

ties from the old Falstaff Brewery at 103rd Street north to Burnham Park.

South of Jackson Park, changes suggested so far will likely make the parks more comfortable for birders. Bathrooms, better recreational facilities, improved security, and general sprucing up will attract more local residents, making parks less isolated.

A trade-off exists for the south side birder. More people means greater safety, but perhaps more disruption for migrating birds. One of the strange attractions of Rainbow Beach is its desolation. Many times, the lone shorebirder is the only human in sight, making Rainbow Beach one of the only places in Chicago with an undisturbed, long, (four blocks) sandy, weedy beach.

Rainbow Beach, between 75th and 79th streets, is one of the least birded stretches on the whole Chicago flyway, said David Mandell, a south side birder who regularly checks the area and has discovered, Willet, and good numbers of shorebirds such as Sanderling, Semipalmated and Least sandpipers, Dunlins, and Ruddy Turnstones. One of the only two Purple Sandpipers seen this decade along the Chicago shoreline was found on the rocky breakwaters off Rainbow Beach.

The area's isolation also attracts Snowy Owls. The weedy, neglected formal plantings, shrub islands, and a neighborhood vegetable garden are sparrow havens. Harris and Clay-colored sparrows have been seen here. Those birding the lake have been rewarded with views of Surf Scoters and Eared Grebes plying the sheltered harbor area.

By making Rainbow Beach safer and more attractive, more non-birders will use the park. Migrating birds stop over and feed in high traffic public parks up and down the Chicago lake front, so the increase in the number of humans probably won't greatly affect Rainbow's birding potential.

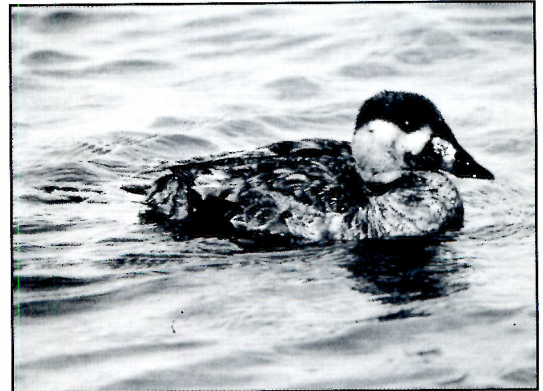
Besides revamping Rainbow Beach, the South LakeFront Coalition is also pressing the city to use bankruptcy hearings to acquire the abandoned Falstaff property (which is seriously fire-damaged) for conversion to a park. The area is large and perfect for use as a park with plenty of room for wildlife resting areas and beach front renovation. The Falstaff property, if acquired, would be central to the coalition's push for a 3-mile long, green ecology zone stretching from Rainbow Beach to the Indiana border.

The abandoned U.S. Steel property, from 79th to 95th Street, is another large site critical to the establishment of a long stretch of public lakefront parkland. U.S. Steel is engaged in a voluntary clean-up of the polluted site, hoping to sell the land for redevelopment. South shore birders have been allowed on the site for years, but eventual clean-up and renovation could yield another stretch of prime flyway.

Jackson Park, stretching between 56th and 67th streets, is arguably one of the two best lakefront sites for passerine migration, especially during spring. Jackson Park contains diverse habitats, which have attracted many unusual species throughout the years, including Tufted Duck, Swainson's Warbler, and Brewer's Sparrow.

This historic park will be refurbished to its former glory, using some of the original 1871 design plans. The area was built for pastoral urban use in a time of many millions fewer users and was later adapted for the 1893 Columbian Exposition. Modern urban park usage has seriously degraded the original vision of landscape architect, Frederick Law

Olmstead, who envisioned water and moving foliage fringing peaceful, open meadows. The lagoons, for example, have suffered serious bank



A Surf Scoter floats in Burnham Harbor, an area targeted for changes that will improve birding in the next century. Photo taken 8 May 1994 by Robert Hughes.

erosion from fishing activities. A fairly recent golf driving range eliminated a large chunk of acreage from general public use, as well as for foraging birds.

General maintenance, improved plantings throughout the park, mixing native and non-native plants, and shoreline reconstruction will make Jackson Park more pleasant for birds and passive recreation. Eliminating the driving range, a goal of the South LakeFront Coalition, would return considerable acreage to productive bird feeding grounds.

The Museum of Science and Industry, located on 57th Street at the north end of Jackson Park, wants to expand by building wings to the east and west. The museum also intends to replace the above-ground parking lot on the north side of the building with an underground garage, replacing the open lawn which was part of the building's original design. Many park advocates argue against using open park acreage for more buildings, but for birders, the changes are likely to be benign, little affecting the park's primary hot spots,

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