

Paul Douglas Forest Preserve

by Stan Stec



Above: *Prairie Falcon, LaSalle County, 7 January 2003. Photo by Jerry Kumery.*
Left: *Prairie Falcon, LaSalle County, Winter 1991. Photo by Barb Dodge.*

Ornithological Records Committee (IORC) lists these birds as casual and requests documentation on any sightings of these two species.

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More than 100 Bobolinks gathered in about 30 square yards of grasslands at the Paul Douglas Forest Preserve one day in the spring of 2002. Many of these declining songbirds that winter in South America, remained to nest, as attested to by subsequent point counts. In fact, after several seasons and many timed observations and point counts, some 165 bird species, many rare or state-listed have been found at this Cook County Forest Preserve. If you want to observe some rare and state-listed breeding wetland and grassland species, here's a good place to bird.

Start your birding from the Central Avenue parking lot by walking on the gravel area to the dirt hill for a closer view of both the wetland and Poplar Creek, which enters the preserve under Algonquin Road and exits under Central Road. A new dam was constructed in the fall of 2001, which created a permanent wetland where previously the area dried in the summer and could be crossed on foot. The wetland was fully formed during the 2002 nesting season and was used by numbers of wetland birds. Walk west along the southern edge of the wetland, then turn north and follow the edge of the soccer field until you reach the footpath leading north along the western side of the wetland. In summer the path gets overgrown with high prairie grasses.

Search here in spring for migrants including Black-



Paul Douglas Forest Preserve photo taken in fall 2003 by Stan Stec.