



President's Message

Birding Tours

I've taken a lot of birding trips and from time to time folks have asked me for tips and insights. So, here's what I've learned over the years since my first trip in 2004.

There are, I think, basically two types of trips: Domestic and Foreign. Let's do the Domestic first. There are in the US three major birding tour companies: Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT), Field Guides, and WINGS. I've had great trips with all of them. They all have web sites with lots of information. The first trip I took was with VENT to Cape May (New Jersey), Bombay Hook (Delaware), and Hawk Mountain (Pennsylvania). I was just a beginner then, but that was not a problem. All the leaders work very hard to make sure that all the participants see all the birds, if humanly possible. Anyway, I had a great time and was hooked.

There are also smaller, specialty bird tour companies, like Larry Manfredi's South Florida Birding or Bob Dittrick's Wilderness Birding (Alaska & Bhutan), that do great jobs in their regions. And, of course, there are private guides and birding pals (local birders who will accompany visiting birders for a day or part of a day, often for no fee, great if there are just a few birds you want to see or just want to spend a morning looking at what's there; look on their website). Finding private guides is trickier, but a good resource is fatbirder.com.

Perhaps Foreign Trips are a bit scarier. They don't need to be. The U.S. big three have lots of them, but I tend to use Rockjumper (a South African company with world-wide tours that caters to Americans), Tropical Birding, or BirdQuest, a British company. Rockjumper is fine for beginners and advanced birders alike, but some of the BirdQuest tours may be "too intense" for some. I've had fine trips with all.

My first group foreign trip was to Iceland with Field Guides—very relaxed and marvelous. But my first foreign birding tour was with Caligo Ventures and not a group. I'd wanted to go to Kenya for some time, but I wanted to see "the big five" mammals as well as some birds. The Field Guides and VENT web pages didn't say much about the mammals, but I found a web page that did, for Caligo Ventures: Bird Safaris and Mammals, second Monday of every month. The price was considerably lower than Field Guides'. So, I called them up. A nice lady answered (the owner, but she's sold the business and it's no longer the same). I asked her which month was best; she said November. So, I asked her to sign me up for November. She said to send in a deposit, so I did. A few months later, she called back to say that I was the only one to sign up, but for \$500 more she could make it a private tour. It was still cheaper than Field Guides, even with a couple of added extras that she arranged (arrive two days early and a half-day birding in Nairobi National

Next Meeting

July 12, 2018

7:00 p.m. Social Time

7:30 p.m. Speaker

Faith Lutheran Church
41 N. Park Blvd. Glen Ellyn
Basement

6:00 p.m. Pre-meeting dinner
Panera Bread

751 Roosevelt Rd. Glen Ellyn

Note NEW LOCATION

Park). The extra half-day at the park was fabulous: Mt Kilimanjaro to the south, Mt Kenya to the north, the skyscrapers of Nairobi to the east, elephants, lions, cheetahs, white rhinos, and 76 lifers before lunch (plus 18 in my hotel's garden on my own the day before). My guide/driver was Joseph and we got along great. He knew his birds and loved to show them off. Later, I talked to a man who'd gone with WINGS on about the same route and had paid a whole lot more. He said he didn't know why they'd brought in a high-priced guide from England—the driver had found all the birds. I asked if the driver's name was Joseph; he said it was.

Except for BirdQuest, all the foreign tours include being met at the airport and transferred to the first hotel, whenever you arrive. All foreign airports I've been in (including Urumqi in Chinese Turkestan) have signs in English and are pretty straightforward, although care must be taken in a few (especially African airports such as Accra) not to fall for scams. BirdQuest tours usually meet at the exit from customs at a designated time, generally an hour or so after a flight from London arrives.

I choose trips by price, time of year, itinerary, and bird list. All the web sites are proud to give all this information (what they don't give is the names of their ground agents or the hotels they use, until you pay up). Hotels are usually quite nice, sometimes too nice since you spend so little time in them! But of course, if you're really off the beaten track (where the birds often are), accommodations are on a "best available" basis. On the Tibetan Plateau (the Chinese high Himalayas north of Tibet) they can be awful. I speak from experience. But the birds! The food, too, is usually quite good, although perhaps not what you're used to. But that's the point of travel, no, to experience new treats?

Thinking of a private foreign tour? Again, fatbirder.com can help you find a guide. Or, just email Rockjumper. They've arranged great private tours for me in South Africa and Papua New Guinea, and I'm planning to have them arrange a short birding stay for me in Botswana in a few years. Expensive by the day, perhaps, but you can see more birds in a day, just you and a guide. And you can concentrate on what you're interested in. I've arranged private tours for myself on my own in Uganda, Tanzania, the United Arab Emirates, New Zealand, and Australia and been very pleased with the results.

All the tour companies do the same thing each evening: go over the bird list of what has been seen that day. That's the down side of private tours: generally, you are on your own to keep track of the day's sightings. But, even before a group tour, my advice is to get a field guide for the area in advance (from Amazon.com) and study the birds you're likely to see before you get there. Don't need to study in deep depth, but at least be familiar with the names and have seen the picture at least once.

If anyone has any questions, I'd love to chat.

John Baker

President

July Meeting Program

1/4 Million Birds

Brad Bumgardner, Executive Director

Indiana Audubon Society

Imagine witnessing thousands of birds every spring morning from a single perch. This is exactly what happens each morning from the Indiana Dunes Longshore Flight Tower. With 1.5 million birds counted in the last five years, learn how this migration mecca is changing what we know about bird migration along the southern shore of Lake Michigan. From super rarities to outrageous single species counts, this place is truly one of a kind!

2018 DuPage County Spring Bird Count Results

May 5, 2018 turned out to be near perfect for the annual Spring Bird Count. Throughout the day we had light winds and clear skies that shined favorably on the 92 participants. And the birds did not disappoint! As a matter of fact, the 188 species recorded during this year's count represents a county record according to historical records dating back to 1973. The previous high was 181 set in 2014. Across the 16 areas a total of 24,309 birds were sighted.

The 92 observers fanned out across the county in 63 parties with a total of 289 party hours spent in the field. This is right around our historical average and exceeds 2017's total of 239 party hours. (I know we would all like to forget the miserable weather conditions last year.)

As can be expected, Red-winged Blackbirds were our most numerous species with 3,360 individuals followed by American Robins (2,190). Surprisingly, Palm Warblers came in third place with 1,062 even surpassing the Canada Goose total (930).

Besides the record setting species count, here are a few highlights and observations of Spring Bird Count 2018:

The Yellow-crowned Night Heron spotted in Area 16 was the first spring count sighting since 1997.

The Northern Goshawk sighted by Bob Fisher in Woodridge was the first Goshawk spring count sighting since 2000.

Mourning Dove numbers were up significantly with 427 during this year's count. This number was only exceeded by the 2005 tally (461).

Sadly, no Black-billed Cuckoos have been found since the 14 encountered in 2015. I hope we see a reversal in this trend during future counts.

A new high of 101 Sora Rails seen this year exceeds the 1989 total of 77.

Nineteen Sandhill Cranes were sighted which is the highest spring count since 1973. This exceeds the 2009 total of 15.

The 14 Prothonotary Warblers were observed across a number of the areas and is the highest count since 2004 (11).

Speaking of warblers, the blockbuster 1,062 Palm Warblers seen this year is only exceeded in the historical record by the 2,021 individuals observed in 1997.

Thank you to all of the captains and team participants! It was quite a count year.

DuPage County Spring Bird Count - May 5, 2018

Canada Goose	930	Belted Kingfisher	11	Blue-winged Warbler	30
Mute Swan	2	Red-headed Woodpecker	28	Black-and-white Warbler	48
Wood Duck	137	Red-bellied Woodpecker	313	Prothonotary Warbler	14
Blue-winged Teal	98	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	2	Tennessee Warbler	62
Northern Shoveler	3	Downy Woodpecker	230	Orange-crowned Warbler	15
Gadwall	2	Hairy Woodpecker	42	Nashville Warbler	129
Mallard	793	Northern Flicker	176	Connecticut Warbler	1
Green-winged Teal	13	Pileated Woodpecker	5	Mourning Warbler	1
Ring-necked Duck	1	American Kestrel	6	Kentucky Warbler	1
Hooded Merganser	6	Monk Parakeet	12	Common Yellowthroat	241
Common Merganser	3	Olive-sided Flycatcher	1	Hooded Warbler	3
Red-breasted Merganser	6	Eastern Wood-Pewee	9	American Redstart	38
Wild Turkey	11	Willow Flycatcher	2	Cape May Warbler	4
Pied-billed Grebe	22	Least Flycatcher	33	Cerulean Warbler	4
Double-crested Cormorant	299	Eastern Phoebe	74	Northern Parula	14
American Bittern	2	Great Crested Flycatcher	52	Magnolia Warbler	13
Least Bittern	2	Eastern Kingbird	90	Bay-breasted Warbler	11
Great Blue Heron	301	White-eyed Vireo	6	Blackburnian Warbler	10
Great Egret	134	Yellow-throated Vireo	18	Yellow Warbler	363
Green Heron	37	Blue-headed Vireo	28	Chestnut-sided Warbler	25
Black-crowned Night-Heron	1	Warbling Vireo	87	Blackpoll Warbler	7
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	1	Red-eyed Vireo	19	Black-throated Blue Warbler	2
Turkey Vulture	59	Blue Jay	544	Palm Warbler	1062
Osprey	10	American Crow	69	Pine Warbler	5
Northern Harrier	3	Horned Lark	4	Yellow-rumped Warbler	738
Sharp-shinned Hawk	6	Northern Rough-winged Swallow	115	Yellow-throated Warbler	7
Cooper's Hawk	45	Purple Martin	20	Black-throated Green Warbler	45
Northern Goshawk	1	Tree Swallow	815	Wilson's Warbler	5
Bald Eagle	4	Bank Swallow	25	Grasshopper Sparrow	1
Broad-winged Hawk	6	Barn Swallow	207	Henslow's Sparrow	9
Red-tailed Hawk	96	Cliff Swallow	8	Chipping Sparrow	92
Virginia Rail	6	Black-capped Chickadee	357	Clay-colored Sparrow	3
Sora	101	Tufted Titmouse	3	Field Sparrow	194
American Coot	159	Red-breasted Nuthatch	5	Fox Sparrow	1

Sandhill Crane	19	White-breasted Nuthatch	200	Dark-eyed Junco	2
American Golden-Plover	1	Brown Creeper	12	White-crowned Sparrow	76
Semipalmated Plover	11	House Wren	205	White-throated Sparrow	395
Killdeer	98	Winter Wren	2	Vesper Sparrow	2
Dunlin	1	Sedge Wren	8	Savannah Sparrow	113
Baird's Sandpiper	2	Marsh Wren	21	Song Sparrow	654
Least Sandpiper	35	Carolina Wren	3	Lincoln's Sparrow	15
White-rumped Sandpiper	1	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	335	Swamp Sparrow	268
Pectoral Sandpiper	3	Golden-crowned Kinglet	4	Eastern Towhee	118
Long-billed Dowitcher	1	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	201	Yellow-breasted Chat	5
American Woodcock	7	Eastern Bluebird	81	Summer Tanager	2
Wilson's Snipe	13	Veery	22	Scarlet Tanager	14
Spotted Sandpiper	44	Gray-cheeked Thrush	45	Northern Cardinal	591
Solitary Sandpiper	104	Swainson's Thrush	273	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	170
Greater Yellowlegs	24	Hermit Thrush	9	Blue Grosbeak	1
Willet	6	Wood Thrush	42	Indigo Bunting	49
Lesser Yellowlegs	164	American Robin	2190	Bobolink	102
Ring-billed Gull	79	Gray Catbird	441	Eastern Meadowlark	77
Herring Gull	3	Brown Thrasher	73	Orchard Oriole	32
Caspian Tern	36	Northern Mockingbird	1	Baltimore Oriole	186
Rock Pigeon	68	European Starling	259	Red-winged Blackbird	3360
Mourning Dove	427	American Pipit	2	Brown-headed Cowbird	520
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	1	Cedar Waxwing	98	Rusty Blackbird	1
Eastern Screech-Owl	2	Ovenbird	44	Common Grackle	474
Great Horned Owl	12	Worm-eating Warbler	1	House Finch	99
Barred Owl	3	Louisiana Waterthrush	4	Purple Finch	5
Common Nighthawk	1	Northern Waterthrush	170	Pine Siskin	15
Chimney Swift	51	Golden-winged Warbler	13	American Goldfinch	628
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	10			House Sparrow	435
		Species Count	188	Total Birds	24,309

July Field Trips

NOTE: All last-minute changes are posted on dupagebirding.org/field-trips

Now is the time for birds to nest, raise their young, molt feathers, and prepare for the fall migration. There are opportunities for all types of birders to participate and enjoy the season. Participants, please remember that the weather and trail conditions can be variable. Many times biting insects are present and temperatures are high. Please dress accordingly and bring insect repellent and water. We expect everyone to enjoy birding in a safe manner. This trip list and other club information are on our DBC website at <http://www.dupagebirding.org/>

Friday, July 6, 2018, 5:00 pm

Know Your Neighborhood: Wayne

The seventh of twelve 'Know Your Neighborhood' trips, exploring hidden gems, odd and under-birded hot spots in DuPage County, we will be visiting the newest DuPage Forest Preserve; Dunham, an active prairie and wetland restoration site. We will be walking one mile on earthen trails that may be muddy if a rain event occurs prior to the trip, so wear proper footwear. It is also recommended that insect repellent be brought along. We will meet at the Wayne Depot on Army Trail Rd, just west of the downtown railroad crossing. 41.950236, -88.249661 This is west of the intersection of Keil Street & Army Trail Rd

Leader: Glenn Perricone, 630-687-2921, Gperricone@dupagebirding.org

Saturday, July 7, 2017, 7:30 am

Birding by Ear: West Branch Forest Preserve

Get your ears tuned and ready to explore the singing grasslands of the DuPage River West Branch in this field trip with an emphasis on auditory birding. Target birds will include Bobolink, Henslow's Sparrow and Grasshopper Sparrow! We will meet in the north parking lot off Army Trail Rd. and embark at 7:30 am. Some of the trails will be earthen, so wear proper footwear for the conditions (mud boots if it rains prior to the walk) and it is HIGHLY RECOMMENDED that you bring bug spray because there will be ticks.

Leader: Glenn Perricone, 630-687-2921, Gperricone@dupagebirding.org

Saturday, July 7, 9:00 am

Swainson's Hawks, Kane County (Pre-registration required)

This trip will be to look for the Swainson's Hawks that have traditionally nested in this area. Also, we will look for grassland birds such as Western Meadowlark. Time permitting and if the Mississippi Kites have returned to their 'traditional' location, we may head up to Rockford to look for the kites. **Please pre-register with leaders** for directions to meeting spot and/or car-pooling opportunities.

Leaders: Bob & Karen Fisher 630-985-2956, kfisher@dupagebirding.org

Saturday, July 14, 7:30 am

Cantigny Golf, Wheaton

This "special edition" of the monthly Cantigny walk will take place at the golf course instead of the park. Ray Feld, Cantigny's volunteer Purple Martin expert and caretaker, will give a short presentation about martins and then lower one of the two martin houses to show us some baby birds. Opportunities for birding on the fringes of the golf course may be available after the presentation, depending on interest and group size. The Cantigny Golf entrance is at 27W270 Mack Road. Drive up the lane and take the first left to park. Then walk across the lane to the martin houses.

Leader: Jeff Reiter jreiter@wordsonbirds.com

Saturday, July 28, 7:30 am

Fullersburg Woods, Oak Brook

This is a trip for new birders. We will go slowly, practice binocular skills and look for the summer birds. Meet in front of the Nature Center, located off Spring Road in Oak Brook.

Leader: Lesa Hipes, 630-689-7463, lhipes@dupagebirding.org

For additional birding opportunities check out the **Illinois Birding Calendar** at <http://www.illinoisbirds.org/calendar-2/>

Call us if you have questions about the trips or if you would like to lead a trip. Leaders do not have to be birding experts, just familiar with the location. There is no need to register for trips *unless otherwise indicated*. Visitors are always welcome. We do not charge fees for birding trips. Field trip information is also found at: www.dupagebirding.org

Field Trip Coordinators

Jessica Becker

Nancy Allured

DBCFieldTrips@gmail.com

News from the Wacky World of the Web

This Bird Has Been Singing the Same Song for 1,000 Years

National Geographic

The American swamp sparrow's amazing ability to pass down its song perfectly is an example of handing down a cultural tradition, scientists say. [Read the full story](#)

A River of Warblers: 'The Greatest Birding Day of My Life' - The New York Times

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/31/science/warblers-canada-migration.html>

Why Are Wild Parrots Disappearing in Miami?

National Geographic

In Miami, conservationist Daria Feinstein is on a mission to save the beautiful Blue-and-yellow Macaw — before it's too late. [Read the full story](#)

Opinion | The Ornithologist the Internet Called a Murderer - The New York Times

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/15/opinion/sunday/moustached-kingfisher-internet-harassment.html>

BBC News US: Flamingo that escaped a zoo in 2005 spotted in Texas

The bird, tagged as number 492, is seen near Lavaca Bay, Texas, after fleeing a Kansas zoo in 2005. [Read the full story](#)

2018 Dixon Waterfowl Refuge BioBlitz

Friday evening, August 3, through Saturday evening, August 4.

The schedule is set, and it's time to sign up for the specific activities you want to join! Teams of citizen scientists will be led by experts in surveying the 3,000-acre site to find and identify as many species as possible (plants, birds, insects, amphibians and reptiles, fungi, and more). [Complete the activity sign-up here](#).

Dusk and nighttime surveys will be held on Friday, August 3. The main daytime activities will take place on Saturday, August 4, with a Biodiversity Festival in the afternoon that is suitable for all ages and mobility levels. **Participate in as much or as little of the 24-hour Blitz as you like.**

During TWI's first-ever BioBlitz at the Refuge in 2015, participants found [more than 675 species](#). Help us beat this amazing record while learning about the Refuge's biodiversity and how to identify its unique flora and fauna. Most surveying activities are **appropriate for ages 10 and up**.

What captures your interest? Is it colorful wildflowers, elusive owls, crawling critters, or butterflies and dragonflies on the wing? **Choose the specific activities you want to be part of** [here](#).

For a printable overview of the entire 24-hour BioBlitz schedule, click [here](#) for a PDF.

For more info on the Dixon Waterfowl Refuge and its location, click [here](#).

Questions? Contact Phoebe Thatcher at pthatcher@wetlands-initiative.org or by calling (312) 922-0777, extension 111.



View from the new overlook at Sandy Hollow

DuPage Birding Club
P.O. Box 3381
Glen Ellyn, IL 60138

First Class



2018 Meetings

January 11

March 8

April 12

May 10

July 12

September 13

October 11

November 8

The photocopying of this newsletter is done through the generosity of the Birches Assisted Living Facility in Clarendon Hills. The DuPage Birding Club sincerely appreciates the Birches continued support.