



COMPASS

Navigating the world of birds and nature

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JULY/AUGUST 2002

BIRDATHON! 2002

Lake Forest College Recaptures the Beecher Cup

By Joe Lill
CAS Birdathon Coordinator

BIRDATHON! 2002 brought out a record number of teams (5) and a record number of birders (23), all vying for the coveted Beecher Cup, which resides for one year in the possession of the team that identifies the greatest number of species in one day.

Teams went out between May 15th and May 21st, and stayed in Cook County. Each team raised a minimum of \$100.00 in pledges, with funds going to the programs of Chicago Audubon. Total funds raised to date total nearly \$9,000.

This was the 3rd annual Dr. William S. Beecher Birdathon Cup Challenge, and the winning team from the inaugural Challenge in 2000 recaptured the Cup. The Lake Forest College Team (Jeff Sundberg, Kris Sundberg, Bill Moskoff and Caleb Gordon) found 140 species, outdistancing last year's winners, the *BudBirders* (Jill Anderson, Walter Marcisz, Cary Hillegonds and Maggie Kurtz) who came in with 132 species.

Following closely behind were:

Thick-kneed kingfishers (Joe Lill, Caitlin Lill, Alan Anderson, Don Darnell, Ralph Herbst and Jeff Sanders) with 130

Presidential Posse (CAS president Christine Lee, Stephen Lee, Mike Hilbrunner and Barb Kratochvil) who came up with 101

The (admittedly) laid-back Village People (Jerry Garden, John Viramontes, Karen Anderson, Sue Martinez and Tony Temske) who saw 61 species, including the only summer



From left to right—Bill Moskoff, Kris Sundberg, Caleb Gordon and Jeff Sundberg. Photo courtesy of Jeff Sundberg.

tanager that anyone had all day. That bird, seen at North Park Village (appropriately) bumped the total species seen by all the teams to 158. This total excludes one hybrid (Brewster's warbler) and one exotic (ringed turtle dove).

Some of the interesting aspects of the day: no olive-sided flycatchers, laughing gulls or Connecticut warblers (staples in past years), but the most co-operative yellow-billed cuckoo (McLaughery Springs) in most birders' experience. An incredible number of scarlet tanagers (including many "orange tanagers"), chimney swifts, Lincoln's sparrows and clay-colored sparrows were seen.

Some team highlights:

Lake Forest College—red-shouldered hawk (Orland Grasslands), Bonaparte's Gull (Rainbow Beach), and Nelson's sharp-tailed sparrow.

BudBirders—three great horned owls (near Maggie's house), blue-winged warbler (Cherry Hill Forest Preserve) and pine siskin (Palos Park Forest Preserve).

Thick-kneed kingfishers—common loon (Northwestern University), merlin (Evanston Lighthouse), Cooper's hawk (Perkins Woods, but Cait and Jeff were strafed by another one at Montrose, which, showing no preference for birding groups, then

dive-bombed a COS outing!), and the hybrid Brewster's warbler (McLaughery Springs).

Presidential Posse—golden-winged warbler (Thatcher Woods Forest Preserve) and the exotic ringed-turtle dove (Brookfield).

Village People—summer tanager.

A number of birders were doing their first "Big Day" and found it to be both exhilarating and exhausting. If you've never done one (or, even if you have), we'd certainly like to invite you to join us next year, and maybe your team will end up with the Beecher Cup!

CONTROVERSIAL BUILDING PLAN GETS PANNED Open Space Saved Momentarily

By David Cohen

A bid to eliminate open space at the lakefront in Evanston was turned aside this spring, but the victory for habitat protection is far from secure. The dispute, which involves Northwestern University's plan to modify a lagoon on its Evanston campus, remains unsettled and beset by conflicting landuse preferences.

The debate erupted in February, when the school announced plans to fill in almost 20% of a 19-acre cooling pond that feeds into Lake Michigan on the eastern edge of the campus. The University said it would use the added space to extend an adjacent parking lot and perhaps add buildings as well. Construction was scheduled to begin almost immediately. Neither students nor Evanston residents were consulted during the planning. The proposal—and the precipitous way it was announced—drew an immediate hostile response.

Building on the Northwestern campus has continued unabated for years, and the sharp decline of open space only added to the anger behind the reaction. Opponents circulated an electronic petition that drew over 7,000 signatures, and the University found itself confronting unexpected resistance from government agencies that were expected to rubber-stamp the proposal.

Since the winds in our area are mostly westerly, and birds don't like flying over

large bodies of water like the lake, green places like this campus are attractive feeding and resting areas for migratory birds. Lapland longspurs, lark buntings, snowy and short-eared owls, and warblers have been seen here. Even rare birds like the red-throated loon, American avocet, western solitaire, and surf scoter have been sighted. The pond itself has a large population of carp and ducks, and the area generally is a quiet green haven for students, birders and others who walk and play there.

"We didn't hear about it until it was in the news," commented Vicky McKinley, a member of the Evanston Environmental Board. The panel is appointed by Evanston Mayor Lorraine Morton and advises the city on conservation issues. "We tried to find out why there was no public notification period."

"Northwestern has not always been attentive to environmental safeguards," observed Joel Greenberg, author of the just-published *A Natural History of Chicago*. "In the early 1960s, the University bought sand from the Indiana Dunes marketed by steel companies that were eliminating Porter County lakefront to build additional plant. Before completing the destruction, manufacturers were blocked by conservationists. But because the steel companies had a market for

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We have endeavored to list all names correctly. If we have inadvertently erred, we apologize and ask that you call us at (773) 539-6793 to let us know. *Not all Birdathon contributions have been received as of this publication. Contributions received after June 28, 2002 will be listed in one of the following issues of the COMPASS.

BUILDING PLAN

continued from page 1

their sand, it was easier to destroy the dunes."

Northwestern used the sand to expand eastward, filling in 84 acres of Lake Michigan. Part of the expansion involved creating the 19-acre pond, used to cool equipment, that University officials now want to fill in. Numerous permits are essential for the project. The Army Corps of Engineers, which told the University in 2001 that it was free to build without one, backtracked during the spring and told the school it had changed its mind.

"We initially said they didn't need a permit because a cooling pond is excluded from the Clean Water Act," said Mitch Isoe, chief of the Army Corps' regulatory branch in Chicago. "But the U.S. EPA contacted us earlier this year and said the cooling pond was made by enclosing a piece of Lake Michigan and therefore still retains coverage under the Rivers and Harbors Act.

"We looked at old photos and newspaper articles and confirmed that. I think the University was a little unhappy that we changed our mind and that they needed a Federal permit."

The Army Corps' reconsideration introduced a second hurdle. The Illinois EPA will have "to certify" any decision made by the Corps, to assure that water quality standards are maintained. Yet another "application" has to be filed with

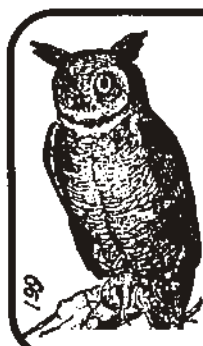
the state Department of Natural Resources.

"Last February, the University contacted DNR for that purpose," said Carol Knowles, a department spokesperson. "But they later withdrew the proposal. We haven't heard from them since that initial correspondence."

Contacted repeatedly, Northwestern officials refused to discuss the issue with the Compass. A central topic in the regulatory review will be the effect of reducing the size of the cooling pond.

"We have water quality issues," asserted Cameron Davis, executive director of the Lake Michigan Federation. "In filling in a part of the lagoon, the rest of the body of water tends to heat up more easily. Bacteria, which is probably coming from the fecal matter of geese and ducks, gets incubated more easily. And that cooling pond discharges water into the Northwestern Beach and also into the Dempster Beach."

The University has defended the move by noting the restricted space available for development on the campus. In addition, Evanston has limited Northwestern's ability to renovate property it buys in the city itself, a measure that has provoked a lawsuit by the University that remains unresolved.



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COMPASS

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North Park Village
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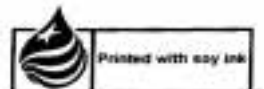
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A Respectable Birdathon

By Christine Lee
CAS President

We knew as soon as we got out of the car that this would be a respectable Birdathon. There were warblers in every tree at Thatcher Woods in River Forest.

“We” were the President’s Posse, a team of four birders who were shooting to get the highest number of species at this year’s Birdathon. Our posse numbered four— me, my husband Stephen (CAS field trip co-chair), Barbara Kratochvil (a new board member) and one novice birder, our friend Michael Hillbruner, who we inveigled into joining our team by promising him a “casual” bird quest.

The day was supposed to be sunny and cool, and thus far, the forecast had not disappointed us. The sun was bringing out all kinds of birds and we were actually having a hard time focusing on only one. We saw chestnut-sided warblers, black-and-white, nashville, golden-winged and blue-winged. All in the same tree.

Birdathon rules are that at least two people in the group must identify a bird (either by sight or by sound). This can be a problem when only one person sees a bird. Stephen saw a Canada warbler but I didn’t so we couldn’t count it. (Boy, what a test of a marriage.)

We did count nuthatches, downy woodpeckers and chipping sparrows. At an open field we searched for bluebirds without luck. We saw ten empi flycatchers but, since they are usually identified by song and they weren’t singing, we couldn’t count a one. That turned out to be the order of the day: all sight, no sound.

When we left Thatcher we had over fifty species. Not bad, but not enough. Bemis Woods, our next stop, disappointed us. No cuckoos, no red-head-

ed woodpeckers and no bluebirds. The birds we found did not help further our count. So, off we went to Palos.

This southwestern area is known for having many different types of birds. We were banking on a few new species there. At Palos West we got scarlet tanagers—lots of them. They seemed to be everywhere—up close and personal.

Driving on a closed-off road we jumped out of the car to spot a red-tailed hawk being chased by a cooper’s hawk. We were entranced by this display, but couldn’t hang around. No time!

Another sound intervened — our stomachs growling. Since this was supposed to be a casual ‘thon we drove to our next destination, Swallow’s Cliff, and had lunch. While there we managed to get a Cape May, blackburnian and ovenbird warblers. Over dessert (great cookies made by Barbara), we saw a bluebird, rufous-sided towhee, and two turkey vultures flew right over our heads. Fantastic! Just the kind of easy birding we had promised Michael.

After our late lunch, lethargy struck. We counted our birds and saw that we were not too far from getting a hundred species. That became our “Holy Grail”. So, off we went to the mythical (no one knew quite where it was) grassland, Duffy Field. After much map, mind and soul searching, we located this Shangri-La of grasslands and got our bobolinks, meadowlarks, field, savannah, and grasshopper sparrows. As an unexpected bonus we stumbled on a black-poll warbler. We were on a roll.

We raced to the site of an osprey nest and found both male and female at home. As we scoped the nest, out of the corner of the eye we saw a brown flash — thrasher! Great! Two new



Female bobolink in Lake Forest. Photo courtesy of Kanae Hirabayashi.

species. Of course not everything works out. We missed the cedar waxwings which only Barbara saw. Tough break.

It was getting dark and we needed only three species to reach our goal. We went to Palos School, but the area surrounding last year’s pond had been replaced by new housing. Stephen and I finally climbed a big mound of dirt the workmen had left and focused on the still-remaining off-in-the-distance pond. Four caspian terns. Yes! A cough. Pheasant! What was that flying away from us? Cormorants! We had our hundred species!

As I looked at a pair of ruddy ducks, I missed the blue-winged teal

that Stephen was telling me to check. (Another test of our marriage). When we came back to the car and recounted we had 102 species. We were over our goal. Time to stop.

The last question of the day was whether or not to count the ringed turtle dove (an introduced species). After much deliberation we decided we couldn’t, but that still left us with 101.

What a day it had been. We birded for over 12 hours, drove over 100 miles, had fun and miraculously none of us picked up any ticks in Duffy’s field. More than a “respectable” Birdathon.

BIRDATHON! 2002 Species List

common loon	killdeer	great-crested flycatcher	yellow-throated vireo	indigo bunting
pied-billed grebe	lesser yellowlegs	eastern kingbird	warbling vireo	eastern towhee
double-crested cormorant	spotted sandpiper	purple martin	Philadelphia vireo	chipping sparrow
great blue heron	least sandpiper	tree swallow	red-eyed vireo	clay-colored sparrow
great egret	dunlin	no. rough-winged swallow	blue-winged warbler	field sparrow
little blue heron	short-billed dowitcher	bank swallow	golden-winged warbler	savannah sparrow
green heron	American woodcock	cliff swallow	Tennessee warbler	grasshopper sparrow
black-crowned night heron	Bonaparte’s gull	barn swallow	orange-crowned warbler	Henslow’s sparrow
mute swan	ring-billed gull	blue jay	Nashville warbler	Nelson’s harp-tailed sparrow
canada goose	herring gull	American crow	northern parula	song sparrow
wood duck	Caspian tern	black-capped chickadee	yellow warbler	Lincoln’s sparrow
american black duck	common tern	tufted titmouse	chestnut-sided warbler	swamp sparrow
mallard	Forster’s tern	red-breasted nuthatch	magnolia warbler	white-throated sparrow
blue-winged teal	black tern	white-breasted nuthatch	Cape May warbler	white-crowned sparrow
northern shoveler	rock dove	Carolina wren	black-throated blue warbler	bobolink
gadwall	mourning dove	house wren	yellow-rumped warbler	red-winged blackbird
ring-necked duck	monk parakeet	marsh wren	black-throated green warbler	eastern meadowlark
red-breasted merganser	yellow-billed cuckoo	sedge wren	Blackburnian warbler	yellow-headed blackbird
ruddy duck	great horned owl	ruby-crowned kinglet	palm warbler	common grackle
turkey vulture	common nighthawk	blue-gray gnatcatcher	bay-breasted warbler	brown-headed cowbird
osprey	chimney swift	eastern bluebird	blackpoll warbler	orchard oriole
sharp-shinned hawk	ruby-throated hummingbird	veery	black-and-white warbler	Baltimore oriole
Cooper’s hawk	belted kingfisher	gray-cheeked thrush	American redstart	house finch
red-shouldered hawk	red-headed woodpecker	Swainson’s thrush	ovenbird	pine siskin
broad-winged hawk	red-bellied woodpecker	wood thrush	northern waterthrush	American goldfinch
red-tailed hawk	downy woodpecker	hermit thrush	mourning warbler	house sparrow
American kestrel	hairy woodpecker	American robin	common yellowthroat	
merlin	northern flicker	gray catbird	Wilson’s warbler	Exotic: ringed turtle dove
peregrine falcon	western wood-pewee	brown thrasher	Canada warbler	Hybrid: Brewster’s warbler
ring-necked pheasant	yellow-bellied flycatcher	cedar waxwing	summer tanager	
sora	willow flycatcher	european starling	scarlet tanager	
common moorhen	least flycatcher	white-eyed vireo	northern cardinal	
American coot	eastern phoebe	blue-headed (solitary) vireo	rose-breasted grosbeak	

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Stewardship Workdays

At the Skokie Lagoons: August 10 and September 14 at 10:00 a.m.

Chicago Audubon conducts regular monthly workdays at the Skokie Lagoons on the second Saturday of every month. Activities include buckthorn cutting, animal and plant monitoring, cleanup and debris removal, planting, and other management activities. For further information call Jerry Garden at (773)545-4632, or e-mail him at jerrygarden@sprynet.com

Meet at the Tower Road parking lot (off of I-94, east of the bridge). If you arrive late, look for a CAS sign near the parking lot directing you to the work site.

Member Programs

At the North Park Village Nature Center, 5801 N. Pulaski, in Chicago.

Birds of the Chicago River
Friday, September 13, 7:30pm (7-7:30 refreshments)

Join Jerry Garden of the Chicago Audubon Society for a slide show of Chicago's second shoreline. Jerry will talk about the variety of birds to be seen there, and will give tips on where to go to see them.

Field Trip

Sunday, August 25 at 8:00 a.m.
Lake Calumet Shorebirds

Walter's annual August shorebird trip is one of our members' favorites. Since conditions change every year,

the locations for this year's trip will be determined in August. This trip is co-sponsored with the Chicago Ornithological Society. Directions: Meet at O'Brien Lock & Dam. Take I-94 to 130th St. Exit east on 130th and turn right just before the steel bridge into the drive for O'Brien Lock & Dam. Turn left after the railroad underpass and proceed along the river to the car park.

Other Events

Chicago Lakefront Warbler Festival
Saturday, September 21

Sponsored by the Chicago Park District, there will be morning bird walks at Wooded Island, Jarvis Bird Sanctuary and Montrose Point. The festival will also include special events in the afternoon and a program in the evening with Michael Male and Judy Fieth.

YOU CAN STILL GET IT HERE!

The brand new Peterson Field Guide, "Hummingbirds of North America," is available at our office. Author Sheri Williamson, co-founder of the Southeastern Arizona Bird Observatory, has signed the ones we have for sale.

You can buy them for \$22, or order over the phone (773) 539-6793 and we'll send out (for an extra \$3 shipping & handling charge).

Spring Sightings by Kanae Hirabayashi



Male bobolink in Lake Forest



Savannah sparrow in a savannah 30 miles west of Chicago



Black-billed cuckoo at Montrose Beach

CENTER FOR NEW BIRDERS To Open in September

To make it easier for adults and children to learn the basics of birding, Chicago Audubon and North Park Village are creating a Center for New Birders. The Center will seek to build a library of age-appropriate field guides and birding books, and acquire usable binoculars to accommodate the growing numbers of people who come on our spring and fall Saturday morning bird walks at the Nature Center.

Other new activities under consideration include:

- Presentations on birding basics in February and March in preparation for spring migration
- Bird walks for children and young adults
- Compiling of booklists for school-aged youth as currently requested by parents and teachers.

Several seasoned birders have already donated field guides. We will seek contributions of additional new and used field guides, and binoculars, especially those designed for young people. Teachers and Chicago Audubon members have already offered to help plan and manage this new endeavor. We may seek funding to further develop programming.

If you would like to help, call Marci Buettgen at (773) 878-4421 or e-mail her at mdbchg@aol.com.