

loons, grebes, coots, and cormorants. In the 1980s it became clear that accipiters, falcons, Ospreys and harriers were regular migrants at Montrose, but that buteos seldom appeared. Both bitterns are regular migrants, but the Least Bittern has obviously run into trouble in the Midwest, and especially in Illinois. Both Black and Yellow Rails have appeared at Montrose, and Eurasian Collared-Doves have nested. Birders have noticed an increase in summer nesting with the additional plantings that are becoming established, and Common Yellowthroats and Brown Thrashers were added to the list of nesters in the summer of 2000. Although The Magic Hedge started out as a famed warbler stopover point, and the greatest number of birders are still found there at that time, the Point area is now a 12-month birding zone.

A good birding site does not necessarily have to be one full of rarities, but it certainly helps in creating a reputation. The Magic Hedge is one of the better Patagonia Syndrome producers in the Midwest. The Syndrome refers to the birding experience of going to a certain place to see a bird rarity and actually finding something else quite rare. Since Montrose Harbor, Montrose Beach, Lake Michigan, and other areas are close by, whenever a birder goes to The Magic Hedge the probability of finding a rare bird nearby increases. When a group went to the Meadow to see a Snowy Owl they checked the harbor and found Thayer's Gull, Iceland Gull, Glaucous Gull, and California Gull. A real Patagonia Syndrome! On Sunday, 15 October 2000 the greatest migratory sparrow spectacle in the history of Chicago took place in the Meadow at Montrose. At least 16 species of migrating sparrows, including LeConte's, Clay-colored, and Harris's, were watched by incredulous birders. Groove-billed Anis have appeared at Montrose (27 September 1981, 24 September 1982 and 25 September 1982, as has the rare Kirtland's Warbler (15 September 1996), Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (8 October 1979), Spotted Towhee (8 May 1992), Rock Wren (9 October 1988), and Lark Bunting (3 September 1988).

Who will ever forget the appearance of the Purple Gallinule in May 1999 for nearly a week in the hawthorn groves just west of the Magic Hedge? Or the singing Western Meadowlark in the Meadow (4 November 1981), the nesting of Eurasian Collared-Doves in the Meadow in 1998 and 1999, the Yellow



*It wouldn't be spring in Chicago if the warblers didn't stop by the Magic Hedge. Photo of Magnolia Warbler taken in Illinois on 14 May 1996 by Joe Milosevich.*

Rail in the Meadow (22 May 1983), the Black Rail in the Meadow (30 May 1994), and the huge migrations across the Meadow of Sandhill Cranes in October, 1998? Not a single birder came to Montrose those mornings to bird the Meadow. They all came to bird The Magic Hedge and, once there, visited the Meadow with great results.

There have been at least 25 records of the decreasing Piping Plover on Montrose Beach in the last 20 years. Hudsonian Godwit, Marbled Godwit, Western Sandpiper, Purple Sandpiper, and Red Phalarope have all been seen on or near Montrose Beach, and a Brown Pelican once spent the day there (15 May 1990). Royal Terns, the Least Tern, Little Gull, and many jaegers have all flown across the beach. Near the breakwater birders have seen the Red-throated Loon (1 December 1991), a Red-necked Grebe (8 October to 16 November 1997), Eared Grebe (4 March 1998), and Western Grebe (7 November 1980). A notable flight of goshawks went through Montrose in 1982.

The Magic Hedge is the magnet for birders, and for many birds as well. But it is the essence of the "Patagonia Syndrome" that keeps the birders returning. Located in the heart of the largest park in the nation's third largest city sits The Magic Hedge. Truly it can be said that birders here will see more in less space, than almost anywhere in the world.

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