

ILLINOIS BEACH STATE PARK

Zion, Illinois



SCHEDULE & FIELD TRIP INFORMATION

2025 Illinois Audubon Society Gathering

September 26-27, 2025

Field trips guided by Red Hill Birding

Friday, September 26

6-9:00 p.m. Illinois Beach State Park. Evening walk in search of migrant warblers, thrushes, vireos, and more. After sundown, we will look for Eastern Screech-Owls and any other nocturnal birds that might still be around. (Snacks and water will be available.)

Saturday, September 27

6 -11:30 a.m. **Field Trip A: IBSP North.** The North Unit combines open sand prairie, marsh, black oak forest and savanna. The North Unit, like the South, can have excellent birding in the fall with plenty of migrant warblers, vireos, thrushes and more. If the winds are right (strong out of the west), we might also stop by the Illinois Beach State Park Hawkwatch, where we can join in their daily monitoring of migrant raptors. Approximately 2x miles of hiking.

Please arrive at location indicated and be ready to bird by 6:30 a.m.

Field Trip B: IBSP South. The heart of Illinois Beach State Park, the trails here go through beautiful black oak woodlands and dunes full of rare dunes plants. Birding can be excellent in the fall, with warblers, thrushes, shorebirds, and raptors, among other migrants. Depending on the time, we may also visit the area around the hotel to look for European Goldfinch and the campground to continue to look for migrants. Approximately 2 miles of hiking.

Field Trip C: Waukegan Beach. Lake County's best shorebird beach and one of the best lakefront migrant traps. We will walk on the beach looking for shorebirds and any birds that may be migrating through. We will also spend some time in the "magic pines" looking for warblers, sparrows, and more. A chance to see European Goldfinch, now "officially countable" on one's life list is also possible. Approximately 1 mile of walking on the beach.

Field Trip D: Pine Dunes and Van Patten Woods Forest Preserves. Van Patten Woods is a great location for passerine migrants with floodplain woods along the Des Plaines River and a stand of pines that can be productive for warblers, vireos, sparrows and finches. We will do a quick check of Sterling Lake for migrant waterfowl. Pine Dunes Forest Preserve is mostly open prairie with scattered marshes, open water and oak savanna. It can be productive for waterfowl, migrant shorebirds, early sparrows and more. Approximately 2x miles of hiking.

Noon Lunch Illinois Beach State Park Hawkwatch Pavilion

2-3:00 p.m. **Program - *Twenty-Six Years of Hawkwatch. How-to and Why*** Join Vic Berardi, founder of the Illinois Beach State Park Hawkwatch for a discussion on the value of a formal count of migrating raptors in the fall along the shoreline of Lake Michigan. Vic will show all species that come through in the fall along with some basic tips on identification. Program will be held on location at the Illinois Beach State Park Nature Center.

4:30 p.m. **Cash Bar and Trivia Contest*** –grab a team and participate in 30 minutes of fun competition.

6:00 p.m. **Program*** – *A World on the Wing: The Global Odyssey of Migratory Birds* by Scott Weidensaul.

7:00 p.m. **Dinner*** Herb roasted chicken breast, baked mac-n-cheese veggie option, sides, dessert and beverages.

**These Saturday evening events will take place at the Winthrop Harbor Yacht Club, 301 North Point Drive, Winthrop Harbor, IL 60096*