



# Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary

Clark Street and Sheridan Road  
Evanston, IL 60201

[clarkstreetbeachbirdsanctuary.org](http://clarkstreetbeachbirdsanctuary.org)

Fall 2022

## From the Sanctuary Stewards

In the spring of 2015 when Judy Pollock asked us to become Stewards of the new Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary in Evanston, we had no idea what we were getting into. We thought our job was to learn about 20 plants that landscape architects Kettelkamp and Kettelkamp had installed and try to keep invasive exotics from getting established. We were told that this was an experiment—turning a bare sand groomed beach into a living habitat—and we wouldn't know for several years what worked.

We had lots of encouragement: from Libby Hill, who had the foresight to urge the city to replace the birding habitat that was lost when Northwestern built their new visitor center; Judy Pollock, who kept the birds in mind and encouraged us to “follow the lead of the plants themselves”; and Paul D'Agostino, head of Greenways for the city. Our focus was on the plant community, the foundation for providing the food and shelter that would attract the birds.



An early workday

Now, seven years later, we are deeply touched and gratified by the growth of so many communities: plants, birds, insects, and PEOPLE who have joined in this adventure. People have volunteered to work with the plants: planting and watering those we want, collecting seeds and dispersing them to new

areas, digging up invasives. We also learned that we need metal fencing not only to protect plants from rabbits, but also, remarkably, an invasion of beavers!

Volunteer bird monitors faithfully show up to observe, identify, count, and document the birds that visit our area and record their data on eBird, the international birding project of Cornell University. We have had daily coverage during the spring and fall migrations for the past 6 years!



We also have an active Steering Committee, volunteers who write the weekly invitations to come to our workdays, and workday leaders who keep records of who came and what they did. Our communications team

maintains a website, writes this newsletter, maintains our social media presence, updates the informational kiosk and more!

We have an ongoing working relationship with City of Evanston staff who supply us with water and store our hoses in the winter, help us maintain our border fence, and loan us tools and wheelbarrows. Many organizations have provided dedicated volunteers who come for one or several days each year, including Rotary International, ZS, First United Methodist Church of Evanston, The Vineyard, and Northwestern's Athletic Department Staff.

We have received generous guidance from stewards at other Lake Michigan beaches from Gary to Waukegan, many talented naturalists, and our bible of botany, the *Flora of the Chicago Region*, by Gerould Wilhelm (who visited CSBBS this spring) and

Laura Rericha. We have identified over 160 species of plants! This season we worked with Karen Glennemeier of Habitat Research LLC to redesign several high visibility areas.



Under her guidance we planted over 1500 new shrubs, grasses, and wildflowers in September 2022! We have also received generous monetary donations from Evanstonians to support our work.

We realized, during the past year, that it is time for a new steward to take the lead. So, our steering committee set out to find a replacement with more training and education in plant biology and conservation. We were lucky to attract Glen Madeja, who became CSBBS Steward on October 1<sup>st</sup>. He is introduced more fully later in this newsletter.



Founding Stewards Julie Dorfman and Jerry Herst with new Steward Glen Madeja

As we hand over many responsibilities, we are not leaving. We will still come to workdays, hope to continue to learn about plants and this unique beach ecosystem, and will be available to consult on next steps for our cherished habitat. And, we get to keep the best parts: new friends and new relationships with each other and the land. What could be better? We are under sunny blue skies (sometimes cloudy), next to a gorgeous lake (sometimes stormy), with gentle breezes (or fierce winds), listening to the birds, the insects, and sometimes a live bluegrass band! We enjoy playing with sand shovels and hoses, surrounded by friends, with the contented hope that together we are helping the earth heal.

THANK YOU for these SEVEN WONDERFUL YEARS and WELCOME GLEN!

~ Julie Dorfman and Jerry Herst

## Bird Sightings

by Nancy Pinchar

The Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary has six dedicated bird monitors and an alternate for the Fall Monitoring Season which covers a period of eight weeks from August 28 through October 22. Each monitor provides a checklist of birds counted on an assigned day of the week.

Volunteers follow a bird monitoring protocol. The sanctuary has been mapped into numbered sections so that we can collect data on the specific areas in which birds are observed. This helps us evaluate usage of the habitat and of its various plant types. Monitors also record and count birds just external to the sanctuary, flying overhead, and on the beach, for an overall snapshot of birds found in the area. The monitors enter their observations into the eBird database; see data and many beautiful photographs at <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L3615041>.

Thus far during the Fall monitoring season over sixty species of birds have been observed, including fourteen types of warblers and notable shorebirds such as Wilson’s snipe and Sanderling. On one memorable sunny day in September, the sanctuary was flooded with Palm Warblers. Another sunny day brought a Magnolia Warbler.



Palm Warbler (photo by C. Fromm)



Magnolia Warbler (photo by S. Judd)

Thanks to all our monitors! And remember, you don't need to be an official monitor—or an expert—to enjoy the birds. You just need to keep your eyes and ears open.

## Meet Our New Steward

On October 1, 2022, following seven years of devoted service by founding stewards Julie Dorfman and Jerry Herst, **Glen Madeja** became steward of the Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary. Glen will head our



Glen Madeja at the Bird Sanctuary

Steering Committee and will provide oversight of all aspects of the sanctuary, including plant management, workday planning, record keeping, and communications.

Steering Committee member David Pelzer interviewed Glen about his new role.

### ***How did you become interested in nature?***

I was raised in North Riverside, west of Chicago. South of us was a wooded area, part of the forest preserve, like the remnant in the bird sanctuary. There was also an open area we called the Prairie. Several blocks north, a pond. As a kid, I had freedom to explore and enjoy these places.

### ***What aspects of your professional background have prepared you for your new role?***

My undergrad college majors were Biology and Physical Anthropology. When I graduated I didn't pursue this path. I followed my mom's wish for me to be a "commercial success" and entered the MBA program in Economics and Marketing at Northwestern. I worked in the business world for 25 years. But I found it was not my true calling.

Meanwhile, as a release from the stress of the day-to-day business world, I took up gardening, which was very Zen-like for me.

Eventually, with my wife Janet's encouragement, I returned to school, entering a new master's program at Northwestern in Plant Biology and Conservation. I then became Executive Director at the Frances Willard House, where I served for nine years. This past summer, CSBBS's Susan Comstock, whom I recruited to be on the Willard House Board, contacted me about the steward position. It seemed the right fit at the right time.

### **Can you say more about why it's a good fit?**

Clearly there's my interest in nature and my training in plants and conservation. Also, to remain viable and valuable, organizations continually need to re-invent themselves. Over the past seven years, the CSBBS volunteer corps, led by Julie and Jerry, have done a fabulous job. I'm coming into the stewardship with a different skill set – including experience with long-range strategic plans and annual operating plans.

### **What would success at CSBBS look like?**

We want to establish and maintain the right ecosystem to make this a true bird sanctuary. We want to work with nature to help make it work the way it should. Also, we need to help the community understand what we are doing, and why. Over the winter, we we'll take another look at CSBBS's stated Mission. Is it the right one for the future? Should it be bigger, smaller, or somehow different than what we have now?

### **What strategies will you employ to determine where to go from here?**

I'm good at problem solving. In my career, I would be the one assigned to thorny issues and trying to decide whether to "kiss it or kill it." I've learned it takes a combination of inductive and deductive reasoning to offer solutions.

For example, if you want to attract birds, you ask, "What do they really need?" There are alternatives for how to best to offer this. Some may work better than others.

I like to play "what if?" games, to mull over what might happen if we did this versus that, and then see how it fits with the reality of what we are seeing out in the Sanctuary.

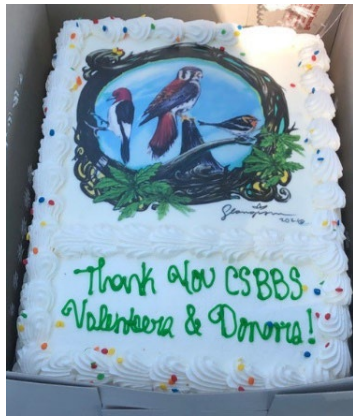
We first need to incorporate the knowledge garnered over the past seven years, to identify what has worked at the site, and what hasn't. It's always good to ask, "Should we continue to do things as we have always done them, or is there a better way?" So, I have started reviewing CSBBS's extensive files of field notes and commentary, especially those related to dune ecology, which I know little about. I am excited and looking forward to playing in a new sandbox - literally!



## CSSBS Appreciation Picnic

Our September 24 workday was followed by a picnic in the city park just outside the bird sanctuary. Planters and weeders, waterers, birders, record keepers, donors, and others came together for good food, good company, and good music provided by the Hastings Hot Band, with CSBBS volunteer David Pelzer on mandolin and voice.

We shared our appreciation for each other—and especially for outgoing stewards Jerry Herst and Julie Dorfman and for Libby Hill, who initiated the CSBBS project. A fun touch: The cake decoration matched the *Birds of Concern* mural at Central Street and Green Bay Road, a collaborative venture involving the Evanston Mural Arts Program and our partner and fiscal sponsor, the Evanston North Shore Bird Club.



## New Gates and New Fencing

We like to have new volunteers and are happy to give tours of our site—but we don't want people to walk through on their own and potentially harm the plants. We also want birds to have priority and not be disturbed by too many people. In addition, we want to protect our plants from damage by rabbits, who seem especially fond of sunflowers, or (see Fall 2020 newsletter) by beavers.



So, the Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary is fenced, and we thank the City of Evanston for recent big improvements to

the fencing! They installed new, sturdy gates this summer; CSBBS volunteers then put pavers under the gates (see picture) to keep rabbits from going

under them. In September city staff returned to install snow fencing around a part of CSBBS that was previously unfenced, and they added chicken wire so that rabbits can't get in between the slats. Yes, rabbits can be cute – but we're rooting for the sunflowers!

## "Bee Bill" Celebration

We were honored, in late June, to be chosen as the site for a celebration of the passage of Illinois House Bill 3118, also known as the "Bee Bill." The bill protects bees and other pollinators by regulating pesticide spraying in the state. It was inspired by a young Winnetka resident, Scarlett Harper, who was concerned about the declining bee population in her yard. Scarlett did research on the problem and possible solutions and then presented what she'd learned to Robyn Gabel, who is her (and our) state representative. Gabel, along with State Senator Laura Fine, then sponsored the Bee Bill. For more on the story, see the June 23, 2022 article in the [Evanston RoundTable](#).

As part of the celebration, CSBBS volunteer Joan Linsenmeier welcomed attendees to our site and talked about the importance of insects as, in many ways, key collaborators helping us to make our bird sanctuary a welcoming place for birds.



Bee Bill Ceremony speakers, from left: State Sen. Laura Fine, Scarlett Harper, Joan Linsenmeier, Mark Clifton (Exec. Director of the North Shore Mosquito Abatement District), State Rep. Robyn Gabel.