

Wooded Island Bird Walk Report for Saturday, April 23, 2011

Hello to All,

The species count, both for birds and birders, continues to climb. The promise of warming temperatures helped some birders to rise early to join the group meeting on Darrow Bridge. Nine First of Year (FOY) sightings were added to our Saturday outings, although not new to Jackson Park itself, as most have been reported by other birders before today. But, to add an immature AMERICAN BALD EAGLE fly over Wooded Island, thanks to a report by Sue F. and Beth S., plus an male EASTERN BLUEBIRD, with his two traveling partners, male PINE WARBLERS, that we almost had to brush off our shoulders, well, we were thrilled with today's outing. And an uncommon sighting of a BROAD-WINGED HAWK was a real treat along the lakefront.

Our resident RACCOONS have fallen victim to a fatal disease. The working diagnosis is canine distemper. During the week, six raccoons were found dead near the water. Today there was a wandering raccoon near and on Darrow Bridge. A US Fish and Wildlife Biologist is investigating. The Raccoon tree in the center of the Island was vacant.

Birders: 22+, including, Karin C., Jennette, Tall Brian, Al L., Bruce, Betsy, Rosemary S., Sally, Rick, Jennie + 3 relatives, Raman, Jean, Meera Lee, Berthold, Markus, Pat D., and guest appearances by Sue F. and Beth S. Eric G. made it to the Island after soccer practice and heard about the Bald Eagle.

Time: 8:00 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.

Places: Wooded Island, Soccer Field, Bobolink Meadow, an 59th St. Marina with two boats docked.

Weather: Started out cloudy and cool, with a strong WSW wind. Temperatures were in the middle 40's F. By 10 a.m. the sun was out and the temperature had warmed to the upper 50's F.

Total Species Count: 50!

Now for the birds:

Double-crested Cormorant – 8 flying over the Lake, just south of Promontory Point.

Great Blue Heron – 1, East Lagoon.

GREEN HERON – 1, spotted by Raman, Japanese Garden, perched on a branch over the water, south of pine trees.

Black-crowned Night-Heron – 6, on Heron Island.

Canada Goose – X, one couple left a large cream colored egg on the center little Island in the Japanese Garden. I think that this little foot print of an Island is also called Turtle Island and it is bad luck to ever step upon it. Rick thought it was a trick Easter Egg hunt. Otherwise, the geese are nesting and paired off for the most part.

Wood Duck – 2, 1 male & 1 female, along west edge of West Lagoon; seen from the North Bridge.

Mallard – X, on all waters

Blue-winged Teal – 5, 4 males & 1 female, East Lagoon.

AMERICAN BALD EAGLE – 1, immature, fly over, Wooded Island, reported by Sue F. and Beth S. ~ 10:30 a.m.

Sharp-shinned Hawk – 1, Bobolink Meadow, reported by Sue F. and Beth S.

Cooper's Hawk – 2, Wooded Island, reported by Sue F. and Beth S.

BROAD-WINGED HAWK – 1, seen flying over East Lagoon between Heron Island and Bobolink Meadow.

American Coot – 2-3, East Lagoon.

Ring-billed Gull – Fly-overs

Caspian Tern – 2, late for work. Arrived over the East Lagoon after 1130 a.m. The first one to arrived called out the Jennie, with a loud, "I'm here!" Jennie knows that call well.

CHIMNEY SWIFT – reported by Sue F. and Beth S.

Belted Kingfisher – 1, possibly 2. A female perched briefly on the South Bridge railing. She was going from the East to West Lagoon. We all hope to have a pair nest nearby this year once again.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker – 3, male and female on Wooded Island. Another male was southwest of Rose Garden fence, low in a tree.

Downy Woodpecker – 3, 1 male was picking on a branch on the ground along the east edge of Wooded Island, in the ground depression, south of the Japanese Garden. A male and female pair were seen together on the Island, not far from the one on the ground. The male was calling and displaying for the female, while they both hunted on branches for insects.

Northern Flicker – several seen and heard on Wooded Island.

Eastern Phoebe – 1, seen on the islet just south of Heron Island, seen from the Meadow side (east).

American Crow – 2, may be nesting near the Music Bridge.

Purple Martin – 4, (2 male/female pair) on the Houses, during a stare down with some starlings. Later the Purple Martins were flying around the south end of the East Lagoon, near Turtle Island.

Tree Swallow – several, wearing their blue coats over pearl white bodies; flying around with the Purple Martins.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow – a few flying near the southeastern part of the East Lagoon, just north of Turtle Island.

Barn Swallow – Common.

Black-capped Chickadee – heard and reported by our Chicago Police Officer who was on patrol on the Island in an SUV. He raises white doves.

Brown Creeper – 2, Karin C. reported one in the Japanese Garden. Another was seen near the big willow near Turtle Island

Golden-crowned Kinglet – a few on Island and Soccer Field near Lagoon.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet – same as above.

EASTERN BLUEBIRD – 1, male, on short trees, Soccer Field. Spotted by Raman. A great thrill to see such a bird in Jackson Park.

Hermit Thrush – 2, 1 in Japanese Garden and another in the Rose Garden.

American Robin – several on Wooded Island.

European Starling – several, sizing up the returning Purple Martins at the Houses.

MAGNOLIA WARBLER – 1, near North Bridge.

Yellow-rumped Warbler – several on Wooded Island. Last one seen in small trees SW of Music Bridge and parking lot.

PINE WARBLERS – 2, flying near the Eastern Bluebird; often on the ground and along the water's edge of the soccer field. We all had great looks. You would think that a Pine Warbler would be found in and among pine trees. Yes, but Sibley states that "they sometimes joins bluebirds and Chipping Sparrows to forage on the ground in suburban settings." Both are great finds for us in the City.

PALM WARBLER – 1, foraging on the ground at the edge of the North Woods of Bobolink Meadow, wearing its brown beanie and flicking its tail.

Eastern Towhee – 2, North Woods of Bobolink Meadow.

SAVANNAH SPARROW – 1, close looks, North Bridge, northeast section.

Song Sparrow – Wooded Island and near Darrow Bridge.

White-throated Sparrow – seen and heard singing on Wooded Island. A few more would found near the Towhee in the North Woods.

White-crowned Sparrow – 1, North Woods of Bobolink Meadow, near Towhee.

Dark-eyed Junco – several in the Japanese Garden. Six in the trees at the south end of the east parking lot.

Northern Cardinal – 4 on Wooded Island, 2 pairs of male and female. One pair was on the ground, just outside the southwest fence of the Rose Garden, and keeping very bad company with a female cowbird.

Red-winged Blackbird – heard and seen on Wooded Island and in Bobolink Meadow.

EASTERN MEADOWLARK – 1, reported by Karin C. high in a tree on Heron Island.

Common Grackle –1, Japanese Garden.

Brown-headed Cowbird – 3, 2 males in the Japanese Garden, 1 female following a pair on Northern Cardinals south of Rose Garden.

American Goldfinch – 3 Japanese Garden.

As always, additions, corrections, photos and comments are welcome.

Good birding!

Pat Durkin