

BIRD OF THE MONTH - NOVEMBER 2021

WESTERN MEADOWLARK

The Western Meadowlark is a large and beautiful bird that gathers in sizable flocks on the dry grassy fields surrounding the Urban Forest each winter. They arrive in October from their spring/summer breeding grounds and find strength and safety in numbers on the hilltop area as they collectively feed on insects and seeds at the ground level.

The striking yellow and black underside plumage is very well camouflaged as they feed low in the field due to wing and back feathers perfectly colored to blend in with the brown, beige and tan grasses of the winter field. It takes a patient and attentive eye to survey the field and notice the presence of the flock due to this deceptive coloration. Yet, the astute observer will be rewarded when the whole flock is suddenly flushed into the air, revealing the bright yellow undersides and black necklace along with a flash of white at the edges of the tail. It's a joy to see and well worth the wait.



To learn more about the fascinating range of distinctive birds appearing in the Urban Forest and along the Shipley to Shore Nature Trail, visit the dedicated tab on this website:

hbtrees.org/urban-forest-2/bird-watching-in-the-urban-forest

A dedicated team of birders survey and tally all the birds and bird species each month producing a report viewable on the HBTrees.com website, under the Urban Forest pull down tab. The monthly list is accompanied by extraordinary photos that can be a useful learning tool when preparing for a visit to the Urban Forest. It's great to know what birds can be expected each month, and a thrill to encounter them on your own.

The ongoing growth and transformation of the Urban Forest and the surrounding hilltop area through the extraordinary efforts of our dedicated volunteers has created a burgeoning magnet for scores of bird species seeking essential food, shelter and basic survival as other options are in continual decline. If you plant it, they will come.

*Written by Betty Kanne
Photo by James Kendall*