

could be improved to encourage more bird stopovers south to 31st Street. Parking access could be better.

McCormick Place may be the best place in Illinois for *Ammodrammus* sparrows, said Mandell, who has recorded high counts of Sharp-tailed Sparrows (27 in a single day) along the weedy edge and among the boulders of the crumbling Lake Michigan seawall between McCormick Place and 31st Street. Grasshopper and Henslow's sparrows are also comparatively common along this stretch of lakefront. Other species seen feeding in the area or found dead at the foot of McCormick Place's huge plate glass windows include Yellow and Black rails, Lark Bunting, and Whimbrel. Birds seen on Lake Michigan from McCormick Place include a Red-throated Loon, masses of fly-by ducks and gulls, an Ivory Gull and Eared Grebe in Burnham Harbor on the convention center's north side.

The fight is on now for the future of the 100-acre Meigs Field. Mayor Daley wants to close Meigs Field to aviation traffic in September 1996 and convert it into yet another park with substantial wildlife habitat. Adding Meigs Field to the Chicago Park District system, along with the land reclaimed by the westward move of Lakeshore Drive, will wrap Burnham Harbor in some 110 new acres of park and bird habitat.

Daley has appointed a panel, headed by his wife, to study the airport conversion. Daley, who has said many times how much he "loves trees," said he would like an environmental education center and wildlife habitat as center points of the Meigs Field conversion. Some birders worry about the loss of Snowy Owl habitat, since Meigs Field is the one reliable place in the Chicago area for this winter visitor. Human activity may disturb the owls when the fences around the 80-acre airfield are re-



*A Short-eared Owl finds a quiet haven at the Bird Sanctuary in Lincoln Park along Lake Michigan. Photo taken 28 March 1993 by Kanae Hirabayashi.*

moved, but except for crazed birders, not many people venture to that part of the lakefront from December through January. Snowy Owls have a penchant for airfields, probably because they are undisturbed by foot traffic there, but the attraction of a large parkland, with plenty of food sources from new plantings for prey species right next to the water will hopefully keep the owls coming to Chicago. And the gain of 100 acres of well-planted natural areas will be a huge boon for migrating passerines.

There are, of course, controversies surrounding such radical land use changes in an intensely urban setting. The Field Museum, the Adler Planetarium, and the Shedd Aquarium situated along the lakeshore, reportedly want to see a substantial increase in the concessions available on the museum campus west and north of Burnham Harbor to better compete with the jazzy revamp of Navy Pier. These amenities might encourage more people to visit the area.

Rather than be overly worried about concession developments on the museum complex, birders should perhaps be encouraged by positive changes at the more northerly Olive Park located where Ohio Street dead ends at the lake, just north of Navy

Pier and west of the water filtration plant.

With the intense redevelopment of Navy Pier as a major attraction directly south, the Park District was careful in its relandscaping of Olive Park. All parking areas have been removed from the park's western edges, and paved trails have been added to control pedestrian and bike traffic. In addition, more bushes and low vegetation were planted. These new developments make Olive Park an even better migrant trap. Since last year, post-restoration, Marshall Keig, a local birder whose condominium overlooks Ohio Street Beach, brought his Olive Park list to an all-time high - 100 species. Keig predicts even better numbers and variety as the newly planted trees get established. Most of the trees in Olive Park's fenced in bird sanctuary are hardy locusts, which are very late to leaf out, making the park the easiest place on the lakefront to see warblers in the tree tops. Olive Park's trees are only greening when Montrose and Waveland Bird Sanctuaries turn into crippling, neck-cranning torture chambers for birders seeking warblers.

Almost every warbler of common occurrence has appeared at Ol-

**Meadowlark**