



# The Hoot

A publication of the Illinois  
Young Birders,  
a special project of the Illinois  
Ornithological Society

Volume I, Issue 2 • Fall 2010



## Upcoming Events

January  
22<sup>nd</sup> Starved Rock State Park  
Eagle Watch

February  
12<sup>th</sup> Ryerson Woods – Owls  
and Flying Squirrels  
*Led by Steve Bailey and  
Sheryl DeVore*

## Illinois Young Birders Wins IDNR Grant for nearly \$2,000!!

In October of 2010, ILYB was awarded a grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources for \$1,969.93. This is funded through the Illinois Wildlife Preservation Fund and will allow ILYB to do several things that will greatly enrich our club. The grant will allow us to purchase 7 pairs of 'birding' binoculars through Eagle Optics to take on field trips, new membership cards for all ILYB members, and 50 copies of 'Birds of Illinois' by Sheryl DeVore and Steven Bailey. The first 50 Charter Members of ILYB will all receive a free copy of this excellent bird guide for Illinois.

Many thanks to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources for their proven commitment to supporting future stewards of the environment.



*Scissor-tailed Flycatcher Photo by  
Ethan Gyllenhaal*

## The Chase

What is one of the best things about being a birder? The thrill of the chase!  
Read about two of our young birders' recent birding adventures.



## Member Spotlight: Ari Rice

Young Birder, Ari Rice, is a 17-year-old with a passion for birds. ILYB coordinator, Brian Herriott, interviews Ari about his birding adventures and his plans for the future.

Q: When did you first start birding and how did you get interested in birds?

A: I've been interested in nature since the day I was born, and I guess this included birds. I remember cardinals, blue jays, and grackles from my preschool years, but the real birding began when I was 8. My parents took me on a trip to Horicon Marsh in Wisconsin, where I saw my first barn and tree swallows, black terns, egrets, and yellow-headed blackbirds (which seem to be a lot rarer now). A few weeks later, we bought a field guide, and of course, I spent hours flipping through it. I've never been the same since.

camp designed for young birders) where we were hiking through the beautiful, lush, Cave Creek Canyon. All of a sudden, we heard this strange, otherworldly barking noise coming from the other side of the canyon. Trogon. My heart started racing. So we cut through the bushes, raced through a dry creek bed, and there it was--this gorgeous green and red bird right above us.

I also have another more recent experience--one that happened last week, actually. Among all my homework, college applications, and other busy stuff, I squeezed in just enough time to bird Rollins Savanna. I was looking for one

crosses paths with another harrier...and then another owl! More owls and harriers show up out of nowhere. Pretty soon, there are five Short-Eared Owls and six harriers in a feeding frenzy. Then, just as mom and I were heading back to the car, a Short-Eared Owl flies straight towards us, dives into the grass, and reappears seconds later--carrying a mouse.

Q: What are your future goals as a birder? Any desire to be involved in Ornithology?

A: I'd love to be an ornithologist, but you have to realize, it's not just birds that I'm interested in. Plants, reptiles, and insects can be just as fun! So in that case, I'd happily become a botanist, entomologist, or ecologist as long as I get to be outside, enjoy nature, and contribute to science.

My work at the field museum has helped me appreciate birds even more. When you're among people who study birds for a living, you'll see there's a lot more to birds than meets the eye. There are life histories, population trends, mating rituals, parasites, and all sorts of weird knowledge that you'd never learn just by watching birds

**“Birding fills me with joy and purpose.”**

Q: What are some of your most memorable experiences involving birds?

A: Oh man, if I were to tell all my amazing bird memories, I would probably end up writing an entire book.

One of these was my first Elegant Trogon. I was attending Camp Chiricahua in Arizona (an 11-day

bird: a Short-Eared Owl--a bird, which for some reason, I had still not yet seen. So, that evening, just as the sun began to set, Mom and I spot a bird gliding over the prairie. I get my hopes up. I look through my binoculars, and it's a harrier. Probably the same one I saw last week. But before I could think, another bird suddenly pops up in front of it. It's a Short-Eared Owl. I follow it with my binoculars as it

*Rice Interview cont'd from page 2*  
casually.

Q: Do you have any adult birders who have been helpful in learning about birds?

A: It's hard to name a single person and say he or she taught me everything I needed to know about birds. In my early years of birding, I really didn't know many adult birders. Most of my knowledge rubbed off of bird books, but when I did finally meet others like me, they were more than helpful. Joel Greenberg in particular has been a great teacher. He not only introduced me to the birding community, but also helped me foster appreciations for

## Coming Soon...

*A New ILYB  
Website!!!*

Thanks to an anonymous donation of \$750, we are excited to be updating our website with the help of a professional web designer – who happens to also be a well-known Illinois birder, Eric Secker.

things other than birds. Whenever we're birding Illinois Beach State Park (a well-known place where Joel and I lead field trips every year) we always look for some of Joel's favorite flowers. He tends to get very excited whenever we find things like gentians or orchids.

Q: Do you have any other hobbies?

A: I really like all sorts of nature. Birds, butterflies, plants, you name it. When I was really little, I used to turn over rocks and look for insects underneath. Sometimes, I'd catch tadpoles and raise them into frogs. And right now, I'm transforming my yard into a wildflower garden.

Aside from these nature-related activities, I'm also part of the school marching band. I play alto, tenor, and baritone saxophone. I'm not so much into sports, but I do love skiing and rollerblading.

Q: What are your plans after high school?

A: This year, I applied to several colleges with ornithology programs (Cornell, Evergreen State, University of Vermont, and Oberlin) so I'm hoping I'll get in...

Q: Have you been birding outside of Illinois? What are some of your most memorable birding trips out of state?

A: I've birded Wisconsin, Cape May, Southeast Arizona, Washington state, south Texas, northern Minnesota, and a number of other places in between. Outside the U.S., I've been to Costa Rica, Panama, Canada, Spain, and Israel, although I didn't do much birding on the last 3 trips.

Q: What is your favorite bird in Illinois? North America? World?

A: Oh man, that's tough. I'll pick two for each category.

Illinois: White-winged Crossbill or Snow Bunting

North America: Limpkin or Varied Thrush

World: European Roller (which I've seen briefly) or Congo Peafowl (which I'll probably never see)

Q: How many birds are on your life list?

A: 850 (517 in North America)

Q: What is it that you enjoy the most about birding? How would you describe birding to someone who's never gone before?

A: I love birding for many reasons. First of all, there's the thrill of adventure every time you set foot somewhere. Birding is full of surprises, and you really never know what you'll see. But birding also fills me with joy and purpose. It provides relief from my anxiety-filled life. Whenever I'm stressed or upset, I'll go birding and often end up feeling better. Whether I've had a great day of birding or a poor one, it seems like I always gain something each and every time I go. Each birding experience builds memories that I'll always be able to look back on and relive.

A friend that I introduced to birding once told me it's a bit like playing "I Spy". I corrected her and told her it was more like "Pokémon" (Gotta catch 'em/ see 'em all...see the connection?). But now that I think about it, birding is both these things and neither. It's much more than simply listing and finding birds. It's a matter of enjoying them for what they are. And if you like birds the way I do, you'll find the extraordinary in everything (even Mallards and House Sparrows). ♪

# Bills and Quills

essays on birds and birding



## The Paranoid Birder

written by Ethan Gyllenhaal, ILYB member, age 15

Most birders bird constantly, no matter where we are or what we are doing. My list of birds for my school and my walk home isn't too bad, including 5 raptor species and Monk Parakeets. This fall, I've noticed larger than normal numbers of kinglets and yellow-rumps than normal on my daily walk home from school. I one time had to steal a friend's paper in order to jot down the time and street intersection when a Monk Parakeet flew over.

This is leading to something, which is how I look really paranoid while walking home from school. I check the skies constantly, hoping the one of the Cooper's Hawks that hunt along my route home flies overhead. I am constantly scanning the skies and trees without even realizing it. This has

produced Cooper's Hawks plenty of times, as well as better birds such as a Sharp-shinned Hawk, a flock of kinglets and yellow-rumps, migrating vultures, and a nighthawk. Of course, because I look like I'm watching for something more unusual than a hawk to come out of nowhere, people notice. I'll occasionally get an odd look, or sometimes a joking question from somebody I know. I don't actually say the somewhat cheesy line that is the title of this post, but I normally say something about birding.

While it is still weird to most people that I often look around while walking home, it would be a bit more unusual (and a bit sketchy) if I had out my notepad, writing down 4 letter codes for the flying, feathery creatures in the trees. While I'm not going to start

eBirding on my way home (with a couple exceptions), I am definitely not giving up my habit of looking paranoid. It is always a treat when even a Downy Woodpecker calls or a goldfinch passes by overhead. Every bird (minus non-natives other than Monk Parakeets) that I see on my walk home installs a sense of triumph in me, even if it is just one of the many robins that search the yards for food.

If you don't already do this whenever you are outside and not birding, it might be a good idea to occasionally take a quick look around, even if it isn't enough to make you look paranoid. 🦅



In this modern day and age of environmental awareness and sensitivity, birding has become a popular pass time for all types of environmental enthusiasts. With a greater number of people taking notice it is hard for vagrant or rare birds to go undetected or even disregarded by unknowing people as just another bird. Often times when such birds are reported people from all around the community and even surrounding areas will come to see it. The rarer the bird, the more crowds that will gather and from farther a-

## Farther a-field Birds Run Greater Risks

written by Edward Warden, ILYB member, age 18

field. As a result of this publicity, the bird is very likely to get flushed more times than once from its roosting or hiding area. Many people, unfortunately, do not follow some form of birding ethics and will flush the bird deliberately, while others will unwittingly do so whether they were looking for that particular bird or not. Many people have brought up the issue of birds getting flushed overly much and then being the subject of tragedies, so to speak, because of this. Are the flushing of birds and the subsequent consequences avoidable? And do the chances of flushing a bird increase the more unusual the sighting? I intend to defend the position that flushing is

unavoidable and that the more unusual a sighting the more prone to flushing a bird is.

Some years ago an *Athene cunicularia* (Burrowing Owl) showed up at Chicago's Montrose Point dunes. A plethora of novice and experienced birders went searching for the bird and, needless to say, it was flushed countless times. One fateful day a birder proved to be the last person to flush the bird. No sooner than it had flown up, an *Accipiter cooperii* (Cooper's Hawk) caught it in mid-air. Very few instances of birders flushing birds turn out so grim, but the fundamental problem is still

*Warden, cont'd from page 4*

there. What happens when a bird gets flushed? It flies away. Seems simple, but it doesn't just end there. We must remember that flying is an integral part of a bird's life so its breast muscles that power this function are tremendously strong in comparison to its body. But none-the-less, it is an exertion on the part of the bird, and in winter this can be a problem because they need to conserve body heat, something they generate and expend very rapidly when active. Also it forces the birds to go to other locations and not be either feeding or resting, also crucial activities for surviving migration and the breeding season. So we can conclude that flushing birds is in general, no good for their welfare.

*Athene cunicularia* are very uncommon sightings on the great lakes. Every few years or so, one shows up. People within certain distances who don't want to travel to Florida or some western state to see one can see it when it arrives in the Chicago region. This draws crowds that don't usually show in the local bird walks. The rarer and more unusual a sighting, the more people that will show up. This inherently increases the numbers of both types of bird watcher described below and hence the amount of people to flush the bird. Another thing that exasperates this is that the bird is an anomaly. Especially if

the bird is not really adapted to the environment that it has entered, it will stick out to other birds, namely predators, like a sore thumb. I call this alien syndrome, where an organism is so out of place that its life is threatened.

The instance with *the Athene cunicularia* was probably an accident. The fact that the *Accipiter cooperii* caught it so quickly is a good indication that he had his eye on the owl in the first place anyway. Thus, whatever caused it to fly, whether it be human or not, would have yielded the same result, an owl in some talons. Birds have very good senses but what makes us easier to see than us seeing them is our size difference. A sparrow is going to see a bumbling human crashing about in the undergrowth while a motionless bird is not too easily seen, especially in dense foliage. When we get too close the bird has no choice but to fly because if we are a predator that knows they are there, we're going to eat them. The only way to solve this is to see the bird before we enter his flushing range, which is not necessarily an easy task.

Finally, many people flush birds on purpose. It has crossed almost every birder's mind that when he was having difficulty seeing something it was tempting to just walk into the bush and scare the thing up. Common birding ethics and courtesy generally dictate

that we don't do this. I hope my first support paragraph explained why. But there are some people who do not have the patience or skill to see the birds so flushing is a pretty quick decision. These people should be asked to stop but, unfortunately, we have no power over them. In particular, there are people who don't even try to search first but simply romp about until something flies away. This problem is really unavoidable unless laws or ordinances are instituted and enforced.

In conclusion, birds that are "sore thumbs" suffer a greater risk of harm in regions where they are unusual. Also, flushing birds is an unavoidable act that is going to occur even with our best attempts and intentions, especially when the bird is special for some reason. It is generally unhealthy for birds when they are forced to fly due to our incursions so people should try their best to respect the birds' space and have patience when searching for them. People that flush birds deliberately should be informed, but otherwise tolerated. In the end it is a pity that the dynamics are as such, but in our position as less aware creatures we can at least do our best to keep our distances when observing birds. ♪

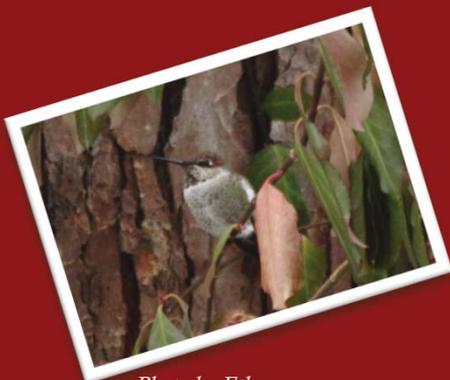


Photo by Ethan Gyllenhaal



Photo by Nathan Goldberg

### *First State Record -- Anna's Hummingbird*

In the Fall of 2010, an Anna's Hummingbird was seen by many birders at a residential feeder in Central Illinois. This is a first state record, which several members of ILYB had the pleasure of seeing and photographing.

# Trip Reports



## The Magic Hedge September 18, 2010

Christine and I [Geoff Williamson] had the opportunity to explore Montrose Point in Chicago's Lincoln Park with some of Illinois's finest young birders. We were billed as the leaders of the field trip, but with six pairs of keen young eyes it seemed that it was us who were led by them.

*Trip Report written by Geoff Williamson*

We started at 8:00am working the famous Magic Hedge at Montrose, with good looks at a variety of warbler species including NASHVILLE WARBLER, BLACKPOLL WARBLER, and WILSON'S WARBLER. A GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH gave its nocturnal flight call while we were looking at the warblers. Nandu Dubey caught up with us, and he enjoyed the views of warblers and flycatchers and sparrows on his first visit to Montrose Point. We were heading for the beach when some of us spotted another warbler in a tree at the north end of the meadow. When we got a look at this bird, I wasn't sure what it was. It looked like a Yellow-rumped Warbler, but then it didn't. It called a few times and when it flew, the bright yellow rump patch confirmed it as a Yellow-rumped, but I'm convinced it was the western form, AUDUBON'S WARBLER. Half the group had to be brought back from the beach, and we went over to Montrose's "Water Feature," where this bird had flown. We got to see lots more warblers, but no luck finding this bird. We

wandered off, and were trying to track down a calling RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH when word came that Ethan Gyllenhaal had relocated the AUDUBON'S WARBLER. We hustled over to where he was, but were unsuccessful in pinning this elusive creature down, though we did see a blue BUDGERIGAR right there.

Then it was off to the beach for real. Along the way Tobias Ginsberg helped Christine check on an injured MALLARD that had lost one of its feet.

Once we reached the shore we had good scope views of a perched immature COOPER'S HAWK (in the tower on the fishhook pier) and some juvenile BLACK-BALLIED PLOVERS. We also saw the plovers in flight, showing off their white upper tails, black "wing pits" and bold white wing stripe that distinguish them from American Golden-Plovers.

We also spotted a distant PEREGRINE FALCON in flight.

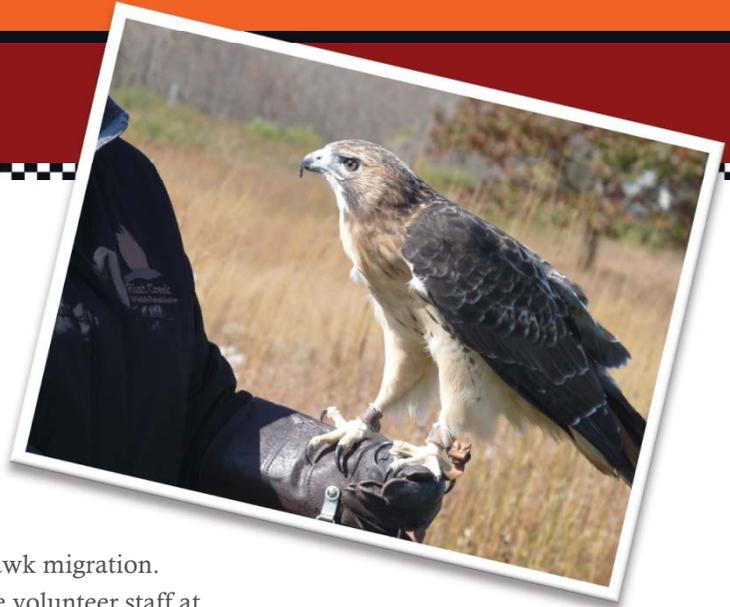
We worked the western portion of the beach dunes for NELSON'S SPARROWS. Pretty quickly we had two giving us a few glimpses. At one point we had three within two feet of each other in one clump of marram grass, with two others having flown into another

section of the dunes 30 yards away — five total! Jake Cvetas and I moved up slowly to get nice looks at a pair, and Nathan Goldberg captured one of the NELSON'S SPARROWS in a photo.



We worked our way back toward the Magic Hedge as a line of storms moved in. We spent the last portion of the trip in the Hedge's "Grotto" watching warblers (including a nice BAY-BREASTED WARBLER that Aaron Gyllenhaal found and identified), a WINTER WREN, and an EASTERN PHOEBE.

## Illinois Beach State Park Hawkwatch October 16, 2010



Five members of ILYB attended this event, which started with a bird walk from the nature center at the south unit at 7:30am. Although not much was seen, it was a beautiful morning to be walking around. Field Sparrow, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Red-bellied Woodpecker, and some Bufflehead were found as well. After returning to the nature center, Vic Berardi gave an excellent presentation on raptors that migrate over Illinois Beach State Park. Vic took all of the photographs and we all learned a good deal about weather patterns and how it effects raptor migration.

After the presentation, we headed up to the North Unit of ILBSP to attend the hawkwatch itself. Unfortunately, winds were out of the southwest, which are not

favorable for hawk migration. Fortunately, the volunteer staff at the hawkwatch had lots of fun activities planned for the day. The good people at Flint Creek Wildlife Rehabilitation Center had brought out 4 live raptors for up-close viewing. All of these birds had been rescued and were no longer able to fly in the wild. These included 2 Red-tailed Hawks, a Sharp-shinned Hawk, and a Turkey Vulture. Janice Sweet had also created a beanbag throwing game, which helped educate kids about raptor migration. I found out quickly that I'm a horrible beanbag thrower! Although the weather was not ideal, we did see some birds overhead and in the grasses surrounding the hawkwatch. While looking for sparrows, Tobias Ginsberg and Nandu Dubey spotted a distant Merlin quickly moving southeast.

We also had a Pine Siskin and White-crowned Sparrow nearby.

Soon thereafter, we had a small group of hawks flyby that included 2 Red-tailed Hawks and a beautiful Northern Harrier adult male.

Nathan Goldberg came up the hill and was very excited about finding a new state and life bird —

LeConte's Sparrow!

Ethan and Aaron Gyllenhaal and Nandu Dubey also saw this bird along with some more Pine Siskins. It was a 'lifer' for Nandu as well. Congrats guys!



*LeConte's Sparrow drawing by Nandu Dubey.*



## The Field Museum November 13, 2010

On Saturday, November 13th, nine members of Illinois Young Birders met at the south entrance of the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago. Our main objective of the day was to view the much lauded ‘skins’ collection later in the morning, but at 8am we started out with a little birding on the museum campus. As is expected in mid-November, the birding was quite sparse. We did, however, manage to put some birds on our day list.

In the shrubs next to the museum, American Tree Sparrows and White-throated Sparrows greeted us. On the east side of the museum, a small group of 9 Cedar Waxwings were perched where I had seen a Cooper’s Hawk earlier in the morning. On the lakefront, we were able to pick out large numbers of Canada Geese and American Coots

along with Herring Gull and Ring-billed Gull. There was also a very cooperative juvenile Black-

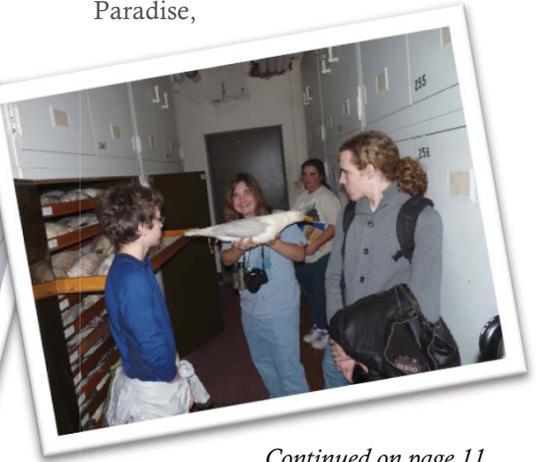
crowned Night Heron that landed right next to our group along the lakewall.

At 10am, we headed into the museum and were met by Mary Hennen, an ornithologist on staff at the museum. She quickly led us past glass cases filled with incredibly large insects from around the world. We were appropriately awed by this! A reminder that when in nature, birds are not the only amazing things to be encountered and studied.

Our first impression of the bird room at the museum was of overpowering smell. More specifically – Mothballs! Although that was a breath of fresh

air compared to what we would later inhale. Once we entered the collections area, there was a large table with a plentiful assortment of bird skins. Most of these were laid out for an artist to draw plates for an upcoming volume of the highly praised “Handbook of the Birds of the World”. There was also a stuffed Barred Owl and a life sized Dodo statue.

Ms. Hennen then led us towards one of the large cabinets, opened it up, and slid out a shelf containing some bird skins. All of us crowded around and were amazed when she held up an Ivory-billed Woodpecker! A mixture of excitement and sadness filled us as we looked at this reminder of the fragility of nature. There was also a small collection of eggs, from the Ostrich egg to the Hummingbird egg, which gave us an idea of the size diversity in birds. Other birds we saw that day included Birds of Paradise,



# The Chase

a feature on the thrill (and agony!) of chasing birds...

## A Sandwich Tern – by Nathan Goldberg, age 15

It was September 11th and Sulli Gibson posted on IBET (The Illinois Birding Listserv) that a man by the name of Rick Remington, a professor at Northwestern University, had sent him a photo of a Sandwich Tern. The photo looked perfect. The lighting was superb. The posture was perfect. And lastly, the distance was about 30 feet away, a bird photographers dream. It was almost too surreal and fake to be true. The posting was left alone for couple of days with confusion and suspicion. Then, on the morning of September 14th, Bob Hughes, a Montrose legacy, posted that at about 7:30 AM, the bird was sitting on the beach at Montrose, but had been chased away by dogs soon after. I hoped that it had returned in the middle of the day, and I quickly called my mom. During one of my free periods at school, we rushed off to Montrose and tried to find it. Sadly, we had no luck. This was attempt #1. After school, I wondered if the bird had reappeared at Montrose, but we had come home anyways, with my mom telling me that we had tried once already. I was downloading my pictures from earlier at Montrose, and at about 3:15 PM I noticed an email and a text message stating that at about 3:00 PM, Sam Burckhardt had just seen the bird briefly for a few minutes again at

Montrose and had gotten identifiable photos. So my mom and I hopped into the car and were off at about 4:00 PM. We spent about an hour and a half there surrounded by all of the big birders in the Chicago area. We noticed nothing for about 30 minutes, but then some people began to notice a pair of terns at Hollywood Beach, the neighboring beach further north. Jeff Skretney had his kids with him, and he didn't want to take any chances on missing the bird, so he generously took his kids and I to Hollywood Beach, with Amar Ayyash joining us. Unfortunately, we all had no luck, and had missed the terns. By now, it had started getting dark and I had to leave to go home and do homework, because of school... There was my second attempt.

My mom and I woke up early the next day, and got to Montrose an hour before school. We stood there, and waited. And waited. And waited some more. Sadly, the bird did not come; making this was my third attempt. I had to go to school, and some people had to go to work. Once at school, I was able to stay in the loop of emails and texts posted on IBET, only checking in passing periods and during lunch. At 11:30 AM, I had learned that Joe Lill had seen the tern



at 9:50 AM at 63rd St. Beach. Great. I even had a free period. I sat there, contemplating the idea of going, even though I did not have the time to go. I thought that my lunch ended at 12:00 PM, but it really ended at 12:40 PM. This was just my luck. I had just wasted 30 minutes thinking about if I should go or not. I checked my friend's schedule, and it said that lunch ended at 12:40 PM. Oh no! I called my mom, and she rushed to pick me up. I told my friends, who were doing homework in the hall, where I was going, and they cheered me on. I was surprised they actually cared! I got downstairs, and my mom and I raced down to the beach. I had 40 minutes to be there and back, and it was a 20-minute drive to get to the beach. My mom was worried about getting a ticket, but she drove fast anyway. Thank you mom! She was also worried that I would be late, but I would have rather been late to class than to have missed the bird. While in the car, I stayed in contact with Jeff Skretney and Greg Neise who were watching the bird and said that they would let

*Goldberg, Cont'd from page 9*

us know if the bird flew, so that we didn't drive the whole way for nothing. We got there, and Jeff pointed us in the right direction. We saw the bird, and I got photos and a video, and screamed, (inside of course), from happiness! FINALLY! I saw the bird for about 3 minutes before a careless 5 year old kid flushed all the gulls, and the tern too. The parents were of course oblivious. We left on this note, and happily found out that the bird had come back.

I rushed back to school because I, "Couldn't be late for Latin class," and

called one of my birding mentors, Sam Burckhardt, and told him that I had gotten the bird. He was very happy, and relieved that other people had gotten to see it to. I got out of the car in front of school, and ran up the stairs to class. I was 5 minutes late, and I got a tardy. My teacher didn't seem to care that I had chased a rare Sandwich Tern, which was a 2nd Illinois Rare Bird Record and saw it. Darn. Well at least I got the bird!!! This was my third real chase for a rare bird, and my first rarity that may never be seen again in my lifetime in the state of Illinois. People are now

discussing the bird and whether it was the North American sub-species, or if it was the European sub-species. Only time will tell. To see the conversations, go to:

<http://birdersforum.com/index.php/topic,1350.msg8669.html#msg8669>

Greg Neise is comparing wingtips and bill angles with other birders to go for the I.D. This is too scientific for me, but perhaps you will enjoy it.

*Photo by Nathan Goldberg*

## A Black-throated Gray Warbler – by Jake Cvetas, age 10

On Saturday, September 18th, a local Chicago area birder, Pete Moxon, found a female Black-throated Gray Warbler in the Elsen's Hill area of West DuPage Woods Forest Preserve near Winfield, Illinois. This was very exciting because it is only about the 10th state record for Black-throated Gray Warbler, which is usually found from Colorado west to California. My dad was out of town so we weren't able to see it right away.

So when he returned, we decided to try for it. At 5:30am on Saturday, September 25th, my dad and I began the hour-long drive to Elsen's Hill. When we started down the trail, we immediately saw Yellow-rumped Warbler, Downy Woodpecker, American Robin, and Common Grackle. Further along the trail, there was House Wren, American Crow, Blue Jay, and Tennessee Warbler. Just

as the sun appeared, we found a group of warblers that included a Black-throated Green Warbler. We thought that the group might contain the Black-throated Gray Warbler, because it had been seen in the company of Black-throated Green Warblers. Unfortunately, the group flew away before we could identify anything else.

So, we headed into the woods, but saw nothing. We came out of the woods back onto the main path and walked back toward the spot where we saw the group of warblers. At that time, we saw Pete Moxon headed toward us also looking for the bird. We started looking in an oak tree that had White-breasted Nuthatch, Black-throated Green Warbler, and Nashville Warbler. After a few minutes, my dad said, "I got it!" Mr. Moxon asked him what he saw and he said, "My first thought was, with

the bright sun, Cerulean Warbler due to the hint of a necklace. But, then I saw the all gray back and distinctive face pattern." During this time, birds were flying in and out of this tree. We were not able to relocate it.

We decided to move further down the trail. Dad found it again in another oak tree. We all saw it high in the canopy. I was very excited to add it to my life list. Mr. Moxon started calling people to post a message that the bird had been found again. It flew out of this tree and we lost sight of it.

About ten minutes later, three other birders including Pete's brother, Vince, joined us in our search. We eventually found the bird again in the same oak where we original had it. When we saw it fly, we got good looks at its white underside.

As I write this, the Black-throated Gray Warbler has now been present at least seventeen days. 🐦

*Photo by Nathan Goldberg*



## Thanks to all who have supported ILYB and, particularly, to our contributors to this edition of *The Hoot*!

*Field Museum Trip Report,  
Cont'd from page 8*

Turaco, tropical Hummingbirds, and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks which still smelled of maple syrup from eating maple seeds.

Ms. Hennen then took us into the lab room where the bird skins are prepared and dissected. An assortment of recent window kills were laid out which included Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Gray Catbird, Rusty Blackbird, and Virginia Rail, to name a few. Seeing them up close allowed us to see field marks that are very difficult to see in the field. Virginia Rails are much smaller than I had thought.

After a thorough discussion of what goes on in the lab, Ms. Hennen then brought us to a door which was labeled 'Beetle Room'. Having grown up on a farm, I thought I would have been better prepared for this room, but I didn't last long. Inside the 'Beetle Room' are many large fishtanks filled with dead animals and birds. These are covered by beetles which are busily eating the remains. As you can imagine, the aroma from this room is quite strong, to put it mildly. I lasted about 30 seconds, but I was quite impressed with most of our young birders who remained for the entire 5 minutes. Future ornithologists perhaps!

Ms. Hennen also showed us her Red-tailed Hawk (live bird) which was over 20 years old and had been a rescue bird. This hawk had been imprinted on humans and a return to the wild would have meant a swift death, so Ms. Hennen has lovingly raised this bird for it's whole life. Beautiful hawk!

The rest of the morning was spent viewing more specimens that we wanted to see and then we were free to walk around the museum afterwards. Thanks to all who came for this most memorable of trips. Many thanks to Ms. Mary Hennen for her excellent leadership as well. See you in 2011! 🦅

## Welcome to our New ILYB Members

### ILYB Members

Taylor Stapinski

### Supporting Adult Members

Ann Pawlak  
Scott Cohrs

### Partner Members

As always, we thank our partner organizations – DuPage Birding Club, Evanston North-Shore Bird Club, Illinois Audubon

Special thanks to our parent organization, the Illinois Ornithological Society!

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