

The Badger BIRDER

January 2020 #701



WISCONSIN SOCIETY for ORNITHOLOGY

Newsletter of the WISCONSIN SOCIETY for ORNITHOLOGY

The atlasing revolution began in Wisconsin -- and the Cornell Lab and eBird say thanks

By IAN DAVIES
eBird Project Coordinator
Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Five years ago, the Wisconsin birding community went out on a limb and forever changed bird atlasing.

Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II, the first dedicated eBird atlas portal, has led the way for the next generation of bird atlases. The efforts of Wisconsin birders have shown how an integrated online atlas platform can make a huge difference in our ability to understand bird populations.

Thank you.

When more breeding observations were collected in the first year of WBBA II than for the entire WBBA I, it seemed that something special was happening.

The next year, 2016, Virginia launched an eBird Atlas. In 2018, Maine joined the atlas team with its

own state-level portal. Last year, 2019, brought an exciting new chapter: the New Zealand Bird Atlas.

An entire country, atlasing online, using the platform inspired by Wisconsin.

In 2020, no fewer than three atlases will launch using the eBird Atlas framework, in New York, Maryland-D.C. and Israel. The New York and Maryland-D.C. portals went live in mid-December and will be collecting data for the next five years.

Data collection for WBBA II was completed on Dec. 31 after five years of field work. Launch of the Wisconsin atlas portal was underwritten by a \$75,000 commitment to eBird from the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology.

Both our team at eBird and other birders around the United States and the world are incredibly thankful for your pioneering efforts on eBird Atlasing.



2020 WSO Convention in May has some interesting wrinkles

By TIM HAHN
WSO Convention Committee

Get ready for Great Birding on a Great Lake! Two Rivers, located on the breezy shores of Lake Michigan, will be hosting the 81st annual WSO convention on May 14-17. Attendees will enjoy a wonderful weekend full of field trips, social events, and educational presentations.

Thursday, May 14

Check-in begins in Two Rivers Central Park where we'll host a Member Appreciation Picnic followed by a performance from the Oneida Nation Smoke Dancers. Our annual awards banquet will take place in the Two Rivers Community Center afterwards. Lastly, there will be an optional night hike at Point Beach State Forest where we'll search for **EASTERN WHIP-POOR-WILLS** and other nocturnal creatures.

Friday, May 15

Friday is all about the birding field trips! All day field trips will start before dawn with

carpool and coach bus options available (extra fee). Shorter field trips also will be offered to Collins Marsh in the morning and along the lakeshore/Two Rivers area in the afternoon. Check-in continues at the Light-house Inn, which will serve as convention headquarters the rest of the weekend.

Beginning birder workshops will take place at Woodland Dunes Nature Center, and a Big Sit will take place at the Manitowoc Containment on Lake Michigan, where birders will have the opportunity to learn shorebird and gull identification with former WSO President **CHUCK SONTAG** and gull expert **AMAR AYYASH**.

To close the evening, birders can recount their day's highlights at a Birds'n'Beers at The Waverly Inn.

Saturday, May 16

New this year is the opportunity for guided field trips by kayak or bicycle. What better way to experience the birds than by "green birding?" Both are dependent on



Here's a sneak peak at the t-shirt logo for the 2020 WSO Convention. The artwork was done by Rebecca Jabs, who will be presenting on her scientific art illustrations at the convention. Shirts can be ordered along with convention registration, which will begin March 1.

weather and water conditions.

Members of the local Bird Brunch Bunch will guide nearby hotspots.

Woodland Dunes will host a communi-

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WSO CALENDAR

Field Trips

Jan. 11 (Saturday) -- Milwaukee: Lakefront Birding

Meet at 8 a.m. at South Shore Yacht Club. Start your annual bird list right with a field trip that will visit a variety of lakefront locations from Milwaukee to Port Washington. We'll look at the wintering gull flocks for Lesser and Greater Black-backed Gulls, as well as Glaucous and Iceland Gulls. Dress warmly and bring your "energy" foods.

Directions to South Shore Yacht Club: Take I-794 EAST over the Harbor Bridge. At the south end of the bridge take the Port of Milwaukee exit. The exit terminates at Carferry Dr. (stop sign), turn left (east) on Carferry, continue east to a "T- intersection" with South Lincoln Memorial Dr. Turn right (south) on Lincoln Memorial. At the top of the hill the road curves right (west) and becomes Russell Ave. After 1 block you will come to a stoplight at Superior St.; turn left (south) onto Superior and go 3 blocks to Iron St. Again, turn left (east) on Iron, go 2 blocks and then down the hill into the parking lot, continue to the south end of the Yacht Club.

January 26 (Sunday) -- Buena Vista Marsh & Necedah NWR: Eagles and Winter Birds

Meet at 8:a.m. at the kiosk along County W in the Buena Vista Marsh. **Directions:** Exit I-39 at County W (Exit 143, for Bancroft), and follow County W west for about seven miles We'll spend a good portion of the morning at Buena Vista looking for wintering raptors, Prairie-Chickens, and other grassland birds. Later we'll depart

for Necedah NWR in search of Bald Eagles, diving ducks and possibly wintering Golden Eagles. Bring a bag lunch to eat in the car.

The complete 2020 schedule appears on Pages 9-12 of this issue of *The Badger Birder*.

WSO Board of Directors

Jan. 25 (Saturday) 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Quarterly meeting will be held at Horicon Education and Visitor's Center on Highway 28 just north of the City of Horicon. Members are always welcome; bring a lunch.

Honey Creek Birdathon/ Bandathon

May 9-10 (Saturday -Sunday) at Honey Creek

Meet at the Cox Nature Center on the Harold and Carla Kruse Nature Preserve at Honey Creek in Sauk County. *Details to come.*

81st Annual Convention May 14-17 (Thursday-Sunday) in Two Rivers

Great Birding on a Great Lake is the theme and among WSO's convention partners are the Woodland Dunes Nature Center, the Lighthouse Inn and Conference Center, the Manitowoc Area Visitor and Convention Bureau and the Two Rivers Main Street program. Keynote speaker for Saturday night's banquet will be Dr. Ben Zuckenberg, whose lab at the University of Wisconsin-Madison has found overwhelming evidence that wildlife populations are responding to climate change.

KATE'S QUOTES

Naturalist KATE REDMOND offers us a selection of quotes on nature, conservation and life around us. These three seemed especially timely.

**"If people knew the joy of giving,
they wouldn't wait until they're dead to do it."**

-- Actor and philanthropist **PAUL NEWMAN**

**"Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection,
we can catch excellence."**

-- Green Bay Packers coach **VINCE LOMBARDI**

**"When even one American — who has done nothing wrong —
is forced by fear to shut his mind and close his mouth,
then all Americans are in peril."**

-- **HARRY TRUMAN**, 33rd president of the United States

The Nature Conservancy expands its preserve in Baraboo Hills with a 117-acre acquisition

By **EMILY MILLS**

The Nature Conservancy

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in Wisconsin has announced the addition of 117 acres of important and diverse habitat to its Honey

Creek Preserve in the Baraboo Hills.

The Nature Conservancy 

Adding this land and restoring it to its natural state will

greatly improve habitat for resident and migratory wildlife species, many of which are currently listed as uncommon or of special concern due to low numbers. The land also includes almost 1.5 miles of stream frontage, including a long stretch of the North Branch of Honey Creek, a Class 2 trout stream.

"This is an exciting addition to the lands we have worked with landowners to help protect in the Honey Creek watershed," said Ann Calhoun, Baraboo Hills Project coordinator for TNC in Wisconsin. "This parcel is an important piece in maintaining and protecting the connection and transition across the diversity of habitats throughout the

valley. From the lowland stream and somewhat rare forested wetlands found on this parcel, to the upland forests, all are critically valuable for wildlife, particularly the wide range of birds that utilize these areas during nesting and migration."

The streams, wetlands, and forest on the land are in good shape, with only limited habitat degradation from past land use and invasive species. The property is surrounded by protected lands on three sides, with TNC's Honey Creek Preserve to the north, Baraboo Range Preservation Association and Wisconsin DNR Forest Legacy conservation easements to the east, and DNR-owned land to the west, making this property an important wildlife corridor.

Protection of this land also helps maintain the quality and connection of the stream and wetland habitats to the forested headwaters, located a mile upstream, on lands protected by WSO and TNC at the Honey Creek State Natural Area.

With completion of a 105-acre purchase in 2017, WSO's Harold and Carla Kruse Honey Creek Nature Preserve now totals 372

acres. WSO members established a nature sanctuary there in 1958, and purchased the first 30-acre parcel in 1960. TNC has worked with landowners and others to protect the diversity of animals and plant communities in the Baraboo Hills since 1964.

Several wildlife species have been found in the wetland complex that encompasses a large portion of TNC's newest acquisition, including amphibians such as the pickerel frog and northern leopard frog, as well as birds such as the **RUSTY BLACKBIRD, RED-HEADED WOODPECKER, LEAST FLYCATCHER, AMERICAN WOODCOCK and AMERICAN BITTERN.**

In addition, this property connects two bluffs that together form a protected and connected landscape of varying elevation and habitat type that is vital to providing refuge for wildlife from the effects of climate change. Areas currently planted with row crops will be transitioned to a mix of perennial native prairie and wetland plant species.

The property will be open to the public and increase opportunities for hiking, wildlife and nature observation, fishing, hunting and cross-country skiing.

Baraboo Hills: A haven for birds in a time of change

For decades now, WSO has partnered with The Nature Conservancy of Wisconsin to expand protection of the Honey Creek watershed in the Baraboo Hills. As southern Wisconsin forests face climate change and other pressures, ecologist **MIKE MOSSMAN** talks with **ANN CALHOUN** of the TNC about impacts on bird habitat in the Hills.

The Baraboo Hills in south central Wisconsin are a sanctuary for birds and other wildlife in a landscape largely dominated by agriculture.

More than half (about 135) of the 226 species of birds that breed in Wisconsin use the Baraboo Hills as a nesting area, and as many as 250 different species either breed in the Hills or pass through during migration.

While the forests of the Baraboo Hills are in relatively good condition, we are losing oak trees, putting the birds, insects and other wildlife that depend on them at risk. Climate change will further exacerbate this situation by reducing forest diversity, giving birds and other species fewer options to disperse and shift as conditions change.

The Nature Conservancy has worked to protect the vast forests in the Baraboo Hills for more than 55 years. In 2014, we began to restore the oak forests at our Baxter's Hollow and Hemlock Draw preserves, using thinning and prescribed fire to set the stage for acorns to germinate and take root and for oak seedlings to have plenty of



Baraboo Hills Project Coordinator **ANN CALHOUN** works with **MIKE MOSSMAN** on a bird survey.

light to compete well.

Mike Mossman is an ornithologist who has spent more than 45 years studying birds and their habitats in the Baraboo Hills. The TNC's Calhoun checked in with Mike to learn more about his research and what it is telling him about birds, the Baraboo Hills and climate change.

Why are the Baraboo Hills such a great place for birds?

Mossman: The diverse mix of habitats—ranging from cool stream gorges with relict hemlock stands to dry rocky glades with stunted oak and hickory trees—is one reason the Hills are a great place for birds. There is a large expanse of forest with minimal fragmentation, which provides a lot of deep, interior forest, which is important for breeding and nesting. The active, science-based management provided by TNC and other partners (such as WSO) is also critical.

Why are oak trees particularly important for birds?

Mossman: Oaks are long-lived trees, and their acorns are an important food source for birds like the Red-headed Woodpecker and other wildlife. Their size and semi-open canopies provide many different types of opportunities for birds to nest and feed. White oaks, especially, have very high insect diversity and are leafing out

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Avian cholera killed 3,800 cormorants on Green Bay

Green Bay -- The bacterial disease avian cholera has been linked to the die-off of thousands of **DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS** in Green Bay, according to the Wisconsin DNR.

In late September, avian cholera was confirmed in cormorants submitted for necropsy to the USGS-National Wildlife Health Center in Madison. These cormorants were collected from the Cat Island causeway in Green Bay.

Avian cholera is a common waterfowl disease that most frequently affects waterfowl and coots. Scavenger bird species and other waterbirds can also be affected. It is seen annually in Western states in **SNOW GEESSE** and **ROSS'S GEESSE**.

Wisconsin has not had an outbreak in wild birds since 1980, though reports of this disease in domestic backyard birds occur more regularly in the state. The bacterial strain that affects birds does not generally affect people, and the human disease known as cholera is not the same as avian cholera.

Avian cholera is caused by the bacterium *Pasteurella multocida* and is highly contagious among birds, swiftly spreading through large congregations of waterfowl. Transmission of the bacteria can occur through bird-to-bird contact or from contact with infected carcasses, water, soil, boots and equipment. The bacteria are easily killed with most disinfectants, including 10% bleach.

Generally, the first sign of an outbreak of avian cholera is the discovery of many dead birds. In this case, the DNR was alerted to the die-off by Green Bay area birders.

The DNR's **JOSHUA MARTINEZ** said the agency had conducted



DNR Photo

*In late September avian cholera was confirmed in **DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS** along Green Bay.*

a bi-weekly check of the causeway, cleaning up more than 3,800 carcasses, and was continually monitoring the site until freeze-up (which will kill the bacteria) and removing any carcasses to prevent spread.

"This process has been a long and time consuming issue, but we are doing everything we can to reduce chances of this disease from spreading into migratory waterfowl in the bay.... The cormorants were the primary species to die (99% of carcasses) during this die-off event. We have contacted all wildlife staff and partners in Wisconsin to keep an eye open for any die-off events in their areas and luckily no one has reported any more issues."

DNR Wildlife Veterinarian **LINDSEY LONG** said, "The Wisconsin public plays a vital role in monitoring our wildlife populations in the state, and we are appreciative of their diligence in informing our biologists of any unusual mortalities they find. Should citizens observe any unusual mortality events of waterfowl, typically involving five or more birds, we ask that they contact their local county wildlife biologist."

To report dead waterfowl, please contact a county wildlife biologist. Please be prepared to identify the specific location where the carcasses were seen and their approximate numbers.

For additional information, contact **LINDSEY LONG**, DNR Wildlife Veterinarian/ Acting Wildlife Health Section Chief, Bureau of Wildlife Management at 608 219-5038 or lindsey.long@wisconsin.gov

A thank-you from WSO's president

Dear members, donors and volunteers,

Thank you for your continued giving, whether in the form of time or money. Your contributions have helped WSO continue our mission **to promote the enjoyment, study and conservation of Wisconsin's birds.**

We provide opportunities for all people to enjoy resident and migratory birds, while being a leading steward of and ambassador for Wisconsin birds. WSO sponsors birding field trips throughout the year, hosts an annual birding convention, publishes a quarterly journal and monthly newsletter, offers research grants, and serves as an informational resource center on bird-related issues. Membership exceeds 1,400 from across the United States and around the world.

Here are just a few of the organization's 2019 accomplishments:

- Strategic Plan review
- Updated the overall structure of our bylaws
- Continued expansion of Honey Creek Nature Preserve
- New board members (*Membership/Honey Creek/ Members-at-large/ Passenger Pigeon Editor*)

Thank you once again for your support. It means the world to us!

With gratitude,
Myles Hurlburt, WSO President

Iron County, Wisconsin

Iron County is blessed with an abundance of forest land open to the public to enjoy birding. It includes over 174,000 acres of a vastly diverse habitat, favoring a wide variety of bird life just waiting for you to discover for yourself!

Request our **"Sportsman's Map"** showing Iron County forest land with a Birding List.

Available at:
ironcountywi.com hurleywi.com mercerc.com

DECEMBER RARE BIRDS



An immature female **KING EIDER** was taken by a duck hunter in Lake Michigan near Two Rivers and photographed by a taxidermist.



Birding Lakeshore State Park in Milwaukee on Dec. 3, photographer **JIM EDLHUBER** came across a **SNOWY OWL** sitting on a deck.



JYM MOONEY photographed this **SUMMER TANAGER**, which lingered at a home along the Milwaukee River in Glendale.



GINA SZABLEWSKI photographed this **SCARLET TANAGER** on Dec. 15 in Shorewood, a suburb just north of Milwaukee.



JEREMY MEYER photographed this **TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE** south of the Boerner Botanical Gardens parking lot at Whitnall Park in Hales Corners.

An assortment of tanagers, odd ducks and solitaires

By **MARK KORDUCKI**

After a cold and snowy November, December was mild and largely snow free over the southern half of the state. The north was blanketed by heavy snow and there was little open water.

Likely as a direct result of the mild temperatures, Milwaukee feeders hosted two species of tanagers. A female **SUMMER TANAGER** was the first to be located. It was found at a busy feeding station during the Christmas Bird Count week but unfortunately left just before the Dec. 14 count. This species is uncommon in Wisconsin but they are fairly hardy and several prior winter records exist. More unusual, a **SCARLET TANAGER** showed up at a feeder not far from the Summer Tanager location on the day of the Milwaukee CBC. This is only the second Wisconsin winter record for this Neotropical migrant. The first was last year on the Green Bay CBC.

The mild temperatures allowed a few other migrants to linger into the middle of

the month. A **WOOD THRUSH** was found and photographed on Washington Island in Door County. Milwaukee birders reported a Dunlin and a **NASHVILLE WARBLER**.

A **VARIED THRUSH** was more typical for the season in Dunn County. This bird was found with a flock of robins and not at a feeder where they are typically seen in winter. Other Varied Thrushes were photographed in Ashland and Outagamie Counties.

More commonly found in spring, a **EURASIAN WIGEON** was an excellent find along the Mississippi River in Vernon County. This bird stayed for several days and was photographed by many birders.

A **KING EIDER** was shot by a hunter near Two Rivers. He documented this species with a clear photograph.

A **HARLEQUIN DUCK** was a nice find in Door County. More unexpected was one inland in Dane County, which was still being seen on Christmas Eve.

A **LAUGHING GULL** was a great find in Sheboygan; this species is more expected in

summer.

A **TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE** was located on typical bluff habitat in Columbia County. Another was found at Whitnall Park in Hales Corners, where it has been enjoyed and photographed by dozens of birders. It is the easternmost found in the country in December, save for one in Massachusetts.

The paucity of winter finches continues but sightings of **SNOWY OWLS** have slightly exceeded expectations.

As of Dec. 17, the DNR reported, 56 Snowy Owls had been reported from 27 counties. This total is on track with that found last winter but far below the 187 found by this date in 2017.

Let's hope the many observers out in the field doing Christmas Counts will turn up a few more unexpected species. Happy holidays to all and good birding in the New Year.

In addition to compiling this monthly report, **MARK KORDUCKI** coordinates Wisconsin's 92 Breeding Bird Survey routes.

Vikings' stadium: Bad for birds, but not too late for a solution

By **BRYAN LENZ**
American Bird Conservancy

Each year in the United States, window collisions kill up to one billion birds. While this is a massive source of human-caused bird mortality, trailing only free-roaming cats and habitat loss, there is good news: Window collisions are preventable!

The bad news: Most new buildings do not incorporate bird safety into their design, and scores of existing buildings (including homes) need to have their deadliest windows treated to prevent collisions.

A new study, led by collisions expert Scott Loss of Oklahoma State University, examined what happens when developers choose not to design a bird-friendly building. The research focused on the Minnesota Vikings' US Bank Stadium, which was completed in 2016 and features 200,000 square feet of glass on the 270-foot-tall building.

Loss's team found that US Bank Stadium kills at least 111 birds each year, including Ruby-throated Hummingbird, American Redstart and Wood Thrush. This may not seem like a lot of birds, but imagine a pile of 111 birds at your feet, or think of the running total in the future: 2,775 birds in 25 years; 5,550 birds in 50 years. These numbers also do not include birds that hit the glass and fly away, many of which die elsewhere or are significantly impaired for the rest of their lives. This is a lot of birds.

It is also a number that might be expected to grow over time if nothing is done.

The amount of glass and the amount of surrounding vegetation were found to be leading factors predicting collision rates. Trees planted during construction will mature and become a stronger magnet for birds, drawing even more into close proximity with the stadium's deadly windows.

Loss's team identified other deadly buildings, two of which kill



even more birds than the stadium. All of these buildings, as well as buildings of all types across the county, must be part of the solution if we want to save hundreds of millions of birds. This brings us to the actions that should be taken.

Step 1: Make US Bank Stadium Safer for Birds

We hope that the Minnesota Sports Facilities Authority, along with the owners of the other problem buildings identified, will take corrective action to remediate their windows. The primary step should be the addition of bird-deterrent patterns to the glass through window films, etching or window replacement.

(Minnesota Sports Facilities Authority Chairman Michael Vekich said officials need to take in the findings and conduct their own reviews of the cost benefits of various mitigation options. The big question, according to Vekich: "What's the acceptable collision rate?" Vekich said he expects a request for proposals will go out no sooner than next summer.)

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New York City will require bird-friendly glass on buildings

By **LINDA POON**
City Lab Newsletter

A dense city like New York can be a dangerous place for birds: Each year, up to 230,000 birds collide with its buildings, and many die as a result, according to estimates from New York City Audubon. In an effort to avoid many of those deaths, lawmakers last month made the city one of the largest in the U.S. to pass bird-friendly legislation.

In a 41-3 vote, the city council passed a bill updating the building code with design and construction requirements aimed at making buildings safer for migratory birds. It will require exteriors on the lowest 75 feet of new buildings, and on any structure above a green roof, to have avian-friendly materials such as patterned glass that make transparent surfaces more visible to birds flying at full speed. The bill doesn't include a mandate to retrofit existing buildings, but requires any future renovations to comply with standards set to take effect in December 2020.

Brooklyn Councilmember Rafael Espinal proposed the legislation with input from NYC Audubon, the American Bird Conservancy and the city's chapter of the American Institute of Architects. "This bill strikes a careful balance in requiring bird-friendly glass only at heights where birds are most likely to be flying," Espinal said.

The legislation is a major step in addressing a critical concern among wildlife activists like Christine Sheppard, who directs the American Bird Conservancy's glass collisions program. North America already has lost 3 billion birds — or 29% of the avian populations— since the 1970s due to a slew of threats that include climate change, habitat loss and loss of insect prey. Window collisions play a role, too: Some 600 million to one billion birds die each year across the continent after crashing into glass surfaces, according to a recent study by the American Bird Conservancy.

Sheppard, who advised New York's lawmakers in writing the bill, said her team would work with the building department as it develops specific guidelines. Her key concern is helping birds see glass surfaces. "Birds ... haven't evolved to recognize glass as a barrier, which means that when birds

see the sky or a tree reflected in glass, they will continue flying towards it."

Sheppard points to Manhattan's Jacob K. Javits Convention Center as a success story. Its original all-glass facade killed nearly 500 birds between 2005 and 2009, making the building one of the deadliest in the city. Then, as part of a five-year, billion-dollar expansion completed in 2014, the center was renovated with fritted, translucent glass as well as a 6.75-acre green roof. By 2015, NYC Audubon found, the design had reduced bird deaths by a whopping 90%.

In 2011, San Francisco became the first major U.S. city to adopt standards for bird-safe buildings, though the city only made them voluntary. Since then, a handful of smaller California cities and the state of Minnesota have followed suit and developed similar ordinances.

There's also been more clear evidence of what works in the past decade. "Now we know that you can dramatically reduce [bird] collision using a pattern that covers less than 7% of the glass surface," Sheppard said.

BIRD OF THE MONTH

Glossy Ibis: *Plegadis falcinellus*

By **DIANA HIERLMEIER**

The **GLOSSY IBIS** is a medium-sized wading bird with a compact body, long neck, and long legs and a long, decurved bill. It has dark eyes and yellow-gray legs. Its relative size is larger than a **CATTLE EGRET** and slightly smaller than a **NIGHT-HERON**.



Diana Hierlmeier

For both sexes, their length is 18.9 to 26.0 inches, weight 18-7 to 27.1 ounces with a wing span ranging from 31 to 41 inches. The plumage appears dark, almost blackish at a distance or in poor light. At close range much of the body is maroon, with wing coverts showing metallic green, bronze and violet tones. Vocalizations include flight calls characterized as low grunts ("graa-graa-graa" or "uhrr-uhrr-uhrr"). At breeding sites, individuals emit grunts, coos, rattle and croaks.

Most notably, the August sighting of a Glossy Ibis pair and their young at Horicon Marsh brought to 226 the total number of species confirmed as breeding in the state since 2015. It was the first time this Atlantic Coast bird has been documented nesting in Wisconsin.

"Finding a breeding Glossy Ibis here was definitely unexpected. It was a fitting end to data collection, and is a testament to the high-quality wetland habitat offered at Horicon Marsh and to the dedication of our hardworking volunteers," said **RYAN BRADY**, a Department of Natural Resources biologist and science coordinator for the survey, known as the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II.

HABITS AND HABITAT

These birds generally occur in flocks, both at nesting colonies and when foraging. They frequent almost any wetland environment with shallow water or exposed mud and will readily feed in farm fields or open areas where soils are moist.

Their preference for habitats are relatively freshwater, open marshes, saltwater marshes, mudflats, mangrove swamps, wet agricultural fields, lake or pond edges, sewage treatment areas and highway margins that have soil moist enough to permit probing.

The Glossy Ibis forages by sight and touch. On dry land, they pick up insects or grain such as rice or sorghum, earth worms, grubs, and other invertebrates including leeches, marine worms, dragonflies, soldier flies, crabs, shrimp, crayfish, mollusk, snails, fish, frogs, newts, salamanders, snake and lizards.

Flocks of Glossy Ibis will forage quite close together, advancing slowly as they probe for prey. This activity often attracts other waders, which capture minnows and other prey moving away from the flock of feeding Ibis.

This species nests in shrubs, trees or marsh vegetation, sometime far from foraging areas. Both members of a pair build a large, bulky nest near wetlands. The male collects more of the nest material, which varies from reeds to sticks depending on what vegetation is available near the site.

The nest is sometimes on the ground in a reed bed, but more often in bushes or short trees, up to about 12 feet above the ground. The pair may add sticks, twigs or reeds to the bulky platform nest



Photo by Jack Bartholmai

This **GLOSSY IBIS** was photographed last summer at the Horicon Marsh.

even after eggs have been laid. Most nests are about one foot in diameter and vary in thickness from just a few inches to a foot.

The female lays a clutch of three to four eggs with an incubation period lasting 20 to 22 days. The young remain in the nest for eight to nine days. Both parents feed the young by regurgitation.

By two to three weeks of age, the young may wander or climb about near the nest. First attempts at flight occur at four to five weeks and by six to seven weeks the young can fly and may accompany their parents to foraging sites.

The Glossy Ibis is a highly gregarious species. Throughout their lives they most are in close proximity with other individuals while feeding, resting in flocks and nesting in tight colonies where nests are usually no more than two feet apart. Pairs defend the immediate vicinity of their nest, attacking other birds that come too close; otherwise they are rarely aggressive.

Courting ibises bow to each other, preen each other and touch their bills together, rattling them while cooing. Glossy Ibis fly in flocks that resemble those of cormorants for which they can be mistaken at a distance.

CONSERVATION

Glossy Ibis are found throughout the world. In North America, populations increased by an estimated 4.5% per year between 1966 and 2015 according to the North American Breeding Bird Survey. This species has a Continental Concern Score of 8 out of 20. Oil spills, pesticides, wetland drainage, ditching of marshes for mosquito control and human disturbance are causes of concern for this species.

FUN FACTS

-- **Glossy Ibis nest in colonies**, often among other species of ibis, heron, egret or spoonbill. Colonial nesters have the extra advantage of many extra sets of eyes looking out for predators. Colonies might also be placed where highly gregarious species, like ibises, can share information about the most productive foraging areas.

-- **They are a cosmopolitan species**, also found in Europe, Asia and Africa. In recent decades, its population in Spain has been increasing rapidly, probably helped by increased rice cultivation there. Glossy Ibis banded in Spain have turned up as far away as Barbados, having crossed the Atlantic.

-- **American populations** are thought to have come from Africa in the 19th century and have spread northward via the Caribbean. It was first found in the New World (New Jersey) in 1817. J.J. Audubon saw this species once in Florida in 1832.

-- **Collective nouns** for the Glossy Ibis include "congregation," "stand" and "wedge" of Ibis.

-- **The oldest recorded Glossy Ibis** was at least 21 years old and lived in Virginia from 1971 to 1992.

DIANA HIERLMEIER, her husband, two dogs and an indoor cat enjoy an acre of farmland in Random Lake that is a Certified Wildlife Habitat and an Advanced Bird Habitat through the National Wildlife Federation.



Photo by Jim Knickelbine

A snowy trail at Woodland Dunes: Preserving natural areas, and then taking care of them, will help wildlife recover.

CALL NOTES

So now, 'tis the season for taking care of our special gifts

By **JIM KNICKELBINE**

I hope you enjoyed the holiday season, your families and friends, music, food and meaningful reflection. These are gifts that we sometimes take for granted.

As I've written before, I view nature as a gift also. The beauty of birds, the majesty of trees, and the fascinating way they all interact with each other to function as one enormous whole with so many parts. Here in Wisconsin we can experience so much of the good that nature provides.

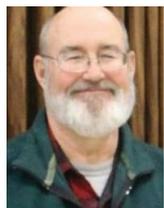
There are many challenges, however, as there are in our own individual lives. In mine I strive for optimism, and a greater appreciation of the nature around us. I need that in my life, but I don't always succeed in maintaining that attitude. For those who are paying attention, there is a wake-up call that is increasing in volume each year. Clearly, we don't always appreciate the gifts that are given us.

Three things stand out for me:

One million species of living things are at risk of extinction, according to a United Nations report.

There are about 3 billion fewer adult breeding birds in North America than there used to be (Cornell University research, based on Breeding Bird Surveys, Christmas Bird Counts and radar studies of migrating birds).

A lot more people are under stress. According to the American Institute of Stress, 77% of us experience physical effects from stress in our lives. I would imagine that such conditions lead to a lot of other personal and social problems.



Jim Knickelbine

I don't think any of these things happened overnight. Rather, they began some time ago in a minor way only to snowball over time. And the longer we ignore them, the harder they are to fix. They are huge problems, and I don't pretend to have all the answers. But I do have an opinion about one possibility, and that would be to take better care of nature.

A major part of the loss of species in general and birds in particular is loss of habitat, either by outright elimination, or degradation by things like non-native invasive species. Preserving natural areas, and then taking care of them, will help wildlife recover -- and it can recover if given a chance. Plus, doing such things can result in cleaner water and air, sustainable forest products, recreation and a host of other practical benefits.

And then there are the effects on people. Where do we tend to go if given a choice to relax? The lakeshore? Up North? The nearest park? Beginning 10 years or so ago, researchers began to measure the effects of being exposed to natural areas. Now, one can find study after study indicating benefits of being near nature, and creative ways to restore and manage natural areas. Even planting more trees on a city street improves how people feel. And each natural area, which we have always known to be special, becomes in fact more valuable.

So we have been given incredible gifts -- birds and other living things. Like anyone who is so gifted, we should appreciate the value of these gifts and take care of them. And it turns out that they in turn may take care of us.

JIM KNICKELBINE is executive director of Woodland Dunes Nature Center and Preserve in Two Rivers.



Quick Calendar

January 11 (Saturday)

Milwaukee: Lakefront Birds

January 26 (Sunday)

Buena Vista Marsh & Necedah NWR

March 15 (Sunday)

Sheboygan: Lakefront Birds

March 21 or 28 (Saturday)

Dane & Columbia County

April 18 (Saturday)

Mead Wildlife Area

May 2 (Saturday)

White River Marsh

May 9-10 (Saturday evening - Sunday)

Honey Creek:

Birdathon -&-Bandathon

May 14 -17

81st Annual Convention

Two Rivers - Lighthouse Inn

June 6 (Saturday)

Southern Kettle Moraine State Forest

June 12-14 (Weekend)

Honey Creek: Summer Campout

August 16 (Sunday)

Horicon Marsh NWR

September 12 (Saturday)

Green Bay: Fall Warblers

September 25-27 (Weekend)

Wisconsin Point Weekend: "Jaegerfest"

October 4 or 11 (Sunday)

Harrington Beach SP: Hawks

Jan. 11 (Saturday)

Milwaukee: Lakefront Birding

Meet: 8:00 am at South Shore Yacht Club.

Directions to South Shore Yacht Club ([Google Map](#)).

Start your annual bird list right with a field trip that will visit a variety of lakefront locations from Milwaukee to Port Washington. We'll look at the wintering gull flocks for Lesser and Greater Black-backed Gulls, as well as Glaucous and Iceland Gulls. We also have a good chance of seeing a Snowy Owl along with an assortment of waterfowl, including Long-tailed Duck.

Dress warmly and bring your "energy" foods.



January 26 (Sunday)

Buena Vista Marsh & Necedah NWR - Winter Birds

Meet: 8:00 am meet at the kiosk along County W in the Buena Vista Marsh. **Directions:** Exit I-39 at CTH W

(exit 143, for Bancroft), and follow CTH W west for about seven miles ([Google Map](#)).

We'll spend a good portion of the morning here

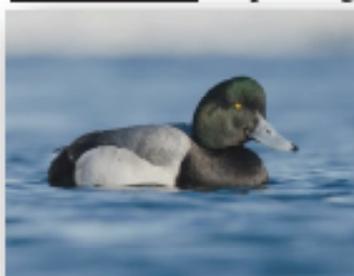
at Buena Vista looking for wintering raptors, Prairie-Chickens, and other grassland birds. Later in the morning, we'll depart for Necedah NWR in search of Bald Eagles, diving ducks and possibly wintering Golden Eagles. Bring a bag lunch to eat in the car.



March 15 (Sunday)

Sheboygan: Lakefront Birding

Meet: 8:00 am at the Sheboygan Marina: **(Google Map)**. Depending on current birding



information, our travels may take us north to Manitowoc and Two Rivers harbors or south to Harrington Beach State Park and Port

Washington areas. Bring a bag lunch.

March 21 or 28 (Saturday)

Dane & Columbia County Ponds

Meet: 7:00 am at Goose Pond, 1 mile south of Hwy. 51/60 on Goose Pond Road (south-east of the town of Arlington) **(Google Map)**. Our

group will tour by auto to several ponds and flooded fields in this very productive area. A wide variety of water birds, shorebirds, migrant passerines, and others are possible (i.e.:



swans, Gr. White-fronted & Ross's Geese, pipits, longspurs, sparrows, etc.). Our trip typically ends around noon after birding the causeway (CTH V) on Lake Wisconsin and Rower Creek Fishery Area. Bring a bag lunch.

April 18 (Saturday)

George W. Mead Wildlife Area

Meet: 7:30 am at the "old" wildlife headquarters building, near the bathrooms, along CTH S - 2 miles south of CTH C or 6.2 miles north of Hwy 10 **(Google Map)**. This trip will include a combination of car caravan and some



light walking. Highlights include an assortment of waterfowl, Prairie-Chickens, Longspurs, but also some early spring

passerines such as Winter Wren, Sparrows (Fox, Vesper, Swamp), Yellow-rumped Warblers, and other songbirds. This trip will be led by Myles Hurlburt and Rob Pendergast. If you have questions contact Myles Hurlburt at **(715-574-1003)** or **mhurlburt44@gmail.com**

May 2 (Saturday)

White River Marsh

Meet at 5:00 am (for those wanting to experience the early dawn chorus of woodcock, snipe, rails, cranes, etc.) meet at the parking lot near the cattail marsh along White River Road follow it about 4.3 miles east from Hwy. D north of Princeton in Green Lake County **(Google Map)**. If you don't want to arrive that early, the group will probably be along this road until around 8:00 AM. Bring along a lunch.



May 9-10 Honey Creek

Birdathon - Bandathon

Come to WSO's Honey Creek property, in Sauk County, for a Saturday evening cookout (potluck) at the Nature Center **(Google Map)**. Then at 8 a.m. on Sunday morning join WSO birders in a Birdathon/Bandathon on the property that will include a hike up Honey Creek valley.

Camping facilities will be available and the Nature Center building will be open.



May 14-17 WSO's Annual Convention

Two Rivers - Lighthouse Inn

Come join other WSO members in Two Rivers at the ***Lighthouse Inn and Conference Center*** **(Google Map)**, right on Lake Michigan, for its 81st annual convention. (Convention registration will run from March 1 - April 15.)

Convention check-in will begin Thursday, May 14 at 2 pm with a "member appreciation" picnic from 4

- 6 pm. Then starting at 7 pm WSO will hold its annual awards ceremony followed by a reception to honor the recipients.



Two all-day field trips will be offered again this year using a slightly new format. The first one will be offered on Friday and the other will be on Sunday. Both trips will be departing from the Convention Center.

Saturday morning there will be a variety of local field trips, departing at various times, from the Convention Center. Following these field trips, lunch will be offered to attendees at the Lighthouse Inn. At noon WSO will be holding its annual business meeting, followed by presentations and birding workshops from 1 - 4 pm. At 5:30 pm there will be social hour leading into a banquet dinner, followed by a keynote speaker - Dr. Ben Zuckerberg at 7:30 pm.

June 6 (Sunday)

Southern Unit -Kettle Moraine State Forest

Meet: 6 am at the parking lot of Scuppermong Ski/Hiking Trails ([Google Map](#)), Hwy ZZ (north side of the road) - approx. 1 mile east of Hwy 67. Carpooling is advised for this trip. Participants will go on an



odyssey beginning in Waukesha County and traveling into Jefferson and Walworth Counties! This trip mixes a couple of 1/4 mile hikes along well-groomed trails and with roadside stops that will take travelers through habitats ranging from pinewood forests to the largest

wet prairie east of the Mississippi. Target species will vary depending on which specialties are being found in the forest in any given year. Common and rare birds present over the past few years include Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-shouldered Hawk, Acadian Flycatcher, Blue-headed Vireo, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Black-throated Green, Hooded, Kentucky, Pine, Cerulean, & Prairie Warblers, Yellow-breasted Chat, Henslow's and Lark Sparrows, and Orchard Oriole. Bring along water and snacks. If you have questions about this trip contact Andrea Szymczak at harrierhawk1@gmail.com

June 12-14

Summer Campout - WSO Honey Creek Property

Meet at 6:00 pm for the return of WSO's campout. Campers should meet at the Nature Center ([Google Map](#)) Friday evening to set up camp and later for a short field trip to listen for night sounds. On Saturday



morning we will form a couple of field trips groups, one going up the Honey Creek Valley and

the other to explore our newly acquired Dischler property. If time allows we may add other nearby locations. On Sunday we'll visit other nearby locations that may include Ferry Bluff SNA, Baxter's Hollow, Natural Bridge S.P. or Sauk Prairie Recreation Area.

August 16 (Sunday)

Horicon Marsh NWR

Meet: 7:00 am along Hwy. 49, on the north end of Horicon Marsh ([Google Map](#)).



We'll bird areas around the marsh that harbor some of the best birds or have the most variety of birds during this time of year. We expect to find a variety of shorebirds and waterbirds, as well as other resident and early migrant passerines.

September 12 (Saturday)

Green Bay: Fall Warblers

Meet: 7:00 am at Bay Beach Wildlife Sanctuary ([Google Map](#)), which can be reached off I-43, exit-187 (Webster Ave.) to East Shore Drive. Use the first parking area, on the right, after entering the sanctuary. Wear good walking shoes, because there will be some hiking, though leisurely. We may tour other nearby areas.

September 25-27

Wisconsin Point Weekend: *JAEGERFEST*

Meet: 7:00 am (each morning) at the first beach parking area along the Moccasin Mike Road ([Google Map](#)), which leads to



Wisconsin Point. Weather plays such an integral part in birding this area, in fact, the worse the weather the more incredible the birding could be. So prepare for the possibility of wet, cold weather as well as typical cool fall temperatures along lake Superior. Participants may want to bring old bread, popcorn, beef

suet, etc. for “chumming” for gulls. If you are staying in a motel, make sure you book your reservation early!

October 4 or 11 (Sunday)

Harrington Beach: *Hawk Watch*

Meet: 8:00 am at the lower beach parking area of Harrington Beach State Park ([Google Map](#)). Please note that there is a state park entrance fee. Later in the morning we may also venture south to the Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory and check for additional species at that site. Bring a lunch.



Starting Location Maps

For those of you that are using an electronic version of this schedule, in each field trip description, there is a link to a Google Map. This link will direct you to the starting location for each field trip and some maps even show the route planned for the day.

If you hover your mouse over the ([Google Map](#)) a little hand with a “W” appears. Left-click the mouse and this will open Google Maps and the starting location for that particular field trip will be displayed.

You can also access these Google Maps on the WSO website, under the “WSO Events” listing.

Dual Field Trip Dates

Two field trips have two different dates indicated. Our intent is to try and optimize our birding during these migration periods. The 1st date listed is the normally scheduled date, but if it is determined that the 2nd date may be better, we will notify participants via the WSO Website: <http://wsobirds.org> and Wisbirdn Listserv. So please check these two services a day or two prior to the 1st date listed.

Weather Cancellation Policy

In the event of poor or dangerous weather conditions, any given field trip may be canceled. Participants will be notified via the WSO Website: <http://wsobirds.org>, Wisbirdn Listserv, as well as various Wisconsin birding Facebook pages. Please realize that under some circumstances there may be insufficient time to post a cancellation. So please EXERCISE GOOD JUDGEMENT when deciding to attend.

Field Trip Co-Chairs

Tom Schultz

N6104 Honeysuckle Lane,

Green Lake, WI 54941

Cell: (920) 960-1796

e-mail: trschultz@centurytel.net

Jeff Baughman

W2640 Middle Road,

Campbellsport, WI 53010

Cell: (920) 960-4732

e-mail: jbaughman@csd.k12.wi.us

WSO Website : <http://wsobirds.org>

Bank donates 900 Gromme wildlife prints to Ducks Unlimited

BMO Harris Bank will donate almost 900 prints of Owen Gromme's paintings of birds native to Wisconsin to Ducks Unlimited, a national nonprofit organization that focuses on supporting waterfowl conservation and wetlands, including Wisconsin's Horicon Marsh.

Since its founding in 1937, the volunteer-based Ducks Unlimited has successfully conserved 14 million acres of wetland across the United States.

The prints have an estimated value of approximately \$500,000. The artwork can be purchased at upcoming Ducks Unlimited fundraising banquets, or by contacting Tom Munich at 262-965-3700.

One of the most celebrated wildlife artists in the United States, Fond du Lac native Owen Gromme (1896-1991) was also a dedicated environmentalist, working with author and conservationist Aldo Leopold to help protect bird species such as herons, owls and hawks.

Gromme, former curator of birds and mammals for the Milwaukee Public Museum, was a nature enthusiast since childhood. He was inducted into the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame in 1994, and his paintings continue to be highly collectible.

"People in Wisconsin and around the country consider Gromme the father of wildlife art. He was the first person to do this on a significant scale," said Ducks Unlimited volunteer leader Glenn Goergen.

In 2011, BMO Harris donated 43 original Gromme paintings to the Woodson Art Museum in Wausau. The works were commissioned in



Photo by BMO Harris Bank

NEIL RIEGELMAN, director of commercial banking at BMO Harris Bank, with an Owen Gromme painting of **WOOD DUCKS** that hangs in the bank's downtown Milwaukee office.

the 1960s for the Milwaukee offices of M&I Bank, which was bought by the BMO Financial group.



Photo by Peter Ziegler

A historical marker honoring the late **JOHN TOEPFER** has been erected near the Greater Prairie Chicken informational kiosk WSO helped establish on the Buena Vista Marsh.

Booklet, state historical marker honor prairie chicken researcher

DR. JOHN TOEPFER died in 2018 after suffering cardiac arrest following hip replacement surgery. A native of Wisconsin and a graduate of University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, Toepfer made a lifelong commitment to the study and conservation of the **GREATER PRAIRIE CHICKEN**, a vanishing species on the grasslands of Central Wisconsin.

In the past year, several efforts have been made to honor Toepfer, including publication of a booklet on his life called, aptly enough, "Toepfer Stories" with a foreword by Greg Septon, who has led Peregrine Falcon recovery efforts in Wisconsin.

Septon was formerly executive director of the Society of Tympanuchus Cupido Pinnatus, a Wisconsin-based group dedicated to prairie chickens but supportive of all endangered and threatened species. A downloadable PDF can now be found at: www.suttoncenter.org/toepfer

A Wisconsin State Historical Marker honoring Toepfer was placed near the prairie chicken kiosk on the Buena Vista Marsh in August.

And a John Toepfer Prairie Grouse Research Scholarship has been established to provide funding for a grad student working on prairie grouse to attend the Prairie Grouse Technical Council meetings each year.



Waterbird Watch finds more jaegers, fewer mergansers

Six hours a day, starting at dawn, for six days of the week, for three months each spring and fall, Waterbird Watch technician **CALVIN BRENNAN** scans the nearshore waters of Lake Michigan at Harrington Beach State Park in Ozaukee County. He just finished his 10th season doing the watch for the Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory, tallying 158,066 migrants:

"Diving ducks, including **RED-BREASTED**

MERGANSERS, were somewhat low (down 32,000 from fall 2018), even given the recent extension of the season (to account for climate change). **CANADA GEESE**, **COMMON LOONS** and some of the dabblers were higher than average. **PARASITIC JAEGERS** were in record numbers with a high of four in one day and perhaps most remarkable of all on an entirely separate day, were three flying southbound as a group. New species for the

overall list were **RED-NECKED PHALAROPE**, **SABINE'S GULL** and **PACIFIC LOON**."

Here's Calvin's Top 10 list for fall 2019:

- Red-breasted Merganser - 87,659
- Ring-billed Gull - 19,639
- Canada Goose - 15,846
- Double-crested Cormorant - 11,210
- Herring Gull - 3,634
- Mallard - 2,680
- Greater Scaup - 2,217
- Common Loon - 1,308
- Lesser Scaup - 1,254
- Bonaparte's Gull - 1,046

NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Kim Jacobson: 'By the time I realized how much work it is to find birds, I was already hooked!'

WSO's Membership Committee is highlighting some of our new members. Here we chat with **KIM JACOBSON**. If you are a new member and would like to be featured, please email dturski@gmail.com

Tell us a bit about yourself:

I live in Milwaukee. I am director of clinical education at Alverno College and an instructor in the General Education Diploma program at Milwaukee Area Technical College.

What is your favorite bird?

My favorite birds are, by far, owls. They are cute while being intelligent and fierce. I think that is an admirable combination. I have always loved owls but, until a few years ago, I had no idea I could find owls in and around Milwaukee.

Now that I know, I am slightly addicted to owling. Thus far, I have seen 11 owl species in the United States, two in Africa and one in Costa Rica. My favorites are probably the **SNOWY OWLS** since they appear so expressive.

How would you describe yourself as a birder?

I became a birder by accident. I have always loved animals, nature and photography. I regularly took photos of natural and manmade items that folks walk by every day without noticing.

I travel internationally a great deal and always enjoy taking bird and other animal photos on those adventures. When I went to Canada to take photos of polar bears, I was desperate to see a Snowy Owl. However, I didn't see any owls. When I came back to Milwaukee, there was a Snowy Owl in a



KIM JACOBSON with a **NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWL**.

parking lot downtown, another at the ferry terminal and several others in the area. I went to find those Snowy Owls and folks I met would mention other birds that were in the area.

I mistakenly thought I was pretty good at birding because it was an irruption year for several species. By the time I realized how much work it is to find birds, I was already hooked!

Since I have a full-time director position, a part-time teaching position and a small craft business, I have to be creative to get out to bird as much as I would like.

Why did you choose to join WSO?

I kept seeing posts about field trips after

they happened, and I was super jealous! So I thought I should get a membership to get cued in to all the cool bird nerd stuff going on ahead of time.

What are your favorite places to bird in Wisconsin?

A few of my favorites are Milwaukee County parks, Horicon Marsh and the Buena Vista Grasslands.

Have you had a recent memorable experience while birding?

This fall I participated in some raptor banding up in Stevens Point and was able to hold a **GREAT HORNED OWL** who serves as education ambassador, several **NORTHERN SAW-WHET OWLS** and a **MERLIN**.

The Northern Saw-whet Owls are fierce, but so cute too! Last year, I saw two Snowy Owls having a mid-air fight with a third Snowy Owl flying around the fray. It was pretty amazing to witness.

I also saw **BALD EAGLES** with locked talons spiraling right over my head. It looked like they were going to crash into the water, but they released and pulled up about 15 feet before the surface of the water.

Is there anything else you'd like to share about yourself with fellow WSO members?

People who see me out and about might recognize me by the *owlsome* ear warmer I made.

Or they might notice the Polar Bear I painted on my coat when in Canada to photograph those bears!

I am always looking for new areas to explore and friends to share my enjoyment of the birdies.

Birdwatching as a competitive game....

On the "Lake Effect" show on Milwaukee's WUWM-FM, a holiday tradition is the compilation of a Games to Gift list. Compiled by **JIM LOWDER**, the list is in its 10th year. In 2019, there was one item of special interest to the birding community.

Wingspan

Players: 1-5

Ages: 10 and up

About: Competitive birdwatching may not be the first topic that leaps to mind as a winning board game theme, but Elizabeth Hargrave has built a marvelous design around it with Wingspan.

The game has players taking on the roles of rival bird enthusiasts who scheme to attract birds of different types to their wildlife preserves.

Points are gathered in various ways, from placing birds in the proper habitats to collecting eggs. Resource management becomes important, too, as you try to balance your feed supply with the bird population.

There's a lot going on during play, but the rules are well written and have clear explanations for all card effects.

Wingspan is a superior game that will entertain casual gamers and hardcore hobbyists — even while offering up educational

content, which is quite a feat.

Like many of this year's picks, it also boasts solo rules for when you can't get your regular game group together.

"This is a really lovely middle-weight game," says Lowder. "It's not going to be so hard that you feel like you need to devote hours to studying the rules. But once you play it a few times, you're going to realize that there are strategies that you'll want to pursue to win."



WSO BOARD MEMBER PROFILE

Tim Hahn

Editor of *The Passenger Pigeon*

What's your background and how did you get into birding?

During family camping trips in the North Woods, while fishing with my dad, I would cast for bluegills, but my eyes were always on the skies scanning for **BALD EAGLES**.

You might call the eagle a spark bird, but it took many years for the spark to light anything.

When I was 20, I had a second shift job during summer vacation, so I needed a morning hobby.

At the suggestion of a coworker I started backyard bird feeding and quickly became hooked, checking out all the bird books from the library.

This new interest led me to get a job at Wild Birds Unlimited, where I met **PAULA STICH, ANNE MORETTI, ERIK BRUNKE** and **TOM PRESTBY**, who are all inspiring birding mentors and dear friends to this day.

What aspects of birding are you passionate about?

Conservation is key when it comes to birds, so it's critical that we educate birders and encourage them to be part of the conservation process through citizen science.

So much data and information still need to be collected, and the biologists can't do it all. We as "regular folks" need to step in and use our skills to help the cause.

We also need more people to know how awesome birds are and who will then want to save them, so outreach to young and diverse people is hugely important.

Simply exposing people to birds and nature can make a difference by striking a spark of interest. By providing opportunities to learn more, we can give that spark something to light.

As an organization, WSO needs to be open and engaging with new, young, diverse bird-



TIM HAHN stopped for a photo, having just "Walked the Wauk," the approximately 45 miles of the Ice Age Trail that runs through Waukesha County. "Not all at once, of course. It took about two years!" Tim said.

ers so the conservation movement can grow.

What brought you to this position on the WSO Board of Directors?

I've been a member of WSO since 2005, and I'm friends with many of the members, so I'm excited to be part of a group who gets to set the direction for the organization.

Although I always felt that being involved with the organization was in my future, I never thought I would be editor of *The Passenger Pigeon*. But when Vice President **MARY KORKOR** asked to consider the role, I decided it was my time to serve the organization that has given me so many opportunities.

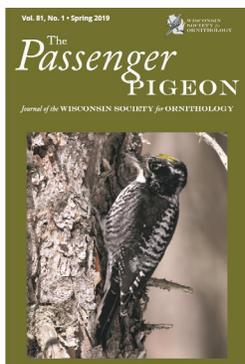
I love all aspects of birding, especially data, records and research, and this role is an opportunity to dig deep into those realms of birds and science. Plus, I will get to use

the writing and editing skills my mom hammered into me while in school!

What are your hopes for the future of the WSO?

The face of birding is changing rapidly. Young people are increasingly taking interest in the environment and the natural communities around them. And while they are passionate, they don't necessarily look for groups like WSO, because there are many other ways for them to communicate about and enjoy birds and nature. Even so, as Wisconsin's largest "bird club," new birders or people new to the state can find great value in WSO to help them get the most out of birding in Wisconsin.

For our continued success, I hope WSO can continue to connect with people in Wisconsin by being welcoming to new birders by sponsoring events for a diverse crowd.



Getting *The Passenger Pigeon* back on schedule

TIM HAHN, who has succeeded **MICHAEL JOHN JAEGER** as editor of *The Passenger Pigeon*, is working to get WSO's quarterly journal back on track and offers this report. "There were some unforeseen circumstances this year, including a health scare, that delayed publication of the Spring, Summer and Fall issues," Hahn said.

"The Spring issue was published in early September, and a combined Summer/Fall issue reached members the week before Christmas.

"We're in the process of editing the Winter issue and have received the major pieces, which are currently in the editing process. We have some editing yet to do, but optimistically I am aiming to get the Winter issue out in January."

ABC touts top bird conservation victories in 2019

By the AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY

The last year has held no shortage of challenges for birds and bird conservation. But thanks to the strong backing of American Bird Conservancy's partners and supporters, our conservation efforts flourished, and we scored major victories for birds across the Western Hemisphere.

We still have a long way to go, and we're already gearing up for another big year in 2020. But we're taking a minute to enjoy some of our most notable achievements for birds in 2019:

Defining the huge scale of bird declines

ABC and other conservationists have been concerned about bird declines for decades, but in 2019, a new scientific paper co-authored by ABC with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and others documented the loss of 3 billion breeding birds over the last 50 years from the United States and Canada.

The research woke millions of people up to the crisis facing our birds, with coverage of the loss appearing in hundreds of newspapers and news platforms. The paper calls for urgent measures by governments, companies, and individuals to reverse these declines.

Restoring grasslands in Texas

Grassland birds are the hardest-hit by population declines, according to the "3 Billion Birds" study. Over the past year, ABC-led migratory bird joint ventures in Texas have collaborated in the restoration of more than 20,000 acres of grassland for birds such as the **EASTERN MEADOWLARK**, **NORTHERN BOBWHITE** and **CASSIN'S SPARROW**. These efforts in the South Texas BirdScape are also providing significant habitat for Monarchs.



Enhancing habitat for Central Hardwoods birds

In the Central Hardwoods region – centered around Missouri and comprising seven other states – ABC and partners collectively completed over 193,000 acres of habitat improvements for **PRAIRIE WARBLER**, **RED-HEADED WOODPECKER**, and other woodland birds, as well as (to a lesser extent) grassland birds in the region.

Enough habitat has now been restored on the Mark Twain National Forest in Missouri that an extirpated population of **BROWN-HEADED NUTHATCHES** can be restored via translocations from the Ouachita National Forest in Arkansas.

Creating new breeding grounds for Golden-winged Warblers

Restoring breeding habitat for the rapidly declining **GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLER** continues to be a top priority for ABC. In 2019, we created more than 2,200 acres of high-quality young forest habitat for the warbler across private and public lands. Since this work commenced in 2013, ABC has created nearly 8,000 acres of habitat for the species in Minnesota alone – an effort extending across public lands in 13 Minnesota counties, conducted in partnership with 22 public and tribal. Recent surveys estimate that 89% of enhanced sites were occupied by Golden-winged Warblers.

Winning big in the Big Apple with bird-friendly buildings

Work to reduce the greatest threats to birds was rewarded this year with a major victory. The New York City Council passed a bill that requires the use of bird-friendly building materials in new construction and in major renovations across the city's five boroughs, where more than 200,000 birds die each year after colliding with glass.

Taking action for birds in the courts

We haven't won this one – yet – and while we take legal action only when absolutely necessary, ABC and Black Swamp Bird Observatory are proud to stand up for birds on Lake Erie. Together, we filed a legal complaint against the U.S. Department of Energy and Army Corps of Engineers over the agencies' failure to conduct a proper environmental assessment before approving and financing Icebreaker, the first offshore wind energy project in the Great Lakes.

If it goes forward, the Icebreaker project would impact one of the greatest concentrations of migratory birds in North America.

Securing sites for endangered birds

In 2019, ABC and our partners protected more than 21,236 acres of critical habitat for some of Latin America's most endangered bird species. We established five new reserves and expanded four existing reserves across four countries, often leveraging funding in coordination with other donors. For example, in a bid to prevent the extinction of the **LILACINE AMAZON** – a colorful parrot found only in western Ecuador – ABC helped to protect 176 acres of key roosting habitat in the Balsas Valley of Ecuador.

Fix your windows, too -- they are part of the problem

From Page 6

Light pollution should also be reduced overnight during spring and fall migration, with lights turned off from midnight until the following evening. (Please note: Turning out the lights is not a substitute for fixing the windows – the glass is the primary concern.)

Step 2: Enact Bird-friendly Building Legislation

There are simply too many new buildings going up for conservationists to be able to approach each developer for individual conversations and improvements. Instead, we need a policy-driven approach with the federal government, states and municipalities adopting bird-friendly building design ordinances and rules.

When incorporated from the beginning,

bird-friendly design does not add significantly to project costs – and it results in beautiful buildings.

Please let your elected officials know that you would like to see action on bird-friendly buildings.

If they do not know that their constituents are concerned about this issue, they will not act. It is up to those who value the lives of birds to make their voices heard.

Start here by sending a letter supporting the Bird-Safe Buildings Act.

Step 3: Fix the Windows where You Live and Work – They Are Part of the Problem

If you're reading this, you can help save birds from collisions too! We cannot focus only on the buildings that kill hundreds of birds. Many buildings in the U.S., probably including your own home, kill a handful of birds each year. With a population of 325

million people, these one- to three-story buildings add up to kill 42% of the total U.S. annual bird collision mortality of up to one billion victims.

It isn't hard to make your home safer for birds. Start by applying inexpensive, appealing retrofits to every home and office window that you already know is a bird hazard. Then, each time you hear a new collision, treat that window. Soon you will have addressed a handful of windows and stopped almost the entire collision problem where you live.

Ready to learn more? Visit www.birdsmartglass.org for a list of proven solutions to window collisions.

BRYAN LENZ, Ph.D., is ABC's bird collisions campaign manager.

2020 WSO Small Grants Program

The **Wisconsin Society for Ornithology** sponsors three research grants:

The **Steenbock Award**, which is intended for beginners, amateurs, and independent researchers, has been used to fund a wide variety of independent bird-related projects. Graduate students and professionals in ornithology may apply for personal projects only. Applicants need not include recommendations or references.

The Charles and Mary **Nelson Award**, established through a 1993 bequest from the Nelson family, is reserved for ornithological research involving wetlands.

The **WSO Grant** is usually awarded to provide additional support for research that is being carried out and funded through, for instance, a university graduate program, or in conjunction with another organization, partner, or sponsor (government, museum, etc.).

- ✓ All applicants should send their name, address, phone number, occupation, and a short proposal along with an itemized budget (including amount requested and how it will be used), and list of expected amounts and sources of other funding.
- ✓ Applicants for the Nelson Award and WSO Grant should include names and addresses of two references. Application may be made for a specific grant, or applicants may let the Grants Committee decide which grant would be most appropriate.
- ✓ In general, only projects conducted in Wisconsin will be considered for funding. Amounts awarded will range up to a maximum of \$500 per grant per year. Grant money may be used for such things as travel expenses, usable supplies, minor equipment, etc.; more costly equipment will be funded if ultimate ownership resides with an organization or institution (museum, university, etc.).
- ✓ Winners will be notified by mail and announced at the annual WSO convention. We request that winners of the Nelson Award and the WSO Grant (and some Steenbock awardees) have their research findings published at some point in *The Passenger Pigeon*. Grants recipients may also wish to present a paper at a WSO convention.
- ✓ **All award recipients must submit a short project report by October 1st** summarizing the work accomplished and identifying how the funds were spent.
- ✓ Applications can be sent either electronically or via snail mail by **January 31, 2020**.

For more information visit the WSO grants website: <http://wsobirds.org/what-we-do/grants>

Aaron Greene
WSO Small Grants Program Chair
3901 Rockwell Drive
Madison, WI 53714
608-800-1865
grants@wsobirds.org



Providing hope for birds and other species in the Baraboo Hills

From Page 3

just as hungry warblers and other migratory birds are arriving in the Hills from their wintering grounds in the tropics.

Can you tell us about the bird surveys you've been doing in the Hills?

Mossman: I've been doing bird surveys in the Hills since 1976, starting with the stream gorges, to learn which areas birds were using for breeding and what they needed to breed successfully. Since then, I have continued to survey these same areas, looking at population changes and responses to habitat change and land management.

In 2012, I began more intensive field studies of breeding birds on TNC properties in conjunction with forest measurements TNC was taking on most of its forest lands in the Baraboo Hills. They measured forest structure and composition, and I and my crew counted birds in these same areas to relate the abundance of various bird species to the nature of the forest habitat. My team and TNC set our survey areas up in a collaborative way so we could repeat our surveys in the future, and, thus, monitor the effects of TNC's management activities on the bird communities.

What have you learned about birds in the Hills so far?

Mossman: The long-term monitoring has indicated that some species are in trouble, for example birds that are typically found farther north in Wisconsin including Canada and Magnolia Warblers. Other species like the American Redstart are increasing.

Have those surveys told you anything so far about TNC's oak restoration work?

Mossman: It's too early to say anything conclusive yet about the work in the Baraboo Hills. In other places, we have seen that prescribed fire is a dynamic process with effects that vary over years of management and across the forest landscape. For example, Acadian Flycatchers, which prefer semi-open understory under a complete tree canopy, may benefit when a dense forest understory is opened by prescribed fire, but be excluded from sites as fire eventually opens the canopy more.

What impacts might climate change have on the Hills and the birds that depend on them?

Mossman: Climate change is already impacting habitats in the Baraboo Hills, especially the stream gorges. For example, the flooding and tree blowdowns caused by major storms that started in the 1980s have changed the stream gorges, especially Baxter's Hollow and Pine Hollow, resulting in a more open canopy, a more disturbed



CERULEAN WARBLERS need large expanses of older forest with white oaks and other tall trees to nest and raise their young. Their presence was one of the reasons WSO purchased the 105-acre Dischler tract in 2017. **MIKE MOSSMAN** documented five **CERULEAN WARBLER**, three **ACADIAN FLYCATCHER** and two **HOODED WARBLER** pairs – all state threatened species – along with a diversity of other bird species on the Dischler tract.

understory, and the decline of some of the northern forest species like hemlock that are important for certain bird species.

So, we should be concerned, but at the same time, places like the Baraboo Hills provide the most hope for birds and other species as the climate changes. They do so well here in the first place because there is not only a large expanse of forest, but within the forest there are all these little niches they can use — from the forest floor to the canopy and then across the landscape from stream gorges to ridge tops. There are not sharp lines and interruptions between these habitats, so plants and animals can migrate across them.

For more on TNC's work in Wisconsin: <https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/united-states/wisconsin/stories-in-wisconsin/>

Lots to do at the May 14-17 WSO convention in Two Rivers

From Page 1

ty-wide Bird Breakfast for casual birders who wish to forgo the field trips. The ham and pancake breakfast (nominal fee) is open to the public, and there will be activities for children, as well as guided bird hikes and a live raptor presentation.

Lunch at the Lighthouse Inn will be served at 11 a.m. and is included in convention registration.

WSO's annual meeting will follow, along with an educational segment on topics including gull identification, invasives in the lakes, aerial insectivores, water quality, and scientific illustration by convention t-shirt designer Becca Jabs.

A research poster discussion will feature some of Wisconsin's brightest biology students from universities around the state.

Saturday evening festivities begin with a social hour cash bar at 5:30, with our banquet at 6:30. Then we'll turn our focus to the highlight of the convention, keynote speaker Dr. Ben Zuckerberg, who will present "*Climate Change: How Birds are Dealing With It and What Atlas Findings Prompt Us to Do.*"

Sunday, May 17

All-day field trips resume on Sunday. Destinations will allow for "going home" trips so birders can limit their driving time after a long weekend.

Woodland Dunes will again have its hiking trails open from sunrise to sunset, and a beginner birding workshop will be available in the morning.

Lodging options; mention WSO for group rates:

Lighthouse Inn on Lake Michigan

Address: 1515 Memorial Dr, Two Rivers, WI 54241

Phone: (920) 793-4524

40 rooms are blocked at poolside rate of \$82/2 people per night. Lakeside is \$97/2 people per night.

Free beverage ticket for bar at check-in

<https://www.lhinn.com/>

Village Inn On the Lake

Address: 3310 Memorial Dr, Two Rivers, WI 54241

Phone: (920) 794-8818

26 standard rooms at rate of \$90 per night

6 Woodside suites - \$149 per night

RV sites available for \$38-\$50/night

Limited pet-friendly rooms upon request

Free beverage ticket for bar at check-in

<https://villageinnwi.com/>



World Migratory Bird Day theme unveiled

Birds Connect Our World will launch as the theme around the world for World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) 2020.

This conservation theme will follow the journeys of migratory birds, exploring the ways we track their migrations, from geolocators and banding to feather studies and surveys, examining the threats they face along the way, and highlighting the communities on the ground that are working to protect them.

The WMBD feature species are **AMERICAN KESTREL, ARCTIC TERN, BAIRD'S SPARROW, BARN OWL, BAR-TAILED GODWIT, CALLIOPE HUMMINGBIRD, CANADA**

WARBLER, FORK-TAILED FLYCATCHER, NORTHERN PINTAIL, PURPLE MARTIN, WESTERN SANDPIPER, and YELLOW-BREADED CHAT.

Environment for the Americas is the home of World Migratory Bird Day in the Americas and connects people to bird conservation through research, education, and community festivals. Learn more about EFTA @ <https://birdday.org/about>



Tons of birds at Goose Pond – literally!

On Dec. 2, **MARK MARTIN** and **J.D. ARNSTON** counted 12,500 mallards, 3,800 **CANADA GEESE**, and 23 **TUNDRA SWANS** at Madison Audubon's Goose Pond.

Later, **GRAHAM STEINHAUER** and Mark counted 1,149 **TUNDRA SWANS** at Goose Pond, breaking **CARL SCHWARTZ**'s record of 1,100 set on Nov. 9, 2017.

In early afternoon, Mark found a picked cornfield with 1,560 swans about 2.5 miles southwest of Goose Pond. Mark returned to Goose Pond and counted 1,050 swans on the pond. Graham watched the swans from the cornfield return to Goose Pond near dusk. The afternoon all time high record was 2,610 Tundra Swans!

Observed Mark: "Many people tell us, 'We saw a ton of birds at Goose Pond.' Today this is an understatement. Actually, one could see 53 tons of birds at Goose Pond. The 2,610 tundra swans @ 15 pounds each = 19.6 tons, 3,800 Canada geese @ 8.6 pounds each = 16.3 tons, 12,500 mallards @ 2.2 pounds each = 13.8 tons, and 733 sandhill cranes were seen in migration heading southeast - 733 @ 9.5 pounds each = 3.5 tons. Grand total = 53 tons of waterfowl!

Slow year for early Christmas counts

Not surprisingly, results of early Christmas Bird Counts are reflecting the slow pattern prevalent much of this fall and winter. Does your feeder have fewer birds than usual? You are definitely not

alone as a majority of feeder watchers around the state are reporting the same, according to **RYAN BRADY**, DNR Natural Heritage Conservation Program biologist. Exceptions include some resident species like **NORTHERN CARDINALS, BLUE JAYS** and woodpeckers.

DOWNY, HAIRY, RED-BELLIED, and **PILEATED WOODPECKERS** continue to show increasing populations, while **RED-HEADED WOODPECKERS** remain as far north as Florence and Sawyer counties this year thanks to good acorn crops. Even a few **YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKERS** are being seen across southern counties.

Lack of snow cover and slightly milder temperatures in the south are also allowing several other migrant species to linger longer than usual, albeit in very small numbers, including **GRAY CATBIRD, BALTIMORE ORIOLE, EASTERN PHOEBE, NASHVILLE AND ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLERS, CHIPPING SPARROW** and **VIRGINIA RAIL.**

Just over 50 **SNOWY OWLS** have been spotted in the state so far, a total that is similar to last year but far below the big irruption years of 2013-15 and 2017. **BALD EAGLES** are slowing starting to concentrate at traditional sites like the Wisconsin River at Prairie du Sac but it will take colder weather and more ice to build numbers significantly.

It's now just **BIRDS CANADA**

Bird Studies Canada has changed its operating name, and is now Birds Canada. They also have fledged an evolved version of their Canada Warbler logo, saying: "We remain steadfast in our mission to work with you to conserve Canada's birds."

"As you know, our work extends beyond the study of birds, encompassing public engagement, habitat stewardship, education and training, involvement in guiding conservation decisions, and more."

"We feel the new name better reflects the nature and scope of our work for birds throughout Canada, and beyond our borders."



Updates on Project SNOWStorm

Project SNOWStorm has tagged 10 **SNOWY OWLS** in Wisconsin in recent years, but none yet this season. To see updates on the project go to <https://www.projectsnowstorm.org/snowstorm-owls-winter-2019-20/> Maps for the newest owls are now posted. And the maps for previously tagged owls are updating automatically as new data comes in (with a delay for the owls' safety), so check back frequently to see what they are up to.



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Inc.
P.O. Box 3024
Madison, WI 53704-3024

DATED MATERIAL PLEASE EXPEDITE

New book tells the stories of Wisconsin naturalists

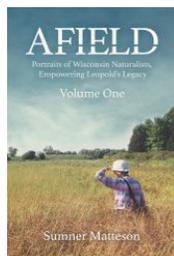
AFIELD: Portraits of Wisconsin Naturalists, Empowering Leopold's Legacy Volume One, by Sumner Matteson

Written over many an early morn and on weekends, this 728-page book is now available for \$29.95 from Little Creek Press in Mineral Point <http://littlecreekpress.com/bookstore/afield/>

From biologist and conservation historian Curt Meine's foreword to AFIELD:

"For 40 years, Sumner has regularly made time to record the stories of Wisconsin field biologists, ecologists, conservation biologists, and land stewards. Among them are the well-known and recognized as well as the more obscure and overlooked.

"All made vital contributions to natural history and conservation in Wisconsin. Some were scientists and teachers. Others were writers and advocates, public servants and



citizens.

"All, in some way, were wisdom-keepers. Their lives span a century and a half, and many never met. Yet they are connected across their diverse places and times and experiences.

"They shared a passion for what Aldo Leopold called "things natural, wild, and free." They carried the same conviction that we are bonded to the land and all its inhabitants and to one another upon it.

"Sumner's perseverance in gathering their voices has only increased the value of his work. In fact, we need these voices and stories now more than ever. We need them to ground us as we face a future of rapidly

changing social, economic, and environmental realities, most especially the uncertain effects of accelerating climate change.

"We need them, more than anything, to nurture the next generation of citizen-conservationists."

Matteson has worked as a biologist, conservation biologist and avian ecologist for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources since 1981. He has authored and co-authored many papers and reports and, for 25 years, led the successful effort to restore Trumpeter Swans to Wisconsin.

A past president of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Matteson is a graduate of UW-Madison (BA, MS). His longtime interest in the history of Wisconsin conservation led to his development of the **Wisconsin Naturalists Project**, which resulted in this first volume.

WSO MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

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PLEASE CIRCLE APPROPRIATE MEMBERSHIP LEVEL:

Include a \$10 surcharge in all categories if you want mail delivery of *The Badger Birder*.

Student/\$25

Senior/\$25 (No Passenger Pigeon)

Household/\$40

Sustaining/\$100

Conservation Advocate/\$200

Make check payable to WSO and send with form to: **WSO Membership / P.O. Box 3024 / Madison, WI 53704-3024**