



# Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary

Clark Street and Sheridan Road  
Evanston, IL 60201

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

Spring 2021

## Message from the Sanctuary Stewards

Welcome to our Spring newsletter. We've been very busy at the beach with pruning, new plantings, and more weeding and lots of watering! We continue our focus on removing invasive species. We appreciate our great watering crew and dedicated weeders/planters/mulchers and look forward to welcoming new volunteers as the season progresses. This year we are looking forward to hosting more volunteer groups and tour groups as Covid restrictions ease. Information on joining us is on our website [www.clarkstreetbeachbirdsantuary.org](http://www.clarkstreetbeachbirdsantuary.org)  
~ Julie Dorfman and Jerry Herst

## First Spring Blossoms

Early plans for the Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary had included Plum Cherry trees. None were available locally at the time, so sumacs were substituted. We were pleasantly surprised, in 2020, to discover a few plum trees had arrived on their own. These young trees erupted with pink blossoms in early April 2021, giving us an extra reason to smile when we came together for our first spring workday.



## Beaver Update

In our Fall 2020 newsletter, we reported that beavers living on the Northwestern campus had discovered our cottonwood trees. They came back in November and within a few days had gnawed

through our wooden fence and harvested another dozen trees!

Fall work days had officially ended for the year, but a group of volunteers came to the rescue. Wearing masks and gloves and physically distancing from each other, we reinforced the wooden fence with metal mesh and installed mesh around each of the approximately 100 Cottonwood trees remaining within the sanctuary. A couple of weeks later, after a busy beaver breached our fence farther up the beach, the city sent a crew to help add wire mesh to more of our sanctuary perimeter.



While the beavers do cause damage, they are part of our natural community and loved by many. They even made the [Chicago Tribune](#) and [Evanston RoundTable!](#)

## Bird Sightings

We had a very fulfilling spring migration season. [eBird](#) recorded 100 species seen and reported on 87 checklists. These included 20 different warbler species, 12 different sparrow species, as well as a wide assortment of woodpeckers, flycatchers, hawks, shore birds and other songbirds. We've seen hundreds of swallows darting around catching insects. Our monitors were rewarded with sightings of cuckoos, kinglets, sapsuckers and flashy, colorful Goldfinches, Baltimore Orioles, and an Indigo Bunting. If you would like to join us for the fall migration, contact us via the website [www.clarkstreetbeachbirdsantuary.org](http://www.clarkstreetbeachbirdsantuary.org)

## Sharing Our Experiences and Knowledge

Goals of the Clark Street Beach Bird Sanctuary include outreach and education. We want to share what we've done and what we've learned with others in our community and to encourage others to work toward building a greener environment. We were excited to have four opportunities in recent months to talk (online) about the history of our site and what we've learned along the way.

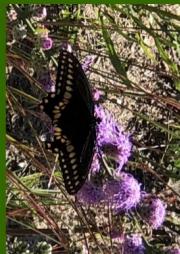
- In February we gave a presentation at the Chicago Wild Things Conference. This meeting included people engaged in promoting, enjoying, and protecting wild lands and wildlife throughout the Chicago area and beyond.
- In April we spoke with members of Evanston's Highland Garden Club. Among other activities, this group maintains some of Evanston's public gardens.
- In May we spoke to gatherings of both the Evanston Lighthouse Rotary Club and the Evanston Sunrise Lions Club.

It is gratifying to have the community interested in and supportive of our work.

### Lessons Learned about Species Interactions



Sulphur butterfly on Liatris



Black Swallowtail butterfly on Liatris



Painted Lady butterfly on Liatris

## New Bushes

In Fall 2020 we removed several Green Ash saplings from the area across the walkway from the Bird Sanctuary entrance. While Ash trees are native, unfortunately they are susceptible to attack by the invasive Emerald Ash Borer insect. We consulted with the Evanston forester, who suggested that these young trees, so close to the walking path, be removed before becoming a public safety hazard by falling on the walking path. We diligently dug out the roots to make way for planting new understory shrubs.

This April, along with volunteers from Rotary International, we installed 14 new bushes in this area—a mix of Elderberries, Gooseberries, and Ninebark. All are natives that should provide shelter and food for migrating birds. We also planted several large swaths of Spiderwort and Black-Eyed Susan flowers to fill in the mix. Thanks in part to the watering crew that worked to give them a good start during this dry spring, the new bushes and flowers seem to be doing well, and we look forward to watching them continue to thrive.

## Other Newcomers

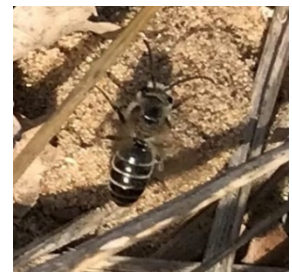
Every year we discover new “volunteer” plant species at our site, ones not introduced by us but arriving courtesy of the wind or waves or non-human animals. Two plants we discovered a bit south of our kiosk this April



are Hairy Bittercress and Purple Deadnettle, which is a type of mint. Hairy Bittercress has delicate narrow stems topped by tiny white flowers. As the above photo shows, though, this plant also develops a dense rosette of leaves at the base, and it produces a lot of seeds. References we checked warned us of rapid spread. So, a new task this spring was pulling this Eurasian invasive to prevent it from crowding out our native plants.

Sometimes we spot new insects at our site as well.

This April a volunteer identified Unequal Cellophane bees, a type of native Plasterer bee, flying in mating swarms. He also spotted a female Unequal Cellophane bee



digging a nest in the sand. These bees have distinct dark/light bands around their abdomens. The “cellophane” in their name comes from the nest lining they produce—a waterproof material that looks like clear plastic. We're curious to see if they show up again next spring.