

Bird Central
Finding Flying Friends

TRANSCRIPT:

(Emily Wilson reporting)

A group of about 15 birdwatchers gather at 103 and Central Park West for a walk through the northern part of the park. Robert De Candido, also known as Birding Bob, has just returned from a bird watching trip to Borneo and will be leading the walk.

BOB: Any questions? Any comments? Anybody want to say anything? Anybody want to complain yet?

Candido, who has a doctorate in biology and used to be a park ranger, says New Yorkers don't need to go somewhere else to see nature.

BOB: Urban habitats are critical habitats A – because most of the world's people are there now so that's where you're going to see wildlife and B – if you're wildlife you can't avoid cities going north or south on your migrations.

Birders say Central Park is a better place to see birds than many woods or meadows because it is right on the birds fly route. And they say some of what is in the park are surprising.

BOB: So there's a screech owl. The male is sitting in the left conifer in the left white pine.

Lugging her camera and tripod along, Deborah Allen is hoping to get a picture of owls in the park. A bird photographer who lives in the Bronx, Allen says her work is pleasure.

DEBORAH: This is a very urban environment and after a while the glass and the steel and the noise concrete and everything can kind of get to you and you need an antidote for that and the birds are full of life. So it really helps you put yourself together.

Birders say hearing the song of this cardinal

CARDINAL SONG

or seeing birds such as hairy woodpeckers, kinglets and warblers is a bit of tranquility in a hectic city.

But bird watching isn't as gentle as you might think, says Brad Woodward, who comes from Union City at least once a week to go on a walk with the group. Birders can get into disagreements about, for example, who spotted a bird first or what kind of warbler it is

BRAD: As in any human endeavor birding is full of personality, politics, personal disagreements, controversies, and in central park birding really can be a contact sport.

Woodward is thinking of writing a screenplay about birding. The title? Bird Wars.

Bob De Candido's walks are every Friday at 9 from 103 and Central Park West and on Sundays at 9 from the dock at the Turtle Pond. They cost \$5.

I'm Emily Wilson, NYC24.