

small grassy area east of the fire station building, inside the wrought iron fence and especially, the wood chips inside the fence further south, along the play lot. This is Wood Thrush Heaven. Check under the bushes inside the fence that border a bricked seating area. Check the crab apples inside the fence for warblers and sapsuckers. Walk west past the building and check the other grassy courtyard on the other side. A Harris's Sparrow was here in 1998. Many sparrows, warblers, and thrushes use this area, and sometimes the firemen have a bird bath set up to attract birds.

Go back out to Pearson, walk a short distance east, and enter Seneca Park through the gate on the right. The bushes inside the playlot fence harbor many Connecticut and Mourning Warblers at the right time of year. During late spring and especially in the fall, this is arguably the most reliable spot in Chicago for Mourning and Connecticut Warblers. I stopped counting at 18 Connecticut Warblers in one 90 minute period on a September fallout day in 1998 in the vicinity of this park.

The tall trees are warbler and bat magnets. Every expected species has been seen in the bushes, on the grass, and in the tree tops. Pay careful attention to the low plantings. Connecticut Warblers act like mice and can disappear easily. They frequent the cave under the yew bushes along the play lots, and have been known to walk over picnickers' feet.

Enter the gate on the right to the play lots. Check the bricked seating area and under all the bushes and the area past the fence to the west. If there aren't too many children around, the birds use the wood chips on either play lot all the time. Exit the play lots back to the park and check the bushes on the right and the grass to the left.

Retrace your steps north and turn right to go through the park to the east. Check all the plantings for warblers and sparrows. Cross Mies Van Der Rohe and go up the steps to the Museum of Contemporary Art. Ask to bird watch in the courtyard. They'll let you. Go all the way out onto the terrace. The bushes on either side of this fenced-in courtyard hold lots of birds, as does the grass in the middle. The gravel drains poorly on the left side of the terrace and the puddle that's usually there attracts birds. A diverse mix of birds is often seen bathing together in the puddle, birds not often seen bathing in the wild or suburban backyards. On one red-letter day in the spring of 2000, a male Rose-breasted Grosbeak was bathing near a male Northern Cardinal and a male Eastern Towhee, for a trio of blush-colored birds that paused the forks of diners at the museum's upper-level terraced cafe.

Exit the museum and continue east on Pearson. Listen and check the tall trees on this block. They are warbler magnets. Turn right at the end of the MOCA courtyard fence and scan the courtyard from this angle. Check the

low yew bushes inside the fence for migrating warblers. Also check the flowerbed to the left inside the Lake Shore park, along the running track and outside the fence of the tennis courts. A Clay-colored Sparrow wintered here one year, living off daily bird seed dumps from Streeterville human neighbors.

Continue south to Chicago Avenue and walk a little east (turn left). Enter the park on the left through the open gate. Walk east on the running track and check the open area of grass, which has had great sparrows, meadowlarks, and daytime strolling Soras. Exit the park on the east side and skirt the south side (right side) of the park building. This grass and the low crabapple trees are also great for migrants. Walk around the building and check the playlot on the north side of the building. Scan the lake to the east for ducks, gulls, jaegers, and sometimes, hawks. An eye to the west sky can also turn up hawks if the winds are right. Sightings of Peregrine Falcons are not uncommon in this neighborhood.

You'll find public restrooms in the park building, the last chance if you want to stop before returning to your car.

Go back west on Pearson on the north side of the street. The yew hedges along the buildings' foundations can be productive, and the tall trees are good for warblers, flycatchers, and woodpeckers. American Crows nest in the tall trees on Pearson Street. Keep checking all the trees until you reach Michigan Avenue.

Turn right to return north to your car at Oak Street or hop on a north or south bound bus.

If you have more time, turn left to go south along Michigan and then left or east along Superior, Huron, or Erie Streets. Wander to the inner drive along Lake Michigan, pausing to check any patch of green, any low bushes or tall treetops. A small park outside the Veteran's Hospital on the southeast corner of Columbus and Erie, for example, has dense, low vegetation inside the fence and a row of tall trees, which can be quite good feeding areas for migrants. Just wander the neighborhood with your eyes open. If it's a fall-out day, you'll be kept very busy as you traverse the Northwestern University Hospital and campus buildings, which are well-landscaped and offer attractive small oases for migrating birds.

When you reach the inner drive (and can see Lake Michigan across the inner and outer drives), turn left and proceed north along the inner drive. Check low bushes and plantings and grassy areas for feeding birds. Check the lake for ducks and gulls. The inner drive will curve west and become Oak Street, returning you to your car, the bus, or the El.

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