whooping Crane sighting: www.fws.gov/midwest/whoopingcrane/sightings/sighting-form.cfm

For general info on the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership: www.bringbackthecranes.org/index.html



Whooping Cranes. Photo by Steve Hillebrand, US Fish & Wildlife.

COMPASS
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PS Form 3526, August 2012 (Page 2 of 3)

BIRDING AMERICA X

ALL-DAY SYMPOSIUM

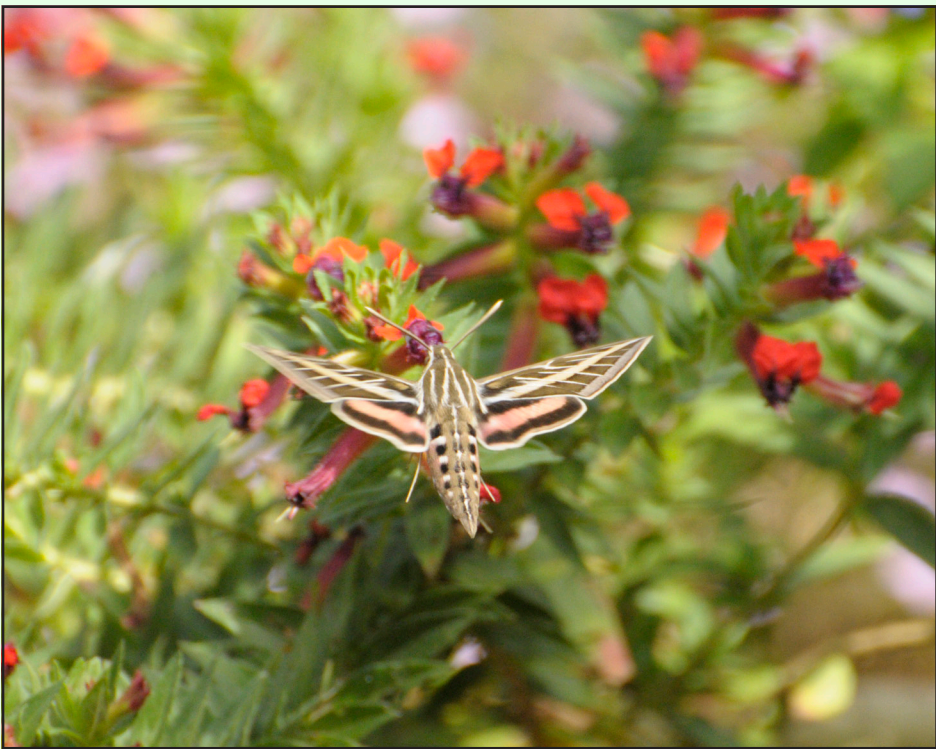
SATURDAY, MARCH 8, 2014

The Chicago Audubon Society is happy to announce its 10th Birding America Symposium to be held once again at North Park University. Discover great places, great people and great birds at this all-day Symposium which will be packed with presentations given by experts from all over the country. This is a wonderful opportunity to hear and see inside information on some of the most

rewarding places to bird, highlighting resident birds as well as migrants. Locations to be presented range from Chicago to Costa Rica to South Africa. Full presentation schedules and registration information will be published in the January-February Compass and will be up on our website as soon as everything is finalized (chicagoaudubon.org). Please remember to mark your calendars for this exciting event!

Hummingbird Moths—Fascinating Creatures!

There were many sightings of hummingbird moths in September and October throughout Chicago and the suburban areas. And these are not hummingbirds—they are definitely moths!



Hummingbird Moth. Photo by Robert Wallace.



Hummingbird Moth. Photo by Mary N. Romero.



Dark-eyed Junco. Photo by Richard Aaron.

continued from page 1

The Dark-eyed Junco

The female chooses the site for the nest which is typically in a depression or niche on sloping ground, a rock face, or amid the tangled roots of an upturned tree. She builds the nest by using her beak to weave together a foundation of grass, twigs, leaves and moss and then uses her body to give the nest its shape. The nests are quite variable in design and placement. Sometimes ground nests are built with just a fine lining of grasses or pine needles. Others may be built with a foundation of twigs, leaves and moss and then lined with grass, ferns, rootlets, hair, and finer pieces of moss. It's a small structure, usually measuring three to five inches across and one and a half to less than three inches deep and usually takes three to seven days to build. It's very rare for Juncos to reuse a nest. When building

around people, they may need to nest in or underneath buildings, window ledges, or in hanging flower pots or light fixtures.

Male Juncos, like many species, are very territorial in summer, chasing away intruders in rapid flights accompanied by excited alarm calls. During winter, they form large flocks and where the wintering ranges overlap, several subspecies may be seen in a single flock.

The oldest recorded Dark-eyed Junco was 11 years and 4 months old. Hopefully most of these dark-eyed beauties lived much longer than that, but just weren't in the right place at the right time to have their longevity recorded!





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

Each year Chicago Bird Collision Monitors recover more than 5000 birds that have suffered collisions in the downtown area.

With your participation our rescue and prevention efforts can be expanded and more birds can be saved.

YOU CAN HELP:

- Join a **morning rescue team.**
- Monitor a building** where you live or work.
- Transport birds** to wildlife rehabilitation centers.
- Support **collision prevention** work.
- Assist in **public outreach** and awareness programs.

For more information:
www.birdmonitors.net
 773-988-1867

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO OUR READERS

There has been some confusion about the difference between a National Audubon membership and a Chicago Chapter membership. A National membership by itself does not financially support the Chicago Audubon Chapter. National Audubon and the Chicago Chapter (and all other chapters) have entirely separate budgets (except for a small yearly stipend from National). In other words, the Chicago Chapter has always carried the burden of all costs of producing and mailing this newsletter and other types of mailings that we have been sending to both the Chapter members and the National members in this area. Because of this

separation in budgets and because we need local support, we are asking that you consider becoming a Chapter member at this time. Chapter membership will not only help with our immediate need to reduce costs related to the newsletter, it will give direct financial assistance to our local programs and goals and enrich the energy and support of the Chapter membership base. If you would like to become a Chicago Audubon Chapter member, please fill out the form below and send it to our office.

Chicago Audubon Society does not rent, lease, trade, or otherwise disclose any membership information whatsoever.

Chicago Audubon Membership Form

If you wish to become a new member, you may either mail in this form or charge your membership online (chicagoaudubon.org). You may also make a straight donation with this form or online. If you prefer, you may call the office with your credit card information (773-539-6793).

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Calendar of Events

November/December 2013

Birdwalks, Workdays, Programs

BIRDING AMERICA X. SATURDAY, MARCH 8, 2014. NORTH PARK UNIVERSITY. The Chicago Audubon Society's 10th bi-annual Birding America all-day workshop event will take place on Saturday, March 8, 2014. Details of workshop schedules and registration will be published on our website as soon as they become available and will be published in the January-February issue of the Compass. *Mark your calendars now for this exciting event!*

WOODED ISLAND BIRD WALKS. JACKSON PARK. Every Wednesday at 7:00 a.m. and every Saturday at 8:00 a.m. These wonderful walks continue throughout the year. Bring binoculars, field guides,

and dress for the weather. Many species are seen. Meet at Clarence Darrow Bridge, just south of Museum of Science and Industry. Everyone is welcome! *For details and directions, contact Pat Durkin at pat.durkin@comcast.net.*

SKOKIE LAGOONS WORKDAYS. 10:00 a.m. monthly, every second Saturday. These workdays are sponsored by Chicago Audubon and are continuous throughout the year. Activities include buckthorn cutting, brush pile burning and other management endeavors. Meet at the Tower Road parking lot, east of the lagoon bridge. Everyone is welcome! *For further information, please call Dave Kosnik at 847-456-6368.*

Season's Greetings

to Everyone from the Chicago Audubon Society!

And May Your New Year be Filled with Many Many Birds!



Cedar Waxwing. Photo by Christopher Drake.

Reminder to our readers:

The Compass can be read and enjoyed in color on our website, chicagoaudubon.org. Just click on the word "Compass" in the top row of links on the homepage to visit our archives. Don't miss these wonderful birds in living color! For historical value, we have added a link to the very first Chicago Audubon newsletter. This link is sitting on top of the Archive list. Enjoy!



Clymene Moth. Photo by Roger Shamley.