



NORTHWEST ILLINOIS: MISSISSIPPI PALISADES & LOST MOUND JUNE 4-6, 2021

Tour leader: Adam Sell

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The area around Savanna, Illinois, along the Mississippi River in the northwestern part of the state, makes for a great birding weekend. High quality bluff forests, expansive sand prairie and open scrub habitat situated along the Mighty Mississippi means there is exceptional bird diversity in a small area. Many of the birds seen on this trip are highly sought by local birders. On this trip, we saw most of those regional specialties, including **Loggerhead Shrike, Eastern Whip-poor-will, Cerulean, Yellow-throated, Prothonotary, and Kentucky Warblers, Blue Grosbeak, Western Meadowlark, Lark, and Grasshopper Sparrows, Acadian Flycatcher, Bell's Vireo** and more.



Female Wood Duck with Young

Daily Report -----**June 4**

The group gathered at our hotel in the evening and we made our way to the Savanna Army Depot. While waiting for the sun to fall, we quickly found some of the specialty birds of the drier sand prairie including Western Meadowlark, Grasshopper and Lark Sparrows, and Blue Grosbeak. We proceeded to an overlook on the Mississippi River and enjoyed a wonderful sunset with American White Pelicans and a Bald Eagle idly cruising past. With the sun nearly down, Eastern Whip-poor-wills were heard calling, including one right next to the platform. Soon, we had 8+ of these nightjars calling throughout the park, including one that was repeatedly returning to an old post to sing, allowing for wonderful looks at this shy, cryptic species.

June 5

We started with a pre-breakfast trip to the southern section of the Mississippi Palisades State Park. In a few stops, we had seen nearly all of the expected specialties. It started with scope views of a singing Veery while birding along a roadside creek. We soon also had excellent views of Acadian Flycatcher, Kentucky Warbler, and Northern Parula while a singing Louisiana Waterthrush stayed out of sight.

Further up the road, we positioned ourselves at eye-level with the canopy and found a major target in a male Cerulean Warbler. At the top of the hill, a stand of pines and surrounding secondary growth gave us wonderful looks at Yellow-throated and Blue-winged Warblers. A White-eyed Vireo played hard-to-get, but eventually gave unobstructed views, if only for a minute.



Kentucky Warbler

After breakfast, we returned to the north side of the park, and picked up some new species including Scarlet Tanager and Yellow-throated Vireo. One participant needed some better looks at Kentucky Warbler and we soon had views even closer than the ones we had earlier! After the Palisades, we made our way to Ayers Sand Prairie and quickly found the Loggerhead Shrike. He even sang! We picked up our lunch made the trip downriver to Lock and Dam 13. Along the entrance road marsh and adjacent fields, we heard Sedge Wren and Common Gallinule, while enjoying families of Wood Ducks. One female had nearly 20 ducklings in tow! A Bald Eagle nest still had three juveniles that looked ready to leave any day. Near the locks themselves, the reliable Eurasian Tree Sparrows were near the Purple Martin house, and in the bottomland woods nearby, we enjoyed both Prothonotary Warbler and American Redstart while a pair of agitated Red-bellied Woodpeckers were being mobbed by an Eastern Wood-Pewee. We also enjoyed watching a barge move downriver through the locks.

*Prothonotary Warbler*

We took a break in the afternoon heat before crossing the river into Iowa to visit Green Island Wildlife Management Area. The road in had some good woodland edge habitat, and highlights included a most confiding Prothonotary Warbler, singing Wood Thrush, and with some patience and persistence, scope views of a Yellow-billed Cuckoo! The marshes at Green Island held specialties such as Black Tern and Trumpeter Swan. A Killdeer had a nest right near the parking area, and while moving away from the nest, we were able to observe the plover's distraction display as it feigned a broken wing. We closed out the day with a wonderful meal at a local restaurant and went over our checklist while enjoying some well-earned ice cream.

June 6

Our final morning of birding had us back at Savanna Army Depot. The morning light and calm winds made for a peaceful outing. On the drive in, a stop at the adjacent marsh gave us a good study in Cliff Swallow ID, and the often-heard Great-crested Flycatcher was finally seen. At Lost Mound, we soon connected with some of our targets for the morning such as a first-year male Orchard Oriole and a Bell's Vireo that made itself visible after some patient searching. We also enjoyed longer studies of some species seen the first evening, including Lark Sparrow and Blue Grosbeak. The day was quickly warming up, so we returned to the hotel for breakfast and our final checklist before saying our goodbyes. Thank you all for a wonderful weekend of birding!

*Trumpeter Swan*

BIRD LIST. 105 species (including 8 heard only). Taxonomy follows the Clements/eBird Checklist, 2019 update. Former (or alternate) English names are in parentheses. (H) = heard only; (L) = tour leader only. The global IUCN red list status is listed for threatened and near-threatened species: CR=Critically Endangered, EN=Endangered, VU=Vulnerable, NT=Near-threatened.

Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>
Trumpeter Swan	<i>Cygnus buccinator</i>
Wood Duck	<i>Aix sponsa</i>
Blue-winged Teal	<i>Spatula discors</i>
Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
Hooded Merganser	<i>Lophodytes cucullatus</i>
Wild Turkey	<i>Meleagris gallopavo</i>
Pied-billed Grebe	<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>
Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>
Mourning Dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	<i>Coccyzus americanus</i>
Common Nighthawk	<i>Chordeiles minor</i>
Eastern Whip-poor-will	<i>Antrostomus vociferus</i>
Chimney Swift - VU	<i>Chaetura pelagica</i>
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	<i>Archilochus colubris</i>
Common Gallinule (H)	<i>Gallinula galeata</i>
Sandhill Crane	<i>Antigone canadensis</i>
Killdeer	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>
Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularius</i>
Ring-billed Gull	<i>Larus delawarensis</i>
Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>
Double-crested Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>
American White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus erythrorhynchos</i>
Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>
Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>
Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>
Belted Kingfisher	<i>Megasceryle alcyon</i>
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	<i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>
Red-headed Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes erythrocephalus</i>
Red-bellied Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes carolinus</i>
Downy Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates pubescens</i>
Hairy Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates villosus</i>
Pileated Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus pileatus</i>
Northern Flicker	<i>Colaptes auratus</i>
Eastern Wood-Pewee	<i>Contopus virens</i>
Acadian Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax virens</i>
Willow Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax traillii</i>
Least Flycatcher (H) (L)	<i>Empidonax minimus</i>

Great Crested Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus crinitus</i>
Eastern Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus tyrannus</i>
White-eyed Vireo	<i>Vireo griseus</i>
Bell's Vireo	<i>Vireo bellii</i>
Yellow-throated Vireo	<i>Vireo flavifrons</i>
Warbling Vireo (H)	<i>Vireo gilvus</i>
Red-eyed Vireo	<i>Vireo olivaceus</i>
Loggerhead Shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>
Blue Jay	<i>Cyanocitta cristata</i>
American Crow	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>
Black-capped Chickadee	<i>Poecile atricapillus</i>
Tufted Titmouse	<i>Baeolophus bicolor</i>
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	<i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>
Purple Martin	<i>Progne subis</i>
Tree Swallow	<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
Cliff Swallow	<i>Petrochelidon pyrrhonota</i>
White-breasted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta carolinensis</i>
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	<i>Polioptila caerulea</i>
House Wren	<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>
Sedge Wren (H)	<i>Cistothorus platensis</i>
Marsh Wren (H)	<i>Cistothorus palustris</i>
European Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
Gray Catbird	<i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>
Brown Thrasher	<i>Toxostoma rufum</i>
Eastern Bluebird	<i>Sialia sialis</i>
Veery	<i>Catharus fuscescens</i>
Wood Thrush (H)	<i>Hylocichla mustelina</i>
American Robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>
Cedar Waxwing	<i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i>
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>
House Finch	<i>Haemorhous mexicanus</i>
American Goldfinch	<i>Spinus tristis</i>
Grasshopper Sparrow	<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>
Chipping Sparrow	<i>Spizella passerina</i>
Field Sparrow	<i>Spizella pusilla</i>
Lark Sparrow	<i>Chondestes grammacus</i>
Song Sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>
Eastern Towhee	<i>Pipilo erythrophthalmus</i>
Western Meadowlark	<i>Sturnella neglecta</i>
Eastern Meadowlark	<i>Sturnella magna</i>
Orchard Oriole	<i>Icterus spurius</i>
Baltimore Oriole	<i>Icterus galbula</i>
Red-winged Blackbird	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>
Brown-headed Cowbird	<i>Molothrus ater</i>
Common Grackle	<i>Quiscalus quiscula</i>
Ovenbird (H)	<i>Seiurus aurocapilla</i>

Louisiana Waterthrush (H)
Blue-winged Warbler
Prothonotary Warbler
Kentucky Warbler
Common Yellowthroat
American Redstart
Cerulean Warbler
Northern Parula
Yellow Warbler
Yellow-throated Warbler
Scarlet Tanager
Northern Cardinal
Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Blue Grosbeak
Indigo Bunting
Dickcissel

Parkesia motacilla
Vermivora cyanoptera
Protonotaria citrea
Geothlypis formosa
Geothlypis trichas
Setophaga ruticilla
Setophaga cerulea
Setophaga americana
Setophaga petechia
Setophaga dominica
Piranga olivacea
Cardinalis cardinalis
Pheucticus ludovicianus
Passerina caerulea
Passerina cyanea
Spiza americana