



'Tis the season to join a Christmas Bird Count

By TOM SCHULTZ

The 120th Audubon Christmas Bird Count season is almost upon us, and hopefully birders everywhere will be flocking to participate!

This annual event is the longest-running citizen science project in our nation. The accumulated data has provided bird researchers with vast amounts of population trend and distribution information.

WSO helped to establish many of the some 110 Christmas Bird Count circles in Wisconsin now coordinated each year by the National Audubon Society.

WSO strongly encourages its members to participate in one or more counts. And we **ALL** can contribute – whether as an individual, as a part of a field party, or by counting the birds at our own feeders (providing you live within one of the count circles).

The important thing is to find out where CBC count circles are located near you, and then get in contact with the compiler for that area – to let them know of your

interest in participating.

Each year, the CBC periods runs from Dec. 14 to Jan. 5. Anyone interested should check out the Audubon CBC website to learn how you can help, and look at the CBC online map. You can zoom in to find out where the count circles are located in your area, and then click on any that interest you to learn the name and email address of that circle's compiler.

The Audubon CBC website can be found at: <https://www.audubon.org/conservation/join-christmas-bird-count>. Or do a web search for Audubon CBC and scroll down to "Join the Christmas Bird Count."

A note to compilers: Make sure you get your Count Date entered on the Audubon CBC website, so other birders can find out when your count will be held. Click on "Enter your CBC data" and put down your count date for this year. It should get included on the CBC map within a day or two.

Everyone can contribute to this important effort and have a great time looking for birds.



Sharing the holidays is for the birds!

Tips and recipes are on Page 6

WSO streamlines nominating process for Passenger Pigeon Awards

Each fall, the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology seeks nominations for its annual Passenger Pigeon Awards.

This year, the process has been streamlined with creation of a nomination form that can be completed online at <https://wsobirds.org/about-wso/awards>. The web site also includes lists of all past recipients of seven major awards.



For those who prefer a printed nomination form, it is available on Pages 22-23 of this issue of The Birder.

WSO is accepting nominations through Dec. 31.

Give special thought to those ornithologists, bird watchers, conservation workers, volunteers or organizations you feel deserve statewide recognition.

If you have nominated someone in the past who was not selected, feel free to re-submit the nomination as many factors get taken into account when the board selects awardees and the slates of nominees can vary a lot from year to year.

With the exception of the Hospitality Award, all 2020 award recipients will be formally recognized at the Passenger Pigeon Awards presentation and reception to be held next May at the 81st annual WSO Convention in Two Rivers.

The Badger BIRDER



WISCONSIN
SOCIETY for
ORNITHOLOGY

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Stan Temple among new inductees for Conservation Hall of Fame

The Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame has announced the selection of three conservation leaders for induction into the Hall of Fame on Saturday April 25th at SentryWorld in Stevens Point. The 2020 induction ceremony will celebrate the 100th inductee into the Hall of Fame. The 2020 inductees will be:

-- **DR. STANLEY TEMPLE**, a UW-Madison professor who did pioneering work in habitat fragmentation, invasive species and other factors leading to species declines, and now serves as a Senior Fellow with The Aldo Leopold Foundation, researching, writing and speaking about Leopold. He is a former editor WSO's quarterly journal *The Passenger Pigeon*.

-- **STEPHEN BORN**, a well-known UW-Madison professor who specialized in environmental planning and worked on almost every aspect of water management, from the Great Lakes to inland lakes to groundwater and rivers and watersheds, and is an expert fly fisher.

-- **JENS JENSEN**, a landscape architect who developed many of our Midwest parks, focusing on indigenous plants and ecological processes of this region's prairie landscape, and also founded The Clearing folk school in Door County.

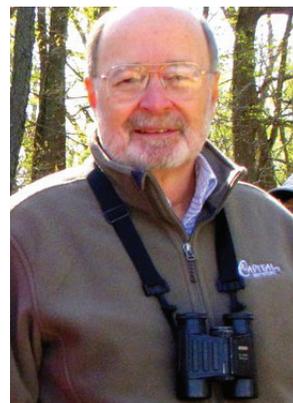
The public is invited to the 10 a.m. and surrounding events ceremony; more information is available at <https://wchf.org/>

Temple's impact on Wisconsin's natural resources has been wide. He has worked as a scientist, communicator and teacher. During his 32 years on the faculty of the UW-Madison Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology, he held the academic position once occupied by Aldo Leopold, working on endangered species such as the Peregrine Falcon, Trumpeter Swan and California Condor.

In the years since he retired to emeritus status he has spread Leopold's land ethic as a senior fellow for the Aldo Leopold Foundation, researching, writing and speaking about Leopold. He brought the Passenger Pigeon alive to Wisconsinites with presentations and articles during the 100th anniversary of the passing of the pigeons in 2014, including rededication of the Passenger Pigeon Monument at Wyalusing State Park during WSO's 2014 convention.

He has received major conservation awards from the Society for Conservation Biology, The Wildlife Society and WSO, including both the Silver and Gold Passenger Pigeons Awards. Among other recognitions, he is a Fellow of the American Orni-

thologists' Union, Explorers Club, Wildlife Conservation Society, American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters. He has been president of the Society for Conservation Biology and board chair of The Nature Conservancy in Wisconsin.



Dr. Stanley Temple

Born's impact on conservation in Wisconsin and beyond is so broad and varied it almost defies description. A faculty member in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at UW-Madison for 36 years, he also was a director of state planning and energy offices and a founder of the River Alliance of Wisconsin. An intrepid angler, he is co-author of "Wisconsin's Trout Streams: The Anglers Guide," a seminal work that focuses not only on where to fish, but also on stream ecology and the story of how these cold-water treasures were saved.

He was a chief advisor to Gov. Patrick Lucey on the decision not to dam the Kickapoo River in the 1970s, which led to the creation of the 8,500-acre Kickapoo Reserve.

-- Danish born Jensen was a landscape architect and a tireless advocate for conservation of our natural heritage. Through his vocation and avocation, his aim was to bring people and nature together. Upon his death in 1951 at the age of 91, the New York Times called him "dean of American landscape architecture."

He was a strong proponent of urban planning and railed against urban sprawl. He was instrumental in establishing the Cook County Forest Preserve, a collection of wetlands, forests, and prairies, throughout greater Chicago. Jensen campaigned against urban sprawl along the southern Lake Michigan shoreline, leading to creation of Indiana Dunes National Park.

Jensen moved to Door County in 1935, where he was a principal proponent of The Ridges Sanctuary, Cave Point County Park, Whitefish Dunes State Park, and Ellison Bay Bluff County Park among others.

'... and a kestrel in a blue spruce'

By **ANITA CARPENTER**

To my fellow birdwatchers: Welcome to December! Christmas Bird Count month has arrived!

It's time to gather friends, plan routes, share meals and, oh yes, count birds in this annual rite. If you need inspiration for this upcoming event, why not reminisce about Christmas counts past – the highlights, challenges and fond memories.



Anita Carpenter 1984.

Bettie Harriman and I have partnered in the same territory for the Oshkosh Christmas Bird Count since

1984. Our small area extends from the north side of the Fox River in Omro, east of and along Highway 116 into Winneconne. Our path takes us through agricultural and small residential areas along the Fox River to Lake Butte des Morts and the Wolf River in Winneconne.

In those 35 years, we've averaged 27 species -- from a low of 21 to a high of 33. Much of our success or lack thereof depends on the status of winter – snow cover and open water. We have experienced brutal subzero temperatures, along with snow-covered and slippery roads, as well as balmy 30 degree plus days and brown fields.

When we think about our birding highlights, we recall the year we found 400 American Tree Sparrows, mostly in one flock. Nor can we forget the 296 American Goldfinches in 1989 or the 369 Mourning Doves in 2007.

Our first House Finch (1) was recorded in 1990. Seven years later, the number exploded to 123. Two cavorting river otters on the ice in Lake Butte des Morts is a special memory.

In all those years, we've had only one really negative experience. We set up a scope to examine a small flock of Snow Buntings foraging in a field. The landowner farmer immediately descended upon us and demanded that we stop photographing his property. He would have none of our explanation -- so we left.

We thought – what was he hiding? We now quickly pass his property even though he has bird feeders, often empty, in his yard.

A quarter mile past this farm lives a couple who welcomes us with open arms. We first met them and their many feeders when they lived along the Fox River in Omro. Then they moved to their present, more rural location, also along the Fox.

With numerous feeders, their yard is always a haven for the usual complement of winter birds and sometimes a rarity. This is always a congenial stop, for he brings us up-to-date on what he's seen during the year, including nesting Bald Eagles and Osprey. We sometimes leave with farm-fresh eggs.

Our most treasured memory happened spontaneously in 1994. My recollection of that count day was one of slow birding with challenging weather conditions. However, my notes suggest otherwise – 30 species seen on a warm 30 degree overcast day. For whatever reason, my imagination suddenly took flight.

I suggested to Bettie that we create our own version of the "Twelve Days of Christmas." With schoolgirl enthusiasm



and amid squeals of laughter, we eventually came up with the "Twelve Days of Birding Christmas."

I can't carry a tune so it's a good thing this day was never recorded!

I will share our song. You're welcome to sing along.

"On the first day of Christmas, the bird gods sent to me: A Kestrel in a blue spruce."

As you all probably know how the song progresses. This is our final verse:

"On the 12th day of Christmas, the bird gods sent to me:

Twelve birders pishing,
Eleven owls a-hooting,
Ten Mallards swimming,
Nine cardinals chipping,
Eight Blue Jays jaying,
Seven starlings squeaking,
Six juncos feeding,
Five Red-tailed Hawks;
Four cawing crows,
Three fat geese,
Two Mourning Doves
and a Kestrel in a blue spruce"

This year, 2019, marks the 25th anniversary of our most memorable count day. Now, when the birding slows, or we just need a "pick-me-up," one of us will sing, "And a kestrel in a blue spruce."

Yes, these seasoned birders still giggle remembering that crazy special day when we created our version of this seasonal song.

Count days are nearing. I wish you all success and fond memories while on your routes. If birding slows, you're welcome to sing our song or create your own.

Sing it with gusto!

Your spirits will be uplifted.

Happy Birding!

ANITA CARPENTER is an Oshkosh naturalist who shares her passion and knowledge of birds, butterflies and other critters with enthusiasm. In 2012 the National Audubon Society honored her with the Great Egret Award, recognizing 32 years of outstanding service to Winnebago Audubon.

Here are 8 tips for a fun *and* successful Christmas Count

By **CARL SCHWARTZ**
Badger Birder Editor

Participating in your first Christmas Bird Count this year? Or simply looking to make the most of this year's annual effort?

-Here are eight tips for a successful count I gleaned over the years from my late colleague Noel Cutright, along with key points shared more than a decade ago by Ted Floyd, editor of the ABA's *Birding*. (And be mindful that not every idea will work for every count or for every counter....)

1. A GOOD COUNT NEEDS A LOT OF COUNTERS.

As Ted notes, a CBC circle is 177 square miles. Even if you had 177 participants, each one of them covering exactly 1 square mile, there is no way you'd have thorough coverage of the count circle. A square mile is huge! Madison annually records the highest species total, thanks in part to often fielding 100+ observers. Yet many counts in the state are done with fewer than a dozen observers.

2. SO MAKE THE EXPERIENCE FUN.

There are tradeoffs here; time spent enjoying a good breakfast together takes time away from the field, so maybe go listening for owls early, knock off before breakfast and be back in the field by sunup. Potluck suppers (after the sun sets) to tally the results can build enthusiasm for next year.

3. COVER LOTS OF GROUND.

Maximizing party-hours is the most important thing to do, Ted argues, but maximizing party-miles runs a close second. All things considered, you're going to see twice as many birds along a four-mile stretch as along a two-mile stretch.

Floyd argued that, mile-for-mile, party-miles by foot are incomparably more valuable than party-miles by car.



Photo by Tom Schultz

Boni Jensen and Jon Roti Roti taking part in the Green Lake Christmas Bird Count

rably more valuable than party-miles by car.

But if you have a count circle split into just six territories, then that's going to mean lots of car miles. But the key is having at least two observers in the car and stopping periodically at spots that look or sound "birdy" and pishing or playing a screech owl tape (Noel was still using an old cassette recorder but iPhone apps and modern speakers make this even easier).

4. DRIVE EVERY ROAD.

Who knows what you will miss by leaving part of your territory completely uncovered. Sometimes driving the same road twice will yield species missed the first time.

5. SCOUT YOUR TERRITORY.

Get out into your assigned area a few days before count day. Try to figure out where that Wilson's Snipe is hunkered down for the winter. Figure out which residences have bird feeders. Work the hedgerows and determine where all the sparrows and finches are hanging out. Introduce yourself to key landowners and secure permission to bird their property on count day.

6. HAVE A PLAN.

Figure out your itinerary in advance. Noel printed out or photographed a map, planned a route and highlighted each road as it was covered. Take sun angles into account for best viewing.

Take into account that ducks, raptors and gulls exhibit predictable patterns of movement during the day and plan accordingly. Leave enough time to get to where you need to go. If you're faced with high winds, know where there are sheltered spots where the birds will take cover.

7. COUNT EVERY BIRD.

It's in looking through all those Canada Geese that you will find a blue phase Snow Goose, or the Brown-headed Cowbird in a flock of Starlings, or the White-crowned Sparrow amid all the House and Tree Sparrows around a feeder.

Observed Ted: "I find that actually taking the time to count, say, Ring-billed Gulls (954, 955, 956...) is the best way to find a rarity (957... oh, wait, that's a Mew Gull!)"

8. HANG OUT A SIGN.

Putting a sign on the back of your vehicle identifying you as part of the Christmas Bird Count will save some horn-blaring and answer some potential questions in advance.

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:
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Best breeding season EVER for Piping Plovers in Wisconsin

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Superior – Endangered Piping Plovers, among Wisconsin's rarest birds, recorded their best breeding season ever in 2019, a promising payoff after more than 20 years of partner efforts to protect nests, monitor their young and increase habitat for the small shorebirds.

"This was an exciting year for Piping Plovers in Wisconsin," said Reena Bowman, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist. "We documented two new nesting locations at the Apostle Islands, five pairs at Cat Island (in lower Green Bay), a record 10 pairs overall, and, at 26, a record number of chicks that reached flight stage."

The successful nesting season is particularly gratifying after 2018's tough year, when there were more nests but fewer successfully hatched and fledged chicks, said Abi Fergus, wildlife specialist for the Mashkiiziibii (Bad River) Natural Resources Department. Mashkiiziibii collaborates with the National Park Service and employs the plover monitors who work to safeguard eggs and chicks from predators and human disturbances.

"Our involvement in this project is a good example of the way in which tribes play a pivotal role in wildlife conservation," says Fergus. "Along with scientific understanding, Tribes bring an understanding that people are part of their ecosystems along with our relatives: other animals, plants, and living things. Mashkiiziibii is proud to support the Piping Plovers of Chequamegon Point, within the reservation."

As encouraging as the record number of fledged chicks was the fact that Piping Plovers stopped in Minnesota right across from



Photo by Alice Ahlfield, National Park Service

Stockton Island in the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore saw its first documented chicks ever.

the Wisconsin Point Bird Sanctuary. Here state, federal and local partners are restoring Allouez Bay shoreline and foraging and nesting habitat specifically for plovers. Work is expected to be done next spring, and there are high hopes the birds will nest there.

"This was a banner year in many respects, perhaps most importantly because we had birds nesting at more sites than ever, and next year, Wisconsin Point could potentially provide another viable breeding location in the state," said Sumner Matteson, DNR avian ecologist.

"The more sites we have available, the less likely a single predation event at any one or two sites is going to make a major difference

to the state's breeding population."

The record nesting year was a long time coming. The first recorded breeding in Wisconsin occurred in 1891 in Jefferson County. During the 1920s and 1930s, there were as many as six breeding pairs in Wisconsin along Lake Michigan in any one year, but habitat loss, recreational pressure and predation likely contributed to serious declines along all the Great Lakes.

By 1948, only one pair of plovers was known to nest in Wisconsin and the Piping Plover was added to the state endangered species list in 1979. Across the Great Lakes region, the loss of habitat caused numbers to drop below 20 nesting pairs region-wide before the small shorebird was officially listed as federally endangered in 1986.

The National Park Service, Bad River Band of the Lake Superior Chippewa, DNR, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and The Nature Conservancy launched concentrated efforts 20 years ago to protect Piping Plover nests, monitor for predators and band young birds on Long Island in the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore.

In 2016, Piping Plovers nested in lower Green Bay for the first time in 75 years -- at the Cat Island restoration chain.

Now, in 2019, a high point has been reached: a record five breeding pairs were documented at the Cat Island chain, and five in the Apostle Islands, including Long/Chequamegon Point, Stockton and Outer.

Including the chicks fledged in 2019, Wisconsin has contributed 118 chicks toward the recovery goal of 150 breeding pairs, with the current population nearly halfway there.

Check out a slideshow of this year's Wisconsin piping plover chicks: <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/EndangeredResources/slideshows/pipingplovers/index.html>.



Photo by Sumner Matteson

At the Wisconsin Point Bird Sanctuary, state, federal and local partners are restoring Allouez Bay shoreline and foraging and nesting habitat specifically for plovers. Work is expected to be done next spring.

Birds, kids and the rest of us can enjoy these decorations

While you are enjoying the many tasty treats that abound this holiday season, don't forget to share some goodies with the birds.

Decorating a tree for our feathered friends and other wildlife is an activity the whole family can enjoy.

Here are some tips gathered from various blogs and the folks at Wild Birds Unlimited, including a fun and easy project for those with any little hands that need to be kept busy over the holiday break.

PINE CONE TREATS FOR BIRDS

What you need:

- ¼ cup powdered unflavored gelatin
- 2 cups water
- 12 medium pine cones
- 2 cups of bird seed with shells removed so only the meat of the seed is left

Raffia string to hang

Place water in a glass bowl big enough to immerse a pinecone. Heat the water in the microwave for 50 seconds. The water should only be warm, but this should be supervised by an adult.

1. Pour the powdered gelatin in the water and stir until it is dissolved.
2. Dip the pinecone into the gelatin water
3. Roll pinecone in a bowl of bird seed.
4. Set the dipped pinecone on wax paper and let it dry for a couple hours.
5. Once it's dry, tie a raffia ribbon around the cone, hang on a tree outside and watch all the birds flock.
6. Or place the pinecone in a cellophane bag and you have the perfect party favor for your guests to take home.

ANOTHER PINE CONE OPTION

1. Tie raffia string around the top of a pinecone.
2. Pack peanut butter into pine cone.
3. Roll cone in bird seed.
4. Hang from a tree.

Be sure to select a tree somewhere near a window so that once you have completed your decorating, you and your family can sit back and watch the beautiful birds enjoy their holiday treats.

WILD BIRD SEED COOKIES (makes 2-3 dozen)

1. Combine 2 cups flour, 1/2 cup sugar and 1/2 tsp. baking powder.
2. Add 1/2 suet cake or 1/2 cups butter or shortening
3. Mix until crumbly.
4. Drop in two eggs, shells and all.
5. Blend 1/2 cup bird seed into the dough.
6. Refrigerate for 1 hour.
7. Roll out the cookie dough to about 1/4-inch thick.

8. Cut out shapes with cookie cutters

9. Use a drinking straw to make a hole in the center of each cookie to hang the cookies later.

10. Bake at 325° F for 12-15 minutes or until cookies harden. Let them cool.

11. Cut twine and string up cookies.

ADDITIONAL TREAT IDEAS

Other decorations that can be strung and placed on trees include popcorn, fresh cranberries, thick fresh orange slices, peanuts in the shell, dried apples or dried figs.

You can also string rice cakes, crab apples, baby dried corn bundles, or grapes.

Natural rough brown string, ribbon and raffia can be used for hanging the decorations.

The birds will use this material for nesting in the spring.



10 tips for winter bird feeding

WISCONSIN DNR

Winter is a great time to feed the birds, as higher energy demands and fewer natural foods give us opportunity to bring some species closer to home. Here are 10 tips for success:

1. The single best seed to provide is black oil sunflower, which has high fat content and attracts the most species.
2. Also offer nyjer (thistle) for finches, white millet for sparrows, doves, and other ground-feeding species both suet and peanut chunks for woodpeckers, chickadees nuthatches.
3. Avoid generic seed mixes as these tend to have more waste and attract less desired bird and mammal species.
4. Deter squirrels with cone- or dome-shaped baffles above hanging feeders or below pole-mounted feeders.
5. Place feeders closer than 3 feet or farther than 30 feet from your home to avoid the deadliest window collision zone.
6. Minimize disease by cleaning your feeders at least once every two weeks using soapy water and a 10% bleach solution.

7. Provide cover such as brush piles or dense shrubs for roosting and escape from predators.

8. Offer water to attract a wider variety of species, using a heating element when temperatures dip below freezing.

9. "Birdscape" your property with native plants such as fruit-bearing shrubs and evergreen trees. Check out these birdscaping resources at <http://www.wisconsinbirds.org/migratory/links.html>

10. Contribute to bird science and management by reporting birds you see at your feeder. The 23rd annual Great Backyard Bird Count will be held Friday, Feb. 14, through Monday, Feb. 17, 2020. Visit the official website at birdcount.org for more information. It's an easy, fun way to get started: for at least 15 minutes on one or more days you simply tally the numbers and kinds of birds you see.

Project FeederWatch is a winter-long (November-April) survey of birds that visit feeders at backyards, nature centers, community areas, and other locales in North America. Participants periodically count the birds they see at their feeders and send their counts to Project FeederWatch <https://feederwatch.org/>

NOVEMBER RARE BIRDS

Winter's early onset dampens activity, but a few sightings stand out

By **MARK KORDUCKI**

So much for a nice transition to fall.

By the beginning of November, cold and snow were the norm. Four measurable snowfalls occurred in southeastern Wisconsin by the middle of the month.

For Milwaukee, it was the snowiest start to winter in 123 years! A few record lows and record low high temperatures were recorded. With this early arrival of winter weather the birding was slow but some rare sightings did occur.

Prior to the onset of cold and snow, a **YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT** was a great find in Milwaukee. This bird was photographed and is one of the three latest records for the state.

A **WHITE-EYED VIREO** in Fond du Lac County was also a pleasant surprise. A **TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE** was carefully observed and photographed in Ozaukee County. **CAROLINA WRENS** were found in Milwaukee and Polk counties.

HARLEQUIN DUCKS used to be seen along the Lake Michigan shoreline annually in Milwaukee. In recent years, sightings of this species have become less frequent. A female bird in Milwaukee was doubly unusual in that it was found in a shallow rocky stream rather than on the lakefront. This is the habitat Harlequins frequent in the western United States. This bird was very obliging and was seen and photographed by many.

Elsewhere, a **CALIFORNIA GULL** was recorded in Douglas County, and a small flock of **AMERICAN AVOCETS** was an excellent find in the early part of the month in Brown County.

The DNR reports that a few **SNOWY OWLS** have reached Wisconsin. As of Nov. 25, at least 20 owls had been documented from 12 counties ranging from Bayfield and Door in the north to Crawford and Milwaukee in the south.

The majority of owls photographed so far have been adults, suggesting low numbers of juveniles were produced on arctic breeding grounds this past summer. It's common for Snowy Owls' breeding success to vary greatly each year, often booming when lemming populations are high and busting when these tundra rodents are few. 2018 had 30 by this date, 2017 had 94 and 2016 had only 5. Of these only 2017 proved to be an irruption year. Details and updates at <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/WildlifeHabitat/SnowyOwls.html>

An observer in Iron County reported **PINE** and **EVENING GROSBEAKS** along with **BOHEMIAN WAXWINGS**. But it's not expected to be a very good year for winter finches either.

NORTHERN GOSHAWKS have been reported in higher than normal numbers, and a **BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKER** was seen in Bayfield County.

Christmas Counts are not far away. Hopefully increased birding activity will produce some rarities as we close out the year.

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



MIKE WANGER found this **Yellow-breasted Chat** on Oct. 29 at Lakeshore State Park in Milwaukee. Writes Mike: "WSO says it's the third latest on record (the later ones were from 1952 and 1961). And it's the **ONLY** photo for a Chat posted in Wisconsin eBird taken in fall."



LORRI HOWSKI found and photographed this **Harlequin Duck** that on the Oak Creek Parkway Trail in Milwaukee County's Grant Park.



This **Townsend's Solitaire** was photographed and reported to eBird from the Riveredge Nature Center in Ozaukee County by **SANDI BRUNETTE-HILL** on Nov. 22

OBITUARIES

Former WSO President Fred Leshar dies at 83

FRED LESHAR, former president of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, died on Nov. 13 in La Crosse at the age of 83.

Leshar was vice president of WSO in 1982 and president in 1983. He served as chairman of the 1990 Tristate Convention



Fred Leshar

of WSO, the Minnesota Ornithologists' Union (MOU) and the Iowa Ornithologists' Union (IOU) held in La Crosse. He was awarded the Silver Passenger Pigeon for distinguished service to the society in 1997. For a number of years, Leshar led several field trips for WSO on the western side of the state – the Chippewa Valley Motorcar Railway, and another one he called The Lansing Loop. The latter trip was focused along the Mississippi River, running through portions of Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa, and continued up through 2010.

In 2011, when the WSO convention returned to La Crosse, he received the Bronze Passenger Pigeon, presented to individuals who have made outstanding contributions in their local communities or in the state to promote the field of ornithology.

He received MOU's award for outstanding contributions to Minnesota ornithology

and birding in 2012.

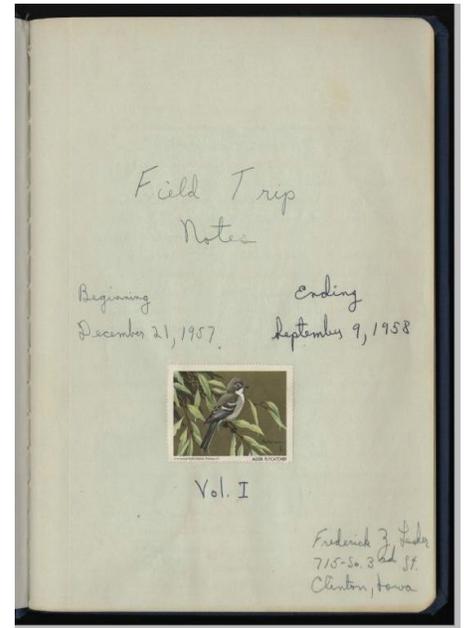
Leshar had a life-long interest in ornithology and helped form the La Crosse (Coulee Region) Audubon Society and enjoyed leading Christmas Bird Counts and conducting Breeding Bird Surveys.

From 1958 to 2002, he kept detailed journals of his birding. The journals, in 14 volumes with over 3,000 pages, are important documents for the Coulee Region of southwest Wisconsin, northeast Iowa and southeast Minnesota.

They can be viewed on the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Murphy Library website and at <https://recolectionwisconsin.org/collections/fred-lesher-bird-field-notes-journals>

Born Frederick Zumdahl Leshar, he graduated from Clinton (Iowa) High School and earned bachelor's degrees in English and biology from Carthage College in Carthage, Ill. There he would meet Jolene and they were married in 1959.

Leshar earned a master's of liberal arts from the University of Iowa in 1962. He taught at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, and later at Augsburg College in Minneapolis, before joining the faculty at UW-La Crosse as an associate professor of English. He taught entry level English and world literature. He taught at the Guangxi Teachers Education University in Nanning, China, in 1989-'90. After his retirement in 1998, he enjoyed reading to children at the campus child center.



From 1958 to 2002, Leshar kept 14 volumes of detailed birding journals, spanning over 3,000 pages

Fred's journals and his bird location sightings are available.

Fred is survived by his wife, Jolene, son Jonathan (Michelle) Leshar, daughter June Leshar (Robert Spiller) and daughter Sarah (Greg) Burdick, along with 11 grandchildren.

Dr. Donald Gibson, co-founder of REGI, dies at 86

DR. DONALD GIBSON, 86, of Antigo, co-founder of the Raptor Education Group, Inc., (REGI) died on Nov. 1 at home under the care of LeRoy Hospice, his family and his turkey - Grace.

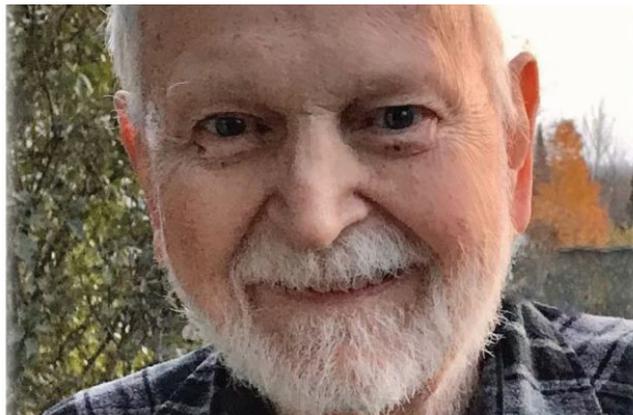
Gibson was born in Laguna Beach, Calif., and married Marjorie Cahak in 1975, in Orange County Calif. She survives. Gibson received his bachelor's degree and medical degree from the University of Southern California.

After graduating from medical school, Gibson joined the U.S. Navy Medical Corps and served overseas as a flight surgeon during the Vietnam War. He completed a residency in pathology at Bethesda Naval Hospital in Maryland.

After serving 13 years in the Navy and attaining the rank of commander, Gibson left military service and worked as a pathologist for many years in Orange County.

In 1990, the Gibsons moved to Antigo and founded REGI, a wild-life rehabilitation and education facility for native bird species.

At the same time, Don was employed as a pathologist with



Associates in Pathology of Wausau. He worked at several hospitals in Central Wisconsin including Langlade Hospital and Aspirus Wausau Hospital.

He retired in 1997, to spend more time with family, following the birth of his first grandchild.

Ever the adventurer, Don excelled in many aspects of life and often surprised his family with unexpected new interests such as when he arrived home with a hot air balloon and announced that both he and Marge were going to become hot air balloon pilots and they did.

Don loved growing orchids, raising racing homing pigeons and astronomy. Gibson loved active sports such as long-distance running, bicycling, downhill skiing, tennis, and ocean swimming.

He received his private pilot's license while in college and later enjoyed flying a powered parachute into his early 80s.

Survivors include his wife, Marge; a son, Darrell Gibson, of Phoenix; two daughters, Katrinka (Greg) Spiro, Jacksonville, Fla., Sarah (Jon) Petroskey, Antigo; and six grandchildren.

DNR documents 31 Black-necked Stilt nests at Horicon

WISCONSIN DNR

Horicon --Once labeled an "accidental" visitor to Wisconsin, a southern breeding bird known for its long, thin, pinkish legs, needle-like black bill and aggressive calls in defense of its chicks, has now moved to Wisconsin in a much bigger way.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources conservation biologists surveying Horicon National Wildlife Refuge in 2019 for rare birds serendipitously observed the southern bird, a Black-necked Stilt, driving away a Killdeer. Following the bird, the biologists found another adult stilt and four chicks on a muddy island of decaying cattail stalks.

They looked for similar habitat and subsequently documented 31 nests, the most ever recorded in the state by far.

"We had no intention of documenting breeding Black-necked Stilts, so it was a nice surprise," said Sumner Matteson, the DNR Natural Heritage Conservation biologist who, along with contractor Daryl Christensen, found the colonies. "Refuge staff members were delighted by the large number of nesting stilts on their flowages."

Black-necked Stilts (*Himantopus mexicanus*) inhabit shallow wetlands and spend much of the day wading in shallow waters to catch and eat aquatic insects, small crustaceans, amphibians, snails, tiny fish and various flying insects, according to the Cornell University Lab of Ornithology guide, "All About Birds."

Black-necked Stilts are known primarily as breeding birds in the Gulf Coast states. The legendary ornithologist Sam Robbins described Black-necked Stilts in his 1991 book, "Wisconsin Birdlife," as "accidental" in the state, with the birds recorded in Racine County in 1847, and three others from Horicon Marsh in 1951, Horicon National Wildlife Refuge in 1986 and Columbia County in 1987. None of these birds were breeding here.

In more recent years, stilts have been expanding their breeding range northward, Matteson said.

Nesting stilts began to appear in Wisconsin in 1999, with individual nesting pairs documented by Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas volunteers at the Horicon Marsh National Wildlife Refuge, and then in Jefferson County and Dodge County in 2004.



Photo by Sumner Matteson

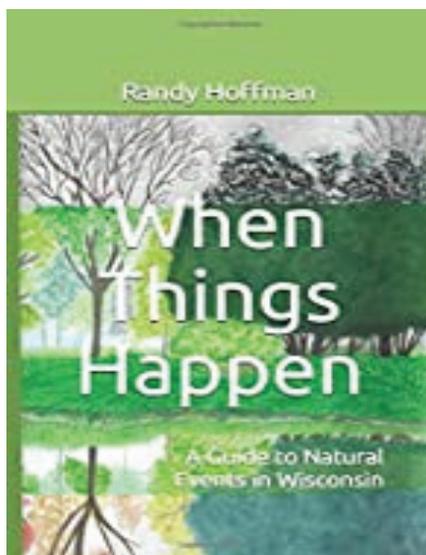
DNR Natural Heritage Conservation biologists found a record number of Black-necked Stilts in Wisconsin in 2019.

The state's second Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas, initiated in 2015, brought confirmation again of nesting at the Horicon National Wildlife Refuge that year, with as many as 12 birds found that summer.

That number swelled to a remarkable 63 adult birds in 2019.

"We will be interested in coming years to see if the bird continues to breed at Horicon and other sites with similar wetland habitats, and if these occurrences continue to increase as a result of wetland restoration efforts and perhaps the effects of climate change," Matteson said.

'When Things Happen': New book, new take on phenology



Just in time for Christmas reading – and giving -- is a new book that takes a different approach to phenology.

When Things Happen -- a Guide to Natural Events in Wisconsin is written by **RANDY HOFFMAN**, a retired natural-areas management specialist with the Bureau of Endangered Resources at the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

A past president of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Hoffman was the first person in Wisconsin to record sightings of more than 300 species of birds in one calendar year. He lives in Waunakee.

The new book, Hoffman's second, looks at seasonality from a different angle. Instead of recording first arrivals or last departures, it focuses on when is the best time to observe and experience natural

events.

Included is the full range of biological diversity from lichens to mammals.

Each moth is divided in thirds and has a primary article featuring prominent events from that time period.

Smaller articles and snippets of events peaking during that time period are also featured.

The book is self-published and only available on Amazon. The print edition sells for \$19.98 and the Kindle eBook is \$4.49.

Hoffman's first book, ***Wisconsin's Natural Communities: How to Recognize Them, Where to Find Them***, was published in 2002 and also is available at Amazon in both Kindle and paperback formats.

FOUND IN OUR ARCHIVES

The power of a *great* rare bird documentation

WSO Historian NANCY NABAK maintains the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology's Archives, housed at the Cofrin Center for Biodiversity at UW-Green Bay, and offers us an occasional look at something **Found in Our Archives**.

I've been filing and learning our history in the Archives for five years now and have recently realized that my articles have focused mainly on people. This month is different. There's a new sheriff in town and it's the **YELLOW-BROWED WARBLER**.

I hadn't even heard of a Yellow-browed Warbler until **QUENTIN YOERGER**, WSO Records Committee chair, asked me to look up a rare bird report from 2006. Granted, 2006 isn't that long ago, but I felt it was time to bring this sighting back to life.

In October 2006, near Bradford Beach in Milwaukee County, **JIM FRANK** observed a bird he'd never seen before. Frank studied it, compared it to other known birds and then wrote up a six-page, single spaced narrative of what he'd seen. He also included a sketch of the bird, with markings labeled, and submitted it along with the narrative to the Records Committee, which Frank himself had headed for many years.

Here are some excerpts from his documentation:

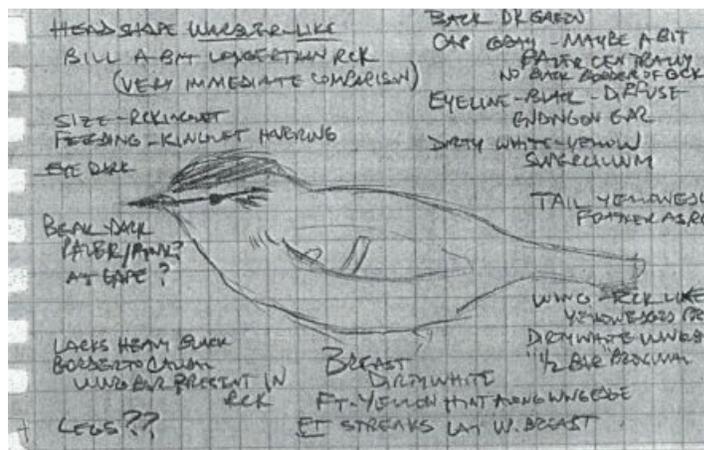
"Walking along the line of small trees I was flushing a few juncos, **YELLOW-RUMPS**, and **Ruby-crowned Kinglets**. Two Ruby-crowned Kinglets were working the tops of goldenrod in one of the breaks in the tree line as I looked down on them.

"They were hovering, landing on the plants, hovering again. The yellow-edged primaries and tail feathers and wingbars were apparent. One of them landed on the goldenrod such that instead of its back, I was viewing its face and breast.

"What a few seconds before was a kinglet seemingly transformed into a warbler. Instead of the round-headed, rising forehead, tiny bill, and dingy green breast of the Ruby-crown, I was looking at an elongated warbler-like head profile, seemingly longer bill, an eye line, a light superciliary line, a dark crown, and a dirty white throat and breast?!

"As it changed positions, I was again viewing the back, wings and tail of a kinglet? None of this made any sense to me. I knew there were only two kinglets in North America and I'd seen thousands of them, but they didn't look like this.

"That evening when I got home, before I took my coat off, I went up to my study and grabbed Sibley's book. I found the juvenile Golden-crowned depiction with the gray crown and for a moment thought again about that as the answer, but the rest of the bird's head and face was Golden-crown. It just wasn't it. I grabbed the Bird



This is the sketch of the **YELLOW BROWED WARBLER** that **JIM FRANK** submitted as part of his documentation. The photo is by Christoph Moning. The species' breeding range extends from just west of the Ural Mountains east to eastern Siberia,



Mongolia and northeastern China. Its winter habitat is lowland broad-leaf or coniferous forest, from West Bengal and Assam in northeastern India east through southern China to Taiwan, and through Bangladesh south to the Malay Peninsula.

of Europe by Mullarney, Svensson, et al. Turning to the Goldcrest page, I realized my recollection of them, too, was accurate. But at the top of that page, my bird was staring back at me in the form of a Yellow-browed Warbler!??

"Of interest is the text indication of this species being native to Siberia, but has some strange tendency to wander significant distances west to coastal area of Europe – often enough to warrant inclusion in the European guide! And does so in September/October. How much farther would it have to go east to Wisconsin instead of west to Europe?

"I have since been told that apparently there are only two previous records for Alaska – on Gambell, and that a month ago a third record occurred on Attu!

"That makes this report almost beyond belief. But when **BETTIE HARRIMAN** told me to check the VENT website for the photos of the Yellow-browed Warbler she saw last month (in Alaska) – I saw the same crazy bird staring back at me as I did along Bradford Beach...."

The Records Committee unanimously accepted this sighting with a comment in the voting margins, "Brilliant documentation!"

Quentin sent me a note:

"At the time it was the only continental North American record. It had been seen previously on the islands in the Bering Sea. This fall there have been two records with pictures along the West Coast, one in British Columbia, the other in California."

So keep your eye on the prize while you're out there, birders! You never know what may be bouncing in the bushes near you.

WSO Checklist of Wisconsin Birds now totals 441 species

Over the last several years, the American Ornithological Society (AOS) has made significant changes to the taxonomic order of bird species. To accommodate these changes, WSO has updated the Checklist of the Birds of Wisconsin, most recently in 2019. Although there have been major changes in the order of species, this last supplement contains no split or lump that pertains to Wisconsin species. The taxonomic order is correct as of the 59th Supplement of the AOS.

There has been one name change, with the Gray Jay re-named Canada Jay. In 2018 three new species were added to the Wisconsin Checklist. Those three were Tufted Duck, Sharp-tailed Sandpiper and Hammond's Flycatcher. These additions increased the state total of valid species to 441. The state checklist is available both as a PDF and as a download to your computer at <https://wsobirds>.



WISCONSIN
SOCIETY for
ORNITHOLOGY

2020 Field Trips

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 [\(715-574-1003\)](mailto:mhurlburt44@gmail.com) 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 Scuppernong Ski/iking 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

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

BIRD OF THE MONTH

Spruce Grouse: *Falcapennis canadensis*

By **DIANA HIERLMEIER**

A bird of coniferous forests, the **SPRUCE GROUSE** inhabits much of Canada and portions of the northern United States. Inconspicuous and relatively quiet, it feeds largely on spruce buds and other conifers.

This grouse is a medium to large chicken-like bird, thick bodied, with black feathers that are barred with gray and a short, dark tail. The male is slate gray overall with bold white spots on the lower breast and belly. It has a broken white line outlining its black throat, with red combs above the eyes and white arcs under them. The feathers under its tail are black with large white tips. The tail is all black or with a rufous tip.



The female is rufous to gray overall, with strong barring especially on the underparts and broken whitish lines around the face. The tail is all blackish-brown with rufous tips. Juvenile birds are similar to adult females. Their length averages 15.3 to 15.8 inches, weight ranges from 14.1 to 22.9 ounces and wingspan averages 22.4 inches.

Habits and habitat

Black and white spruce, tamarack and jack pine are important tree species for Spruce Grouse in Wisconsin. This species often occupies the edges of upland and lowland coniferous forests, especially mature black spruce-tamarack forests adjacent to young successional stands of upland spruce, jack pine or red pine.

Their diet generally consists of spruce buds and other conifers, but they will consume some invertebrates in the summer. They forage in trees and on the ground and will consume bearberries, bunchberries, spruce, pine and tamarack needles, white birch buds, blueberry leaves and fruit. They are also known to consume wood fern, sedges, mosses, mushrooms and insects. During the winter, their diet is nearly 100% conifer needles.

Both females and males defend individual territories in breeding season. Territorial displays include fanning, tail weeping, and wing claps. Unlike some other North American grouse, the Spruce Grouse does not have throat sacs that inflate during displays.

This species conducts courtship displays in Wisconsin from late February to early May. The nest is a simple depression in the ground lined with conifer needles, leaves and feathers. The female selects a nest site that is often well concealed with low branches and located in areas of dense herb-shrub layers.

In Wisconsin, female Spruce Grouse frequently nest at the base of black spruce among a thick ground layer of Labrador tea, cotton grass, leatherleaf and sedges. The female will lay a clutch of three to eight eggs and incubation lasts 12 to 24 days. The young depart the nest shortly after hatching and are able to feed on their own. The first flight for the young birds takes place six to eight days after hatching and the chicks will remain with the hen until they are about 70 to 100 days old.

Most individuals are permanent residents, but some move short distances (less than 10 miles) between summer and winter territories. This "migration" is accomplished on foot. Females are more likely to move than males, and tend to go further. They are often found in small flocks, which in summer are usually family groups.

Conservation

The Spruce Grouse is listed as "threatened" in Wisconsin. This species is a rare resident of coniferous habitats in the north. The highest concentrations are clustered in Sawyer, Ashland, Iron, Oneida, Vilas and Forest counties. There is limited information on population trends, but habitat loss is a threat and appears to have caused



Cornell Lab of Ornithology Photo

dramatic reduction or elimination of populations in some areas. This species rates an 8 out of 20 on the Continental Concern Score and the Spruce Grouse is a United States – Canada Stewardship species.

These birds have historically inhabited forests showing a fire-related patchwork of various stages of regeneration; timber harvesting can produce similar patterns, but only if the clear cut areas are small and if sufficient quantities of optimal habitat are preserved. The Spruce Grouse is listed as "endangered" or "threatened" in some states at the edge of its range.

Fun facts

-- Most grouse use their feet, wings, and tails to produce sounds for their courtship displays. Spruce Grouse make swishes and whooshes with their tails. In the swish, the strutting male sweeps his tail to one side as he steps with the opposite foot, making him seem to wobble. The tail feathers make a soft, rasping sound as tiny protrusions on each feather catch on the feathers underneath. The *whoosh* comes from the male suddenly fanning his tail open, much as a person might snap open a fan.

-- The Spruce Grouse's crop (a pouch between the throat and stomach) can store up to 10% of the bird's body weight in food, to be digested overnight.

-- The Spruce Grouse's gastrointestinal organs change with seasonal shifts in diet. In winter, when the bird must eat more food to maintain its mass and energy balance, the gizzard grows about 75% and other sections of the digestive tract increase in length by 40%.

-- The Spruce Grouse's tameness has made it familiar to early explorers and to residents of the North, where it still enjoys such folk names as fool's hen, swamp partridge, spotted grouse, and mus-kode'-se, the latter from the Chippewa name for the species.

References and resources

Bent, Arthur C. *Life Histories of North American Cardinals, Grosbeaks, Buntings, Towhees, Finches, Sparrows, and Allies.* Dover, New York, N.Y., 1968.

Schroeder, Michael A., Erik J. Bloomberg, David A. Boag, Peter Pyle, Michael A. Patten. *Spruce Grouse, ver.2.* The Birds of North America. Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, Ithaca, N.Y., 2018.

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.

The Badger Birder: 700 issues dedicated to keeping WSO members in-the-know

This issue of **The Badger Birder** is No. 700, giving us an occasion to relate the history of a newsletter than in 58 years has changed editorial leadership just six times.

In 1961, the Board of Directors of the 22-year-old Wisconsin Society for Ornithology decided to add to its member benefits a monthly newsletter in addition to the quarterly journal it has published almost since its founding in 1939.

Launched in September of 1962, the first four issues came out under the editorship of **HAROLD G. LIEBHERR** of Milwaukee, with a blank masthead where a nameplate should appear. Then **RALPH MORSE** won a naming contest, and **The Badger Birder** emerged as issue No. 5 in January 1963.

Beginning in 1964, the editor was the legendary **MARY DONALD**, and under her **The Birder** specialized in bringing news of current and future events, sponsored either by WSO or by local bird clubs, describing hot-spots where rare birds are likely to be seen, even mentioning what rarities have been observed. Donald, a resident of Fox Point, would edit the **Birder** for an amazing 27 years.!

For many years, she was state's leading birder with lifetime state total of 377 species and a lifetime Milwaukee County total of 343. She had served as WSO secretary from 1948 to 1950 and was president in 1979.

In 2001, Donald was the inaugural recipient of the Samuel D. Robbins Lifetime Achievement award. It honors those people who actively contribute to WSO above and beyond their having previously received the Silver Passenger Pigeon Award (for service to WSO) and the WSO Certificate of Appreciation (for continued service to WSO).

The Birder experienced significant growth under the editorships of DNR biologist **RANDY HOFFMAN**, who succeeded Donald in 1992 after his term as WSO president.

He would hand the reins to **JENNIFER NIELAND** of Green Bay in 1995, who

edited the **Birder** for five years and was succeeded by **ROB WHITMIRE**, who, after a year, passed the editorship to **MARY UTTECH** in 2001.

From four pages in 1993, the newsletter would grow in size and design sophistication, ranging from 8 to 16 pages and include field trip reports, profiles, birding hot spots and reports on the convention, annual awards and other Society news.

Uttech would hold the position for 13 years and stayed on for the last year at the request of WSO President **CARL SCHWARTZ**, who was eager to succeed her and has held the job since May of 2014, working in tandem with his wife, **BARBARA DEMBSKI SCHWARTZ**, who handles the layout and design of a full-color e-newsletter that averages 24 pages a month. Both had retired from journalism careers at the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel.

Members' increasing use of the e-Badger Birder option has trimmed pro-

Number 1 September, 1962

NEW PUBLICATION - This is the first issue of a newsletter to be published monthly by the WSO. It is hoped that this publication will help the members feel closer to their society. We will report news items of the society and its members, reports of the board meetings and any other items we feel will be of interest to all members. This publication will need the help of all WSOers to provide news for future issues. Any items which you want included should be sent to the newsletter editor, Harold Liebherr, 723 W. Riverview Drive, Milwaukee 9, Wisconsin. We hope to mail the publication on the first of each month, therefore get your items to us by the 15th of the previous month. Items which reach us by Sept. 15 will be included in the October issue.

BIG CONTEST - This publication is existing without a name. The WSO will hold a contest to the naming of the newsletter. Send your suggestions by November 15. It might be possible for us to begin the new year with a name. To the WSOer submitting the winning name the Society will give a free membership for 1963. Start thinking today and get your ideas in before the deadline.

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

September 8 - 9 - Fall Campout: camping can be done in the park on the millpond in Leland, Wisconsin, in the front yard of the David Cox farm near Honey Creek, or in the yard of the Kruse farm near Loganville. If you have never attended a WSO Campout you have missed a marvelous experience. Plan to attend this one. There will be interesting trips into the surrounding area.

September 22 - Meeting of the WSO Board of Directors, Hardware Mutual Insurance Building, Stevens Point. If you have any suggestions to make to your officers, concerning the operation of the society or projects they should consider, contact them before this meeting. The board will be happy to consider any proposals you might make. Your officers are listed on the rear cover of the Passenger Pigeon.

September 30 - Fall Hawk Watching Trip: Cedar Grove. If the weather is right you might be in for a treat of a good flight of hawks. If not, then you can have the companionship of other WSOers during the day. Remember to enter the banding area from the upper road which is north of the preserve.

Items to be included in the calendar of coming events should be in the hands of the editors as soon as possible. Do you have Audubon Lectures, or other interesting programs in your city? Include them in the Calendar of Coming Events.

MEMBERSHIP - Have you renewed your membership for the year 1962? Now is the time to do this. Tear off the coupon shown below and mail it, together with your payment to the Treasurer, Mrs. Alfred C. Holz, 125 Kolb Street, Green Bay. If your membership is paid, you may like to use the coupon to present a Gift Membership to some interested friend.

THE BADGER BIRDER

Number 5 January 1963

A monthly publication of The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Inc.
Editor: H. G. Liebherr, 723 W. Riverview Dr., Milwaukee 9, Wis.

DATES TO REMEMBER:

- January 10 - Christmas Bird Count Completions due - Mail to: Rev. Sam Robbins, Associate Editor of the *Passenger Pigeon*, Roberts, Wisconsin.
- January 13 - Oconowoc - Meeting of the S. Paul Jones Bird Club, Oconowoc Township Community Center, 7:30 P.M. Walt Wellman will show slides of his trip to Bear Lake, Utah.
- January 20 - Menasha - Audubon Wildlife Film, "The Living Wilderness" by Chas. E. Mohr at Washington Junior High School.
- January 22 - Madison - Audubon Wildlife Film, "The Living Wilderness" by Chas. E. Mohr.
- February 5 - Stevens Point - Audubon Wildlife Film, "Alberta Outdoors" by Edgar T. Jones in the State College Student Union.
- February 14 - Milwaukee - Audubon Wildlife Film, "Waters and Wildlife" by Roy E. Coy at Shorewood High School.
- February 28 - Madison - Audubon Wildlife Film, "Waters and Wildlife" by Roy E. Coy.

SUPPLY DEPARTMENT NOTES: We must extend congratulations to the Kruses for the fine catalog published by the Supply Department. Ours has a prominent place on our book shelf and will be looked at many times. Please make the following changes in your catalog so that it will be up to date. Wrong author: The booklet "Wildflowers on Wisconsin Farms" is by McCabe, not Ellerson. Price change: Audubon Guide Swiss listed at \$9.95, now \$4.50. "Guides Book of Nature Walks" by Clara Hussong listed at \$1.50, now \$2.00. No longer available: Owl Towels (who-o-o-s for dinner); record "Dawn in a Duck Blind". New Item: Bausch and Lomb BALSCOPE TEN Telescope. A 10X quality scope, 10 1/4" long, 9 oz., \$9.95. Address Change: Edward W. Teatree, 26515 Lisbon Road, Oconowoc.

Also note that the shipment of records from the publishers has been erratic and if you have not received the record you ordered, please be patient, we are sure that it will arrive in due time.

CHIPPEWA WILDLIFE SOCIETY: At a recent meeting of the society Harold Mattisk spoke on his new study project, potholes and their contribution to the production of ducks and other wildlife. He believes that by building thousands of potholes throughout the state we could contribute tremendously to the production of wildlife with relatively little cost.

DUES ARE DUE: WSO memberships are based upon the calendar year, and with the coming of the new year the dues for 1963 are payable. Your membership entitles you to many benefits including monthly issues of *The Badger Birder* and four issues of the

Number 390 December 1990

DATES TO CONSIDER:

- December 15 - Annual Christmas Count Period.
- January 2 - WSO Field Trip - Winter Birding - Milwaukee.
- January 5 - Riveredge Bird Club - Charlene Gieck - Peregrine Recovery Program, 7 PM, Newburg.
- January 19 - WSO Board Meeting - Horicon Headquarters. About 10:30. Snow date January 26.
- February 2 - Bald Eagle Field Trip to Prairie du Sac - Wehr Nature Center.
- February 3 - Bald Eagle Field Trip to Prairie du Sac - WSO Field Trip.
- February 5 - Riveredge Bird Club - Barb Kranich - Galapagos Birds - 7 PM.
- February 26 - Wehr Nature Center - Milwaukee Metro Audubon Society - "How is the Whooping Crane Surviving," Gordon Dietzman, International Crane Foundation.
- March 10 - WSO Field Trip - Milwaukee Lakeshore.
- June 6-9 - WSO Convention - Green Bay.

FROM OUR FIELD TRIP CHAIRMAN: Just in case you have misplaced your field trip schedule during the holidays, here are some of the details of the next three field trips. Winter Birding on Saturday, January 5, meets at the Jancau Park. Lagoon between 8 and 8:30 AM. A good time to start your 1991 list. We'll be looking for wintering gulls, goodies such as Thayer's, Glaucous, and Iceland, and we may find a Snowy Owl. Dress warmly and bring "energy" foods.

For the Bald Eagle trip at Prairie du Sac, meet at 9:30 AM just south of the business district on Hwy. 78. Bring a sack lunch though there are several restaurants available in the area.

For the Milwaukee Lakeshore trip, please meet at the McManley Marina Pavilion (north of the Jancau Lagoon on Lincoln Memorial Dr.) at 8 AM. This should be a chance to observe wintering waterfowl, gulls, possibly a Snowy Owl, as well as some early spring migrants. After touring by auto to several birding spots, we will head to the Wehr Nature Center for lunch. Bring a bag lunch and a few slides if you have some for a short program during lunch.

FROM THE PRESIDENT: The WSO Board has decided to develop a long-range master plan for our Honey Creek property. This plan would look towards our future goals for the property and address how to reach these goals. The WSO Board has mandated that a committee consisting of concerned WSO members and board members be formed to address these issues. If anyone would like to participate on the Honey Creek Master Plan Committee, please contact Randy Hoffman, 305 Fifth Street, Waukegan, WI 53097 or call (608) 849-4502.

CONVENTION ITEM: A pre-convention trip to Washington and Rock Islands at the north end of Door County is being planned for this year's meeting. If there is enough interest, another could be planned for the Nicolet Forest. Why not let Tom Erdman know your wishes! Tom Erdman, P. O. Box 631, Green Bay, WI 54302.

HOTLINE REQUEST: The Hot Line has been very busy this past month. Please let the Hotline know if you have any updates on the birds on the tape.

The Badger Birder
The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Inc. Newsletter
The Society Achieves this goal through programs in research, education, conservation and publication.

#460 **HOT LINE: 414-352-3857** **January 1998**
https://www.wso.org/richtter/wbba.html

Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas Heads Into 4th Year!

By Bettie Hartman, WBBA Coordinator

I know, we are barely into the new year, and it is cold, and there are no leaves on the trees and shrubs. Even so, the 4th year for field work on the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas will soon be underway. Those Great Horned Owls will be nesting shortly, and then Common Ravens, Red-tailed Hawks and even American Crows. So it is time again to at least be planning your atlas work for 1998.

To get everyone in the mood, there will be a **state-wide meeting on 21 February 1998** in Tomahawk, Wisconsin at the Tomaseo Hill Bandages Training Center. This meeting, sponsored jointly by the WBBA and Partners in Flight will focus on getting the last two years of atlas field work accomplished. Teanaco Packing Corporation is providing the place for our meeting. The featured speaker will be Brad Jacobs, coauthor of the Missouri Breeding Bird Atlas. Brad's living proof that atlas workers can make it through the project and still be able to enjoy birding. He will give us some helpful and encouraging tips to see us successfully through the last two years of field work.

Other speakers include Chris Wood, our three-time paid atlaser, who will share some of his atlasing secrets; Daryl Teaton and Bettie Hartman, who will describe how to get an atlas block covered fast and easy; and Jennifer Davis, the manager of the Atlas Data Management Center at UW-Green Bay, who will give us the latest findings of the data collected thus far.

All Atlas volunteers are strongly encouraged to attend this meeting. You are encouraged to make it a work/play weekend. Come up to Tomahawk for the meeting on Saturday, then bid on Sunday for all those winter finches and other northern species. We promise to have current birding information available to help you find the birds.

Check the enclosed registration form for more details and send your registration to Alex Kalling, W330 N5273 West Shore Drive, Hartland, WI 53029-9732 by 10 February.

If you have not yet volunteered to survey a block for the Atlas, please, please, do so. We need more volunteers. Yes, we are planning on using some paid Atlasers in 1998 and 1999, but we will not be able to hire enough people to get the job done using only paid workers. We need more volunteers! There are approximately 225 blocks which remain unassigned to anyone, and even more that are only partially completed. Check the advertisement for paid workers elsewhere in this newsletter to see which counties need the most help. If you have property in one of them, or family, or friends you could visit, why not volunteer to do some birding for the Atlas this summer. Even a weekend of surveying will be helpful to the project. Please let me hear from you, or contact the appropriate Regional Coordinator to volunteer, or come to the meeting in Tomahawk and select a block then. A huge thanks to each of you who can find the time to help the Atlas in 1998! Bettie Hartman, 5188 Bittersweet Lane, Oshkosh, WI 54901, 920-233-1973

Atlasers Wanted

The Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas is planning to hire (through grants) several individuals to do field work for the 1998 breeding season. These atlasers will be expected to work full time on the Atlas from about late May to early August, giving at least 300 hours of time to the project. These workers will atlas in the more remote areas of the state where we do not have volunteers available or in

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The Badger Birder

Newsletter of The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Inc. **January 2008** #568

WSO Youth Grant Bluebird Project

Northern Lights 4-H Club • Polk County, Wisconsin

Northern Lights 4-H Club President Katie Pretzel and Vice-President Haley Yunker applied for a WSO Youth Grant to help construct a bluebird trail as an environmental learning project that served the community. A component of this project was to create a multimedia documentary of this project. The Northern Lights 4-H Club was formed in September of 2006. The members live in Northwestern Polk County in Northwest Wisconsin.

Members researched various types of houses and the habitat that would be most beneficial in constructing our bluebird trail. As a result we built 28 Peterson nest boxes out of cedar lumber using screws instead of nails. We built the boxes with one opening panel, making sure the panels fitted snugly to prevent rain from blowing in the seams. The boxes have oval entrance holes measuring 1.58 in by 2.14 in, roof overhangs measuring 3 x 5 inches ventilation holes near the top and drainage holes in the floor. The boxes have no perches.

Once the nest boxes are constructed, they need to be mounted in suitable habitat. Ideal bluebird habitats are open and barren or short-cut/sparsely grassed areas (so they can see their food), with a few trees nearby for perching. Examples of good habitat are pesticide and herbicide-free cattle or horse pastures, cemeteries, acreages, abandoned orchards, hike-and-bike trails, prairie coulees, lightly traveled roadsides, abandoned railroad right-of-way, golf courses, open areas in parks, and the edges of meadows. We chose to put our nest boxes in three locations: the Polk County Fairgrounds and Zillmer Park, both in St. Croix Falls, and the D. D. Kennedy Park near Arcy. We made sure to have our bluebird boxes in place by mid-March, when the bluebirds return from their winter migration and are looking for nesting sites.

Our boxes are spaced at intervals of about 300 feet, mounted on smooth metal poles at a height of between four- to six feet, convenient for monitoring and maintenance. We were able to mount all of our boxes so that



The entrance holes face east, away from prevailing winds and direct sun exposure. We learned to monitor the boxes at least once a week during calm, mild, and dry weather, recording what we observed. Nest boxes need to be checked for slowly larvae, other birds nesting in the boxes, and wet nests. We replaced all the nest

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Each editor brings a distinctive touch to The Badger Birder

From Page 16

duction and distribution costs and thus held membership costs in check.

And the *eBirder* has added many color photos and graphics along with an increased amount of content.

Printing in color costs a lot, so if you are still getting the newsletter by mail, it remains in black and white; but on the internet we added the color for free.

So if you already use email, this might be the time to switch to the *eBirder*. All it takes is an email request to membership@wsobirds.org

You also can look up past issues of the Birder on the WSO website at <https://wso.wildapricot.org/Badger-Birder>

Only members receive the most recent issues, so if you want to keep up on current happenings, keep your membership up-to-date or join WSO today.

Time to renew your WSO membership? Consider being a 'Conservation Advocate'

Something to keep in mind if you are due to renew your membership in WSO:

When WSO revamped both its membership class structure and annual dues in 2017, it created a new "Conservation Advocate" class that combined a "Sustaining" membership with an additional \$100 contribution to WSO's Conservation Fund.

This is designed to help WSO better implement a key focus identified in its 2015 strategic planning survey.

WSO also is pleased to offer the ability to renew your annual membership safely and securely online. Just go to wsobirds.org/members and click on the RENEW tab.

Please review your member profile and verify that your contact information is correct.

To make membership even easier, WSO has implemented a new auto-renew feature.

When you renew you can update your profile and membership level to automatically renew when your membership comes up for renewal in 12 months.

You will get the same reminder emails that you receive now, and if you change your mind about auto-renew, you can change it at any time through your WSO account or by emailing membership@wsobirds.org

And don't hesitate to contact us with any questions at membership@wsobirds.org



Or, if you prefer to use the U.S. Postal Service, you can still beat the renewal reminder rush and send in your annual membership renewal using the handy form on the last page of *The Badger Birder*. Just fill out the form, check off the membership level at which you are renewing, and mail the form along with your check to:

Wisconsin Society for Ornithology
c/o Mary Murrell
P.O. Box 3024
Madison, WI 53704-3024

REMINDER: Members wishing to receive by mail a printed version of *The Badger Birder* must pay a \$10 annual surcharge. This is in addition to the cost of membership.

NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHTS

Randy and Joanna Parlee: *'Out of this velvety silence emerged the long, complex, piercing musical song of a Winter Wren'*

WSO's Membership Committee is starting a new Badger Birder feature, highlighting some of our new members. Here we chat with **RANDY and JOANNA PARLEE**. If you are a new member and would like to be featured, please email dlturski@gmail.com

Tell us a bit about yourselves:

Joanna is a retired elementary school teacher, currently teaching education students at Cardinal Stritch University. She's been very involved in environmental education and conservation. I (Randy) am a retired lawyer currently teaching trial practice at Marquette University Law School. We live in the Town of Erin (Holy Hill area).

What are your favorite birds?

Joanna loves crows and ravens because they are smart and cool! My favorite is the **PILEATED WOODPECKER** because it reminds me of Woody Woodpecker.

How would you describe yourselves as birders?

We are avid amateurs. We've taken birdwatching vacations all over the United States and the Caribbean. Joanna has the special ability to mimic bird vocalizations. In one amazing encounter, after searching for hours for a **MANGROVE CUCKOO** at Mary Point in St. John's in the U.S. Virgin Islands, Joanna imitated the bird's call. Suddenly, this stunning secretive bird flew in, leaving us in a state of disbelief and wonder!

What led you to join WSO?

Our interest in citizen science led us to the WSO website. We are deeply concerned about the observed reduction in bird numbers, something we've noticed at our backyard feeders long before the reduction was objectively measured. Years ago I counted nine **ROSE BREASTED GROSBEAKS** simultaneously at our feeders; now we are



Randy and Joanne Parlee

lucky to see that many in a year. The **RED HEADED WOODPECKERS** and **EASTERN WHIP-POOR-WILLS** are gone. On the plus side, we live adjacent to the Loew Lake Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest and have recently seen **BALD EAGLES**, a **SNOWY OWL** and a migrating **COMMON LOON** there, birds we hadn't seen before in the 35 years we've lived here.

What are your favorite places to bird in Wisconsin?

Our favorites include the Ice Age Trail, Horicon Marsh and the

Please turn to Page 20

Angie Yoeckel: *'I have fond memories of being out in the field picking stones and being excited to see Sandhill Cranes'*

WSO's Membership Committee also chatted with **Angie Yoeckel**. I Tell us a bit about yourself:

Hi! My name is Angie Yoeckel. I am 33 years old and work as a receiving coordinator at WB Warehousing and Logistics. I live outside of Rubicon, with my cat Grace.

Where are you from and where have you lived?

I was born and raised in the Town of Herman (Dodge County) on a dairy farm. I decided to attend college at the University of Wisconsin-Superior and upon the completion of my degree in psychology, I worked full-time in the mental health and substance abuse field for many years.

During that time, I found solace in nature, especially along the shores of Lake Superior, and my love of birds really started to take hold. The career path I chose took an emotional toll on me and I found watching birds helped me feel at peace.

Almost two years ago, I was blessed to be able to relocate near my hometown and now live on the homestead where my grandmother Jeanette (Christian) Yoeckel was born and raised.

What are your favorite birds?

My favorite bird is the **BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE**. I like their coloring and their personality! But honestly, I love all birds, especially the ones that land on my bird feeder long enough for me to figure out

what they are!

How would you describe yourself as a birder?

I am definitely a "newbie" when it comes to birding. I don't own a pair of binoculars, any pictures I take are with my phone, and I have no idea what one does with a field checklist. I bought the "Birds of Wisconsin Field Guide" and I dog-ear the pages with birds that I see on or near my bird feeder or around my property.

Do you have other involvement with birds and/or nature?

Growing up on a farm, I have always felt a spiritual connection to the land. I have fond memories of being out in the



Angie Yoeckel

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Bird City Wisconsin launches newsletter

Bird conservation news this year has been pretty depressing, highlighted by a report in the journal *Science* that over the last half-century, no fewer than three billion birds, or 29% of 1970 abundance, had vanished from North America's skies.



These trends are why a decade ago birding organizations in Wisconsin launched Bird City Wisconsin, which has grown into an alliance of 109 communities recognized for and empowered to generally make urban areas both friendlier for birds and places where people want to live and work.

In November, Bird City launched a monthly electronically-delivered newsletter to 1) help spread that message, 2) share stories of local successes, and 3) offer timely reminders on projects and procedures.

It's already landing in the email of many Bird City partners, local officials and others who share Bird City's mission. If you'd like

to subscribe, just send an email to director@birdcitywisconsin.org

Get ready for the Backyard Bird Count

We all love birds. so it's fitting that the 2020 Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) begins on Valentine's Day, Feb. 14 and continues through Monday, Feb. 17. The GBBC team at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Audubon and Bird Studies Canada can't wait to see what your checklists reveal. All the details are at <https://gbbc.birdcount.org/>

Introduction to Bird Song course offered

Feb. 5 – March 25

INSTRUCTOR: Bill Mueller was director of the Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory until his retirement in October. Bill is currently serving on the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative's Steering Committee and is the co-chair of the Issues Committee. He served as conservation chair of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology from 2002 to 2012, as co-chair of the Mid-

west Aerial Insectivore Working Group, and as Project Coordinator for the Milwaukee BIOME Project.

THE COURSE: Will introduce students with varying prior skill levels to bird song identification, cover how and why birds sing, how they "use" song in their reproductive cycle, and incorporate the ecological and evolutionary functions of song.

This course will be valuable to students who are just beginning to learn the bird songs, as well as those students who want to hone their skills and delve more deeply into an understanding of bird song.

SITE: University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Field Station, 3095 Blue Goose Rd., Saukville, Wis.

RECOMMENDED MATERIALS: Please bring a laptop or tablet to the first class.

SCHEDULE: Wednesday evenings, Feb. 5 – March 25, 7 to 8:30 p.m.

CREDIT: This class is offered for continuing education credits. A certificate showing 1.2 CEU credits will be issued upon completion of the course.

For more information and to register visit: <https://uwm.edu/field-station/workshops/>

Meet the Parees and Angie Yoeckel

Parees from Page 19

Kettle Moraine. Horicon Marsh, one of the top 10 birding spots in North America, according to National Geographic, is only 33 minutes away from our home. We are weak on shorebirds and waterfowl but try to improve by observing and identifying them there. Believe it or not, our Wisconsin birding goal for next spring is to sight a **PAINTED BUNTING**, a bird we have wanted to see all our lives! There were anecdotal sightings last spring in the Loew Lake area near our home. This we have to see to believe, since the Peterson Guide has this bird restricted in the U.S. to Texas and the southeast coast! Despite our travels we feel Wisconsin is second to none as a bird watching destination. We will never leave this place!

Have you had a recent memorable experience while birding?

We saw two rare **ELEGANT TROGONS** simultaneously at Cave Creek Canyon in the Chiricahua National Monument of Arizona. In the Caribbean we witnessed **MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRDS** riding thermals to extreme altitudes and actually disappearing into the base of clouds. This is something I saw but could not believe until I heard on an NPR science program that they do this.

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

Our very favorite birding spot is probably the Porcupine Mountains Wilderness Area in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Hiking there through the old growth forest one time, it was, in the words of Gordon Lightfoot about the North Woods, "too silent to be real."

Out of this velvety silence emerged the long, complex, piercing musical song of a **WINTER WREN** from the forest floor. We were hypnotized, completely transfixed, unable to even move. I am sure that every member has had a similar experience. It is why we love the birds. We both look forward to meeting other members, participating in WSO activities, particularly contributing to citizen science.

Yoeckel from Page 19

field picking stones and being excited to see **SANDHILL CRANES**, finding feathers, or seeing tracks left by various critters.

When my father would turn over the soil to plant, **KILLDEER** nests were sometimes revealed, so then we always went around them with the machinery. These days, I put out bird seed and corn in the yard. One day I found a nest of turkey eggs in my field! I was blessed to see the mom and the chicks walk by my bird feeder after hatching, and then be on their way!

Why did you choose to join WSO?

I decided to join WSO because I want to meet people who share my love of birds, and nature in general!

Where are your favorite places to bird in Wisconsin?

My favorite places to bird are Shafer Beach at Wisconsin Point (outside of Superior), the land around my home, and of course, my bird feeder. I am hoping to find new spots in this area!

Have you had a recent memorable experience while birding?

Before moving closer to home, my morning commute included driving from Superior to Duluth on the Blatnik Bridge that goes over St. Louis Bay. On my last day of work, I was driving over the bridge when two **BALD EAGLES** flew right over the top of my vehicle. They were about five feet away from me! It was so memorable at that emotional time in my life, but it also brought me closer to nature. I don't think I will experience anything like that again, or ever be that close to an eagle again!

Anything else you'd like to share with fellow WSO members?

I have only been back in the area for less than two years, and I'd like to meet new friends. If anyone would like to get coffee and go birding, find me on social media, and let's go!

WSO BOARD MEMBER PROFILE

Mary Murrell

Membership Committee chair

Tell us a bit about your background.

I grew up in Ohio and Virginia but have lived many different places, spending most of my adult life on the coasts, in New York City or in the San Francisco Bay area. For many years I worked in book publishing, most of them as an acquisitions editor at Princeton University Press. I wish I could say I worked on their brilliant bird guides, but, alas, I did not!

After 15 or so years in publishing, my insatiable curiosity led me to get a Ph.D. in cultural anthropology at the University of California-Berkeley. After completing that, I moved to Madison for a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Wisconsin. Here, I met and married a firmly rooted Wisconsinite and made the state my home.

I retain an affiliation with the UW-Madison Department of Anthropology and continue to publish in the field, but, for actual money, I do freelance editing. I live in Monona, a city of 8,000 on Lake Monona.

So tell us a little about how you first got involved in birding.

Despite a long-standing fascination with certain charismatic species like Bald Eagles and Peregrine Falcons, I came to serious birding only in midlife. After I moved to Wisconsin, when my husband and I were dating, we took a lot of walks and, during them, we naturally started paying attention to Wisconsin's birds. Our interest in birds grew alongside our interest in each other, and, as they say, the rest is history.

How did you come to join WSO?

I joined WSO in 2015 because I wanted to meet more birders and become a better birder, and I have not been disappointed.



WSO Membership Chair **MARY MURRELL** at the Aldo Leopold Shack along the Wisconsin River near Baraboo.

From WSO, I learned about the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas, which I joined in 2016, dedicating myself first to a priority block in Oneida County and, later, to one in Vilas County.

It took me a gazillion hours to complete that first block -- the high point was finding a Northern Goshawk nest with young -- but the whole experience kicked my birding into a higher gear. I attended my first WSO Annual Convention in 2017, and, despite some really bad weather, I met many fascinating and friendly people there, as I have at every WSO convention.

Where's your favorite place to bird in Wisconsin?

The easy answer is my yard. First, we have been birdscaping for a few years, and I am always anxious to see what new birds we might be attracting. Our yard list is up to 159, and, in May 2018, we had 19 species of warblers in our yard in one day!

Second, after the small city I live in became a Bird City, I pitched the idea to our local radio station (WVMO 98.7 FM) to do a short, weekly bird report, modeled on the seasonal fishing report. I've been doing it for almost two years now, and it keeps my birding hyper-local. In May, the Wisconsin Broadcasters Association gave the Monona Bird Report a first-place award in its category, which was encouraging.

Away from home, I like to bird in Vilas and Oneida counties, where my husband's family has a cabin, not only for its abundant public land but also because that area is generally under-birded and so every eBird checklist means a lot.

What aspects of birding and WSO interest you the most?

I love the unpredictability, the constant discovery, and the heightened attention that birding demands, and I especially like how birding takes me into places I never would have seen or experienced otherwise. But, less selfishly, I'm really worried about birds. Beginning with the Atlas, WSO has helped me to become not just a better birder but a more informed and engaged birder.

As WSO Membership Chair, I hope to attract as many of Wisconsin's bird lovers as possible into the organization so that we can collectively have as big and as positive an impact as we can.

Weather caused mixed results for this year's Big Sit! events

Three Big Sit! events were held in southeastern Wisconsin on Saturday Oct. 12 with mixed success amid challenging weather conditions.

Members of the **Noel J. Cutright Bird Club** held their 10th annual Big Sit on the Hawk Tower at **Forest Beach Migratory Preserve** north of Port Washington along Lake Michigan in Ozaukee County.

The count was started by the late **DR. NOEL J. CUTRIGHT**, founder of the Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory, which until recently maintained its headquarters at Forest Beach

At a Big Sit, birds are counted from a fixed

location.

The weather on the Bill Cowart Memorial Hawk Watching Platform was challenging -- cold and windy -- but throughout the period from sunrise to 2 p.m., nine birders participated and 66 species of birds were seen, just shy of Big Sit record there of 70 in 2014. The most exciting bird of the day was a **HARRIS'S SPARROW**.

The **Horicon Marsh Bird Club** has been holding a similar Big Sit for even longer at the Palmatory Street Overlook in Horicon in Dodge County. Matt Herzmann said the count there was concluded at 9:30 a.m. with very windy conditions and temps in

the 30s. They tallied 23 species, including **DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT, AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN, GREAT BLUE HERON** and **GREAT EGRET**.

The **Benjamin F. Goss Bird Club** didn't fare much better with their Big Sit! at **Retzer Nature Center** in Waukesha County with a low temp around freezing and sustained winds of 10-15 m.p.h.

A **YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER** was the first bird and an **ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER** was probably the most surprising sighting. Last bird for the day, No. 27, was a female **NORTHERN HARRIER** migrating over the center.



The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology Awards Program recognizes individuals and organizations that have made outstanding achievements in advancing bird conservation, promoting the field of ornithology and contributing to the Society.

The WSO Board of Directors selects their slate of award recipients based on nominations they receive during the open nomination period which occurs in the fall of the year. Award recipients are formally recognized during the Awards Presentation and Reception held in their honor at the annual WSO Convention.

Members are strongly encouraged to recognize the contributions of their peers by participating in the nomination process.

When completing the information on page two of this form, please refer to the box below as a guide to assist you in providing the appropriate criteria.

The Passenger Pigeon Awards and their Descriptions:

Bronze Passenger Pigeon - presented to individuals who have made outstanding contributions in their local communities or in the state to promote the field of ornithology.

Silver Passenger Pigeon – presented to members of WSO for distinguished service to the Society.

Certificate of Appreciation - given to previous recipients of the Silver Passenger Pigeon who continue to provide exceptional service to the WSO.

Golden Passenger Pigeon – presented to individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the field of ornithology.

Noel J. Cutright Conservation Award - recognizes outstanding contributions to bird conservation in Wisconsin.

Samuel D. Robbins Lifetime Achievement – honors people who actively contribute to the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology above and beyond their having previously received the Silver Passenger Pigeon Award.

Special Recognition Award – recognizes the collective efforts of a far-reaching project or partnership that increases the public's awareness and appreciation for birds, their habitats or the need for conservation.

Hospitality – recognizes home and business owners that are gracious hosts and stewards of rare bird species.



**WISCONSIN
SOCIETY *for*
ORNITHOLOGY**

Award Nomination Form

I would like to nominate _____ for the

- Bronze Passenger Pigeon Award
- Silver Passenger Pigeon Award
- Certificate of Appreciation
- Gold Passenger Pigeon Award
- Noel J. Cutright Conservation Award
- Sam D. Robbins Life Time Achievement
- Special Recognition Award
- Hospitality Award

Nominee's Full Address _____

Email address _____ Phone number _____

I feel this person is deserving of the award based on the following qualifications:
 (Award descriptions are on the previous page. If you need more space, please use an additional blank page)

A few details about you (the nominator):

Name _____ Phone _____

Full Address _____

Email address _____

Additional Information _____

Your nomination will be reviewed by the WSO Board of Directors at their January meeting. The Awards Chairperson will contact you with the results when they are released to the public.

Thank you for taking the time to submit a nomination. For further information about individual awards or the awards process, contact our Awards Chair, Wendy Schultz (contact info on the next page).

By mail:
Wendy Schultz/WSO Awards
N6104 Honeysuckle Lane, Green Lake WI 54941

Students swell crowd at conservation summit

The third annual Southeastern Wisconsin Conservation Summit attracted more than 180 people. The summit is an opportunity for academic researchers, land managers, government biologists, students and others to talk about their on-going projects.

This year's two-day event Nov. 1-2 featured 27 speakers, presenting on diverse topics like remnant oak ecosystems, the Motus wildlife tracking system, Wisconsin's Bumble Bee Brigade, reducing bird strikes on buildings, mapping stream habitat, amphibian decline and mussel monitoring.

New this year was outreach to students in the form of resume coaching and break-out sessions where students could put their questions about professional development to people already working in the conservation and environmental fields. More than 70 students took advantage of these opportunities.

The symposium, held at Forest Beach Migratory Preserve north of Port Washington, drew sponsorship support from the We Energies Foundation, Milwaukee County Parks, the Ozaukee Washington Land Trust (OWLT), Horicon Bank, Country Inn and Suites, Charter Steel, Thompson & Associates Wetland Services, the Friends of the Cedarburg Bog, Sherpers and the Milwaukee Area Land Conservancy.

Next year's summit will be held in a new location. Due to OWLT's decision by to close the clubhouse at Forest Beach, the Observatory has moved its offices to downtown Port Washington. Contact info@wglbbo.org for office hours or to be included on the mailing list for news about future events.

The summit also was an opportunity to introduce, **DR. JENNIFER PHILLIPS-VANDERBERG**, the Observatory's new science director, who takes over from **WILLIAM MUELLER**, who retired in mid-October after nearly 10 years in that role.



William Mueller (right), who retired in mid-October after nearly 10 years as director of the Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory, handed over his responsibilities to Dr. Jennifer Phillips-Vanderberg. They both presented at the 3rd annual Southeastern Wisconsin Conservation Summit, held for the last time at the old clubhouse at Forest Beach Migratory Preserve.



She comes to the organization with extensive experience conducting ornithological research and, as a Michigan native, with a lifelong affection for the Great Lakes and a deep appreciation of the issues faced by the region and its bird life.

Phillips-Vanderberg most recently worked as a life scientist in the Environmental

Protection Agency's Chicago office, where she addressed pollution-control issues in the Great Lakes Region. She earned her undergraduate degree from Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Ore., and her Ph. D. from the University of California-Davis. She has also worked as a naturalist at the Michigan DNR's Saginaw Bay Visitor Center

Tagged Upland Sandpipers reveal startling migration secrets

THE BIRDING WIRE

Biologists have known that Upland Sandpipers migrate between their nesting range in the northern United States and southern Canada to their wintering range in the Pampas grasslands of Argentina and Uruguay, but new research is revealing that there's much more to the story.

Ornithologists knew virtually nothing about Uppies' migration routes, or even when they migrated – until now. Would you believe these small grassland birds fly 5 to 7 days nonstop across an ocean, between continents, in a 12,500 mile round-trip migration!

More surprising new information about Upland Sandpiper migration patterns was just published in the journal *Frontiers in Ecology and Evolution* by Vermont Center for EcoStudies ornithologist and author Jason Hill.

In a first for this species, the research team used lightweight

satellite tracking tag data – and some complicated math – from data provided by 9 tagged Upland Sandpipers to document a series of new discoveries.

The researchers learned that sandpipers regularly cross major ecological barriers during migration, which includes long flights over oceans, above high elevation mountains, and over vast tropical forests. They also documented new migration staging sites at sugarcane fields in mountain valleys in Colombia, in grasslands in the Llanos of Venezuela, and at airports along the Atlantic Coast of the United States.

Perhaps the most dramatic discovery came from the Amazon rainforest. Some of these sandpipers – a species thought to inhabit large open grasslands exclusively – spent our winter season on partially flooded river islands in the Amazon basin, some 600 miles north of the nearest site previously known to host wintering Uppies.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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

DATED MATERIAL PLEASE EXPEDITE

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. **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 13-16 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 19-10 (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.

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.

WSO MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

E-Mail _____

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**