

the Northwestern Madison Street Station.) You can also take the CTA Red Line (Howard) subway to the Chicago Avenue stop and walk the short distance to Oak and Michigan Avenue.

If you must drive, the easiest place to find parking is on Oak Street east of Michigan Avenue. Park on the north side of the street across from the Drake Hotel.

The park at the "S" Curve of Lake Shore Drive can be excellent for migrants - warblers, sparrows, thrushes, wrens, kinglets, even rails. Check all the low-lying bushes at the west end of the park where a Bewick's Wren was seen in 1991. The fruiting trees on the south side of this small park can also be great. Walk east across the open area with the benches, checking the tops of tall trees and also, the grassy area immediately adjacent to Lake Shore Drive where every common and several rarer sparrows have been seen, including Clay, LeConte's, Nelson's Sharp-tailed, and Harris's. Check the horseshoe-shaped flowerbed that closes off the open area carefully - Virginia and Sora Rail, many Mourning and Connecticut Warblers, and all the thrushes have been seen in this bed and behind it, under the lower crabapple trees.

Slow and deliberate movements yield good birds here, as well as at the other sites described. Take your time and listen for movement, song, and chip notes above the constant roar from Lake Shore Drive. Watch the little caves created by overhanging shrubs, taller flowers, and even broad-leaved plants, such as hostas. As strange as it sounds, when downtown, Connecticut Warblers LOVE hostas. These warblers rarely leave the ground and crawl under and around hosta leaves, sometimes completely disappearing within a dense clump of this ornamental plant.



*Connecticut and Mourning Warblers favor the low ground cover in the flower beds at Seneca Park.*

Return west to Michigan Avenue, cross to the west side of the street and walk south (turn right). Check the courtyard of the Fourth Presbyterian Church (west side of street two blocks down). Warblers, sparrows, and thrushes use the bushes around the perimeter of the courtyard and canopy feeders can be found in the few tall trees. A Brown Thrasher wintered all through one very icy winter here, helped by the Rector's seed feeder. Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers have ringed the trees in this small park with their telltale scars.

Continue south on Michigan Avenue to Pearson Street (Borders is on the corner). The park surrounding the old Water Tower can yield Connecticut and Mourning Warblers, sometimes in relatively high numbers, although a lot of construction in the area has diminished its viability for birds in the short-term. The park is being landscaped and there is no reason to believe it won't return to productivity, once low shrubs and groundcover plants and flowers have been established. The tall trees in this park have been preserved and provide a dense canopy for more arboreal species. The trees are not especially healthy, making them popular hosts for insects, and of course, an insect banquet fuels many migrant birds.

A slow and careful study of the low plant beds will yield some birds, but the tree tops always reward a patient birder. Every common warbler has been seen here, as well as most of the vireos, flycatchers, woodpeckers, tanagers, grosbeaks, and Common Nighthawk. A Northern Saw-whet Owl slept through the day one April in a tree right across the street from Border's bookstore. Bats frequently roost in the trees - hanging or clinging to the bark. While it is preferable for cities to use native plants in their green spaces to provide better food and cover for wildlife, the fact remains that migrating birds will use what plant cover they find in an urban jungle, and the Water Tower Park seems to provide some of what migrating birds need en route.

Use the restroom and get coffee upstairs at Border's if needed. This is the quickest bathroom break in the area. If it's afternoon, you can grab a decadent cone or sit down for a sinful sundae at Ghiradelli's Ice Cream Parlour, just west of Border's on Pearson Street.

Return to Pearson Street, cross back over Michigan Avenue and walk east past the other old, yellow limestone Water Tower Building. Check the grass you can see on the right through the back gate of the building for thrushes. Past this driveway is another driveway that leads to the fire station parking lot. Check the fenced-in corner of the play lot - the woodchips and (relative) remoteness attract tons of sparrows, warblers, and thrushes.

Check all the bushes along the wrought iron fence. Walk to the back of the fire station slowly, and check the