

Wooded Island Bird Walk Report for Saturday, December 31, 2011 and Sunday, January 1, 2012

Hello to All,

In addition to our usual winter post walk extension trip to the 66th St. Outer Harbor, we ventured to MONTROSE HARBOR to see the TWO SNOWY OWLS. One owl was high up on a light tower, tucked in between two light fixtures. It was difficult to see, but parts of him were visible. The other napped on the roof of the concession stand, between two chimney screens. It would cast a boring look at the assembled birders gathered on the sand, then tucked its nose into its feathers and doze off. Both were spotted, but the one on the roof had a pure white nape. Mark and I saw a FEMALE HAIRY WOODPECKER, in a tree southwest of the concession stand. We met some other birders known previously only from posts made on IBET and IL Birders Forum. Randy, Jennie, Mark and Jennette made an additional stop at Jarvis Bird Sanctuary on the way home.

The weary GREAT BLUE HERON was at its usual station on a bit of land in the southwest corner of the Inner Harbor. It was seen again on Sunday just before noon.

The Double-eyed immature RED-TAILED HAWK made a dramatic appearance on the top of the roof of the Yacht Club building. It posed like a weather vane. Although this one has two normal appearing eyes, I am concerned that this bird requires remedial hawking lessons. At first we thought that it had a mouse in its talons. But after using our scopes on its feet, it turns out that the Big Fella had managed to make himself a bark sandwich, wrapped up in leaves. The look on his face when he unwrapped the leaves was "priceless." Even he looked disgusted with the results of his efforts. He flew off only to return a short time later to land on top of the slanted crane pulley, in front of the Yacht Club. There he perched, high and out in the open, with winds buffeting his feathers. And there he remained even after we left.

On New Year's Day, Jennie and I did make the usual circuit around Wooded Island and through Bobolink Meadow. The weather was wet, cold and very windy. It was more an endurance test than a birding experience. The major event that occurred was the sudden flight of several hundred CANADA GEESE from the East Lagoon. If this happens while you are near, skip the thought of a passing Bald Eagle. Think rather of our local outdoor canine, the COYOTE. The owner of "Copper", the happy Golden Retriever, told us that a coyote came near the southeast shore of the East Lagoon and all the geese took flight.

BIRDERS: 9. Karin C., Randy, Leo, Carol, Sally, Jennie, Mark, Jennette, Pat

TIMES: 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. – Wooded Island & Bobolink Meadow.
9:40 a.m. to 10:15 a.m. – 66th St. Outer Harbor and Lakefront.
11:00 a.m. to noon – Montrose Harbor.

PLACES: Wooded Island and Bobolink Meadow
66th St. Outer Harbor
Montrose Harbor

WEATHER: Partly Cloudy. Temperature on Saturday 32 – 48 F,
South winds 12–24.

TOTAL SPECIES COUNT: 28

PIED-BILLED GREBE – 1. Montrose Harbor.

HORNED GREBE – 1. Montrose Harbor.

GREAT BLUE HERON – 1. 66th St. Inner Harbor.

Canada Goose – 449. ~ 350 on the East Lagoon alone. Plus 60 on the ground northeast of Darrow Bridge. 39 in the Outer Harbor. The goose with the partial white head and nape was in the East Lagoon. We have not seen this bird for several weeks.

Mallard – a male/female pair in the East Lagoon.

CANVASBACK – 1. 66th St. Outer Harbor among a flock of Redhead and Scaup.

Redhead – 10. 66th St. Outer Harbor. 7 males with females.

Greater Scaup – 10. More females than males. Outer Harbor.

Bufflehead – 2. A few males and females. Outer Harbor.

Common Goldeneye–14. 1 male in the West Lagoon. 3 males and 1 female in the Marina. 10 total, male and female, in the Outer Harbor.

Hooded Merganser– 2. 1 female in the Marina and 1 female in the Outer Harbor.

Common Merganser – Small raft was in the Lake, beyond the mouth of the Outer Harbor.

Red-breasted Merganser – x. A raft out on the lakefront at the entrance to the Harbor. Also small numbers in the East Lagoon, Marina and Outer Harbor.

RUDDY DUCK – 1. Montrose Harbor.

Red-tailed Hawk – 1. Double-eyed. Outer Harbor.

Ring-billed Gull – x A few singular flyovers on Wooded Island/Bobolink Meadow. Around 8 on the Docks in the Marina.

Herring Gull – 2. Outer Harbor.

Monk Parakeet – Heard by Mark near the North Bridge, heading towards Hyde Park.

SNOWY OWL – 2. Montrose Harbor.

Downy Woodpecker – 2. Heard by Mark near Darrow Bridge.

HAIRY WOODPECKER – 1. Female. Montrose Harbor.

American Crow – 7.

Black-capped Chickadee – 2.

American Robin – 1. Montrose.

European Starling – 2. Near Darrow Bridge.

Northern Cardinal – 9. 4 on Wooded Island and 5 on Turtle Island.

American Goldfinch – 9. 8 on Wooded Island. 1 Outer Harbor.

House Sparrow – 2.

This report has been recorded on eBird.

As always, corrections, additions and comments are welcome.

Please note that the Wooded Island Walks are on Wednesday will start later, at 7:15 a.m. due to the later sunrise.

The Saturday walks start at 8 a.m.

The group gathers on Darrow Bridge in Jackson Park, south end of the Columbia Basin (North Lagoon); south side of the Museum of Science & Industry.

Good Birding!

Patricia Durkin
Chicago Audubon Society Representative
Wooded Island Bird Walks