BACKYARD BIRD Habitat
Chicago Area Migration

How many bird species migrate annually through Chicago area?

- About 280

What kinds of birds?

- Warblers (32 species)
- Sparrows (18 species)
- Flycatchers (10 species)
- Thrushes, Vireos, Wrens, Blackbirds, Swallows, etc.
American Redstart
Setophaga ruticilla

Map created by Terry Sohl, Data from NatureServe
http://weather.rap.ucar.edu/radar/displayRad.php?icao=KUSA&prod=bref1&bkgr=black&endDate=20140418&endTime=-1&duration=0
http://birdcast.info/
“An invisible river of animals, rivaling any scene from the Serengeti but consisting of half-ounce birds that pass quietly overhead, in the dark.”
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Chicago Bird Collision Monitors
http://www.birdmonitors.net/
Chicago’s location, north of “corn-soybean desert” and on the shore of Lake Michigan, makes it a critical stopping-off point for migrating birds.
In spring, peak of migration by insectivorous birds corresponds to oak flowering and early leaf-out.

A number of bird species preferentially use oaks for foraging.
Backyard Landscaping Principles

- Feeding:
  Bloom, leaf-out in spring migration
  Berries, seeds during fall migration

- Resting:
  Layered plantings will provide food and shelter.
Recommendations

- Add oaks to the mix; possibly also elms, hickories, hackberries; make sure there is a good mix of early leaf-out species.
- Create diversity of flowering species that flower early.
- Remove non-native species and invasives; this should be a step-by-step process; replace with native species with similar growth form; among shrubs look for native species that have bird-friendly fruit.
- Open up portions of understory; dense understory is diminishing herbaceous cover.
More recommendations at:
http://www.habitatproject.org/CMBA/toolkit.html

Or search for:
Chicago Migratory Bird Alliance Toolkit
Insect-eating birds

- hackberry
- honey locust
- crabapple
- prairie willow
- pussy willow
Nectar-drinking migrants

- Hawthorn
- Ohio buckeye
- Crabapple
- Cherry. Cultivars of cherries that flower between May 3 and 15
- Hummingbirds: wild columbine, penstemon, paintbrush, Virginia bluebell, fire pink, woodland phlox in large groupings
Fruit-eaters

- Viburnums: arrowwood, nannyberry, witherod, blackhaw
- Elderberry
- Virginia creeper, wild grape
- Spicebush
- Chokeberry
- Winterberry – acid soils
- Hawthorns
- Wahoo
Which Birds, Which Plants?

Use the filters below to show birds by region and preferred food sources. Click on a bird to see the plants it uses as food sources.

REGION: All East West FOOD TYPE: All Berries Fruit Insects Nuts Seed Cones Seeds
Bird habitat can look landscaped or natural...
But some mess helps...

Don’t Deadhead
Let leaves stay under trees and shrubs
Avoid insecticides
Fix problem windows

RELOCATE YOUR BIRD FEEDERS…CLOSE to Windows! (1.5 ft)