

Wooded Island Bird Walk Report for Saturday, July 30, 2011

Hello to All,

It was a day to welcome home our summer travelers and an young expatriate now living in Sweden.

Eric and Tobias have returned from a two week vacation in the Republic of Ireland. Tobias now speaks with a slight lilting brogue. During his travels, Eric read our reports and kept us informed of sightings in Ireland, thanks to the smart phone that he carries. We all enjoyed the short video of the Northern Gannet nesting colony on the Saltee Islands, off the east coast of Ireland. They are magnificent birds that winter at sea. According to Paul Clyne's Checklist of the Birds of Jackson Park, Chicago, a single "immature westbound Northern Gannet was observed at 57th St. & Cornell Ave. (on) 11/06/1993* - the second Illinois record and the first for Cook Co."

Sally brought her granddaughter Anna along for the bird walk. More accurately, when Anna stepped off the plane from Sweden, she asked if she could go birding on Wooded Island. Anna put my pocket magnifying glass to good use during our walk and really enjoyed identifying the butterflies that floated by with occasional landings to allow for close observation and utter enjoyment for us all.

On Wooded Island, an extensive area south of the Japanese Garden has signs posted by the Chicago Park District. The signs indicate that "woodland restoration" will take place. Efforts will be made this week to contact the Chicago Park District to find out the detailed landscape plans. Stay tuned. The dead oak trees and shrubs west of the Rose Garden have been replaced. Crushing wheel tracks from the heavy equipment remain on the grass.

As for the birds, the young are out and about and discovering a new world. Parents are nearby to give support and encouragement. I hope a memory will remain with the young so that they will return to Wooded Island in the coming years.

BIRDERS: 11, including Eric, Tobias, Sally, Anna, Karin C., Jennie, Caroline, Leo, Steve, Jennette, and Pat.

TIME: 8:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

PLACE: Wooded Island, Soccer Field and Bobolink Meadow

WEATHER: Sunny. Warm. Humid. Temperature in the middle 80 degrees F.

TOTAL SPECIES: 24

Now for the birds:

Great Blue Heron – 1, East Lagoon.

Green Heron – 4, East Lagoon of which 2 young were reported by Karin.

Black-crowned Night-Heron – 1, juvenile, flew to Turtle Island and disappeared in the foliage, from the southeast shore of Soccer Field.

Canada Goose – X, on water and able to fly.

WOOD DUCK – 12, 2 adult females. 1 female had 10 BABIES in tow in the West Lagoon, near the South Bridge. The other adult female was seen at the southeast tip of Wooded Island, in the East Lagoon. She may have had young with her too, as the babies enjoyed scrambling up the shore from the water, but she was at the water's edge alone when we passed.

Mallard – 13, 1 adult female had 4 young babies in the West Lagoon. The ducklings were fraternizing with the baby Wood Ducks. In the East Lagoon another adult female had 7 young following her.

Caspian Tern – 1, East Lagoon

Monk Parakeet – singular birds calling overhead in flight over Wooded Island and the south end entrance to Bobolink Meadow.

Eastern Kingbird – 4. Two perched together in the Meadow. 1 was on the Willow Tree near Turtle Island. 1 was perched high on the northwest tall snag on Wooded Island, west of the Japanese Garden.

American Crow – heard on Wooded Island and seen around the East Parking Lot.

Purple Martin – some young remain at home while others have made it to the tallest branches of the snags on Wooded Island. These adventurous youngsters are in the company of an adult. They seemed a bit bewildered, perched high up in the sun. Like human climbers, they seemed to have discovered contemporaneously, that the ascend is easier than the descent. They are trying to figure out if and when they have it in them to take flight.

Cliff Swallow – 1, reported by Karin C. at the South Bridge.

Barn Swallow – less each week flying under the bridges.

Black-capped Chickadee – heard by Steve on Wooded Island.

American Robin – many young were seen on the Island.

Gray Catbird – several seen on Wooded Island.

European Starling – many young. Birds are flying back and forth in flocks.

Cedar Waxwing – 10 + on Wooded Island. The young have fledged.

Yellow Warbler – heard on Turtle Island.

Song Sparrow – 3, 2 were seen and heard on Turtle Island. 1 was perched in the open and belting out its song in the Meadow.

Northern Cardinal – fleeting glimpses of males were seen on Wooded Island, Turtle Island and Heron Island.

Red-winged Blackbird – females seen on Wooded Island and in the Meadow.

Baltimore Oriole – silent young were seen near Darrow Bridge, on Wooded Island and near and on Turtle Island.

American Goldfinch – 2 males were seen on the southwest side of Wooded Island

Other sightings:

COMMON WHITE TAILED DRAGONFLY – discovered by Tobias on Wooded Island.

RED-SPOTTED PURPLE BUTTERFLY – found by Anna at the immediate area southeast of the South Bridge.

MONARCH BUTTERFLY – found on, what else, a Milkweed plant along the Soccer Field shore. Anna differentiated it from its smaller cousin the Viceroy.

Per usual, an enjoyable morning was had by all.

Hope to see you next Saturday at 8 a.m. or on Wednesday at 7 a.m.

Good Birding!

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Wooded Island Bird Walks

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