



Jim Landing took this photo of a California Gull, one of two birds present, at Calumet Park, Cook County on 23 January 2000. Jim Landing loved gulls and was an expert at identifying them.

Here are other tributes to Jim Landing.

Passionate about gulls

While I never got to know Jim personally, I certainly got to know him as a birder and my closest association with him was when he single-handedly started the Gull Frolic at the Winthrop Harbor Yacht Club in northeastern Illinois in February, some six years ago. This birding event is one of Jim's legacies for the Chicago birding community. After winter cabin fever, nearly every birder in the area now attends this event.

Jim loved gulls and gull identification and one of his last posts on IBET, was about a recent gull identification guide for birders. This dedicated Larophile recommended, A reference guide to the gulls of the Americas. Chumming for gulls was one of Jim's great past-times.

Jim also developed other birding workshops hawk, shorebird, and sparrow identification for birders to enjoy.

I first met Jim in the early 80s, often at Montrose or Lake Calumet Sewage pond. He also loved the Medusa Cement area of Lake Calumet when the first Great Black-backed Gulls in the Chicago area could be found in winter. I remember one day when we both got to see a Ruff and Curlew Sandpiper in one day in the Calumet Lake area. Jim was elated!

Jim also saw the need for citizen science and practiced often the documentation of rare bird sightings. He was one of a handful of birders who documented the spring observation of a male Williamson's Sapsucker in a Chicago neighborhood off the expressway. This record, to date, is the only record of that species for Illinois.

*— David B. Johnson
Buffalo Grove*



Jim Landing, who had at least 395 species of birds in Illinois on his list, took this photo of a Wood Stork at Sanganois Conservation Area in Mason County, 5 August 1992.

Sharing knowledge

Many of us had the opportunity to meet Jim Landing in the field or at one of the informative gatherings that he organized for the birding community. He was always approachable and gave generously to others from his birding expertise and knowledge of the natural world about us. I owe a lifer or two to Jim. He was a leader, an organizer and an activist.

I recall once meeting Jim on a cold winter's day, in late February 2003, along the North Branch of the Chicago River. The location was Rowan Park and the occasion was the close-up sighting of a female Harlequin Duck. She was diving into the churning pool of water created by the small dam in the river. What can I say? The location was the best Chicago had to offer as a substitute for the rocky Atlantic coast.

Here comes Jim; walking along the sidewalk, alone, and typically underdressed for the cold weather. He spoke with the few of us gathered along the walk. He said that our little

avian visitor had a "sweet face." A birder pointed out a strange-looking goose on the water. Jim explained that it was a domesticated goose. These confusing domestic escapees can be a bane to new birders, as they do not make it into many field guides. Jim understood and provided the information without condescension.

I have a folder of Montrose Musings, which Jim wrote on IBET. Montrose Musings is a testament to Jim, the great writer. I took a look at the last IBET posting of Jim's that I saved. It is dated June 6, 2007. He ended his message with the following words:

"I have lived through the days when birding was considered to be only for a few eccentrics to a point where it is one of the most common outdoor activities in the United States. I am proud and pleased to have been along for that ride!"

*— Pat Durkin
Chicago*

Searching for rarities

Dave Johnson reminded me of the Black-throated Gray Warbler on the canal. I had called Jim at work to tell him about it, and he arrived without his binoculars! He had lent his car to someone that day and had his binoculars in the trunk, so he had to borrow another friend's car to come and see the bird, not knowing that it would hang around for about a week.

When the Williamson's Sapsucker was in the Chicago neighborhood, I worked until 8 or later that night, and by the time I got there it was well past sunset, but Jim still had the bird's location, and it was visible in a street-light! How many of you have ever gone out looking for a woodpecker in the dark?

I remember all of the chumming we used to do by Rocky's fish shack at Navy Pier, which is long gone now. And I won't forget the Lake Calumet Dairy Queen stops. That was a mandatory stop after a hot day of shorebirding.

— Richard Biss, Lake Villa

Thank you Ben, Jerry and Jim for all you gave to the Illinois birding and conservation community.

Meadowlark