



Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary

Clark Street and Sheridan Road
Evanston, IL 60201

clarkstreetbeachbirdsanctuary.org

Spring 2023

From the Sanctuary Stewards

You never know what’s going to happen at the beach. New plants come up, others that thrived in previous years disappear. Lake levels rise and fall. Workdays are rained out or it’s too hot to work. So it was with the search for a steward to replace Julie Dorfman and Jerry Herst. Our due diligence found the perfect steward, but it turned out that he needed to take a pass on the responsibilities. We then formed an “interim team”: Jerry agreed to stay on and Libby Hill agreed to be co-steward while we figure out a new approach. Fortunately, our unwavering steering committee continues to take on many major responsibilities, making for a smooth transition. This has made it possible for Libby, Jerry, and Julie to step back, think about the larger issues, and also not come to every workday.



Libby and Jerry preparing to label plants

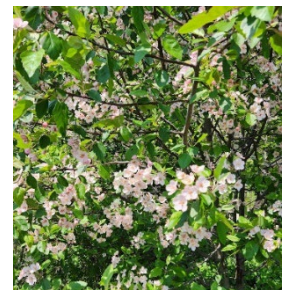
Nancy Pinchar has organized an incredible crew of birders who have diligently kept track of migrants and returning residents. Our eBird page has more birds and birders than ever before. Check out Nancy’s article in this newsletter.

Susan Comstock has taken over organizing workdays with aplomb. She writes weekly emails with good humor and with photographs of our target plants, encouraging volunteers to turn out and help. Sometimes we are digging invasives, sometimes watering to supplement the watering crew, and

sometimes planting or gathering seeds. Workday leaders report on projects they supervised and on possibilities for the next workday.

Chris Steel is again organizing our watering crew. While the goal is for our native plants to weather what nature throws at them, we like to give the new ones a helping hand, especially when it is hot and dry on the beach. David Pelzer and Joan Linsenmeier continue to work on outreach, Joan editing the newsletter and David communicating with groups interested in volunteering or touring the sanctuary.

Our vision has expanded as well. After working for eight years on the beach, this spring we reviewed and revised our mission statement and goals, recognizing the role that we play as an ecotone, a transition zone between the lake and sand beach to the east and the larger trees in the parkland to the west.



Blossoming Prairie Crabapple

This clearer vision and a new description of the sanctuary can be found at clarkstreetbeachbirdsanctuary.org/about-1.

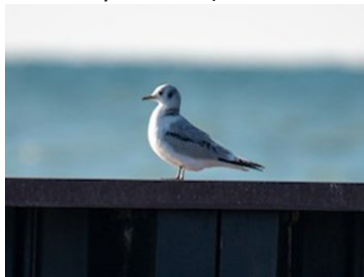
We continue to enjoy the support of the larger Evanston and environmental communities. Our interactions with the City of Evanston and Northwestern University are very positive. We welcome new volunteers and are grateful for monetary contributions to help us add new plants and educational materials. If you would like to join us at the beach, you can find our work schedule here: clarkstreetbeachbirdsanctuary.org/volunteer. To make a financial contribution, go to: clarkstreetbeachbirdsanctuary.org/donate.

Bird Sightings

By Nancy Pinchar

One of the goals of the CSBBS is to monitor bird activity seasonally to assess usage of the habitat by migratory and resident birds to inform future plantings and habitat maintenance needs.

This spring our monitors observed many expected species such as migrating warblers, thrushes, and sparrows, but also an exciting rare bird visited the beach area for several days, the Black-legged Kittiwake. This small gull is typically found along the east and west coasts where it has nesting colonies and forages over the ocean. It infrequently makes its way inland along the Great Lakes and may have last been seen in the Chicago area in 2017. (See photo below by S. Judd.)



Recently we also analyzed our 2022 bird count data from the Spring and Fall seasons to identify species of concern and threatened species observed at

the sanctuary. The analysis was based on the latest Birds of Concern listing for the Chicago region from the Bird Conservation Network (<https://www.bcnbirds.org/trends13/concern.html>).

Approximately 17 percent of the species (23 of 139) were rated as of concern or threatened, and 5 percent (7 of 139) as experiencing moderate to strong regional population declines. Some of the birds of concern include the frequently seen Palm warblers and Caspian terns. These results underscore the importance of the sanctuary mission.

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

Our Fall Plantings: An Early Spring Look

Eight CSBBS volunteers joined our plant consultant Karen Glennemeier on the morning of May 23, 2023, to take stock of the hundreds of grasses, flowering perennials, and shrubs we planted last fall. The

group explored four of the five areas planted at that time. They placed permanent labels in the ground near new plants to assist volunteers in identifying them, as well as providing information for visitors viewing the sanctuary from the "bumpouts." Many species were identified; in some cases we could account for the number that had been planted. It was a little tricky to ID some plants this early in the season, but Karen taught us some tricks.



Black-eyed Susan with bunny-soft leaves

One example: Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia*) has leaves that feel like soft pillows. We decided, though, that it was too early in the season to identify other plants, particularly aster, spurge, and some varieties of milkweed.

Our greatest success was in the area near the entrance to the sanctuary, where almost all the newly planted species were identified, including Black-eyed Susan, Mountain Mint, Flowering Spurge, and Rough Blazing Star. We moved on to the area



Karen Glennemeier
IDing new plants

near the "kiosk bumpout," where the ground was very dry. Nevertheless, among the well-established *Coreopsis*, we found some new Purple Love Grass, Hoary Vervain, Leadplant, Little Bluestem, Common Prickly-pear Cactus, Carolina Rose, and (so far) one Downy Phlox in bloom. The area at the far north of the sanctuary has Wild Columbine, two

species of ferns near the Box Elders, and Common Prickly-pear, Creeping Juniper, and Dwarf Honeysuckle. The northern sandy area (which we also call the "Remnant") continues to be less productive and somewhat puzzling, even to Karen.

After a busy two hours on the beach, we decided to save additional labeling for our June survey. We're excited to see what else turns up!