



COMPASS

Navigating the world of birds and nature

VOLUME 17, ISSUE 9

OCTOBER 2003

Chicago Audubon Society



Mission Statement

Founded in 1973 with an accent on birds, the Chicago Audubon Society's mission is to promote the understanding and appreciation of nature, and to aid in the conservation and restoration of our natural ecosystems as they relate to our geographical area. We do this for the benefit of humanity as well as for the earth's biodiversity. Chicago Audubon carries out this mission through a combination of education, stewardship and research programs, supported by fundraising efforts designed to further involve Chicago Audubon Society members in their favorite pastime, observing and studying birds and other wildlife.

More Rare Sightings at Montrose!



Black-tailed gull. Photo by Bob Hughes

By Don Darnell

There have been many uncommon to rare bird sightings at Montrose Point over the years – Kirtland's and Townsend's warblers, a hooded crow and, most recently, a Grace's warbler to name a few — but the image that filled Mike Miller's spotting scope lens on the morning of August 7, 2003 should have been enough to cause even the most stuffed-shirt ornithologist to gush out an "Oh Baby!" or, at the very least, a hearty and quite audible, "Yes!"

For the record, reports of a possible black-tailed gull (*larus crassirostris*-Latin for thick-billed) along the lakefront had come out of southern Wisconsin and Miller Beach a day or two earlier. Still, for a couple of

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Chicago Audubon Society
Web Site is now LIVE
www.chicagoaudubon.org

see Page 2

Join Audubon's Bird Walks for Families
During Harvest Festival
• OCTOBER 25 & 26 •

see Page 4

REMINDER BIRD SEED SALE

Saturday, October 25

If you haven't ordered—

You can still phone your order in by Friday, October 15th, using the form below, or download it from our website at www.chicagoaudubon.org.

If you have ordered—

Remember to pick up your bird seed order between the hours of 9:00 A.M. and Noon on Saturday, October

25th, at the location specified when you phoned or mailed in your order.

The two pick-up locations are 1513 Church Street in Evanston and 7820 West Madison Avenue in River Forest.

There is still time to sign up to volunteer to help distribute seed. Call the office (773) 539-6793 and let Karen Andersen know at which location and how many hours you can volunteer. We need volunteers at the pick-up site by 8:00 A.M.

CHICAGO AUDUBON SOCIETY BIRD SEED SALE ORDER FORM

| QTY | DESCRIPTION | PRICE | TOTAL |
|-------|----------------------------------|---------|-------|
| ___ | 20 lb. Regular Wild Bird Feed | \$4.75 | _____ |
| ___ | 40 lb. Regular Wild Bird Feed | \$8.25 | _____ |
| ___ | 20 lb. Premium Wild Bird Feed | \$6.25 | _____ |
| ___ | 40 lb. Premium Wild Bird Feed | \$11.25 | _____ |
| ___ | 20 lb. Black Oil Sunflower Seed | \$5.50 | _____ |
| ___ | 40 lb. Black Oil Sunflower Seed | \$10.25 | _____ |
| ___ | 25 lb. Sunflower Hearts | \$15.25 | _____ |
| ___ | 25 lb. White Millet | \$6.25 | _____ |
| ___ | 25 lb. Safflower | \$12.25 | _____ |
| ___ | 25 lb. Cracked Corn | \$4.25 | _____ |
| ___ | 10 lb. Peanut Bits | \$7.75 | _____ |
| ___ | 10 lb. Thistle | \$8.75 | _____ |
| ___ | 25 lb. Thistle | \$20.75 | _____ |
| ___ | 13 oz. High Energy Suet Cake | \$1.25 | _____ |
| ___ | 15 oz. Fruit and Nut Bell Treats | \$2.75 | _____ |
| TOTAL | | | _____ |

I will PICK UP my order between 9 A.M. and NOON on Saturday, Oct. 25th, at

1613 Church, Evanston 7820 Madison, River Forest

Please find my check for \$_____ enclosed or charge my credit card

Credit Card Type: Master Card VISA

Credit Card number: _____

Expiration Date: _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE (_____) _____

I will be able to help on BIRD SEED SALE DAY between the hours of _____ and _____.

Mail your order to:
Chicago Audubon Society, 5801-C N. Pulaski Road,
Chicago, IL 60646
(773) 539-6793

Orders Must be Received by October 10th.
Remember, 40 % of your purchase is tax deductible.



Chicago birders to pick-out this first “observed” visit of a non-migratory Japanese species to the Great Lakes, among hundreds and hundreds of ring-billed gulls of similar plumage and size, is something all Chicago area nature-watchers should feel good about.

That fateful day, two veteran birdwatchers, Mike Miller and Bob Hughes were out on the lakefront with spotting scopes and binoculars. Because of the reports of a possible black-tailed gull in bordering states, Miller had been scanning the hundreds of gulls at Montrose from his spot in the sand alongside the Fishhook Pier. His first objective was to see if he could find a gull with a darker mantle than the others, when all of a sudden that’s exactly what he saw in his scope! A bird that looked basically like the other ring-billed gulls but with a much darker mantle.

He shouted over to birder Bob Hughes who was busy photographing a shorebird inside the fenced-off Shorebird Protection Area thirty feet away. Once Hughes caught a glimpse of the “dark” gull it was off to the races. Because the two men were a couple hundred yards away from the suspect gull, they started sprinting, literally, through the deep sand to get a better look.

With Miller gasping for breath (“I’ve got to quit smoking,” he told me) they pulled up alongside several lifeguard boats beached in the sand within 30 to 40 yards of the suspect gull. By the time Miller was able to stop hyperventilating (Miller’s words), set up his scope and lay a calm cheek to his scope’s eyepiece, Hughes was already taking pictures of the bird for the IOS Records Committee through his own Questar scope.

The gull in their lenses was diagnostic: red tipped bill, yellow legs, right shape and plumage, including the namesake black tail. “This looks like it!” said Hughes.

“Holy Crow!” gasped Miller as he again centered the gull in his lens, this time at short range. Within minutes, two other birders, John Purcell and Kanae Hirabayashi, who had seen the two men sprinting in the sand with backpacks and binoculars flying – not to mention tripods and scopes cradled in their arms – were on the scene and getting good views of the bird.

The remarkable thing about the Japanese gull sighting is that there are absolutely no records of the species on the Great Lakes, and the few documented sightings to be had were up along the Alaskan coast and in the Aleutian Islands.

Doug Stotz, ornithologist at the Field Museum, said there were some sightings of black-tailed gulls in the San Diego area back in the early 1950s, the speculation being at the time that they might have been transported on one of the many ships returning from Korean War duty. There have been other reports of the species along the eastern seaboard, and there was a well-documented sighting in Manitoba (the only other inland sighting on the North American continent).

But as to the Thursday, August, 7, 2003 Montrose Beach bird, Stotz says that the likelihood of the gull lifting a ride on a boat is almost nil, that the bird very likely flew in via the north Pacific, through Alaska, and just kept working its way east until stopped by the Great Lakes. Stotz, who heads the IOS Records Committee, said that this clearly observed and well-photographed vagrant should have no trouble clearing the IOS records committee.

Between the September 9th observations and photographing of the Grace’s warbler at Montrose Point –(first spotted by Chicago birders Clara Coen and John Purcell) and the black-tailed gull at the Point, with its “Magic Hedge” and meadow, its beach and “protected” dune habitat area, Montrose Point continues to provide Midwestern nature lovers with a never-ending string of unparalleled avian sighting thrills.



Grace’s warbler Photos by Kanae Hirabayashi

An Update on Plum Island

By Don Goerne
Chairman, Friends of Plum Island Committee

As of September 16, 2003, Mr. Wendland, spokesman for the developer of Starved Rock Island, LLC stated that 34 people had placed deposits on a possible 50 Plum Island lots. Wendland also said that required surveys will be completed by the end of September, clearing the way for a presentation to the Village of Utica for annexation at the end of October.

As expected, it sounds like the Utica Planning Commission may be holding Plum Island annexation hearings in the near future. We ask those of you who can to make every effort to attend these hearings. Planning commission hearings are held in downtown Utica once a month at 6:00 p.m. on the last Thursday.

Our letters asking that any and all requests for the annexation of Plum Island be denied have been an overwhelming success. The village clerk, who received 105 letters at one point stated, “It has absolutely exploded.” More recent reports indicate that “1,000 letters and counting” have been received.

Thank you to all who printed and mailed in our form letter. To those of you who added your own personal comments or took the time to write your own letter, THANK YOU!!!!

For anyone wishing to make a contribution, please make checks payable to and mail to:

Illinois Audubon / Plum Island Fund
P.O. Box 2418
Danville, IL 61834-2418

For more information, contact me during the day at (815) 673-5544 or at dgoerne@yahoo.com.



COMPASS

Chicago Audubon Society
North Park Village
5801-C N. Pulaski Road
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www.chicagoaudubon.org



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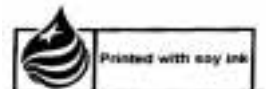
Audubon info hotline: (847) 299-3505
Report sightings to: (847) 265-2117
Rare bird alert: (847) 265-2118
Activity line: (773) 539-6793, press 1
Web page: www.chicagoaudubon.org
Audubon office: Manager, Karen Andersen, (773) 539-6793, fax (773) 539-6830, chicago_audubon@juno.com. Office hours: Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

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Chicago is First U.S. City with Bird-Friendly Skyline

Over Ten Thousand Birds Saved Each Year

Mayor Richard M. Daley has issued a mayoral proclamation designating Aug. 25 - Oct. 25 "Lights Out Chicago Days." The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has provided funding through the Urban Conservation Treaty for Migratory Birds program, and Crain's Chicago Business has donated advertising space to recognize and thank participating buildings. The Lights Out program is a cooperative venture between Audubon and the City of Chicago, with support from the Building Owners and Managers Association.

In the past, tens of thousands of birds have perished because the lights on tall buildings confuse their navigation systems. These tiny creatures make exhausting all-night journeys. Many of them fly hundreds of miles in one night on their way from Canada to South America. They find their way by a complex set of instincts and signals which can become

confused by the lights. They sometimes circle the buildings repeatedly and die of exhaustion or by colliding with the building.

Ken Wysocki, President of the Chicago Ornithological Society, is one of a number of volunteers who have been monitoring this problem for the past few years. According to Wysocki, turning out the lights can have a huge beneficial effect. "Last fall, due to a date mixup, there was a night when many of the skyline lights were on, and you could actually see the birds that were trapped by the lights circling the buildings. I picked up dozens of dead birds that day. But on other days last fall, when a majority of the downtown lights were off, most of the migrating birds passed overhead safely."

Over 250 species migrate through Chicago, about 5 million individuals in all. Many birds killed at Loop buildings are declining species. Radar

studies show that these birds migrate in a broad front across the Midwest. Many birds use the now-friendly skies over Chicago.

Doug Stotz, Field Museum ornithologist, estimates that the "Lights Out" program saves the lives of over ten thousand warblers, tanagers, thrushes, and other migratory birds each year. His studies show that turning out lights reduces bird mortality by 80%. Tall buildings dim the lights on the upper stories after 11 PM each evening from August 25 to October 25 and from March 17 to June 7. Birds move through the Chicago metropolitan area throughout these months, and by simply dimming or turning off the lights, building managers and owners can help them successfully migrate.

For more on Lights Out Chicago visit www.cityofchicago.org/environment/BirdMigration/

Chicago Buildings Taking Part in "Lights Out":

- AT&T Corporate Center/USG Building Complex
- Bank One Center
- Bank One Plaza
- The Boeing Company
- Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago
- John Hancock Center
- The Harris Bank Building
- Kluczynski Federal Building
- LaSalle Bank Building
- Hyatt Regency McCormick Place
- Merchandise Mart
- Northwestern Memorial Hospital
- Sears Tower
- Tribune Tower
- UBS Tower
- 55 E. Monroe
- 77 W. Wacker
- 161 N. Clark
- 311 S. Wacker
- 500 W. Madison

INTRODUCING — WWW.CHICAGOAUDUBON.ORG

Chicago Audubon proudly presents its new and improved interactive website at www.chicagoaudubon.org. The website was developed and designed by Noel Maguigad and edited by Gail Goldberger.

Now you will be able to instantly read the:

- CAS Rare Bird Alert
- Latest Audubon Advisory
- Most recent issue of *The COMPASS*.

You will also be able to check out our Calendar of Events, fill out and e-mail forms and registration materials to the CAS office, buy t-shirts, and link to a bevy of local, state and national birding and natural science resources.

So log on today, and enjoy.

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I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).

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 1. Complete and file one copy of this form with your postmaster annually on or before October 1. Keep a copy of the completed form for your records.
 2. In cases where the proprietor or security holder is a foreigner, include in items 10 and 11 the name of the person or corporation for whom the trustee is acting. Also include the names and addresses of individuals who are stockholders who own or hold 1 percent or more of the total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities of the publishing corporation. In item 11, if none, check the box. Use blank sheets if more space is required.
 3. Be sure to furnish all circulative information called for in item 15. Free circulation must be shown in items 15(3), 4, and 5.
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PS Form 3526, October 1999 (Reverse)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Stewardship Workdays

At the Skokie Lagoons: October 11 and November 8 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, planting, and other management activities. Meet at the Tower Road parking lot, east of the lagoon bridge. If you arrive late, look for a CAS sign near the parking lot directing you to the work site.

For further information call Jerry Garden at (773)545-4632, or e-mail him at jerrygarden@sprynet.com

Programs

At North Park Village Nature Center
7:00 pm-Refreshments
7:30 pm-Program

Friday, October 10th

Carol Nelson presents "A Visit to Bunker Hill" talk and slide show.

Friday, November 14th

Libby Hill presents "The Chicago River."

Weekly Bird Walks

Wooded Island
Every Wednesday in Oct & Nov -7:00 a.m.

Every Saturday in Oct & Nov - 8:00 a.m.

Bring binoculars and field guides. Dress for the weather. Meet at the Darrow Bridge, just south of the Museum of Science and Industry. **Note:** All the usual routes into the parking lot are closed. If you come from the North, you must swing around the Museum at 57th St, continuing south on Cornell Ave. until you reach Hayes Drive (6300 South). At Hayes, turn left and get back on the Outer Drive going north. At 5800 South, turn left, and follow the road into the parking lot, proceed to where you are just north of the Darrow Bridge. For more information, please call Doug Anderson (773) 493-7058.

North Park Village Nature Center

Every Saturday in Oct - 8:00 a.m.

Meet in front of the Nature Center at 5801 N. Pulaski in Chicago. Bring binoculars and field guides. For more information call the CAS office at (773) 539-6793.

Bird Walks

Saturday, October 18 - 8:00 a.m.
The Grove/River Trails

Join us at the Grove, an 82-acre site with natural ponds and an oak-hickory forest to look for late fall migrants. We'll stop at an interpretive center with a collection of reptiles, amphibians and fish. We'll also bird at River Trails, a nature center, a few minutes down the road from the Grove.

Meet at 1421 Milwaukee Avenue, just north of Glenview Road and south of Euclid Avenue. Any questions? Call Doris Johanson at (847) 827-5930.

Other Events

North Park Village Harvest Fest, Saturday and Sunday, October 25 and 26

See below.

Save the Date

Birding America VI
Saturday, March 13, 2004 at North Park University

Northbrook House FOR RENT

Right on the North Branch of the Chicago River

Sunny, clean 2BR, 1 Den home on quiet, one square mile of forest preserve. Fireplace, central air, full dry basement, beautiful wood floors, patio. Energy-efficient home. Hiking, cross-country trails out back door. Owner maintains yard and home. \$1,550. Must see! 847-272-4834 or lambj@pecorp.com

Join Audubon's Bird Walks for Families During Harvest Festival — OCTOBER 25 & 26

A Project of *The Early Birds*

The Chicago Audubon Society (CAS) will lead a series of **Special Bird Walks for Families** during North Park Village Nature Center's Harvest Festival, Saturday, October 25 and Sunday, October 26, from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM at North Park Village, 5801 North Pulaski Road, Chicago.

These **Special Bird Walks for Families**, a project of the **CAS Early Birds** program, will be offered Saturday and Sunday at 11:00 AM, 12 Noon and 1:00

PM. Families will be able to use CAS binoculars and field guides during the walks.

CAS volunteers will also mount scopes at the main bridge to help kids spot birds around the Nature Center pond. The CAS booth will demonstrate how to select bird seed and bird feeders for backyard birds and how to build a birdhouse.

Harvest Festival attracts thousands of families each year for the Scarecrow Building Contest, Storytelling, Farmers' Market and Live Music. This event is free and open to all age groups. For more

information, contact the North Park Village Nature Center at (312) 744-5472.

To volunteer to lead bird walks or work in the CAS booth, please contact Marci Buettgen, 773-878-4421, mdchgo@aol.com.



Illustration by Kirsten Munson



NOW IS THE TIME TO JOIN CHICAGO AUDUBON

The Chicago chapter of the National Audubon Society is a leader in the conservation and restoration of natural ecosystems, focusing on birds and other wildlife for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity. Established in 1971, CAS operates as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization with over 4,000 members in the Chicago area.

The National Audubon Society has 600,000 members nationwide.

MEMBER ACTIVITIES AND BENEFITS:

- Program meetings (6 per year)
- Bird Walks led by trained guides
- Bird Habitat Survey
- Christmas Bird Count
- Center for New Birders (2003)
- Field trips year round
- Biennial Birding America Conference
- Birdathon
- Student Scholarship Awards
- The COMPASS (10 per year)

TO JOIN: Complete the application form here and mail it with your check (payable to "Chicago Audubon Society") to:

Chicago Audubon Society
5801-C North Pulaski Road
Chicago, IL 60646-6057

Or by Phone: (773) 539-6793 with a VISA or MASTERCARD

CHICAGO AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

Please enroll me as a member of the Chicago Audubon Society. Enclosed is my check for \$20.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: (_____) _____ E-mail: _____

THERE IS ALSO A MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM ONLINE AT WWW.CHICAGOAUDUBON.ORG WHICH YOU OR YOUR FRIENDS CAN DOWNLOAD AND MAIL