

## Wooded Island Bird Walk Report for Saturday, August 2, 2014

Hello to All,

It was another gorgeous summer morning to enjoy on Wooded Island.

We missed the swimming event of the morning though. Paul Clyne was out earlier. Paul wrote that he “had a LIFE sighting of a *SWIMMING Black-crowned Night Heron*. This was about 4 feet off the east bank of the Heron Island. The bird was toting a big fish (bluegill?) in its beak. While swimming, its posture was (predictably) horizontal, suggesting some exotic white-faced duck. Once it got to shore, it returned to being a typical Black-crowned Night Heron with prey.”

We did not see a single Black-crowned Night Heron on our Walk. Perhaps the ‘Esther Williams’ of Black-crowned Night Herons was doing laps in the central part of the West Lagoon, which we normally do not check.

Paul and Randy have seen a *Rose-ringed Parakeet*, a likely escapee, around the Inner Harbor.

The eastern edge of the North Lagoon, from the Museum to Darrow Bridge is holding a nice pocket of birds, including *White-breasted Nuthatch*, *Baltimore Orioles*, and a successful nest of *Cliff Swallows*, according to Paul.

On Wednesday, July 30<sup>th</sup>, Michael Lange, of the Chicago Park District, graciously met with a dozen birders and concerned conservationists, at the South Shore Cultural Center. He shared the plan-in-progress developed by the Army Corps of Engineers. Mighty changes will be coming to Jackson Park, starting in January 2015. A document is being drafted to identify the key concerns of birders and conservationists in our group. We hope to be able to nominate a birder to represent the Wooded Island birders during the planning process and as plans are finalized. Michael Lange was open to such a representative at the table. I will report on developments as they unfold. A major thank you to all that have devoted their time, shared ideas, asked the hard questions, and the like, during so many changes to this small plot of land, only sixteen acres, called Wooded Island. We have to stay the course.

Just to remind ourselves, and everyone else, including the Chicago Park District; in 1978, thirty-six years ago, Doug Anderson was successful in having the entire Wooded Island, south of the Japanese Garden, designated and dedicated as the “Paul H. Douglas Nature Sanctuary” by the Park District, which owns the land in Public Trust. There are several signs on the Island, provided by the Park District, to herald this designation. (See attached photo). An Olmsted design that was meant to last only a couple of years seems unbecoming to supersede the Sanctuary that was created after the Columbian Exposition.

As always, there are many things and creatures of interest that we pause to note on our walks. Attached are a photo of a *Prairie Blazing Star* (*Liatris*, a.k.a. 'gayfeather') that is blooming in the Rose Garden.

A photo of the *Button Bush* (*Cephalanthus Occidentallis*) was taken near the boardwalk, southeast of Turtle Island.

A *male Cicada* fell off a branch that was being admired by Dan. He landed on the boardwalk and resting there for a while. How do I know it was a male? It was chirping/singing loudly before the fall, and only the male sings.

A *Double-crested Cormorant* was “wing-drying” while perched on a favorite branch in the East Lagoon. Their plumage is not water repellent, and thus gets soaked with pursuing fish underwater.

**BIRDERS:** 14. John and his father Dan; Leo and Caroline H.; Sid, our photographer; Jane and canine Precious for a while; Jennie S., Karin C., Mark W. just returned from polar bear land within the Arctic Circle; Eric and Tobias G., a recent China trip returnee; Renate, Karin D. and Pat

**TIME:** 8:00 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.

**PLACES:** Wooded Island and Bobolink Meadow

**WEATHER:** Sunny, Temperature 70 – 72 F. Mild variable breeze.

**TOTAL SPECIES COUNT:** 30

X = commonly seen and/or not counted.

1. Canada Goose – X. Numbered and unnumbered.
2. Mallard – X.
3. Double-crested Cormorant – 2. (Photo of one air drying wings)
4. Great Blue Heron – 2.
5. Green Heron – 3. Two adults were near the nest in the Japanese Garden and there was a beak showing from the edge of the nest. Hope returns for a juvenile and successful breeding.
6. Cooper's Hawk – 1. Reported by Eric and Tobias near 56<sup>th</sup> & Cornell Drive.
7. Ring-billed Gull – X.
8. Monk Parakeet – 1.
9. Chimney Swift – X.

10. Ruby-throated Hummingbird – 1.
11. Downy Woodpecker – 4. Heard.
12. Eastern Kingbird – 3.
13. Purple Martin – X. Adults and juveniles around Houses and in flight.
14. N. Rough-winged Swallow – 1. Reported by Tobias G.
15. Cliff Swallow – X.
16. Barn Swallow – X.
17. Black-capped Chickadee – X. Heard near the north end of Bobolink Meadow.
18. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher – 3.
19. American Robin – X. Many juveniles.
20. Gray Catbird – 2.
21. European Starling – X. Increasing size and number of flocks on ground, perched and in flight.
22. Cedar Waxwing – 1.
23. *Tennessee Warbler* – 1. In Sycamore tree near soccer field shore.
24. Yellow Warbler – 2. Rose Garden and central Wooded Island.
25. Song Sparrow – X. Rose Garden and Bobolink Meadow.
26. Northern Cardinal – 1. Male. Others around.
27. *Indigo Bunting* – 1. Male. If you wait a while, this fellow will come to perch on the bare tree in the southwest corner of the Rose Garden. Who is watching who?
28. Red-winged Blackbird – X. In Japanese Garden and elsewhere on Wooded Island, and in Bobolink Meadow.
29. American Goldfinch – X. Males are looking very sporty in their bright yellow with black cape wings, and light orange bill.
30. House Sparrow – X. Darrow Bridge and Bobolink Meadow.

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 near Darrow Bridge at the start times. Newcomers are warmly welcomed.

*Note:* Darrow Bridge has been barricaded by the Department of Transportation but there are openings at each end that allows for foot traffic. The Bridge has been deemed unsafe. Birders continue to meet on Darrow Bridge and scan the lagoons and trees while the group comes together.

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 57<sup>th</sup> Street (labeled Science Drive on a small blue street sign). There is a Stop Light at 57<sup>th</sup> 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