



Field Trip co-chairs: Still together after all these years

WSO will honor Schultz, Baughman for 30 years' service leading trips

By **WENDY SCHULTZ**

Once upon a time, a long time ago -- before the Internet, before cell phones and digital cameras, before children and gray hair and SUVs -- a couple of sharp-eyed and good-looking young guys agreed to take over as Field Trip co-chairs for WSO, and share a position on the Board of Directors.

It was January of 1987 and those young guys (who are still good looking) were Tom Schultz and Jeff Baughman.

Working on their 31st year of leading excellent field trips for birders across the state, they are slated to receive special recognition for their years of service at the annual WSO Convention Awards Ceremony at 7 p.m. Friday, June 16, in Carter.

Although 30 years have gone by, these two remain as enthusiastic as ever about finding birds and leading others to them. This comes as no surprise to me. I was there at the beginning and witnessed how well they clicked together.

I remember weekend after weekend of traveling throughout the state to follow the migration: Tom and I, Jeff and his brother Scott. Memorizing bird songs and quizzing each other using CB radios to communicate from our cars. Right blinker was a **YES** answer, left blinker was a **NO**.



Daryl Tessen got celebration of Tom and Jeff's long tenure as field trip co-chairs off to an early start at WSO's Horicon Marsh field trip last August.

Hours of staring through scopes to look at gulls in the winter, then shorebirds and more gulls in the summer.

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WSO President sends a message to THE President

WSO President Michael John Jaeger has written a letter to President Donald Trump urging the nation's chief executive to support scientific inquiry and the use of scientific information in decision making. It was prompted by a note from longtime WSO member Dr. Virginia Hayssen, professor of biological sciences at Smith College in Massachusetts.

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2 new names on WSO leadership ballot

By **MATTHEW HAYES**
WSO Research Committee Chair

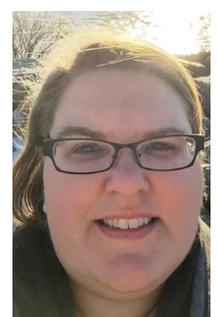
Members of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology will find two new names on the ballot at the Society's 78th Annual Meeting on June 17 at the Potawatomi Carter Casino Hotel.

The Nominating Committee will bring to WSO's annual convention two new recommendations to round out its slate of four officers.

MYLES HURLBURT, from Rib Mountain in Marathon County, will be recommended for the position of vice president, filling a vacancy left by Andy Cassini's decision not to seek a second term. **Dani Baumann**, from Saukville in Ozaukee County, who the Board of Directors approved in January to replace Michelene (Mickey) O'Connor as treasurer, is being



Myles Hurlburt



Dani Baumann

nominated to succeed her.

O'Connor stepped down after serving four years as treasurer in order to devote more time to her duties as an avian zoo-keeper at the Milwaukee County Zoo and her expanding efforts as one of the state's

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The Badger BIRDER



WISCONSIN
SOCIETY for
ORNITHOLOGY

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3 spring youth grants awarded

By ED HAHN
WSO Education Committee Co-chair

WSO recognizes the importance of fostering an appreciation of birds amongst Wisconsin's youth. It offers grants of up to \$250 each spring and fall to be used towards youth projects pertaining to bird research or bird education. Applicants must be students or teachers of grades K-12 and residents of Wisconsin and winners are encouraged to submit a summary report upon completion of the project.

The first spring grant of \$250 will provide funds to expand the study of Eastern Bluebirds by students in the Florence County School District.

In 2015 students there constructed and in early April installed nest boxes using GPS to mark their location. Throughout April and May they monitored the nest boxes for eggs, identifying which boxes were being used by bluebirds and which by other species. In 2016 the boxes were cleaned and again monitored.

Autumn Lambert, Florence County High School science teacher, will lead a new group of students in their monitoring of the boxes in 2017. They will review the information collected over the previous two years and research, design and construct a "new and improved" bluebird nest box. After construction they will install the boxes at new locations and then monitor the boxes to

determine if the new design has improved the usage and success by bluebirds.

Lambert hopes the project "continues indefinitely and continues to build an effort to promote nesting bluebirds in Northeastern Wisconsin, not just Florence County."

The second grant goes to 4 year old Aubrey Wadzinski and her mother Katie. Aubrey has seen robins in their yard and enjoys filling the bird feeder and watching them. She would like to learn more about the birds she sees, and talked with her teacher at St. John Lutheran School in Wausau.

Aubrey's teacher, Teri Eberhardy, will focus on how special robins are to Wisconsin. She will use math, science and art to teach the children about robins. The grant will pay for several books about robins, replica eggs, puppets, a weight measurement center, a bird science viewer, and a bird specimen center.

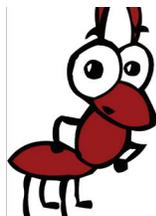
The third grant of \$250 went to Callie Mikolajczyk and Sarah Ratelis to support a summer enrichment program serving 100 Kenosha middle schoolers. The students will be identifying plants, insects and birds found on school grounds near retention ponds and in scrub brush areas. They will work on developing the ability to ID birds visually and by song. They will then create a field guide.

The grant will allow them to purchase 10 Pocket Naturalist Guides and Birdsleuth materials from the Cornell Lab.

KATE'S QUOTES

Naturalist Kate Redmond offers us a monthly selection of quotes on, nature, conservation and life around us.

"When you have seen one ant, one bird, one tree, you have not seen them all."



-- Edward O. Wilson, American biologist recognized as the world's leading authority on ants

"Eight-year-olds should not be asked to become warriors or worriers. Children have much more important work to do:

Watch ants. Grow flowers. Dance between the raindrops. This is sacred work, and childhood needs to be preserved just as much as rain forests and wetlands."

— Michael Weilbacher, environmental educator

"Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts."

-- Sign over Albert Einstein's office at Princeton University

Honey Creek Birdathon finds 90 species, bands 16 -- and now seeks your financial support

By MAIA PERSCHE
Honey Creek Birdathon Coordinator

Conditions for the 33rd annual Honey Creek Birdathon, held in the western-most valley of the globally-significant Baraboo Hills, could hardly have been better on Sunday May 14. And the day's results followed suit with a higher-than-average 90 species recorded on the Harold and Carla Kruse Honey Creek Nature Preserve.

As former WSO president and retiring birdathon leader Jesse Peterson observed, when you see three cars headed out County Highway PF from Prairie du Sac at 3:30 a.m. on a Sunday morning in May you can pretty well bet they are birders. And so it was that Jesse, Bettie Harriman, Anita Carpenter, Marilyn Bontly and Carl Schwartz all showed up just before 4 a.m. at the intersection of Sky View and Alder Drives to be greeted by a **SWAMP SPARROW** that was up just as early. Peepers and green frogs were also vocalizing, along with an **AMERICAN ROBIN** and multiple **GRAY CATBIRDS**.

The skies were clear, allowing temperatures to fall into the mid-40s by dawn. But the waning gibbous Moon was still at nearly 90% brightness allowing those on hand to take notes without a flashlight. Venus, the dazzlingly bright eastern Morning Star this spring and summer, did not disappoint.

Early birders who showed up to record the early birds and all were pleased to hear a number of caterwauling **BARRED OWLS**, at least one **EASTERN SCREECH OWL** and a distant **GREAT HORNED**. At least three **AMERICAN WOODCOCK** were heard doing their courtship displays, as were **WILSON'S SNIPE**. Absent again this year, though, was the eastern **WHIP-POOR-WILL**, which was once common in the woods here but has not been heard in several years.

The other early singers, all heard before the 5:36 a.m. sunrise included **BLUE JAY**, **EASTERN PHOEBE**, **NORTHERN CARDINAL**, **RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD**, **CANADA GOOSE**, **CHIPPING SPARROW**, **YELLOW WARBLER**, **COMMON YELLOWTHROAT**, **AMERICAN BITTERN**, **SEDGE WREN**, **ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW**, **SANDHILL CRANE**, **WILD TURKEY**, **BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER** and **YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER**.

Taking over leadership of the annual birdathon/bandathon this year are Maggie Stewart and Maia Persche, both on hand for Sunday's walk, along with WSO President Michael John Jaeger who offered a brief geological history of the area. Maggie is coordinating the Birdathon's fundraising aspects, while Maia led nearly 30 people on Sunday morning's walk up the valley.

The walk began at 8 a.m. and the group was surrounded by several warbler species just after stepping into the preserve. **BLUE-WINGED** and **YELLOW WARBLERS** called from the old pasture and glimpses of **AMERICAN REDSTARTS** appeared in the forest understory. **BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHERS** and a pair of **SCARLET TANAGERS** foraged on flowering trees overhead in the canopy.

The water in Honey Creek was high this year, keeping the several creek crossings exciting. Singing pairs of **LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSHES** lined the creek, starting just after the first crossing. A **WINTER WREN** was heard singing in the first hemlock stand on the rocky hillside, and was joined by the distant notes of a **WOOD THRUSH** and **ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAK** further back in the forest.

The group was lucky enough to catch sight of both a **BROAD-WINGED** and **RED-SHOULDERED HAWK** soaring above the canopy, and to hear a **PILEATED WOODPECKER** drumming and calling just out of sight. **OVENBIRDS** sang intermittently from either side of the



Photo by Thomas Nicholls

Under the direction of Dr. Anna Pidgeon, a total of 16 species were banded, a high count for one morning. Additionally, many local families and students were able to see birds up close and help release birds once they were banded.

trail, and the sharper calls of **GREAT-CRESTED FLYCATCHERS** could be heard in the trees.

We paused in the open field at the foot of the grassy hill, listening to a **BROWN THRASHER** and watching a pair of **EASTERN BLUEBIRDS**. **YELLOW WARBLERS** darted about the dense vegetation near the creek. **FIELD SPARROWS**, **SONG SPARROWS** and **INDIGO BUNTINGS** could be heard staking out territories in all directions from where we stood.

Hiking back from the hill, we stopped to admire the abundance of nodding trillium near the creek and listen to the woodland birds that continued singing, even at midday. **AMERICAN REDSTARTS** and **RED-EYED VIREOS** seemed to line the trail, occasionally interrupted by the slower song of a **YELLOW-THROATED VIREO**.

On Saturday, the Bandathon began at around 6 a.m. despite a few unexpected rain showers in the early morning. Dr. Anna Pidgeon from UW-Madison oversaw the banding with the help of three of her students, Ashley Hannah, Paul Schilke and Maia Persche. Nets were set up on either side of Alder Drive, near the suet feeder by the Nature Center, and between the creek and the cornfield. The first catch of the day was an **AMERICAN ROBIN**, followed shortly by several warbler and sparrow species. Two **NORTHERN WATERTHRUSHES** were caught alongside the road, as well as a male and female **YELLOW WARBLER**. Nearly every male **COMMON YELLOWTHROAT** in the areas turned up in one of the nets eventually, for a total of 4 new birds and 2 recaptures from previous years. A few late migrants were banded, including a **VEERY**, a **WHITE-THROATED SPARROW** and a **WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW**.

Melissa McDonald brought the Baraboo Middle School science class to the preserve for the day to watch the banding, hike in the valley, and participate in a banding activity led by Tom Nicholls of the Nature Education Center in Fifield. The students were impressed by the **HAIRY WOODPECKER**, which was caught in the mist net by the suet feeder and proved to be the most vocal bird of the day.

A total of 16 species were banded, a high count for one morning. Additionally, many local families and students were able to see birds up close (a new experience for some) and help release birds once they were banded.

About \$1,600 already has been donated or pledged for this year's event by 25 generous donors. For 49 cents you can mail your donation to WSO c/o Maggie Stewart, P.O. Box 217, North Lake, WI 53064. Or go to <http://wsobirds.org/> and click on the link on the left side of the page for "Honey Creek Birdathon & Bandathon."

Board seeks changes in membership structure, dues increases

By **MICHAEL JOHN JAEGER**
WSO President

Under WSO's bylaws, dues for members "shall be in such amount as shall from time to time be recommended by the Board of Directors and confirmed by the membership."

The WSO Board is requesting its members to consider proposed changes to membership classes and dues during our Annual Meeting on Saturday June 17 at this year's 78th annual convention in Carter. If approved, the changes would be effective for 2018. Official notice of the proposed change, as required under WSO's bylaws, was provided in a similar news article in the May edition of The Badger Birder.

While WSO has historically increased its dues about every 5 years, it has been 16 years since the last increase. What follows is an overview of the proposed changes, including the board's reasoning. The membership levels and costs used in the board's review are from 2015, the most recent full year for which information was available when our analysis was undertaken.

CURRENT REVENUE TARGET

The target expenses WSO tries to cover with basic membership dues, as specified in WSO's Policies and Procedures document, consists of the following:

Passenger Pigeon, except for color printing costs, \$18,289

Badger Birder, \$6,429

Other direct membership expenses, \$2,374

Total: \$27,092 in 2015

The revenue estimate under current dues was \$31,380. While this indicates that overall target expenses are being covered, further analysis showed insufficient revenues at the Single, Student and Senior membership levels for those that receive paper newsletters, as well as Students receiving the electronic newsletter.

REVISED REVENUE TARGET

The board's analysis also showed that the expenses included in its current revenue target did not adequately reflect the costs of WSO's core membership operations. The board concluded that it was appropriate to include these additional expenses in a revised revenue target:

Color printing for Passenger Pigeon, \$6,128

Brochure costs, \$500

Website costs, \$2,786

Administration, \$5,017

These would add \$14,421 to the target expenses, for a total of \$41,523. The revenues generated by WSO's existing dues levels fall short of this revised target by about \$10,000.

PROPOSED DUES STRUCTURE

To solve both the revenue shortfall under some of the existing membership classes, along with the extensive overall revenue shortfall under the more comprehensive revenue target, the board is proposing to update both the membership class structure and our annual dues. The proposed new membership classes and dues levels are shown below in Table 2.

Under this proposal, overall dues would increase to \$44,690, compared with \$31,380 from existing dues levels. This would adequately cover the revised revenue target of \$41,523.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES

"Single" and "Family" classes would be combined into one "Household" class

A \$10 surcharge would be implemented for anyone wishing to receive mailed paper copies of The Badger Birder, reflecting the additional printing and postage costs involved compared with electronic delivery of the eBirder.

A new "Conservation Advocate" class would combine a "Sustaining" membership with an additional \$100 contribution to WSO's Conservation Fund.

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

"Life" and "Patron" classes would no longer be available to new members, but current "Life" and "Patron" memberships would be continued without any changes in benefits.

Expanding the range of costs to be included in the revenue target to be covered by regular membership dues.

Overall, the board concluded that a dues increase was a reasonable solution given: 1) the increasing quality and amount of information and services the Society is providing through its publications and website and 2) the extraordinary length of time (16 years) since the last dues increase.

These two tables compare current and proposed membership levels and dues:



TABLE 1

Current Membership Levels

Senior	\$15 (no Passenger Pigeon)
Student	\$15
Single	\$30
Family	\$35
Sustaining	\$75
Life - Single	\$600
Life - Couple	\$700
Patron	\$1,000
Library	\$25 domestic/\$35 foreign

TABLE 2

Proposed Membership Classes and Dues

Dues Class	Rate (e-BB)	Rate (paper BB)
Notes		
Senior	\$25	\$35 (no Passenger Pigeon)
Student	\$25	\$35
Household	\$40	\$50
Sustaining	\$100	\$110
Conservation Advocate	\$200	\$210
\$100 goes to Conservation Fund		
Library		\$35 domestic/\$45 foreign

Despite cool start, May delivers exciting species

By **MARK KORDUCKI**

A warmer than average April ended with cool weather and this persisted into the first 10 days of May. One plus was that this chilly stretch slowed the leaf-out and made for better viewing conditions. Persistent north winds also kept migrants well to the south of us for the beginning of the month. However during this cool stretch some excellent birds were found.

A small group of **SMITH'S LONGSPURS** were found in a field in Dane County. They stayed for a few days and excellent views were obtained. A handsome male **WESTERN TANAGER** visited a feeder in Eau Claire County, and one later was found in Marathon County. Cool weather was likely the reason for a very unexpected visitor to an Outagamie suet feeder: a **WORM-EATING WARBLER**. A colorful male **CINNAMON TEAL** was seen in Jefferson County and two **LITTLE BLUE HERONS** were found in La Crosse County.

The rainy, cool conditions at the end of April were also conducive to shorebirds along Lake Michigan. Milwaukee had a nice mixed flock of **AMERICAN AVOCETS**, **WILLETS** and **MARbled GODWITS** that were enjoyed by many. Good numbers of Avocets and Willets were seen along the lake that day in several counties. **PIPING PLOVERS** also continued to increase with multiple reports along the Lake Michigan shoreline from scattered counties between Racine and Brown.

The winds finally shifted enough to allow Neotropical migrants to begin moving into the state on May 9th and the flow became a wave with temperatures into the 80s on



Photo by Ryan Brady

This Lewis's Woodpecker visited a feeder at a bed and breakfast near Port Wing in Bayfield County for more than a week.

the 16th. The most unusual find during this stretch -- and the bird of the month so far -- was the stunning **LEWIS'S WOODPECKER** visiting a yard and feeder in Bayfield. Gracious homeowners have allowed dozens of birders into their yard to view this western woodpecker as it is alternating between visiting their feeders and roosting on a telephone pole. It is the fifth state record for this colorful vagrant.

As is often the case, Horicon Marsh was a real birding hotspot. A **SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER** was seen briefly and photographed there before it quickly departed. More expected but still a treat was a **King Rail** that occasionally walks into view in



Photo by Maureen Gross

These Red Knots, in full breeding plumage, were found by Mark Korducki at Horicon Marsh, on the south side of Highway 49.

the middle of the day and appears to be on territory. Three **WHITE-FACED IBIS** spent the better part of a week there and were joined by a **GLOSSY IBIS**. Later, this same area produced a **SNOWY EGRET** and a few **CATTLE EGRETS**. Unusual shorebirds included **RED KNOTS** and **WHIMBRELS**.

It was a good month for White-faced Ibis with single birds seen in Dane, Green Lake and Winnebago Counties. Dane also had an **EARED GREBE** and as of May 23 two **WESTERN GREBES** were still being seen.

The huge wave of passerines produced 32 species of warblers on the 16th in Ozaukee County, including a **WORM-EATING WARBLER**. A **WHITE-EYED VIREO** was a nice find in Milwaukee.

LARK BUNTINGS were reported from Adams and Vilas Counties. **YELLOW-THROATED WARBLERS** returned to their traditional haunts in Grant County's Wyalusing State Park. **NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRDS** were reported from several counties, including at least three on one day in Milwaukee County. Late lingering **HARLEQUIN DUCKS** were found in Racine and Sheboygan. Racine also had a Lark Sparrow.

A **LAUGHING GULL** was located in Ozaukee County's Port Washington, while the Manitowoc Impoundment had nine species of gulls reported during the month including two or three **LITTLE GULLS**.

It was an eventful month that always passes too quickly. Early June can also produce some rarities. I can't wait to see what else shows up.

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

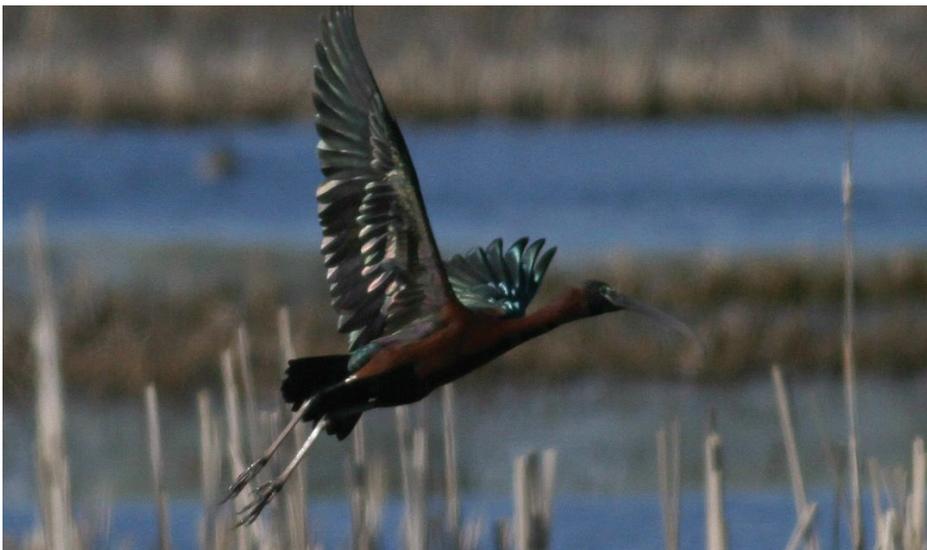


Photo by Jim Edlhuber

This Glossy Ibis appeared to come and go from Horicon Marsh in the company of three somewhat more common White-faced Ibis.

Timely reasons to Sponsor-a-Species to save Wisconsin's birds

By **CARRIE BECKER**

WBBA II Communications Director

With Father's Day, graduation time and wedding season underway, Atlas organizers are hoping the state's bird lovers will check off the remaining 40+ Wisconsin breeding species remaining to be claimed through the Sponsor-a-Species program, a major source of support for the project.

Familiar species like Wild Turkey, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Ruby-crowned Kinglet along with several ducks, gulls and terns remain, and every dollar of every sponsorship helps support the study of every bird on the list.

As the largest bird survey in state history, a great deal of field work is being undertaken by citizen scientists and the in-kind efforts of agencies and organizations. Although the Atlas is primarily the work of volunteers, it's vitally important to be able to hire seasonal professionals to ensure statewide coverage.

Funding from Sponsor-a-Species is used 1) to hire seasonal ornithologists to survey remote and hard-to-access priority blocks where there are few volunteers, and 2) to conduct a special point count survey that will provide rigorous models of relative abundance and information on statewide population size for many species of interest.

Hiring seasonal technicians is standard for any atlas that covers such a broad area, in order to ensure full coverage. The cost of these seasonal hires will approach \$85,000 in 2017 alone.

Through Sponsor-a-Species, a donor can sponsor one or more bird species for up to five years.

When a species is sponsored for the entire five-year period (starting at \$500 total), the name of the sponsor or someone the sponsor wishes to honor will be associated with that species in all Atlas publications and in the final print and web-based versions of

the second Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas.

Donors interested in sponsoring a species can do so online at wsobirds.org/sponsor-a-species, or by contacting Charlie Luthin at AtlasSponsorship@wsobirds.org

SPECIES STILL AVAILABLE

Tier 3 (\$500/year)

Ring-necked Pheasant
Sharp-tailed Grouse
Wild Turkey
American White Pelican
Northern Saw-whet Owl
Yellow-headed Blackbird



Wild Turkey

Tier 4 (\$200/year)

Redhead
Canvasback
Common Goldeneye
Least Bittern
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron
Mississippi Kite
Yellow Rail
Wilson's Phalarope
Common Tern
Forster's Tern
Laughing Gull
Olive-sided Flycatcher
Acadian Flycatcher
Bell's Vireo
Boreal Chickadee
Great Tit
Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Worm-eating Warbler
Summer Tanager
Lark Sparrow
Nelson's Sparrow
European Goldfinch



Yellow-crowned Night Heron



Black Duck

Tier 5 (\$100 per year)

WATERFOWL
Mute Swan
Gadwall
American Black Duck
Ring-necked Duck
Red-breasted Merganser
GALLIFORM, GREBE,
CORMORANT, GULL, PIGEON

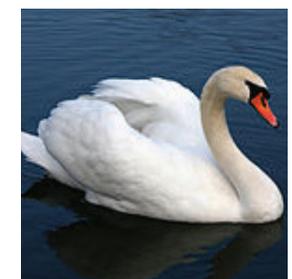
Gray Partridge
Horned Grebe
Double-crested Cormorant
Herring Gull
---Rock Pigeon

SWALLOWS, SPARROW

Northern Rough-winged Swallow
Bank Swallow
Cliff Swallow
Savannah Sparrow

BLACKBIRDS & FINCH

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Common Grackle
Brown-headed Cowbird
House Finch



Mute Swan



Brown-headed Cowbird

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ATLASER SPOTLIGHT

Dan Belter: 'Atlassing has made me more aware of the diversity of birds that call my county home'

The Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II is a volunteer-driven effort to survey the distribution and abundance of our state's breeding birds. Since the project started in 2015, our volunteer team has grown to include more than 1,300 Atlasers who have submitted more than 67,750 checklists.

Who are these incredible volunteers? It turns out that once you get past the binoculars, our Atlasers are as varied as the bird species they observe. This series turns the spotlight on a few of the many dedicated men and women who have helped the Atlas achieve such tremendous success to date.

NAME: Dan Belter

HOMETOWN:

Except for an eight-month stay in Green Bay back in the mid-1980s, I have lived in Wausau all my life.

AGE: 52

NUMBER OF YEARS BIRDING:

Thirty years. I started my "life list" back in 1987.

OTHER CITIZEN SCIENCE EXPERIENCE:

I'm a past member of the WSO Records Committee, I submit my bird sightings into eBird, I took part in the first Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas, and for the last few years now I have been part of the Wausau Bird Nerds team for the Great Wisconsin Birdathon, a fundraiser for the Bird Protection Fund of the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin..

FAVORITE BIRD:

For me, this is a very hard question to answer. I like family groups like flycatchers, thrushes and shorebirds, but I would have to say my favorite bird is my next "life bird," whatever that will be.



DAN BELTER says: "I'm currently the primary atlaser for four blocks that I'm hoping to finish up this year. Then I'll pick up any other blocks that are still open, or I'll help others with their blocks."

MOTIVATION TO ATLAS:

I took part in the first Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas project, so I had an idea of how this worked. What I really like about the current atlas project is that we can enter our data into eBird instead of on the old checklist cards we used, and all of the information we need is available on the WSO website, including the quad maps. This is a big improvement over the first atlas project.

WHERE DO YOU ATLAS:

I atlas all inside my home county, which is

Marathon County. It is a big county with 36 priority blocks, so it's been a challenge so far, but this year should be better with the help of a paid tech on board. I'm currently the primary atlaser for four blocks that I'm hoping to finish up this year. Then I'll pick up any other blocks that are still open, or I'll help others with their blocks.

MOST INTERESTING ATLAS FIND:

New species in areas where they were not found during the first atlas project. An example was just last year when I found a Grasshopper Sparrow along the eastern side of the county in an area where I thought I'd never find one. Another was confirming Dickcissel as breeding in an area west of Wausau.

MOST REWARDING PART OF ATLASING:

Finding something new that wasn't found during the first Atlas project, or confirming a breeding bird in a block that wasn't confirmed during the first Atlas project.

HOW HAS PARTICIPATING IN THE ATLAS CHANGED THE WAY YOU BIRD?

It has made me more aware of the diversity of birds that call Marathon County home. By visiting the different habitats in my home county, you become more knowledgeable of the birds you have, and the conservation needs for them to breed here.

ADVICE FOR SOMEONE "ON THE FENCE" ABOUT PARTICIPATING:

Come on in and join the fun! You'll become more knowledgeable with identifying birds and the habitats they use to breed, and there is always something fascinating to find. If you're unsure if you have the skills or knowledge needed to participate in this project, don't be. You can get a mentor to help out, or learn as you go. This is a great, and fun, citizen science project to be involved with.

More birders need to record Atlas observations

Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas coordinators are calling for more birders to submit observations to this vital survey.

"June is the very best time to start atlassing if you haven't yet. Nearly every bird you see is on territory, building a nest, or raising young," said Atlas coordinator Nick Anich. "WSO members are already out there watching birds, but by simply taking the extra steps of going birding in priority atlas blocks and reporting it to our easy online portal, they can be contributing to the Atlas and bird conservation."

The breeding bird species of Wisconsin face a variety of threats, and the Atlas is integral to collecting solid information on current bird populations to inform sound management. "The only way to get a true picture of Wisconsin's avian diversity is to have birders submit this information from the field," Anich explained. Interested

birders can sign up at <https://wsobirds.org/atlas>

Since the project started in 2015, the Atlas volunteer team has grown to include more than 1,300 atlasers who have submitted over 60,000 checklists documenting the whereabouts and behavior of three million birds of 239 species. Results are already showing range contractions and expansions, including 11 species not confirmed during the first atlas.

Despite these impressive numbers, organizers say more data needs to be submitted from more parts of the state. More than 1,250 priority blocks spread throughout Wisconsin must be fully atlased in order for the survey to be considered complete. Each block requires at least 20 hours of surveying, including night atlassing hours.

"Anyone contributing just a few, probably really fun hours of bird-

Please turn to Page 8

Warmer weather brings more Atlassing events open to the public

OUTAGAMIE COUNTY - ATLASING AT MOSQUITO HILL NATURE CENTER

When: Saturday, June 3, 8 a.m.

Where: Mosquito Hill Nature Center, N3880 Rogers Rd, New London

Join Outagamie and Winnebago County Atlas coordinator Stuart Malcolm on a bird walk and at 10 a.m. learn how to submit the observations gathered during the walk to WBBA II. Birders of all skill levels are welcome; presentation will be given in conjunction with the Northeast Wisconsin Bird Club. For more information: stuart.malcolm26@yahoo.com

WALWORTH COUNTY - BREEDING BIRDS OF PRICE PARK CONSERVANCY

When: Saturday, June 3, 8 a.m.

Where: Price Park Conservancy N6418 Hordunk Rod., between East Troy and Elkhorn
Join Jim Marrari, Walworth County Atlas coordinator to spend an hour or two looking for and documenting bird sightings., then review how the data is entered into the Atlas portal.

For more information: Jim Marrari at 262-594-2894 or jacamar@centurytel.net

VERNON COUNTY - NOCTURNAL ATLASING IN KICKAPOO VALLEY

When: Friday, June 9, 8:30 p.m.

Where: Kickapoo Valley Reserve Visitor Center, S3661 WI-131, La Farge
Night field trip to look for owls, nightjars, rails, bitterns and other nocturnal marsh birds. Meet at visitor center, pair up, distribute maps and get out to nearby Priority and Specialty Blocks. Meet back at visitor

More atlassers needed in field this summer

From Page 9

ing will help tremendously, especially in areas that have only few observations to date," said Anich. "Though we do warn you that it is addictive. We hear all the time from our team how much they enjoy atlassing and how much it deepens their appreciation for birds."

To Atlas, birders need to simply add another step to their bird watching process. For each species seen, any breeding behaviors observed are also documented, ranging from none, to perhaps a singing male in suitable habitat, to the unmistakable sight of a bird feeding its young.

To get atlasers up to speed, a number of field trips and workshops have been organized; they are listed in the calendar on Page 20 of this issue of *The Birder*.

Those wishing to learn more should contact the Atlas coordinator for their county listed at <https://wsobirds.org/atlas-county-coordinators> and find out which areas still



Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II



center to pool data and share stories. Bring a flashlight.

For more information: Paul Hayes at: pjhayes@mwt.net or 608-632-2147; or Ben Johnston at: Ben.Johnston@wisconsin.gov or 608-625-2960

PORTAGE COUNTY - ATLASING DEWEY MARSH SWA

When: Saturday, June 17, 7 a.m.

Where: Meet at K-mart, 111 Division St., Stevens Point

Join Portage County Atlas coordinator Rob Pendergast for a morning atlassing field trip in Dewey Marsh SWA in cooperation with Aldo Leopold Audubon Society. Birders of all experience levels are welcome. RSVP to Rob Pendergast at acadiantigerheron@gmail.com

DOUGLAS COUNTY WILDLIFE AREA BARRENS BIRDING

When: Saturday, July 1, 7:00 a.m.

Where: Meet at the parking area on Bird Rd. just north of CR-M

Join top atlasers Matt Berg and Brian Collins in exploring the unique barrens habitats of the Douglas County Wildlife Area. Typical

barrens species such as Upland Sandpiper, Brewer's Blackbird, and several species of sparrows and warblers are expected as well as the possibility of Sharp-tailed Grouse. Help contribute valuable data to this unique priority block

For more information: Matt Berg at saintcroixdfly@gmail.com or 715-338-7502

SHAWANO COUNTY - JUNG HEMLOCK-BEECH FOREST AND MOUNTAIN-BAY STATE TRAIL

When: Saturday, July 15, 7 a.m. to noon

Where: Park your car safely off CR-A just 0.25 miles west of Kroenke Creek Rd.

Join Brown and Shawano County Atlas coordinator Erin Giese for a morning field trip just south of the town of Gresham. Together you'll atlas the Jung Hemlock-Beech Forest State Natural Area and the Mountain-Bay State Trail. After atlassing in the morning, Erin will demonstrate how to enter the morning's atlas data into eBird at the Shawano County Library.

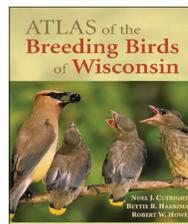
Like other northern counties, Shawano County is in need of your birding help. RSVP to Erin Giese at giesee@uwgb.edu or 615 403-6000.

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BIRD OF THE MONTH

Northern Harrier: *Circus cyaneus*

By **DIANA HIERLMEIER**

Also known as the Marsh Hawk, the Northern Harrier is a slender, white-rumped, medium-sized, low flying raptor of upland grasslands and fresh and salt water marshes. The male is grey above, with a darker grey head, white below with black wing tips. The female is mostly brown with white below; both have long wings and tail and



Diana Hierlmeier

long, slender, yellow legs. These birds have tails that are banded with light and dark bars, yellow eyes and a black, hooked bill with yellow at its base. Eye color of an immature bird will change from brown to yellow as they age over three years. Average wingspan for these birds is 3.5 to 4.5 feet. Females are about 50% heavier and 12.5% larger than males.

Male Northern Harriers perform elaborate flying barrel rolls when courting females. Most males are monogamous or simultaneously bigamous, although some males pair up with up to five mates in a season. In North America,

the frequency of polygamy is influenced more strongly by abundance of food in spring than by the ratio of males to females.

Northern Harriers nest on the ground, usually in tall, dense clumps of vegetation and will nest alone or in loose colonies. They prefer undisturbed upland and wetland areas such as hay fields, pastures, and medium to tall idle grasslands, old fields, oak savanna, sedge meadow and barrens. The nest consists of a platform of sticks and grass and can be constructed of thick-stalked plants like cattails, alders and willows with the inner lining constructed of grasses, sedges and rushes. Completion of the nest usually takes one to two weeks and is built by the male and female. The nest's outside measurements range between 16 and 24 inches wide by 1.5 to 8 inches deep.

The female lays three to nine eggs over a period of nine days, which she incubates while the male provides her with food. Incubation usually lasts 28 to 36 days and the nestling period averages 14 days. The young are able to fly 30 to 35 days after hatching. Once flying, the parents feed them in mid-air, passing food to the first fledgling to reach them.

The Northern Harrier forages on the wing, capturing a wide range of prey -- mainly small and medium-sized mammals and birds. They fly low over the ground with their wings held in a "V" shaped pattern. Unlike other hawks, this species relies heavily on auditory cues, as well as visual ones, to capture prey. Facial feathers amplify sound.

The most common prey are rabbits, ducks, mice, reptiles, insects, voles, shrews, rats and turtles; harriers have been known to subdue their prey by drowning them.

The male Northern Harrier has been nicknamed "the grey ghost" due to its grey plumage and owl-like face. In the winter, Northern Harriers may roost communally on the ground, often together with Short-eared Owls.

To identify this species in flight watch for a flight pattern that is several deep wingbeats, alternating with long glides. For audible clues that this species is nearby, listen for a shrill call, "kek, kek, kek" or "keee, keee, keee" -- especially near a nest. A begging call that has been described as a "wailing squeal" is given by juveniles to adults when they beg for food.

First described by Linnaeus in 1766, the oldest Northern Harrier on record was a female. She was at least 15 years, four months old when captured and released in 2001 by a bird bander in Quebec; she had been banded in New Jersey in 1986.



Migrating harriers travel singly or in small groups and prefer to follow coastlines in their migration routes. They take advantage of strong thermals to minimize energy while migrating. A few harriers may remain on the northern breeding range throughout the winter as long as snow cover does not interfere with their hunting success.

Predators of the Northern Harrier include coyotes, feral dogs, striped skunks, raccoons, red foxes, American Crows, Common Ravens and Great Horned Owls, which prey on eggs and nestlings. Livestock and deer sometimes trample their nests.

In the 1800s, numbers of this species likely increased after the clearing of Eastern forests for timber and agriculture. Historical accounts list these birds as abundant and widely distributed. Declines in breeding harriers have been observed in parts of North America through the late 20th century. They appear to be declining globally due to habitat loss with the destruction of wetlands and conversion of grasslands to monotypic farmlands. Additionally, the small mammals they prey on have been reduced by overgrazing, pesticides and reduced shrub cover from crop field expansion. Northern Harriers are susceptible to pesticide buildup from consuming poisoned small mammals.

The Northern Harrier is listed with a status of Least Concern on the conservation scale.

TO DIG MORE DEEPLY:

Bent, Arthur C., *Life Histories of North American Birds of Prey, Part One*. Dover, New York, N.Y., 1961.

Clark, William S. and Brian K. Wheeler. *Hawks*. The Peterson Field Guide Series. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, Mass., 1987.

Dunn, John L. and Jonathan Alderfer, *National Geographic Field Guide of Birds of North America*, National Geographic Society, Sixth Edition.

National Audubon Society, *The Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior* (illustrated by David Sibley), Alfred A. Knopf, New York, N.Y., 2001.

Terres, John K. *The Audubon Society Encyclopedia of North American Birds*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, N.Y., 1980.

Welty, Joseph Carl, *The Life of Birds*, Saunders College Publishing, New York, N.Y., 1982.

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.

Convention-goers will be asked to elect 4 officers for 2017-'18

From Page 1

two licensed hummingbird banders.

Cassini, who will continue on the WSO Board as chair of its Conservation Committee, was awarded his Ph.D. in Zoology from UW-Madison last May and teaches Advanced Placement environmental science, biology, natural resources and ecology at Kettle Moraine High School in Wales. Cassini also coordinates a summer internship program for the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II.

The committee also will nominate for reelection as WSO officers for 2017-'18

MICHAEL JOHN JAEGER, president since 2016, and **JENNY WENZEL**, secretary since 2013.

Jaeger, who was elected president in 2016 after serving two years as vice president, retired in 2014 from the staff of the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin. He also has chaired WSO's Scholarship and Grants Committee. In his first term as president, Jaeger led a successful half-million-dollar drive to expand WSO's Honey Creek Preserve and has worked to increase WSO's public profile as a force for bird conservation, traveling widely to forge contacts with other conservation groups, local bird clubs and Audubon chapters in the state.

The nominating committee was led by two members of the Board of Directors -- Levi Wood, coordinator for WSO's Honey Creek Preserve, and Matthew Hayes, WSO's research chair -- along one non-board member, Nolan Pope.

Hurlburt grew up in Durand and has lived his entire life in Wisconsin. He says he has always been drawn to the diversity the four

seasons provide here. As a child, he was introduced to the enjoyment of nature from his dad and brothers by their participation in many outdoor activities like hunting, fishing and trapping. But it wasn't until he became interested in the pure enjoyment of just being surrounded by the beauty of nature and the peace and tranquility it brought him, that birding became his joy and passion.

While the birds found in his own backyard were the first to spark his curiosity, Hurlburt said, he has since expanded his interest in and search for the elite, rarer species found in the state and his Wisconsin Life List stands at 325. Hurlburt says his current nemesis species is the Connecticut Warbler.

A participant in many WSO field trips and leader of the annual April trip to the Mead Wildlife Area, Hurlburt is a member of the Wausau Bird Club, where he has donated his talent as a woodworker on several local projects, including a Chimney Swift tower, Purple Martin house repair and blue bird boxes.

Besides bird watching, his other interests include, photography, golfing, and spending as much time as possible with his wife Sue and four sons (Zach, 29; Alex 25; Nicholas, 22, and Bailey 16). He says he likes planning family vacations to places that are not only fun for everyone, but may also provide opportunities for photographing new bird species. A family trip to Costa Rica in 2013 offered spectacular sightings..

Hurlburt works for Sentry Insurance in Stevens Point and has a B.S. in Business Administration from Cardinal Stritch Uni-

versity and an associate degree in computer science from Chippewa Valley Technical College. At Sentry, he is part of the information technology organization.

Baumann was named in January to fill the remainder of O'Connor's one-year term as treasurer. Jaeger said at that time: "I'm looking forward to working with Dani. Not only is she a talented accountant, I'm impressed with her enthusiasm and dedication to birding."

Baumann says she was tricked into starting her birding career at 4:30 a.m. on May 6, 2011, in the middle of Wyalusing State Park while on a "No, we won't get up early" trip. Since that day her life has revolved around birds and numbers.

Baumann graduated in 2007 from UW-Milwaukee with a Bachelor's in Business Administration-Accounting Degree and is currently working as a senior accountant at American Dental Partners where she has worked for the last eight years.

A dedicated volunteer, when she isn't in her office, Baumann can be found coordinating the Breeding Bird Atlas efforts in Ozaukee County or editing *The Timberdoodle News* (newsletter of the Noel J. Cutright Bird Club). You may also recognize her name from the "Let's Go Birding" column, a regular feature in *The Badger Birder* that will be looking for a new writer to give Baumann time for her duties as treasurer.

Baumann says she also finds time to bird the wonderful hotspots of her home county of Ozaukee. Outside of birding, you can often find her reading a good book with her two cats, Braun and Charlie, curled up in her lap.

BIRDING DIGEST

Great Wisconsin Birdathon tops goal

Madison -- With several weeks still to go in the Great Wisconsin Birdathon campaign, coordinator Diane Packett announced that the drive had topped its \$75,000 goal.

The Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin's effort on behalf of priority projects supported by its Bird Protection Fund had surpassed last year's record total and was surging past the \$78,000 mark in late May.

"I'm overwhelmed by your dedication to bird conservation and by the generosity of your donors," Packett said in an e-mail to birdathon teams. "It's a tribute to you that so many are willing to support your fundraising efforts. It's obvious that you believe in what we're doing. Keep on birding and fundraising until the official campaign end on June 15."

The GWB <http://wibirdathon.org/> is a partnership between the NRF, WSO, Wisconsin DNR, Bird City Wisconsin, Madison Audubon, Wisconsin Audubon Council and the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative.

Research award will honor the Lukes

Green Bay -- The University of Wisconsin-Green Bay Cofrin Center for Biodiversity has announced the establishment of the Roy and Charlotte Lukes Research Award, commemorating the important contributions to conservation and environmental education by Roy and Charlotte Lukes, two of Wisconsin's most influential and beloved naturalists.

The award, created by a generous endowment from West Bend philanthropist Ron Horn, will support an annual scholarship targeted for student research at the Toft Point Natural Area and the surrounding

Door Peninsula Coastal Wetlands, designated in 2015 as a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance. The initial award will be \$1,000.

Roy Lukes, an educator and nature writer known well beyond the borders of Door County and Wisconsin, died on June 26, 2016.

Wanted: Warbler songs

Dr. Jay Pitocchelli, a biology professor at Saint Anselm College in Manchester, N.H., is studying songs of migrants to better understand their migratory movements. He is seeking recordings of singing Mourning Warblers in Wisconsin. A Smart Phone recording is good enough for this project. Here is his contact info: Dr. Jay Pitocchelli, Chair, Environmental Stewardship Committee, Saint Anselm College, Manchester, N.H. 03102; Phone: 603 641 7397; jpitocch@anselm.edu

395 migrants die when they smash into Texas high-rise

By **KARIN BRULLIARD**
Washington Post

At 7:20 a.m. on a day in early May, Josh Henderson was summoned to a mass casualty event at a 23-story building in downtown Galveston, Texas. He arrived to a scene unlike any he had ever witnessed.

Henderson, supervisor of the animal services unit in the Galveston Police Department, quickly began collecting the bodies — dozens upon dozens of migratory birds that had evidently become disoriented and slammed into the high-rise while flying north from Central and South America during a storm the night before.

Three of the birds — a Nashville Warbler and two Magnolia Warblers — were alive. But 395 were not so lucky.

Henderson knows the number because he counted the animals by hand, sorted them into a rainbow-hued array on an autopsy table, and then packaged them for delivery to researchers. The resulting list and images will deliver a gut-punch to any appreciator of birds, and probably to most anyone who likes living things.

Henderson's body count began like this:

- 90 Nashville Warblers**
- 60 Blackburnian Warblers**
- 42 Chestnut-Sided Warblers**
- 41 Ovenbirds**
- 29 Yellow Warblers**

And on it went, all the way down to “**1 Cerulean Warbler.**”

In a statement, Henderson sounded a bit stunned by the mass casualties. Birds fly into buildings fairly regularly, he conceded. But “the numbers are nothing I am familiar with throughout my career in animal services,” he said. “This is the largest event like this I have ever been a part of in over 10 years.”

Bird advocacy groups said the incident, which may have been exacerbated by strong storm winds that propelled some of the



Photo by Josh Henderson

Josh Henderson, supervisor of the animal services unit in the Galveston Police Department, collected 60 Blackburnian warblers.

animals into the structure, served as a reminder of the dangers buildings pose to birds. As many as 1 billion birds die in collisions with glass in the United States each year, according to American Bird Conservancy. An Audubon Society representative said building crashes are a “tragic and avoidable fate for too many birds that comes second only to death by cat.”

“Turning off indoor and outdoor lights, especially during spring and fall migration seasons, is a simple and effective way to protect birds and save people money,” said Tania Homayoun, urban conservation program manager for Audubon Texas. Wildlife advocates also argue that new buildings should be constructed with “bird friendliness” in mind, which can involve using patterned, frosted or other non-reflective glass, as well as incorporating architectural features such as awnings.

Henderson said he hoped the incident would “inspire change.” And a little over a week after the bird deaths, it did.

The Galveston skyscraper, headquarters of American National Insurance, turned off the floodlights that normally illuminate the structure and the plaza around it. Instead, a string of green safety bulbs — important for warning airplanes — ran around the very top of the tower. An American National spokesman told the Houston Chronicle that the building plans to keep its lights off during the migration season or when the Houston Audubon Society sends out alerts about conditions that might spell trouble for birds, such as storms or low clouds.

“The Texas coast is the first land these migrants encounter after crossing the Gulf of Mexico,” Richard Gibbons, conservation manager for Houston Audubon, told the National Audubon Society. That means

American Bird Conservancy applauds federal Bird-Safe Buildings Act

AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY

The American Bird Conservancy (ABC) has issued a statement applauding U.S. Rep. Mike Quigley (D-Ill.) and Rep. Morgan Griffith (R-Va.) for introducing the Federal Bird-Safe Buildings Act. The bipartisan bill is designed to reduce bird mortality by calling for federal buildings to incorporate bird-safe building materials and design features. As many as a billion birds a year die in collisions with buildings in North America alone.

....“By pursuing cost-neutral, responsible and realistic solutions we can play an important role in preserving the intrinsic, cultural, and ecological value birds bring to our society,” Quigley said in a statement. “This bill will put an emphasis on constructing buildings with bird-safe materials and design features, which in turn will help eradicate unnecessary bird deaths caused by collisions with glass.”

Many bird-friendly design techniques—such as installing screens or grilles on windows and minimizing the use of glass on lower floors—are already used in some federal buildings to control heat and

light or security. The proposed bill would require the General Services Administration to apply similar measures, where practicable, to all new and existing federal buildings.

The legislation would help address one of the greatest human-caused threats to birds, said Christine Sheppard, director of ABC's Glass Collisions Program.

“Although this legislation is limited to federal buildings, it's a very good start that could lead to more widespread applications of bird-friendly designs and use of bird-smart glass solutions,” she said.

A 2014 study found that White-throated Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Ovenbird and Song Sparrow are among the species most commonly killed by collisions with buildings.

The study also reported that several species of national conservation concern are especially vulnerable to collisions. Affected species include Wood Thrush, Golden-winged Warbler, Canada Warbler, Kentucky Warbler and Painted Bunting as well as Common Yellowthroat.

Winnebago Audubon promotes bird conservation in a variety of ways



The Badger Birder is offering a regular focus on birding groups in Wisconsin. Some are clubs formed at nature centers; others operate independently, while still others are the core of the state's many local Audubon chapters. The Winnebago Audubon Society is a great example of the latter.

By ANITA CARPENTER

Spearheaded by Katherine D. Rill, a local botanist and environmentalist, the Winnebago Audubon Society was organized in Oshkosh in 1981.

Its mission is "to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats through grassroots efforts of community outreach and advocacy."

Thirty-six years later, Winnebago Audubon (WAS) is still going strong, supporting a variety of bird-related activities.

WAS coordinates the annual Midwest Crane Count in Winnebago County. Members participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count, as well as May, September and Christmas bird counts, and a fund-raising birdathon.

This year WAS also partnered with the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin in its Great Wisconsin Birdathon.

Two different elementary schools per year are recipients of a WAS-sponsored nature-related educational program. Currently, Beka Weiss of Aves Wildlife Alliance takes her birds of prey to delight and educate the youngsters.

One of WAS's major commitments is its partnership with the Oshkosh Area School District. Sullivan's Woods is the school district's 40-acre outdoor educational site, which all 4th graders visit in spring and return as 5th graders in fall. WAS coordinates and is the backbone of the "Friends of Sullivan's Woods" group. This active friends group maintains the trails and prairie, endlessly fights invasive plants, and provides educational materials and leaders for the visiting classes as they learn about birds, insects, flowers and the natural environment.

WAS was one of the movers and shakers for Oshkosh to become a High Flyer in the Bird City Wisconsin recognition program. It again was an active sponsor in the 7th annual Oshkosh Bird Fest, held in recognition of International Migratory Bird Day. Bird Fest www.oshkoshbirdfest.com is held annually



Photos by Janet Wissink

Below: At the Oshkosh Bird Fest, one of the challenges offered by Winnebago Audubon was to use tools representing a bird's beak to pick up seeds, nuts and worms to learn how birds eat. And when you are part of the Big Sit and trying to count as many birds as you can without leaving a 17-foot circle, a spotting scope is of a great use -- and even the kids get involved.

on the first Saturday in May in Menominee Park, Oshkosh. A "Big Sit" begins at 6 a.m. with an average of 50 bird species recorded. Other activities include a raptor presentation, bird banding, a Wild Ones native plant

sale, birdhouse building, educational exhibits and a silent auction.

Bird Fest continues that evening during the Downtown Oshkosh Gallery Walk. Bird art by Oshkosh school students is exhibited at the Masonic Center. New at Gallery Walk this year was "Bird Fest Under the Dome 2017," an exhibit by 23 photographers from around the state hosted by the Oshkosh Public Library in the Waters Building and sponsored by the Oshkosh Photography Group.

As a lead-in to Bird Fest, a daily bird quiz appears on the Oshkosh Bird Fest Facebook page beginning April 1 with answers revealed the following day.

WAS offers field trips but not on a regular basis. It has started a "Birds and Beer" series, which is very popular. An outing in February along the Fox River in Oshkosh led off with a watch for wintering eagles and waterfowl.

Although WAS does not have regular monthly meetings, a schedule of activities may be found at www.winaudubon.org. All programs and activities are open to the public.





KEEP LOOKING UP

Jizz Factor: Hard to define but you know it when you see it

By **STEVE PETZNIK**

Have you put the Jizz Factor to work?

Those of you who are veteran birders may already know the answer to that question. And you'd no doubt say "yes". For those of you who don't know what I'm talking about, this article is for you.

Any time a person goes out birdwatching he or she is using past experience to correctly identify birds or at least to get them into a category like warbler, flycatcher, shorebird or waterfowl.



Steve Petznick

You know from past experience what a Black-capped Chickadee looks like so you are able to quickly ID the species when you see it again.

You have learned the field marks, its feeding behavior or its flight pattern and your brain quickly tells you that it's a Black-capped Chickadee. That was an easy example.

Okay, now it's a Big Day Count or a Breeding Bird Survey and there are leaves and you can only see a portion of the bird

behind the foliage. Your brain takes in all the clues it sees in that instant and uses past experience to come up with an answer; all in a fraction of a second.

That's the Jizz Factor.

I learned about the Jizz Factor many years ago from Mark Peterson, who served as fall seasonal editor for the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology from 1983 to 2007.

Mark was patient with me since I was a young and eager birder. I wondered how he could tell the species of duck that was only a dot floating on the horizon. I had to walk another couple hundred yards closer to correctly ID the bird.

Mark was right, but how did he know? He said it was by the way it was sitting on the water. This was my first encounter with the Jizz Factor. As Mark explained how he picked up the duck's "vibe," I understood the concept, but his Jizz Factor was remarkable.

Another birder with an incredible Jizz Factor is Daryl Tessen, who annually records more than 300 species on his Wisconsin year list.

He calls it a gut feeling. The first species of bird that comes to your mind is probably the correct one, Tessen says, and you can either trust the Jizz Factor or you can confirm it.

Over time you will find that the Jizz Factor leads you to the correct identification most of the time.

Here's the science behind the Jizz Factor: You are subconsciously processing many options at once. Things like time of day, migration or not, type of habitat, location of bird, behavior, song, coloration

and field marks.

All of these "clues" are being processed very quickly and you come up with your hunch – your Jizz answer. So how do you improve your Jizz Factor? You spend time in the field. Nothing can take the place of experiencing birds first hand. Yes, you can practice with apps and listen to audios, but time in the field is the best teacher.

If you are birdwatching with more experienced people, ask lots of specific questions. I have found that most seasoned birders are willing to share their knowledge and help a person enjoy their birding more.

The leaves are out. The birds are hidden. So go put your Jizz Factor to work and enjoy your birding this month.

STEVE PETZNIK welcomes your opinions by contacting him at Steve.Petznick@outagamie.org Besides being a naturalist and land steward for over 25 years at Mosquito Hill Nature Center, Steve has taught numerous bird identification classes and led many field trips.

Here's what Wikipedia has to say about the birding term 'jizz'

A term originally used by birdwatchers to describe the overall impression or appearance of a bird garnered from such features as shape, posture, flying style or other habitual movements, size and coloration combined with voice, habitat and location.

The concept is so useful that it has been adopted by field biologists in referring to the impression of the general characteristics of other animals. Ecologists and botanists also may speak of "habitat jizz" or the jizz of a plant.

Often jizz is useful for identifying to the family or genus level, rather than the species level. For example, "It definitely had the jizz of a thrush, but I couldn't see what kind."

The origin of the word is a mystery.

Some have speculated that it comes from the World War II air force acronym GISS for "General Impression of Size and Shape (of an aircraft)", but the birding term was first recorded in 1922.

More likely, jizz is a corruption of *gestalt*, a German word that roughly means form or shape. Other possibilities include the word *gist*, or a contraction of *just is*.



Through fog, sleet, mosquitoes and ticks, the field trips went on....

From Page 1

One winter they lugged their car batteries into the house when the weather was predicted to be 50 below — just to be sure we could make it to the Milwaukee lakeshore the next morning.

Their mothers fully understood that Mother's Day could be celebrated any other time but May.

Through temperature extremes, mosquitoes, ticks and even children, together they mastered their skills and kept up with the latest equipment, record-keeping and ways to communicate with other birders.

Although I missed about 20 years of their field trips and chasing the birds to raise our boys, I did return to active birding in the fall of 2013 and found the camaraderie and friendliness among WSO field trip attendees simply outstanding — in good part due to the friendships Tom and Jeff have forged over the years.

It is no stretch to say that Tom and Jeff have a "following" and are well-respected among their birding colleagues far and wide.

Most notable is their long-time connection to renowned Wisconsin birder, Daryl Tessen, who seems to be their biggest fan.



Tom Schultz scanned this photo from a slide image he made on the Milwaukee Lakefront field trip of Jan. 8, 1994. The temperature was minus 7. That's John Schaefer in the foreground amid the ice fog.

Some might argue they are **HIS** biggest fans, too.

I recently ran into Tom Schultz, which is **NOT** hard to do since we've been married for 34 years. When he learned that

I was asked to write this story and needed facts, he set about to find copies of his ancient *Badger Birders* (now practically collectible) and slides of past field trips to "prime the pump" of his

memory going back to those early years.

I also sent the guys a few questions to ponder.

See the adjoining page for their trip down memory lane.



As Field Trip Committee co-chairs, Tom and Jeff share a vote at WSO Board meetings, such as this one (above) that was held in April 1997. The children -- now adults -- sometimes even got into the picture. Here's Tom with young Riley (left) and Jeff with daughter Tamara in February of 1990 at Prairie du Sac. Did they grow up to be birders? You can ask their dads on any upcoming field trip.



Reflections on 30 years of finding birds for the rest of us

So how did you guys meet in the first place?

JEFF BAUGHMAN: We met probably in the late fall or early winter of 1982, at one of the Owen J. Gromme Bird Club meetings in Fond du Lac. I was new to the area and wanted to learn more about the local birding areas. By the next spring Tom and I had become friends. We had the same ideas about finding new places to bird, and our annual trips to Superior over Memorial Day and to other areas cemented our friendship.

TOM SCHULTZ: Jeff's recollections of our early days fit well with mine, with our first connections being through Bill Volkert, who was a mutual friend. Jeff and I (and Wendy) hit it off very well, and we started doing quite a bit of birding together. It wasn't long before Jeff's brother, Scott, joined us and we began birding more actively, and traveling together to more distant corners of the state to find birds.

How did you come to succeed Ed Peartree as field trip chair?

JEFF: My recollection is that Noel Cutright approached Tom about succeeding Ed as field trip chair. I think before Tom committed to the job he and I discussed the idea of becoming co-chairs.

TOM: As a budding bird artist I had been invited to attend the annual holiday parties of the Society of Tympanuchus Cupido Pinnatus down in Milwaukee, and set up a display of my paintings. One of the attendees was Noel Cutright, whom I had gotten to know through various WSO activities, and partly through Noel's influence Wendy and I had the opportunity to meet a number of important people involved in bird conservation, like Fran and Fred Hamerstrom. Shortly after the December 1986 event, Noel asked whether I might consider taking over the board position of Field Trips Committee chair from Ed Peartree. Ed was having some difficulty walking and was hoping to pass the position along to someone else. I was flattered but a little hesitant to take on this role by myself. Wendy and I both thought it might be neat if Jeff and I were to fill this role together. Jeff and I decided it would be a collaboration that would work well – so I let Noel know that we would take the job. Our term started in January 1987.

What field trips did you do initially and how does it compare to recent years?

JEFF: We used to have weekend "campout" trips. In the spring we camped at Wyalusing, Perrot State Park and Trempealeau, and the Southern Kettle Moraine. In the summer we camped at Crex Meadows and participated in the Nicolet Forest Bird Survey and the fall campout was at Honey Creek. When we became parents, the weekend and long distance field trips were no longer feasible so we kept some of the highly sought after trips and began to ask other individuals/groups to host trips and alleviate the load. I remember having six-week-old Tamara in a baby carrier while leading the Horicon Marsh field trip in August of 1988. There were other times when both Tamara and Riley, as toddlers, came with us on trips such as Goose Pond.

TOM: We have certainly tailored the schedule over the years, adding new locations and making modifications to work better logistically. Another innovation was working with birding tour companies to offer WSO trips to areas outside Wisconsin, such as California, Arizona, Texas, North Dakota, Costa Rica, Venezuela and Ecuador.

How has the Internet changed the way you lead field trips?

JEFF: Technology has only helped those that are inclined to use and embrace it. With the field trip link on the WSO website, access to Wisbirdn and various Facebook pages, it has made it easier to communicate with our participants and to organize what we do. We now have a Google Map link for each of our field trips.

TOM: Email and the internet also have allowed us to publish reports with photos shortly after our field trips so people can quickly see where we went and what we saw – which also is then included in *The Badger Birder*. One of our biggest improvements was when we



At the beginning in April 1987: Jeff (right) scoping a Ruff at Goose Pond and Tom a few weeks later on Gibraltar Rock.

started to use walkie-talkies. These allow for easy communication between vehicles in our car caravans – both for giving travel directions and relaying information about birds being spotted. These have been especially useful at Wisconsin Point in notifying birders—spread out along the beach—when good birds are spotted.

What do you each like best about your co-chair?

JEFF: I appreciate Tom's attention to details, his patience and his record keeping, things that I lack most of the time. He never seems to be in a hurry and has a lot of patience. I dislike doing our field trip reports, where he seems to like it – and he keeps good notes. I gladly create the annual field trip schedule and work on the map links.

TOM: Each fall Jeff puts his strong computer skills to use to put together our annual calendar, which then gets sent out via *The Badger Birder*. The schedule now contains much more information, and is far more visually attractive than the ones we produced during our early years.

Describe your most frustrating field trip.

JEFF: Weather and the timing of migration are the two most frustrating things we have to deal with on field trips, especially, when the trip depends on it –like the Columbia/Dane County trip, Green Bay warblers, and our Hawk Watch. For this reason we created the "dual" date trips and watch the weather forecasts.

TOM: I recall one cold January field trip to Milwaukee when the fog along Lake Michigan was so thick that you couldn't see more than 25 feet! Of course there was no point in continuing that outing since we couldn't possibly see any birds!

Is it safe to assume Daryl Tessen is your biggest fan?

TOM: Daryl has without a doubt been our most dedicated field trip attendee over the years, missing very few of our outings. His presence always adds a fun dimension to these events. We still have a ways to go to catch up with his record 40 years service on the WSO board, but we hope he'll be attending that next field trip after we DO – so we can give him the beans!

Any additional story or reflection to add?

JEFF: Leading, coordinating and advertising WSO field trips has been a labor of love. I can't imagine having not been a part of it for the past 30 years. We have tried to provide the best trips for our members -- and non-members -- and welcomed all suggestions within reason. "No Daryl, I will not walk out into that marsh to flush that Yellow Rail."

TOM: One of the most enjoyable aspects of our field trips is the socializing with friends, and getting to know birders from other parts of the state. Finding good birds is fun, but sharing the experience with others makes even it more enjoyable and meaningful.

FIELD TRIP

Great early morning chorus on the White River Marsh

By **TOM SCHULTZ**

WSO Field Trips Co-chair

It was a pretty nice morning as folks began gathering May 6 along White River Road in Green Lake County. The sky was clear and the temperature was chilly, but at that point in the day the winds were still pretty light.

As folks were getting out of their cars there were a number of early morning sounds emanating from the marsh. American Bitterns were “pumping,” Soras were whinnying, Sandhill Cranes were unison-calling, Canada Geese were honking, a pheasant was crowing, and a Wilson’s Snipe was “winnowing” overhead. Song and Swamp Sparrows were sounding off, along with Red-winged Blackbirds, American Robins and a cardinal.

We started hiking along the gravel road to the west, and soon could hear Marsh Wrens and then Sedge Wrens adding to the chorus. A few Virginia Rails were calling, and Mallards and Blue-winged Teal flew by – along with occasional cranes.

The group was a little more hushed than normal, as I knew we weren’t far from the first Whooping Crane nest in White River Marsh in well over 100 years – and we didn’t want to disturb them.

For that reason, we also didn’t walk down to the oak island as we usually do. (*Sadly, we learned that this crane nest was lost – predated by a coyote just two days later on the evening of May 8.*) We heard Yellow Warbler and Common Yellowthroat, and then turned to head back to our vehicles.

From there we drove to Hopp Road, where a large flooded area was hosting a nice group of shorebirds – including Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Dunlin, Pectoral and Solitary Sandpipers. Great Blue Herons were present, along with a Bald Eagle, a Red-tailed Hawk, several ducks and geese – and a Sora also was spotted.

We continued around Big Island Road, where we added Eastern Meadowlark, Bobolink, and Vesper and Henslow’s Sparrows, and then a stop at the White River Bridge yielded Yellow Warbler, Ovenbird, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and a couple of Veeries.

We then traveled around to the west end of White River Road and heard Pine and Prothonotary Warblers and a Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

Along the way to Princeton we stopped at a young pine plantation and were able to hear a singing Clay-colored Sparrow, and then continued on to a restroom stop at the BP station. There we were treated to the sight of four Ospreys, all flying in the vicinity of a new nest on one of the tall light poles at the Princeton High School football field.



Photos by Tom Schultz

It was a beautiful but chilly morning as the sun rose on WSO field trip participants taking in the dawn chorus emanating from the marsh along the White River Road. Later, several Veeries offered good looks near the White River Bridge, and at Lake Puckaway, in the village of Marquette, scopes picked up Forster’s and Common Terns, both of which nest on the lake.



Our next stop was Lake Puckaway, at the village of Marquette. A Warbling Vireo was serenading us from the nearby trees as we parked, and on the lake we could see Great Egrets, Double-crested Cormorants and Forster’s Terns. A couple of distant Common Terns were also picked out by their grayer wings. Both species nest on this lake.

From there we drove to the northern part of Grand River Marsh, where the highlight was spotting a Trumpeter Swan sitting on her nest. She slinked off soon after we arrived, but we were glad to see that she soon returned to continue her motherly incubation duties.

Our next stop was a large pond on Lake

Maria Road, where we found another Trumpeter Swan, a few Canada Geese, and several species of ducks, including Gadwall, American Wigeon, Lesser Scaup and Ruddy. Only a few shorebirds were present, like Greater Yellowlegs and Spotted Sandpiper.

At Lake Maria County Park we added a few waterfowl, including Redhead, Bufflehead, Hooded and Common Mergansers, and Ruddy Duck. Other birds observed there were Horned and Pied-billed Grebes and American White Pelican.

We finished our day at some shorebird ponds along Miller Road and Hwy. A, but unfortunately the only birds of interest were Lesser Yellowlegs and Brewer’s Blackbirds.



**WISCONSIN
SOCIETY for
ORNITHOLOGY**

Michael John Jaeger, President
P.O. Box 217, North Lake, WI 53064
president@wsobirds.org

May 10, 2017

President Donald Trump
The White House
United States of America

Dear President Trump,

I write on behalf of the Wisconsin Society of Ornithology (WSO) one of the largest and most active organizations in the nation devoted to the enjoyment, study, and conservation of birds. Formed in 1939, WSO has over 78 years as a leading steward and ambassador for Wisconsin birds. We preserve and manage high-quality natural lands for forest birds and prairie-chickens. For our entire existence, we have published a quarterly journal with seasonal field sightings as well as peer-reviewed research. Along with education and conservation efforts, we both conduct and promote research. WSO has awarded more than 50 research grants over the past 5 years. We have also developed and coordinated the most extensive citizen-science project ever conducted in Wisconsin, a model that has been followed by other states.

When working with natural resources, regional efforts require a national infrastructure, because natural resources, such as birds, do not comply with political boundaries. Thus, the study of birds flourishes when data and information are freely exchanged and where ideas and interpretations can be presented for critical evaluation by the scientific community without fear of suppression or retaliation. Our journal and contributions to national and local scientific data collection attest to our commitment to this basic tenet of science. The interactions of scientists and dedicated amateurs together with our contribution and access to national data bases allow us to monitor the progress of the natural world, in our case the ebb and flow of bird populations. The Wisconsin Society of Ornithology is committed to the integrity and impartiality of our science and that of others. Solid data and sound science are foundation of decisions and policies that affect life on Earth, particularly when our ability to influence the natural environment is both evident and accelerating.

The United States has long been a global leader in scientific innovation, and your administration could play a pivotal role in maintaining that leadership through its support of science and scientific discourse. On behalf of the Wisconsin Society of Ornithology, I urge your administration and Congress to keep the United States at the forefront of science through support of scientific inquiry, and by permitting and fostering an unfettered flow of scientific data, information, ideas, and scientists themselves within the global community of practitioners focused on peaceful pursuits. The WSO stands ready to provide our expertise and assist you and your administration in achieving these goals in any way we can be of service. We thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael John Jaeger
President

WSOBIRDS.ORG



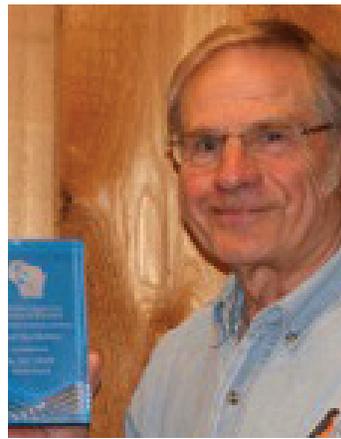
The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to promote the enjoyment, study and conservation of Wisconsin's birds.



Patricia Heiden received a special Director Emeritus Award from BRAW President Patrick Ready for her 28 years as association secretary.



Dave and Kelly Marwitz were named Bluebirders of the Year. They monitor nest boxes in three counties and fledged close to 900 bluebirds in 2016.



Photographer Jack Bartholmai received the BRAW Merit Award. He is the Dodge County coordinator and a longtime BRAW member.



Longtime member Ann Wick (left) received the Joe O'Halloran Lifetime Achievement Award. She has banded 12,129 bluebirds, and monitors 150 boxes.

BRAW annual meeting kicks off the new season

By **CLAIRE ROMANAK**
BRAW Secretary

The 31st annual meeting of the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin was held at La Follette High School in Madison on April 1. A total of 81 bluebird fans and various wildlife specialists were on hand.

President Patrick Ready welcomed participants and showed the group a picture of an unmonitored nest box that was obviously occupied by House Sparrows and reminded us all of the need to either monitor the boxes or remove them to keep them from becoming House Sparrow producers.

Ready then introduced new Treasurer Dan Schroeder who presented the association's financial information.

Steve Sample, BRAW vice president, spoke on several changes within the organization. He will be passing the data collection position on to Director Steve Fallon as he takes over as publicity chair. He also introduced JP La Fougé, the new webmaster.

Sample reported 9,352 boxes reported to BRAW, which fledged 26,672 bluebirds, with a total of all birds fledged of 45,053. He gave an overview of the results compared to 2015 numbers and said the report would be on the website and in the summer issue of *Wisconsin Bluebird*.

Ready said he had given a talk at Horicon and was asked why BRAW still monitors bluebirds since "they are everywhere." His reply: They are everywhere because BRAW does monitoring and we should be very proud of that.

Ready then introduced Carol McDaniel, county coordinator chair. McDaniel explained what being a county coordinator entails, noting that there are counties with openings. McDaniel said she still sees many nest boxes mounted on wooden posts, indi-

cating that people need to be educated on correct placement and mounting.

The first presentation was *Chickadees & More Chickadees* by Sample, who showed photo of all 7 species of chickadees found in North America along with their ranges. The seven species are Mountain, Grey-headed, Boreal, Mexican, Carolina, Black-capped and Chestnut-backed, which differ in looks, behavior and habitat.

There are two of these species found in Wisconsin, the Black-capped and Boreal. They are an interesting cavity nester and will utilize nest boxes, old woodpecker holes or excavate their own cavity.

After a brief break the group reconvened for a presentation on Audubon's Climate-Watch Study presented by Brooke Bateman. Audubon is documenting how birds are changing their ranges.

Winter ranges are shifting north. There are protocols to follow with 12 survey points per grid, listening for 5 minutes at each point & recording data to eBird. Volunteers are needed and can apply at bbateman@audubon.org.

The next speakers were Mark Martin and Brand Smith, who gave a presentation on Madison Audubon Society's American Kestrel Nest Box Program. They showed photos of boxes and mounting posts, predator controls, and the apparatus used to monitor the boxes. In 2016 they had 48 occupied boxes with 207 eggs, 188 young, 171 fledged and had banded 93 kestrels from 20 of their boxes.

After lunch was the seventh annual BRAW awards ceremony.

The Joe O'Halloran Lifetime Achievement Award went to **ANN WICK** from Black Earth. She is a longtime BRAW member, has banded 12,129 bluebirds, and monitors 150

boxes.

The BRAW Merit Award went to **JACK BARTHOLMAI**, a long time BRAW member who was unable to attend. Jack is an excellent photographer who has generously donated many of his photos as well as monitoring trails in Dodge County where he is county coordinator and a longtime BRAW member.

The Bluebird of the Year Award went to **DAVE AND KELLY MARWITZ**. Dave is county coordinator for Green Lake County and they monitor nest boxes in three counties and fledged close to 900 bluebirds in 2016.

The BRAW Director Emeritus Award went to **PATRICIA HEIDEN**, BRAW secretary for the last 28 years. She has never missed a convention and has been an integral part of the BRAW Board of Directors.

The last presentation was *Bald Eagles in Wisconsin* by Barb Barzen. In 1963 there were only 487 nests in all 48 states. In 1972, DDT was banned. In 1973 the Endangered Species Act was passed. By 1995 the population had recovered enough so that their status was changed from endangered to threatened.

In Wisconsin, by the 1960's eagles were found only in the northern third of the state. In the first state survey in 1973 only 108 nests were recorded.

A recovery plan was made in 1986, with a target of 360 nests. That was reached in 1991. They were delisted in 1997. During winter, the Mississippi River is a Bald Eagle super highway.

The upper Mississippi River Valley is the most important area for Bald Eagles in the Midwest. The second most important wintering area is the Sauk City area, followed by the Fox River to Green Bay area

Big turnout for 20th Horicon Marsh Bird Festival

By JEFF BAHLS AND LIZ HERZMANN

The 20th Annual Horicon Marsh Bird Festival started at 6:04 a.m. on Friday, May 12, with an Eastern Screech Owl in a park in Horicon. The festival ended with a Tufted Titmouse at Dodge County Ledge Park at 4:45 p.m. on Monday, May 15.



Sandwiched in between were 154 other species of birds and a couple thousand birders.

This year, the festival saw near perfect weather

-- low winds, temperatures in the upper 60s and mostly clear skies --making for great attendance.

The festival species list included 20 warblers, 16 waterfowl, 14 shorebirds and 10 sparrows. Many birds' migration was delayed to our south because of storms in Arkansas and Missouri until just prior to the festival. Near full leaf out on some trees made warbler viewing a challenge. Baltimore Orioles and Scarlet Tanagers were plentiful in numerous locations, however.

Birds that Horicon Marsh is known for were showing well with Virginia Rails spotted along the boardwalk at the Horicon Marsh Education and Visitor Center as were Sora along Ledge Road in the interior of the marsh. American Bitterns were found along Dike and Ledge Roads and Highway 49. Black-necked Stilts were spotted in many areas but especially along Highway 49.

History was made on Saturday, May 13, near the line between Horicon Marsh State Wildlife Area and Horicon National Wildlife Refuge. A Northern Mockingbird gave viewers a distant, but good look, making it the 239th bird species to be seen during the 20 years of the festival.

Other birds making uncommon festival appearances included several Broad-winged Hawks, seen for just the fourth time. A Sand-erling was found along Highway 49 for just the fourth time as well. The titmouse was only the third time this species made it on the festival checklist.

Olive-sided Flycatcher and Black-throated Blue Warbler made the list for only the fifth time. The screech owl was recorded for only the fourth time, with their last appearance nine years ago.

Festival organizers extended special thanks to Blue Heron Boat

Tours, Marsh Haven Nature Center, the DNR, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and especially the members and volunteers of the Horicon Marsh Bird Club.

Chequamegon Fest tallies 175 species, Lewis's Woodpecker

By RYAN BRADY

Our 11th annual Chequamegon Bay Birding & Nature Festival ran from Thursday to Saturday, May 17-19. The weather was a bit challenging with temps never exceeding the low 50s, constant cloud cover, persistent northeast winds off the lake, and a cold rain for half of two days. But birders -- and the birds they watch -- are a hardy group, and most of the 380+ participants seemed to have a wonderful time.

Our near-final bird tally stands at a slightly below average 175 species, owing in part to the stalled migration and difficult conditions for detecting some species, especially waterbirds. No doubt the highlight was the extremely cooperative Lewis's Woodpecker, which was seen by all who sought it. Also notable were two other species not found during any of our 10 previous festivals, several Long-billed Dowitchers and a late Snow Bunting.

Waterfowl were more scarce than usual, while shorebird diversity was pretty good, highlighted by the dowitchers, Whimbrel, Ruddy Turnstone, Black-bellied Plover and Wilson's Phalarope.

A "Brewster's" Warbler was found among 25 warbler species. Northerly winds meant no big migration flights but the cool weather yielded outstanding viewing conditions in many cases. The Bay-field (Les Voigt) Fish Hatchery was especially good with flocks of warblers foraging below eye level just above the surface water, a key source of insect prey in such difficult conditions.

Other fun finds included Sharp-tailed Grouse, Harris's Sparrow, Yellow-headed Blackbird, American Pipit, Philadelphia Vireo, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Upland Sandpiper, Northern Goshawk, Rough-legged Hawk, and large numbers of Rose-breasted Grosbeaks at area feeders.



Tom Rank, founder of state Purple Martin Association, dies

Thomas W. Rank, 64, of Sheboygan Falls, founder and president of the Wisconsin Purple Martin Association, died on April 27.

The Sheboygan County Sheriff's Department said Rank was shot and killed by his 38-year-old daughter before she turned the gun on herself. Capt. Cory Roesler said dispatch got a 911 call from Sarah Soucheck, who said she'd just killed her father, and was preparing to take her own life. The line then went dead. The SWAT Team and numerous other agencies responded to the scene and found the bodies of Rank and Soucheck.



Tom Rank

Rank was born on Aug. 3, 1952 in Manitowoc and married Candice Kappelman on Oct. 21, 1972 in Two Rivers. Tom was an employee at Kohler Co. for more than 40 years. A memorial service was held at the Wenig Funeral Home in Oostburg on May 8. A memorial fund has been established in his name.

Rank was an avid outdoor and wildlife photographer and enjoyed hunting and fishing. He founded the Eastern Wisconsin Purple Martin Association and launched its newsletter, "Purple Martin Chatter," in March 2012. He later took the group statewide, offering this background at <http://www.wisconsinpurplemartins.org/> :

On May 3, the association posted this note on its active Facebook page:

"A heartfelt thanks goes out to all that offered their condolences and also offered assistance to help manage Tom Rank's martin colony. You truly do have the spirit of Tom in you. One reason why Tom formed this association was so that Purple Martin landlords could bond with one another and assist each other in times of need. Tom's colony will be well taken care of. In fact, Tom's wife Candy has been busy providing supplemental feedings to the martins since the weather has been cold and rainy. We will certainly ask if the need for help arises.

"Also, people have been inquiring if Martifest 2017 is still on. It most certainly is! The date is Saturday, June 24th beginning at 10 a.m. at Marsh Haven Nature Center in Waupun."

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

June 3 (Saturday) Kettle Moraine - Northern Unit -- Meet at 6: a.m. at Mauthe Lake Recreation Area...

Bring good walking shoes, because there will be quite a little hiking, though leisurely. Most trails are well groomed.

Notable species include Red-shouldered and Broad-winged Hawks, Pileated Woodpecker, Acadian, Alder and Willow Flycatchers, 10-15 warbler species including Mourning, Canada, Hooded, Pine and Cerulean...

Complete 2017 field trip schedule was published in January issue and appears online at http://wsobirds.org/what-we-do/field-trips

WSO Membership Application or Renewal

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