

Wooded Island Bird Walk Report for Saturday, February 22, 2014

Hello to All,

Birders keep showing up during this severe winter. Perhaps from habit, but more likely it is the avian surprise that maybe waiting to be found. For the past few weeks, despite the physical hardship of being outdoors, a surprise has always been found.

The greatest surprise today, was the discovery by Mark Webster of a *male Northern Pintail*. He was among a small group of Mallards on the west side of the Outer Harbor, and out of the water, resting on the old wooden ramp of the Jackson Grill building. (Photo attached). Thank goodness Randy suggested that we check out the Harbor.

What an elegant and handsome duck is the Northern Pintail! We only see them in migration, and then only one to two, according to Paul Clyne. I consider them more a western USA bird. While Randy and Mark were scanning the other birds in the Harbor, I saw the N. Pintail make a rapid ascent to join a flock of five birds, in flight, heading northwest. They all looked the same from below, rather than one Pintail plus Mallards. They have a light creamy color. I thought that perhaps other Pintails were near the shore of the small beach near LaRabida. It would have been great to have Mark and/or Randy confirm the identification. What a WOW experience to see him so close, and out of water, and then take flight. Mark's photo is the best!

Off of 63rd St. Pier and Beach, another few surprises awaited us. *A male and female pair of Redhead Ducks* was floating among the mergansers and a *few White-winged Scoters*. No Snowy Owl today.

A male Bufflehead was seen at the north end of the Outer Harbor. *A male and female Mallard* were displaying to each other in the Harbor. The male would dip its' bill in the water, while facing the female, and the female would do the same. "I like you. Do you like me?"

BIRDERS: 6. Randy, Mark W., Raman, Jennie, Sally and Pat

TIME: 8:00 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.

PLACES: Wooded Island, Bobolink Meadow, 63rd St. Pier and Lakefront, Outer Harbor

WEATHER: Cloudy. Temperature in the middle 20's F. Wind WSW 10 – 15mph. Ground conditions continue to be hazardous and arduous underfoot. Snow is compacted and ice is everywhere.

TOTAL SPECIES COUNT: 18

X = commonly seen and/or not counted.

Mark Webster shared his list and the photo of the male Northern Pintail for this report.

1. Canada Goose – X.
2. Mallard – 8. Outer Harbor
3. NORTHERN PINTAIL – 1. Male. Outer Harbor.
4. REDHEAD – 2. Male & Female. In water off of 63rd St. Beach.
5. Greater Scaup – 1. Outer Harbor.
6. Gr/Lesser Scaup – X. In water off of 63rd St. Beach.
7. BUFFLEHEAD- 1. Male. Outer Harbor.
8. Common Goldeneye – X. 10 in Outer Harbor.
9. Common Merganser – X. In water off of 63rd St. Beach.
10. Red-breasted Merganser – X. 10 in Outer Harbor.
11. Ring-billed Gull – X.
12. Herring Gull – X. 2 in the Outer Harbor.
13. Woodpecker Species – 1 or 2. Heard on Wooded Island. Probable Downy.
14. American Crow – X.
15. Black-capped Chickadee – 4 +. Wooded Island.
16. WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH – 2. Wooded Island.
17. Sparrow Species – 5. Flew from lake to edge of Dune at 63rd St.
18. Northern Cardinal – X.

This is a group report, with many birders contributing to the list. Most of the birds were seen by a least several or all the birders.

Corrections, additions and comments are welcome.

Recordings are not used to attract birds.

This report will be recorded on eBird as a group report for the Wooded Island Bird Walks.

The Walks are free and open to one and all. They are held year round. Birders always show up on Darrow Bridge at the start times. Newcomers are warmly welcomed.

The Walks start at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, and at 7:15 a.m. on Wednesday.

Birders gather on Darrow Bridge, which is located south of the Museum of Science and Industry. Ample parking is available east of Darrow Bridge and is accessible from South Lake Shore Drive at 58th Street (labeled Science Drive on a small blue street sign). There is a Stop Light at

58th Street. Make a turn at the Stop Light towards the Museum. Turn Left (south) at the intersection of Science Drive and Columbia Drive. Go through the parking lot to the west end near Darrow Bridge.

Best of Birding to All,

Patricia Durkin

Chicago Audubon Society Representative

Wooded Island Bird Walks