



Atlassers document 220 breeding bird species

By **CARRIE BECKER**
Atlas Communications Chair

After the third field season for the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II, volunteers have documented 220 bird species breeding in the state, most recently including a family of rare and secretive marsh birds called King Rails.

With this addition, 12 new species have been observed nesting in Wisconsin that weren't found during the first Breeding Bird Atlas survey two decades ago.

"A few of these King Rails were reported in the first atlas but none were confirmed as nesting here," said Ryan Brady, Department of Natural Resources conservation biologist and science coordinator for the Atlas. "So it's exciting to see wetland management efforts having positive benefits for a species that requires high-quality marshes to successfully raise its young."

Good wetland management by state and federal wildlife staff also has contributed to another more widely observed Atlas finding: Trumpeter Swans are undergoing an impressive expansion in range and numbers since the last Atlas survey from 1995 to 2000, Brady said. Trumpeter Swans were deci-

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Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II

SEASON 3 SUMMARY

12 New Species

Not confirmed breeding during Atlas I

- King Rail (new in 2017)
- Canvasback
- Bufflehead
- Whooping Crane
- Mississippi Kite
- Eurasian Collared-Dove
- White-eyed Vireo
- Great Tit
- Kirtland's Warbler
- Yellow-throated Warbler
- Blue Grosbeak
- European Goldfinch



And Then There Was One

Search for White-winged Crossbill continues

White-winged Crossbill is the only species confirmed as breeding in more than 5 blocks during Atlas I which has not been confirmed as breeding in the state this atlas. Unlike most species, crossbills are nomadic, each year moving across the continent in search of good spruce and pine cone crops, their primary food source. Perhaps this will be the year we find them in Wisconsin's portion of boreal forest!

King Rails Breeding at Horicon Marsh

Seen but not confirmed breeding during Atlas I

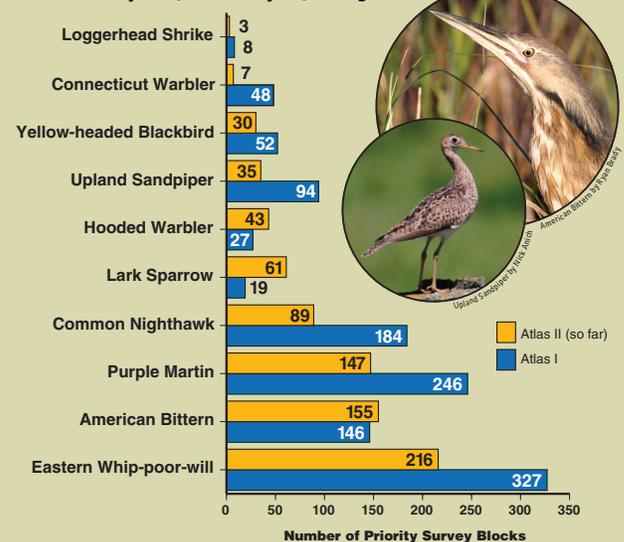


This Species of Greatest Conservation Need was also reported from several other large Wisconsin wetlands this year. Look for them in large marshes, especially in south-eastern Wisconsin, where wetland restoration and management may be having positive benefits.

Have You Seen These Species?

Atlas collects data on species of concern

Records of conservation-priority bird species are an important product of the atlas. Some of these species may be vanishing, while others are holding steady or increasing, but only a statewide effort will reveal these trends. If you have seen or heard these species in June and July, help us out by reporting them!



For more information contact Nick Anich: nicholas.anich@wisconsin.gov

October 2017

WSO celebrates expansion of Honey Creek Preserve See Page 3

The Badger BIRDER



The newsletter of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology is published 11 times per year. Contributions are welcome! E-mail your articles, photos, event dates and information, comments and suggestions to the editor.

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Naturalists book needs your help to tell story of state's environmental legacy

By SUMNER MATTESON

After interviewing Wisconsin naturalists intermittently over the past 40 years -- while away from my day job as an avian ecologist with the Wisconsin DNR -- I have (finally) completed the first volume of a



Sumner Matteson

two-volume set on Wisconsin naturalists spanning the years 1836-2017.

Curt Meine, Aldo Leopold's biographer, spoke at a recent meeting of *Wisconsin's Green Fire* conservation group and said that as a first step in re-awakening the state's environmental consciousness,

we need to tell the stories of those who preceded us in establishing Wisconsin's environmental legacy.

That's what my book will attempt to do.

The naturalists included in Volume One: Increase Lapham, Francis Zirrer, George Knudsen, Jim Zimmerman, Ruth Hine, Lorie Otto, George Becker, the Hamerstroms, Francis Hole, Roy Lukes, Sam Robbins, Bill Volkert, LeRoy Lintereur, Lois Nestel, Marion Moran, Michael Van Stappen, Eric Epstein and Sigurd Olson. Nine of these individuals are in the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame, and I interviewed eight of those.

For the few naturalists in this book that I did not know well or never met, family members and/or colleagues shared journals or directed me to the Wisconsin State Historical Society -- in the case of Increase Lapham -- to personal correspondence illuminating the breadth of the naturalist's life. Through it all, during the long journey to bring to completion this first volume, I have been more intrigued by what these

naturalists experienced or felt or believed than what they accomplished because in exploring one's life there is a more complete understanding of a life lived fully.

Most chapters begin with a brief biographical sketch, followed by the words of the naturalist I interviewed. I wanted readers to connect immediately with these naturalists. My guiding intention is to honor the legacy of our naturalists, who tirelessly remind us not to lose sight of ecological relationships.

Elva Paulson recently wrote that my chapter on her parents, Frances and Frederick Hamerstrom, was "a gem." So that told me I was probably on the right path.

A literary press and publicist are waiting in the wings, once sufficient funds can be raised. I have two fund-raising goals: short-term \$25,000 to publish and promote Volume One; and long-term \$25,000 more for the writing and publishing of Volume Two. To date, about \$6,000 has been raised for Volume One, including \$800 from Bird City Green Bay, thanks to the efforts of Nancy Nabak.

Tax-deductible contributions can be made out to SOEI (Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute), with *Wisconsin Naturalists* on the memo line, and sent to Alan Brew, SOEI Executive Director, c/o Northland College, 1411 Ellis Ave., Ashland, WI 54806.

Help make this book a reality; then let's get back to watching birds!

SUMNER MATTESON works to protect endangered and threatened birds as an avian ecologist for the DNR's Natural Heritage Conservation program. He helps lead the Great Wisconsin Birdathon, a joint effort of the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative to raise money and awareness for bird conservation.

KATE'S QUOTES

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

"Birds should be saved for utilitarian reasons; and, moreover, they should be saved because of reasons unconnected with dollars and cents. . . To lose the chance to see frigatebirds soaring in circles above the storm, or a file of pelicans winging their way homeward across the crimson afterglow of the sunset, or a myriad of terns flashing in the bright light of midday as they hover in a shifting maze above the beach - why, the loss is like the loss of a gallery of the masterpieces of the artists of old time."

-- THEODORE ROOSEVELT, president, historian, naturalist, explorer

WSO celebrated Honey Creek expansion on a perfect autumn day



Nearly 80 people gathered on Sept. 30 to celebrate and honor those who supported the campaign to raise \$575,000 to add 104 acres to the Harold and Carla Kruse Honey Creek Nature Preserve. Development committee chair (upper left) Mary Korkor introduced the last three WSO presidents (Michael John Jaeger, Carl Schwartz and Kim Kreitinger, left to right, with invitation artist Anders Preston, front) as the donor plaque was unveiled. WSO members picnicked, were entertained by the music of the Jim Knickelbine family (center) and Mike Mossman and Lisa Hartman (right), hiked the property and had a good ol' time.

-- Photography by Tom Schultz



RARE BIRDS REPORT

Hurricane season brings Wisconsin a truly Magnificent Frigatebird

By **MARK KORDUCKI**

After a wet summer, the early part of fall saw precipitation well below normal. The month began with cooler temperatures that felt more like October. The end of the month saw the warmest temperatures of the year with several areas hitting the mid-90s!

The most exciting find of the month was a **MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD** seen flying over Bluegill Bay Park in Wausau (Marathon County) on the morning of Sept. 22. Unfortunately, the bird did not stop and no one was able to relocate it. This bird might have been blown up here by one of the two major hurricanes that have hit the United States already this autumn. This is only the fourth record of a frigatebird in Wisconsin.

A **SAY'S PHOEBE** visited a yard in Bayfield County and lingered for half an hour before disappearing. Good documentation photos were taken.

A **WESTERN KINGBIRD** was briefly seen in Dodge County before quickly moving on. Continuing this trend, a **SCISSOR-TAILED FLY-CATCHER** was reported as a fly-by in Rock.

A **LONG-TAILED JAEGER** was found on Lake Koshkonong in Jefferson County. This is a very unusual inland sighting. This bird was seen quite close to shore and excellent photos were obtained as the bird alternated between resting on the water and making short flights. An inland **SABINE'S GULL** was found in Burnett County.

All three species of jaegers and multiple **SABINE'S GULLS** were more expected at Wisconsin Point. Unfortunately, most of these sightings occurred early in the week before the WSO field trip officially began. The weekend of the field trip was hampered by hot, calm weather that was not conducive to bringing these pelagic birds close to shore. A cooperative **WESTERN GREBE** was enjoyed, however, during the weekend on the point.

A **NEOTROPIC CORMORANT** was seen at Harrington Beach in Ozaucue by the skilledwaterbird counter deployed there by the Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory, headquartered in nearby Port Washington. He also reported a few **PARASITIC JAEGERs**.

Early **ROSS'S GEESE** were found in Milwaukee and Dodge. An immature **YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT HERON** was a nice find in Racine. A small number of **NELSON'S SPARROWS** were found in Dane.



Melanie Coulthurst photographed this Magnificent Frigatebird over Bluegill Bay Park in Wausau on the morning of Sept. 22.



Ryan Brady of Washburn photographed this Say's Phoebe in his Bayfield County yard. It spent half-an hour preening and fly-catching from some fences before flying west out of sight.

The next two months are typically the best ones of the year for producing rare vagrants. Check your local migration hotspots and watch your feeders carefully.

*In addition to compiling this monthly report, **MARK KORDUCKI** coordinates Wisconsin's 92 Breeding Bird Survey routes. The American Birding Association offered this roundup of bird activity spawned by Hurricane Irma: <http://blog.aba.org/2017/09/abarare-hurricane-irma-bird-round-up.html>*

WSO needs 3 Christmas Count compilers and lots of participants

By **KYLE LINDEMER**
CBC Coordinator for WSO

With the days getting shorter and the third field season of the second Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas coming to a close, it's already time to start thinking about the 117th National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count (CBC). This year's count will run from Thursday Dec. 14, 2017 through Friday, Jan. 5, 2018.

There currently are 114 count areas throughout Wisconsin, each of them a 15-mile-in-diameter circle. Each has a compiler who is responsible for picking the day of the count, organizing volunteers, planning routes, compiling the data, and submitting that data to the National Audubon Society.

Currently, the **Columbus, Hustisford** and **Meadow Valley** circles are in need of compilers.

Volunteers of all experience levels are encouraged to participate in as many counts as they would like. The goal is to count every bird that you see or hear in your area. If spending the day outside in the cold doesn't sound like your idea of a fun time, you can always count birds at your feeders from the comfort of your heated living room.

If you are interested in becoming a compiler for the three open circles, or if you are a compiler that has your dates for this year's count, please email me at kyle.lindemer@gmail.com.

If you are interested in participating in a

count this year, please contact the compiler listed in the spreadsheet at <https://wso-birds.org/christmas-bird-count>

The data collected by observers over the past 116 years allow Audubon researchers, conservation biologists, wildlife agencies and other interested individuals to study the long-term health and status of bird populations across North America. When combined with other surveys, such as the Breeding Bird Survey, CBCs provide a picture of how the continent's bird populations have changed in time and space.

The long term perspective informs strategies to protect birds and their habitat, and helps identify environmental issues with implications for people as well.

FIELDTRIP: JAEGERFEST



Shawn Putz and Adam Sinkula (top left) were among the dozens of birders who braved a stormy weekend of Jaegerfest on Superior's Wisconsin Point. Among species seen were a juvenile Parasitic Jaeger (bottom left) and an immature Bonaparte's Gull (bottom right)

Camaraderie trumps weather at Jaegerfest

By **TOM SCHULTZ**
WSO Field Tripw co-chair

The skies were looking quite ominous on Friday, Sept. 22 as folks were gathering on the beach at Wisconsin Point around 6:45 a.m.

The early morning sky was deeply overcast, but looking over toward Duluth, there was a bank of blackish-looking storm clouds moving in – which matched the recent radar images we had seen. Before long, we were starting to see flickers of lightning, soon followed by the patter of raindrops, and with periodic rumbles of thunder getting closer and closer everyone headed to their vehicles by about 7:15.

After about an hour the storm had mostly moved by, and birders started re-gathering on the beach. There was increasing excitement as the first **PARASITIC JAEGER**s of the day were spotted – two dark juveniles that were flying together, harassing gulls for a while, then landing on the water. Other than these jaegers it was mainly **RING-BILLED** and **HERRING GULLS** present, with one or two **BALD EAGLES** seen flying in the distance.

The skies at the Point remained quite

cloudy and ominous, and it wasn't long before the weather started deteriorating again with thunder and lightning getting closer. A little after 9, there was suddenly a bright lightning bolt just to the rear of us, followed shortly by a loud crash of thunder, and once again everyone remaining on the beach made a dash to their cars!

After another wait for the weather to clear the group began assembling on the beach once again. By 10, there were close to 40 birders present, with scopes set up and scanning over the water for birds. Two juvenile jaegers were again making periodic appearances as they dashed around looking for gulls to chase. An adult **GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL** was spotted out among **HERRING GULLS**, and then later an adult **LESSER BLACK-BACKED** was found – looking a little smaller and grayer. More rainshowers interrupted our viewing a couple of times around midday.

Around 2 p.m., we received notice that a **WESTERN GREBE** had been spotted by birders on Gull Bluff – which is a mile or so to the east. We tried scanning with scopes out in that area, initially without success, but

then about 3:45, it was finally found. It provided nice (although distant) scope views as it lingered out in front of the group.

We had additional sightings of the two jaegers from time to time throughout the day, and then on at least one occasion in the later afternoon we had three individuals in view at one time.

Saturday morning broke with some remaining clouds, with a pretty sunrise a little while after people began gathering on the beach – which started around 6:30. Fortunately, there was little or no rain in the forecast. Once again the early morning temperature was quite mild for this time of year, in the mid 60s, and the winds were light.

About 6:40 a couple of immature **BALD EAGLES** flew over, and our daily group of **RING-BILLED GULLS** began arriving, tempted by our periodic offerings of bread. An immature **BONAPARTE'S GULL** joined them and picked up small leftover morsels – providing nice opportunities for viewing at close range.

At 6:53, a **BELTED KINGFISHER** was spot-

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Bird City Wisconsin challenges 107 communities to do more

Criteria are changed to include energy and sustainability, address outdoor cat restrictions

By **BRYAN LENZ**

Bird City Wisconsin Director

The last update from Bird City Wisconsin invited you to celebrate recognition of our milestone 100th (Sturgeon Bay) and 101st (Osceola) communities while taking a look at what the program had accomplished since its 2010 launch.

Since then, Bird City has recognized six additional communities -- Shawano, Alma, Appleton, Monona, Rice Lake and South Milwaukee -- and has another exciting development to report: an updated set of criteria for becoming a Bird City.

Last month, Bird City made the first-ever change to the criteria it has established for recognizing communities that undertake conservation and education activities to make their communities healthy for birds... and people.

Previously, communities could be recognized as Bird Cities by meeting 7 of 22 criteria from five categories (habitat creation and protection, community forest management, limiting threats to birds, education, and the official recognition and celebration of International Migratory Bird Day). To be considered an elite High Flyer, a community had to meet the Basic requirements plus at least 5 of 17 more rigorous criteria split into the same categories.



Bird City Wisconsin's new criteria can be found online: <http://www.birdcitywisconsin.org/Docs/InitialApplication.pdf>

The changes in the criteria and in the application itself are designed to nudge Bird City communities to build upon the wonderful things they currently are doing to be recognized as Bird Cities. To maintain consistency in the program, all of the criteria that were in the old application are still in the new application (with some wording changes for clarification).

To these were added an entirely new category, Energy & Sustainability, to help address climate change and urban pollution, a point system to emphasize the more-involved criteria, numerous new criteria, a single application rather than separate Basic and High Flyer applications, and a

slight increase in the number of criteria required to become both a Bird City and a High Flyer.

The revised application also features a new restriction on High Flyer status that prohibits High Flyer recognition for communities that officially support outdoor cats.

This is a huge issue as cats spread serious diseases to humans and wildlife (e.g., *Toxoplasma gondii*), cats that spend at least part of their lives outside do not live as long and are not as healthy as indoor cats, and research has shown that cats in the United States kill 2.4 billion birds and 12 billion mammals... **EVERY YEAR.**

Bird City Wisconsin is modeled on the Arbor Day Foundation's successful national program Tree City USA and seeks to promote civic management and public engagement to create healthy bird and human populations. The participants that have come together to seek recognition for their communities include public officials, bird watchers, conservationists, local businesses and chambers of commerce.

Bird City is supported by grants from the Arthur J. Donald Family Foundation, the Bird Protection Fund of the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin (NRF), the WE Energies Foundation and the Wisconsin Audubon Council; individual donations; and application and renewal fees.

It also receives significant in-kind support from the Milwaukee Audubon Society. Seed funding and follow-up support for Bird City was provided by the National Audubon Society and Toyota through a TogetherGreen Innovation Grant.

Bird City Wisconsin strongly promotes participation in a number of statewide birding activities, including the NRF's Great Wisconsin Birdathon, the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II, International Migratory Bird Day, the Christmas Bird Count and the Great Backyard Bird Count.

It has helped launch similar programs in Minnesota, Indiana, Iowa and Texas, and offers to work with organizations in other states interested in such an effort.

Bird City has three annual application deadlines: March 1, July 1 and Nov. 1. Renewals are due each Jan. 31. Bird City Wisconsin communities receive street signs and a flag to trumpet their achievements, along with a plaque and a copy of Owen Gromme's book "Birds of Wisconsin."

Bird City maintains a web site <http://www.birdcitywisconsin.org/Index.htm> and can be followed on Facebook www.facebook.com/BirdCityWisconsin/ or email me at director@birdcitywisconsin.org to join our email list.



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<https://wglbbo.org/swcs>

Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory
at Forest Beach Migratory Preserve
4970 Country Club Road, Port Washington, WI 53074
<http://bit.ly/ForestBeachDirections>

Looking for a special holiday gift this year?

A gift with meaning? A gift that matters?



Receive this beautiful glass **SCARLET TANAGER ORNAMENT** to hang on your tree (or give it as a gift) when you sign up to sponsor one of the last species still available to support the **Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas**. Go to <http://wsobirds.org/sponsor-a-species> for complete information and **see article below to take advantage of special discount opportunities** and to earn recognition with that species in all final Atlas publications. Ornaments will be shipped to all new sponsors recorded by Dec. 10.

WBBA II SPONSOR-A-SPECIES CAMPAIGN

Only 28 species available from 239 offered 3 years ago

Just 28 Wisconsin breeding species remain to be claimed through the Sponsor-a-Species program, a major source of support for the second Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas.

While 211 species already have found sponsors, key species remain, and each sponsorship helps support the study of every bird on the list. Data already collected during the first three years of Atlas field work already is guiding key conservation efforts aimed at meeting the goals of Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative:

When a species is fully sponsored (starting at \$500), the name of the sponsor or someone a sponsor wishes to honor will be listed with that species in the final print and web versions of the Atlas.

The Atlas Development Committee has established a goal of securing sponsors for every species by Jan. 1, 2018.

To help accomplish this, as part of the Atlas' special Christmas season promotion, we not only are offering a special Scarlet Tanager ornament with each full sponsorship, but we also are offering a 5% discount on any 5-year adoptions of remaining species where at least half of the total cost is paid at the time of sponsorship and a 10% discount to anyone who completes their entire 5-year adoption payment by the end of 2017.

The latter would make a Tier 3 adoption cost just \$2,250, a Tier 4 species \$900 and any Tier 5 species \$450. To take advantage of these discounts, contact committee member Carl Schwartz at cschwartz3@wi.rr.com or 414-416-3272.

Although the Atlas effort is primarily undertaken by volunteers, it is vitally important that seasonal professionals are engaged to ensure statewide coverage.

Funding generated from the Sponsor-



a-Species campaign is used for two main purposes:

- 1) To hire seasonal ornithologists to survey remote and hard-to-access priority blocks where there are few volunteers
- 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.

The cost of these hires totaled nearly \$85,000 in 2017 alone!

Here is the current status of the campaign and species still available:

TIER 1

\$10,000 **COMPLETE**
(3 species sponsored)

TIER 2

\$5,000 **COMPLETE**
(7 species sponsored)

TIER 3

\$2,500

(4 species remaining
of 24 total species offered)

*Ring-necked Pheasant
Sharp-tailed Grouse
Wild Turkey
Yellow-headed Blackbird*

TIER 4

\$1,000

(12 species remaining
of 49 total species offered)

*Redhead
Common Goldeneye
Yellow Rail
Wilson's Phalarope
Common Tern
Forster's Tern
Olive-sided Flycatcher
Bell's Vireo
Boreal Chickadee
Worm-eating Warbler
Nelson's Sparrow
Summer Tanager*

TIER 5

\$500

(12 species remaining
of 156 total species offered)

*Mute Swan
American Black Duck
Ring-necked Duck
Horned Grebe
Rock Pigeon
Philadelphia Vireo
Northern Rough-winged Swallow
Bank Swallow
Northern Mockingbird
Brewer's Blackbird
Common Grackle
Brown-headed Cowbird*

FOUND IN OUR ARCHIVES

Guestbook captures bird club memories in an era of friendship

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 a frequent look at something **Found in Our Archives**.

Last month, I shared a sweet poem that was inscribed in a notebook given to Phyllis and Alfred Holz by their mother, Minnie.



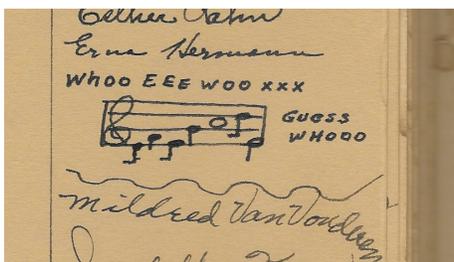
I also shared that there were so many savory goodies inside that book that I'd need to offer another dose of the contents in the future.

The gorgeous guestbook/scrapbook—“You Are Our Guest at the Whip-poor-will: Tramping the Outdoor

Trails with Al and Phyll” -- is on loan to the WSO Archives from Tom Erdman, curator of the Richter Museum of Natural History at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay.

There's no reason for me to hold back, so here's another tasty nugget from the Whip-poor-will guestbook.

As I've turned the pages and read newspaper clippings, I've also come across handwritten notes by people who have visited the



The notes and clippings in the Whip-poor-will guestbook tell much about a bygone era.

Whip-poor-will cabin and signed the guest book.

There are many comments from couples, individuals, family and friends, but my eye snagged on to one page for good reason (who could miss *this* fun?)

In beautiful penmanship across the top of the page it says, “Beautiful spring day temp.” Below is the date, April 29, 1951.

The visitors on that day? The Green Bay Bird Club.

It looks like a good -spirited prankster from the Green Bay area left a quizzical musical signature (see photo). Although I've tried to figure out who it might be from other clues, I've come up empty handed.

However, I have a strong feeling that when Phyllis and Al looked at the guest book later that day, they knew exactly whooo it was.

There are 27 names signed in the book from

the bird club. One name was immediately recognizable, Clara Hussong, a writer for the Green Bay Press Gazette, an avid birder and an outdoors advocate. There is a trail named for her at the Bay Beach Wildlife Sanctuary in Green Bay.

Two others stand out as well, Sister M. Paul and Sister Aquinas. As a member of the Green Bay Area Bird Club, I wish there were still women of the cloth in the club today. I could use all the help I can get when it comes to getting those warblers into view!

There is another name that stands out. After signing her name, Hazel Duquaine wrote, “Yippie!” I think this club had some fun out there!

A kind spirit lives within these pages. The notes and clippings tell much about the era. They show that Al and Phyll adored the community where they lived. They saved numerous articles written by Clara Hussong, and have poems taped on the pages in between her articles.

And the guests who had an opportunity to visit Whip-poor-will adored the place and the family. Their inscriptions speak of the wonderful time they had, how they can't wait to return, and how they hope to remember everything they were taught while out on a hike.

I like to think that my birding scrapbook will one day feel like this. That people will view it and know I loved being with my fellow birders as much as I loved finding the birds.

I hope they'll know that our friendship was just as precious as those built in the 1950s, and I hope they'll feel that wherever we are, the “Whip-poor-will” lives within us.

-- NANCY NABAK

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New study doubles estimate of bird species in world

New research led by the preeminent American Museum of Natural History in New York City suggests that there are about 18,000 bird species in the world—nearly twice as many as previously thought.

The work focuses on “hidden” avian diversity—birds that look similar to one another, or were thought to interbreed, but are actually different species. Recently published in the journal PLOS ONE, the study has serious implications for conservation practices.

“We are proposing a major change to how we count diversity,” said Joel Cracraft, an author of the study and a cura-

tor in the American Museum of Natural History's Department of Ornithology. “This new number says that we haven't been counting and conserving species in the ways we want.”

Birds are traditionally thought of as a well-studied group, with more than 95% of their global species diversity estimated to have been described.

Most checklists used by bird watchers as well as by scientists say there are 9,000 to 10,000 species of birds. But those numbers are based on what's known as the “biological species concept,” which defines species in terms of what animals can breed together.

CALL NOTES

It's not enough just to love Nature....

By **JIM KNICKELBINE**

For me, *being* outdoors is necessary to writing about the outdoors. Or at least being able to see the outdoors. At least a tree or two. Even if there isn't something specific to look at, it's important for my frame of mind



Jim Knickelbine

to feel some connection to nature even if it's through a pane of glass.

On an unusually warm late September evening I attempted to write from the bank of the river near my house, but alas, technology failed me and I was forced to slink back inside to the security

of the home computer. Outside, a beautiful sunset rages, and birds sing. Or squawk in the case of the herons. As the darkness deepens, the screech owls will begin calling, followed later by the Great-Horneds who have recently resumed their romantic vocalizations (at least I imagine that's why they're calling now).

Leaves are just beginning to turn along the Lake Michigan shore, a hint of the sudden change in the world's appearance that is to come in the next couple of weeks. We humans seem to love bright colors-- sunsets, birds, leaves-- as if suddenly the deep greens



and blues James Taylor sang about are no longer special.

Along with the changing colors come the ads and commercials beckoning people to come to Wisconsin or to our home town to experience the temporary wonders of nature. Oh, how we seem to treasure trees and nature in general for a couple of weeks of the year. Or lakes when we can water ski on them. Or birds when there is a rare lifer.

I think the world would benefit from an increased awareness on our part, and ap-

preciation of the whole of nature. Every bird is important in ways we probably don't even know about. Birds are probably smarter than we know, even though there are limits to their abilities to adapt. And perhaps more beautiful. The same could be said for so many other living things. People included, perhaps.

So when I see the hoopla about fall and how beautiful Wisconsin is, I think, "Aren't those wonderful trees and all the wonderful things they shelter and feed and sustain worth taking care of?" To tout to visitors the beauty of nature and then not care for it seems to be the height of irony.

Birds, and the ecosystems they depend on, in turn depend on us. There is so much we can do on a personal level: yard plantings, support for organizations like WSO, and advocating for nature in general.

The wonderful new addition to WSO's Honey Creek Nature Preserve and everyone's support for that \$500,000+ effort is an excellent example of doing right by nature. I'm glad this organization and my fellow members understand that. Sometimes I wish more people did, too.

JIM KNICKELBINE is education co-chair for WSO. A native of Manitowoc, he is executive director of Woodland Dunes Nature Center and Preserve and a licensed bird bander.

Weather challenges aside, about 90 enjoyed the annual Jaegerfest

From Page 5

ted as it flew past the group, and a short time later a **BLUE-WINGED TEAL** winged past. At 7:10 a group of five divers flew in and landed, which appeared to be **GREATER SCAUP**. A short time later they took off and headed west toward Duluth. A few minutes later a **WESTERN GREBE** once again made an appearance, sitting far out on the calm waters of Lake Superior.

Around 7:25 we had our first appearance of a **PARASITIC JAEGER** for the day, not far from a couple of kayakers that were paddling offshore, followed by another **BLUE-WINGED TEAL** that flew past.

A few minutes later, a group of terns came flying in, numbering about 5 individuals, followed soon after by a couple of jaegers - flying together once again. A moment after that, a third individual was spotted (another dark juvenile), further to the east.

At 7:55 five terns were again observed flying by, possibly the same group that was seen previously - with two of them now seen to be **FORSTER'S** (showing the typical

dark ear patch), flying along with **COMMONS**.

A few minutes later, a group of four shorebirds flew past, with two being **SEMPALMATED PLOVERS** and the other two **SANDERLINGS**. More ducks were spotted about 8:10, which included a **MALLARD**, an **AMERICAN WIGEON**, and five **BLUE-WINGED TEAL**.

About 9:40 a neat interaction was observed over the lake, when a **MERLIN** was spotted chasing a **PARASITIC JAEGER** - although a moment later the tails had turned as the jaeger was suddenly chasing the Merlin! .

As the morning continued, the beach started getting warmer. Unfortunately, warm weather and light winds aren't conducive to making birds active and our birding slowed down.

Around 11:30 a number of birders decided to head over to Gull Bluff, hoping it would be a little cooler there - or at least have more of a breeze. A **FRANKLIN'S GULL** spotted there, a very nice highlight bird.

Other birds seen from Gull Bluff included a **GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL** and

a **WESTERN GREBE** - and then a **COMMON LOON** was spotted as well. A little while later an adult **SHARP-SHINNED HAWK** flew by at close range.

On Sunday, the temperature was again quite mild but there also was thick fog and our visibility was limited. A **DUNLIN** flew by and landed on the beach nearby, which was the first seen all week.

There are certainly many variables involved in how productive the birding is on Wisconsin Point. This year, unfortunately, our Jaegerfest event didn't coincide with great migration conditions, so the activity was generally slow.

As usual, the jaeger activity (on Friday and Saturday, at least) was very good, and anyone who had hoped to spot jaegers certainly had good fortune.

Overall, the numbers and variety of birds were fairly low this year.

One of the great highlights every year, however, is the opportunity for camaraderie and social interaction - and that certainly the case again this year, with total attendance for the weekend was around 90!

BIRD OF THE MONTH

Wood Duck: *Aix sponsa*

By **DIANA HIERLMEIER**

Flamboyant, iridescent, unmistakable and brilliant are words used to describe the Wood Duck, which is often called Wisconsin's most beautiful duck.



Diana Hierlmeier

It is a medium-sized duck with a crested head, broad wings and a large rectangular tail.

The male's distinctive head pattern-- iridescent green and purple overall, a white throat with fingerlike extensions onto the cheek and neck, red eye and white crest -- along with its burgundy breast and overall colorful plumage are unique within the family of ducks.

The brownish to gray female is distinguished by a pronounced white patch around the eye, white throat and gray crest. Males in basic plumage and juveniles resemble adult females. These birds range in length from 18.5 to 21.3 inches, with a wingspan from 26 to 28.7 inches and weight averaging 16 to 30.4 ounces.

This is a common bird of riparian habitats, wooded swamps and freshwater marshes. Woodies are also the most successful of the seven species of North American ducks that regularly nest in cavities.

Unlike most waterfowl, Wood Ducks perch and nest in trees and are comfortable flying through forested and wooded areas. Their broad tail and short, broad wings help make them maneuverable.

Wood Ducks pair up in January and most are already paired when they arrive at their breeding area. Males court the females by swimming in front of them with wings and tail elevated, sometimes tilting their heads backwards for a few seconds. Males also may perform ritualized drinking, preening and shaking movements.

Both members of the pair may preen each other.

Breeding pairs search for nest cavities during early morning. The male stands outside as the female enters and examines the site. They readily use nest boxes if natural cavities are not available.

Their slim bodies allow them the use of Pileated Woodpecker cavities when available. These birds generally nest in trees near water and sometimes directly over water but will use cavities up to 1.2 miles away from water.

The Wood Duck is the only North American duck that regularly produces two broods in one year. Females lay one egg per day and males will accompany females to the site each day. Once incubation begins, male involvement diminishes to being absent by hatching time. Incubation lasts 27 to 30 days.

"Egg-dumping" or "intraspecific brood parasitism" is common in Wood Ducks. Females visit other Wood Duck nests, lay eggs in them and leave them to be raised by the other females.

In some areas this occurs in more than half the nests. Individual females typically lay 6 to 16 eggs per clutch. Some nests have been found containing 29 eggs -- clearly the result of "egg-dumping."

Once hatched, the young see their mother and are imprinted on her immediately. The day after hatching (within 24 hours) the female will lead her brood out of the nest cavity.

Since they prefer to nest above water -- and usually many feet

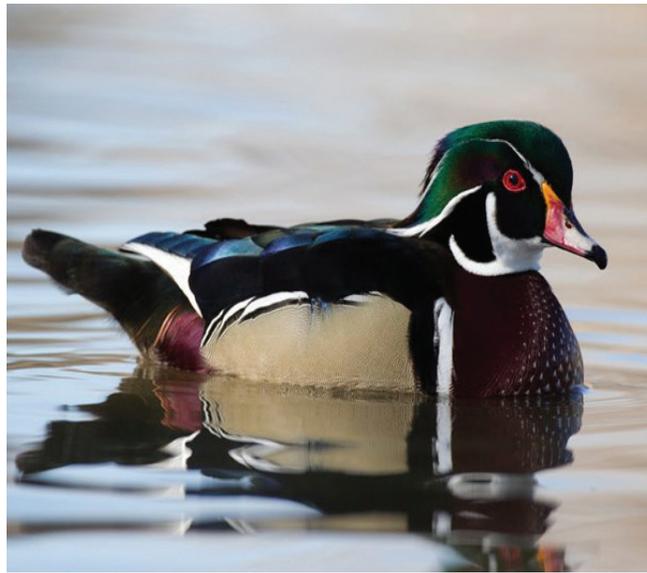


Photo from Cornell Lab of Ornithology

above the ground -- the young must be coaxed to jump out of the nest and make their way. The mother calls to them but does not help them in any way.

Ducklings can jump from heights of over 50 feet and land without injury. Wood ducks have claws, unlike most ducks, and these claws are thought to assist the ducklings when climbing out of the nest.

Once out of the nest, it will be about seven more weeks before the young learn to fly and during this time they follow their mother closely for safety and finding food.

The oldest recorded Wood Duck was a male at least 22 years, six months old. He was banded in Oregon and found in California.

Wood Ducks feed by dabbling, or by making short, shallow dives. They are strong fliers and can reach speeds of 30 m.p.h.

Their diet consists of seeds, fruits, insects and arthropods. When aquatic foods are unavailable, they move to dry land to eat acorns and other nuts from forests and grains from fields.

Plant material makes up 80% or more of what they eat -- including soybeans, smartweed, water primrose, panic grass, duckweed, millet, water lily, blackberries and wild cherries. They will also eat flies, beetles, caterpillars, isopods and snails.

The voice of the wood duck is a loud "squeal" heard when in flight and when swimming. These birds are preyed upon by foxes, cats, largemouth bass and turtles.

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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.

King Rails confirmed in 3rd Atlas season are 12th new nesting species

From Page 1

mated by overhunting by the late 1800s, and the species was mostly absent from Wisconsin until the DNR's Natural Heritage Conservation Program and its partners began reintroducing the species in 1987.

"Even a decade ago, most breeding pairs kept to the more remote northern lakes," Brady said. "Good wetland management and protection have allowed Trumpeters to use unoccupied marshes and increase their numbers to over 5,000 birds."

Volunteers have documented them breeding across the north, northwest and central regions and birds have even colonized the Lower Wisconsin River.

The purpose of the five-year atlas effort is to document all bird species that breed in Wisconsin, from common year-round residents like Northern Cardinal to species of high conservation interest like Connecticut Warbler. Some of these species may be vanishing, while others are holding their own, or even increasing, but only a statewide effort will reveal these trends, said Nicholas Anich, Breeding Bird Atlas coordinator for the DNR.

"The project already has amassed records of 4.9 million birds, but we still have a ways to go," Anich said. "We need more volunteers to survey priority areas so we get a complete picture of what's going on with our bird populations and how we can help them moving forward."

More than 1,400 volunteers have contributed to the survey so far, but more are needed to survey remaining priority areas, particularly in northern, central and western regions of the state.

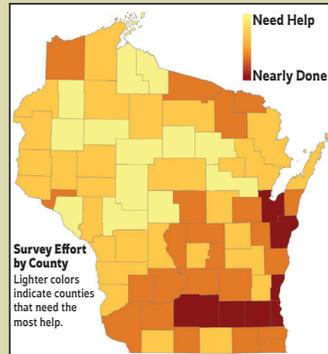
Volunteers collect data by observing birds and then entering their sightings online via the eBird program developed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. That information is reviewed by Anich, Brady and other ornithologists from organizations leading the project: The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, the Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory, the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative, and DNR.

All Wisconsin residents are encouraged to

Three of Five Seasons Complete

Let's take a look at the numbers

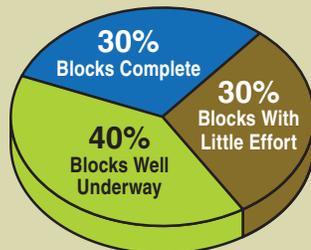
1,430 Volunteers
88,500 Checklists
239 Bird Species
4.9 Million Birds



We Need Your Help

Not an expert? Not a problem. Every sighting counts!

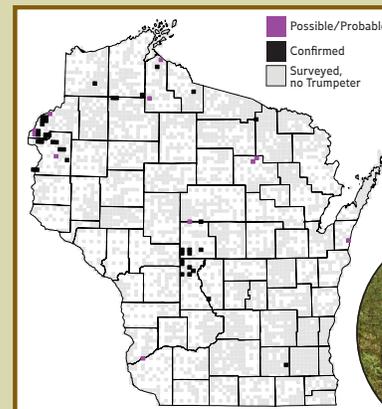
We are making progress in the southeast counties, but need lots of help up north. There are still blocks in every area of the state that need coverage. Get involved in this historic bird survey by going to wsobirds.org/atlas



Trumpeter Swan Success

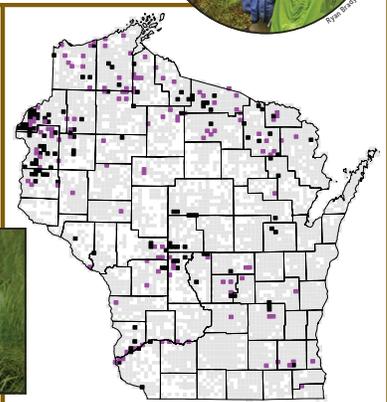
Atlas depicts range expansion

Unregulated shooting led to the extirpation of the Trumpeter Swan from Wisconsin by the late 1800s. Wisconsin DNR began reintroducing the species to Wisconsin in 1987, with good success. Atlas II clearly shows a range increase beyond the remote northern and central Wisconsin lakes that were their stronghold during Atlas I.



ATLAS II (so far)

2015-2017



"We're constantly hearing from people how rewarding atlasing is, and we welcome participants of all ability levels."

-- Bill Mueller

participate, especially those who live or travel to priority areas like northern, central and western Wisconsin. "It's easy to participate and you don't have to be an expert birder to help," said Bill Mueller, director of the Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory, "We're constantly hearing from people how rewarding atlasing is, and we welcome participants of all ability levels."

To volunteer, visit the project website at wsobirds.org/atlas.

Training sessions and field trips will take place throughout Wisconsin in 2018. When the project is completed, the data will be published in a hard-copy book and online for use by researchers, land managers, conservationists and citizens interested in birds and their habitat.

ATLASER SPOTLIGHT

Larry Michael: 'Birding for quality, not quantity, is how the Atlas has changed my birding'

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 1,435 atlasers who have submitted nearly 89,000 checklists.

The Atlas couldn't happen without its volunteers, and every atlaser brings a distinct set of talents to the project. Our team is truly as varied as the bird species they observe, and the truth is you can be any age, live anywhere, and need only an interest in birds to participate. Case in point is this month's spotlight: As a blind birder, Larry Michael did not think he had anything to offer the project. After reluctantly joining, it turns out that not only is he making important contributions birding by ear, but he's having a great time doing it.

NAME: Larry Michael

HOMETOWN:
Horicon, Dodge County

AGE: 65

NUMBER OF YEARS BIRDING:
About 30

OTHER CITIZEN SCIENCE EXPERIENCE:

Christmas Bird Counts
Midwest Crane Count
Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas I
Federal Breeding Bird Survey
Great Lakes Owl Survey
Wisconsin Marshbird Survey

FAVORITE BIRD:

My favorite bird is the Chestnut-sided Warbler, hands down. Seeing my first Chestnut, I thought I had discovered a new bird species. It pushed me into birding.

About seven years ago I lost my eyesight, and it changed how I birded forever. But I soon found out that being forced to bird by ear is no less rewarding.

I never thought about a favorite "heard only" bird. The American Robin's song always brings back fond childhood memories, and for me is the start of spring. I have a hard time atlasing without hearing a robin's song. Simple in song as well as beauty. You gotta love 'em.

MOTIVATION TO ATLAS:

I hate to admit this, but at first I was not motivated to atlas and did not do so for the first two years. I felt that a blind birder had little to offer to a project like this.

But after reading again and again the breeding codes that fell into the "heard only" category, I soon began to question my thoughts. After talking to Ryan Brady and county coordinator Matt Herzmann, I finally changed my mind. They told me that a blind atlaser could provide plenty of important data and that they would be more than happy to accept any observations that I could provide.

That was all the motivation I needed. Thanks, Ryan and Matt.

PRIMARY ATLASING LOCATION:

Priority blocks Horicon CE and Mayville South CE, both in Dodge County.

MOST EXCITING ATLAS FIND:

Let me first "set the stage." I do all of my night time stationary atlasing alone. So, while I was sitting alone listening to the night sounds I was startled by very loud barking, chuckling, rattling, hissing, bill snapping and spine chilling screeching just 10 feet away. This went on for over five minutes.



Larry Michael says: "It must have been said before: 'If I can do it, anyone can.' This is coming from a birder who is blind. Even if you have less than desired sight or hearing, there is a place for you in the atlas. They will welcome you with open arms."

I knew right away that it was an Eastern Screech Owl. I must have set up too close to its nesting cavity. I do not know who was more surprised or frightened. Exciting? That is an understatement.

MOST REWARDING PART OF ATLASING:

The easy and simple answer would be that I am helping birds. But I have found in just one year of atlasing that I am reaping rewards far greater.

Atlasing has given me a more complete picture of a bird's life cycle. I have heard birds sing the very first morning back from their wintering grounds, and male birds fighting over some unknown territory. From "romance" songs to alarm calls for some impending danger, to chicks begging for food or just-fledged young "demanding" to be fed, atlasing has taken me into the daily life of birds.

For that, I thank the atlas.

HOW ATLASING HAS CHANGED THE WAY I BIRD:

A bird song is just a song, and a call is a call. Well, no more. When I now hear a bird I try to understand what is going on. From what that bird is trying to "say," to what the other sounds in the area might be. Birding and atlasing have become more than just hearing a bird species, checking it off the list, and then moving on to the next one. I now stop to really listen. Birding for quality, not quantity, is how the Atlas has changed my birding.

ADVICE FOR SOMEONE "ON THE FENCE" ABOUT PARTICIPATING:

It must have been said before: "If I can do it, anyone can." This is coming from a birder who is blind. Even if you have less than desired sight or hearing, there is a place for you in the atlas. They will welcome you with open arms.

Always remember that you do not have to go it alone. Ask a friend who has an interest in birds, or contact your Atlas county coordinator for help. Tag along with fellow atlasers.

The rewards are great and it is fun. Also, I would be remiss if I did not give a "shoutout" to the very best birding partner, my sister Karen. She is the bridge between me being just a blind birder and being a blind atlaser.

Thanks, Karen.

FIELD TRIP

Bay Beach fall warbler field trip produces results – and a visit to Piping Plover nesting island

By JEFF BAUGHMAN
WSO Field Trip Co-chair

Green Bay -- By 7 a.m. on Sept. 9, a group of nearly 70 people met at Bay Beach Wildlife Sanctuary for WSO's annual Fall Warbler Field Trip. Skies were clear, there was little or no wind and temperatures were in the upper 40s, nearly perfect conditions for this particular trip.

After we gathered the group to outline the strategy for our day, we checked out the pond by the first parking area. Here we had a cooperative **CASPIAN TERN**, a couple of **GREAT EGRETS** and **NORTHERN PINTAIL** flying over the pond. A **GREAT BLUE HERON** was spotted along the far shore, with a few **CANADA GEESE**, **MALLARDS** and a **PIED-BILLED GREBE** swimming in clear view.

After a few minutes, we started hearing chip notes of migrants in the trees behind us or as they flew overhead. Our first fall warbler of the day was an uncooperative **BLACKBURNIAN** that flew off before many of us could find it. At that point, we decided to hit the trails in search of these birds.

It didn't take you long before we had looks at **SWAINSON'S THRUSH**, **GRAY CATBIRD**, **WARBLING VIREO** and several warblers, including **TENNESSEE**, **NASHVILLE**, **MAGNOLIA**, **BLACK-THROATED GREEN** and **AMERICAN REDSTART**. One snag hosted a **CEDAR WAX-WING**, a couple of **ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAKS** and a little later several **NORTHERN FLICKERS** and **BLUE JAYS**.

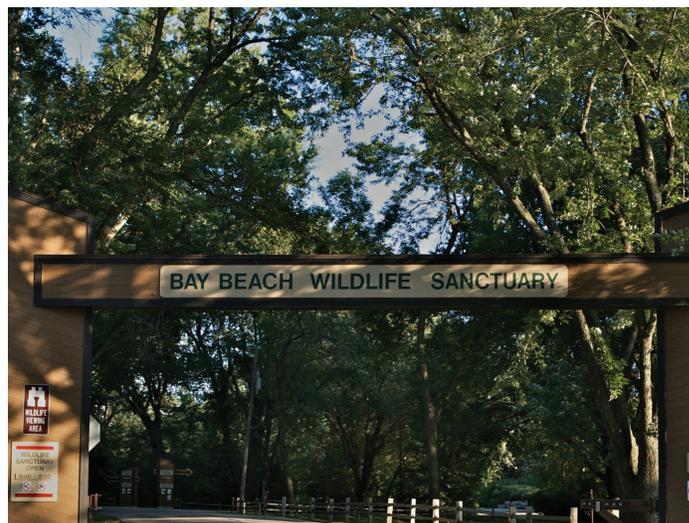
Continuing toward the main entrance road, we again found a nice group of migrants and tallied five or six more **SWAINSON'S THRUSHES**, **RED-EYED VIREO**, **AMERICAN REDSTART**, **BLACKPOLL**, **TENNESSEE** and **MAGNOLIA WARBLERS**. Along the main road we added **PHILADELPHIA VIREO**, **EASTERN WOOD PEWEE**, **WILSON'S**, **BLACK-AND-WHITE** and **CAPE MAY WARBLERS**.

After a short break at the nature center, a short walk east of the center failed to yield anything new. So we decided to bird our way back to our cars and drive out to the Cat Island portion of our field trip. On our trip back to the cars we did add **BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON**, **GREEN HERON**, **BLUE-WINGED TEAL** and **WOOD DUCK**. We also had our first **PALM** and **CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLERS** and another more cooperative **PHILADELPHIA VIREO**. Our final tally at Bay Beach was 62 species, including 13 species of warblers.

After meeting at the park and ride on Lineville Rd., we carpooled out to the Cat Island parking area. From here we started our 1.5-mile hike out to the first island, where four pairs of **PIPING PLOVERS** successfully nested this past summer.

On the hike out we added **LESSER SCAUP**, **HORNED GREBE**, **AMERICAN WHITE PELICAN**, **AMERICAN BITTERN**, **BALD EAGLE**, **NORTHERN HARRIER**, **SORA**, **AMERICAN COOT**, **KILLDEER**, **TREE** and **BARN SWALLOWS**, **MARSH WREN** and **SWAMP SPARROW**. Upon arriving at the first island, we noticed a few shorebirds along the west shore. These birds were quite distant, but through our scopes, we added **BLACK-BELLIED AND SEMIPALMATED PLOVERS**, **SANDERLING**, **LEAST SEMIPALMATED** and **SPOTTED SANDPIPERS**.

We walked the causeway around to the southeast side of the island in hope of finding more shorebirds but there was minimal shoreline habitat and no birds were present. As we rested, some of us on the large rocks along the causeway, contemplating (a few of us dreading) the 1.5-mile hike back to the cars, a small mixed flock of shorebirds landed quite close. Among them were 8 **SEMIPALMATED PLOVERS**, a **SANDERLING** and a **SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER**. While enjoying these birds at close range an **AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER** called from overhead, circled, landed near us for a couple of seconds,



The Bay Beach Wildlife Sanctuary in Green Bay is a 700-acre urban wildlife refuge offering miles of hiking and walking trails, and excellent birdwatching opportunities.



This Army Corps of Engineers photo from 2013 shows the 4- to 8-foot high wave barrier connected to the outline of Cat Island. The Cat Island chain off of Green Bay once protected 1,400 acres of wetlands along the coast from punishing storms. Starting in the late 1960s, high lake levels and storms started to erode the island and by the 1970s, the three-island chain was submerged. The \$34 million restoration project aims to bring back significant wetland habitat. With completion of the 6.8 mile long wave barrier, sandy sediment dredged from the harbor is being used to fill in the island area, creating amazing shorebird habitat that already has seen successful breeding by endangered Piping Plovers.

then flew up, circled a few more times while calling and then headed southeast out of sight. We were hoping to find the **BUFF-BREADED** and **BAIRD'S SANDPIPERS** reported here the day before, but we were not able to find them.

Although it's a long walk (especially for a guy with arthritic knees), the birds and the people made for a great trip. We tallied 47 species on the Cat Island leg of our trip, giving us a grand total of 84 species for the day. A big thank-you to Mike Reed for coordinating access to Cat Island and to both Daryl Tessen and Mike for helping lead the trip.

Andy Larsen: Riveredge naturalist, director made an impact

Andy Larsen banded migratory birds, boiled maple sap for syrup, and planted seeds of native prairie plants, as well as the seeds of environmental awareness in tens of thousands of people, at the Riveredge Nature Center over his 32-year career there as a naturalist and its first executive director.

Larsen was the central force in building Riveredge from its founding in 1968 to a 379-acre complex of forest, wetland and prairie communities visited by tens of thousands each year. He died at his Cedarburg home in hospice care on Sept. 22 at the age of 78 of complications of Parkinson's disease, which he had battled for three decades.

A "Celebration of Life" memorial event will be held on Saturday Nov. 18 from 1 to 5 p.m. at the Mequon Nature Preserve, 8200 W County Line Rd, Mequon. The family welcomes donations in Larsen's memory to the Wisconsin Parkinson's Disease Association, Bayfield Regional Conservancy, Riveredge Nature Center or your favorite charity.

"It is no stretch to say that Riveredge, as we know it today, would not exist without the immense sacrifice, passion and devotion of Andy and his family," the nature center staff said in a statement. "Everything you see at Riveredge today can be traced directly to the work of Andy and the dedicated group of volunteers he inspired and led."

Larsen was hired in 1969 to work at the fledgling nature center along the Milwaukee River near Newburg in Ozaukee County.

He was as anxious to return to the Midwest as the Whitefish Bay Garden Club was anxious to hire staff and get things going, said Judy, his wife of 55 years. The garden club had founded the center in 1968.



*For many years each Sept. 9th, Andy Larsen, first director of Riveredge Nature Center in Ozaukee County, would take Lorrie Otto, nationally-recognized environmentalist and inspiration for Wild Ones, on a tour of Riveredge's prairies to celebrate her birthday. This photo was taken by Ney Tait Fraser, who tells Larsen's story in a chapter titled "Nature in the City and Outdoor Classrooms" in her book *Mending the Earth in Milwaukee*. Otto died in 2010; Larsen died Sept. 22.*



ANDY LARSEN: "Everything is connected to everything else."

The path that Larsen took from his boyhood in Fond du Lac to Riveredge meandered as much as the Milwaukee River does in its twists and turns through the nature center and southeastern Wisconsin.

The couple met at Carleton College in Northfield, Minn., and graduated in 1961. From there, Larsen completed a master's degree in forestry from the Yale School of Environmental Studies. The couple then joined the Peace Corps and were sent to southern Brazil where they helped establish the equivalent of 4-H clubs in communities there. They returned to the U.S. in 1965, and Larsen was hired by Lakeside School Nature Center in Spring Valley, N.Y.

Four years later, friends in Wisconsin told him about the proposed nature center in Ozaukee County. He put down roots as deep

as any of the prairie plants at Riveredge, where he put volunteers to work and trained them to teach others.

Larsen said in one of his first newsletters after joining Riveredge: "The goal to which Riveredge must dedicate itself is the development of environmentally literate citizens."

He was its executive director emeritus at the time of his death and still believed strongly in that mission.

"From time spent walking along railroad tracks throughout southern Wisconsin in order to collect remnant prairie seed used to establish the prairies at Riveredge, to pioneering the inquiry-based education style that still is used today to engage the curiosity of children and adult learners alike, his legacy will forever continue in every living thing on this land and in every person that comes to be awed, renewed, and inspired by those living things," the Riveredge staff's statement said.

Judy Larsen noted that "his favorite saying was 'Everything is connected to everything else.'" That was played out by his routine banding of migratory birds, particularly the warblers that would nest in southeastern Wisconsin before returning to Central America for the winter, she said.

It also would lead him to work with the Milwaukee Public Museum on establishing environmental education programs at the Tirimbina Rain Forest Center in Costa Rica.

Recognized as Educator of the Year for his extensive work with students of all ages, including his adult ecology class, which provided hundreds of volunteer teachers at Riveredge and elsewhere, he also is remembered for his weekly column "The Nature of Things," in the Milwaukee Sentinel and his early morning radio spots on WTMJ.

This article was adapted from a story in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel and other sources.

Federal Duck Stamps = Big Win for Conservation!

Buy them from The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Inc.

What is a Federal Duck Stamp?

A Federal Duck Stamp, formally known as the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, is a **revenue stamp** that hunters 16 years of age and older must purchase each year and carry with them to hunt waterfowl. It is also a **conservation stamp** because proceeds from stamp sales help purchase and protect wetland habitat for the National Wildlife Refuge System.



2017-2018 Duck Stamp Art – Trio of Canada Geese

Why Buy Federal Duck Stamps?

Conservationists buy Federal Duck Stamps because they know that the stamp is, dollar for dollar, one of the best investments they can make in the future of America’s wetlands. Some 98 percent of the proceeds go to secure wetland and grassland habitat within the system. **Birders and other outdoor enthusiasts** annually buy Duck Stamps to gain free admission to national wildlife refuges. The stamp is valid from **July 1 to June 30**.

How Much Land Has Been Purchased?

Federal Duck Stamp sales have raised over \$800 million since the program began in 1934, and they have helped acquire and protect more than six million acres of wetlands within the National Wildlife Refuge System. Wisconsin refuges funded in part by Federal Duck Stamp sales include:

- Horicon National Wildlife Refuge
- Necedah National Wildlife Refuge
- Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge
- Wisconsin Waterfowl Production Areas, which preserve small natural wetlands and their associated uplands

How Can You Display Your Support for Conservation?

By using WSO’s holder to display a Duck Stamp you can demonstrate that birders contribute voluntarily to habitat preservation.

To learn more, visit the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service website: www.fws.gov/duckstamps

WSO’s Program

Stamps are available from WSO beginning late in June and ending December 25. **NO ORDERS WILL BE ACCEPTED BETWEEN DECEMBER 25 AND MAY 31**. In a consignment program, WSO purchases Duck Stamps and sells them at the price offered by other outlets (WSO does not make a profit on these sales).

WSO also offers a reusable clear-plastic key-ring-type holder for the Duck Stamp (shown at right) that you can attach to your binocular strap, pack, etc., so everyone can see that you support this worthwhile conservation effort. Stamps and holders are available from WSO on a prepaid basis only.



- If you want **only stamps**, send a check for **\$25 for each stamp**, plus **one self-addressed stamped envelope**, to the address below.

OR

- If you want **stamps and reusable plastic holders**, send a check for **\$28 for each stamp and holder**, plus **the form below**.

Make checks payable to WSO and send your request to: WSO Duck Stamps
c/o Christine Zimmerman
2708 Eisner Ave
Sheboygan, WI 53083

Questions: 920.980.8083 or
jeff.chris@att.net

If you are ordering stamps and holders, include your name and address on the following form – this form will be taped to a mailing envelope; **if you are ordering stamps only, do not use this form.**

Name _____

Address _____

Minnesotan Hautman wins 2017 Duck Stamp contest

Bob Hautman, an artist from Delano, Minn., is the winner of the 2017 Federal Duck Stamp Art Contest. The announcement was made on Sept. 16 by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the annual art contest, held this year at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

Hautman's acrylic painting of a pair of mallards will be made into the 2018-'19 Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, or Duck Stamp, which will go on sale in late June of 2018.

The stamp sells for \$25 and raises nearly \$40 million each year to provide critical funds to conserve and protect wetland habitats in the National Wildlife Refuge System for the benefit of wildlife and the enjoyment of people.

"Our nation's waterfowl hunters and other sportsmen and women have a long tradition of leading the way in conserving wildlife and habitat," said Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke.

"There is no better example of this than the Duck Stamp, one of the most successful conservation programs in U.S. history, through which hunters have contributed hundreds of millions of dollars since its inception eight decades ago."

Waterfowl hunters age 16 and older are required to purchase and carry a current Duck Stamp when they hunt. Conservationists, stamp collectors and others may purchase the stamp in support of wildlife conservation. A current Duck Stamp also can be used for free admission to any national wildlife refuge that charges an entry fee.

Because nearly all of the stamp proceeds are used to conserve habitat for birds and other wildlife, birders, nature photographers and other outdoor enthusiasts buy Duck Stamps to help ensure that they can always see wildlife at their favorite outdoors



The 2017 Federal Duck Stamp Contest winning art was **Mallards** (acrylic) by Bob Hautman of Delano, Minn. Second place went to **Cinnamon Teal** (acrylic) by Greg Alexander of Ashland, Wis.

spots.

The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology has long encouraged its members to purchase a duck stamp, and an order form appears on the adjacent page and online at <http://wsobirds.org/images/pdfs/duckstamps2017-18.pdf>

The current 2017-'18 stamp (with Canada Geese) is also available at your local post office.

This is Hautman's third Duck Stamp Contest win. His art previously appeared on the 1997-'98 and 2001-'02 Duck Stamps. Hautman's brothers, Jim and Joe, are also multiple Duck Stamp artists, having each won the contest five times.

Of 215 entries this year, 12 made it to the final round of judging. Eligible species for this year's contest were the Mallard, Gadwall, Cinnamon Teal, Blue-winged Teal and Harlequin Duck.

Greg Alexander of Ashland, Wis., placed second with his acrylic painting of a Cinnamon Teal; Christine Clayton of Sidney, Ohio, took third place with her oil painting of a Blue-winged Teal. In 2000, Clayton won the National Junior Duck Stamp Art Contest with a painting of a Northern Pintail. She



was 17 at the time.

The judges for this year's contest were Dr. Jacob Straub, a waterfowl biologist and the Wetlands and Waterfowl Conservation Chair in UW-Stevens Point's College of Natural Resources; Jane Kim, an artist and science illustrator; Robert Spoerl, a lifelong hunter and conservationist with a passion for waterfowl; Tim Pearson, an artist and fly-fishing guide; and Richard Prager, an avid collector of Federal and Junior Duck Stamps and Duck Stamp remarques and original artwork.

"A huge thank you goes to the faculty, staff and students of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point for hosting the contest this year," said FWS Principal Deputy Director Greg Sheehan.

"The UW-Stevens Point's College of Natural Resources is one of the nation's premier natural resources programs and has historical connections with the Service as the alma mater of a number of our staff and top agency leaders."

A gallery of the 2017 Federal Duck Stamp Art Contest entries is at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwshq/sets/72157686451028213/>

Cherish Wisconsin Outdoors Fund tackles 1st restoration work

The Cherish Wisconsin Outdoors Fund was created by the Wisconsin Legislature in 2012 to ensure the future enjoyment of publicly owned lands and waters.

This permanent endowment is funded primarily through \$2 donations made when individuals purchase a hunting or fishing license or reserve a campsite online. Additional gifts can be made directly to the Natural Resources Foundation, which manages the fund.

After five years, the fund, designed to compensate for the decline in taxpayer funded work by the Department of Natural Resources to provide habitat management for state-managed conservation lands, such

as State Parks, State Natural Areas, State Wildlife Areas and State Fishery Areas, has finally reached a value at which it can begin to make disbursements.

The first \$50,000 disbursement will support two critical habitat restoration projects.

A Walworth County project will tackle nearly 800 acres in the Southern Kettle Moraine State Forest at Clover Valley Fen and Bluff Creek State Natural Areas. The second project will assist with work on more than 300 acres in the newly acquired Tyrone Tract of the Lower Chippewa River State Natural Area in Dunn County.

"These projects represent some of the most biodiverse and ecologically significant

properties in Wisconsin," said Ruth Oppedahl, NRF executive director. "We feel so proud that the Cherish Wisconsin Outdoors Fund's first disbursement will make such a meaningful impact in two high-use properties that are home to a wide variety of game, non-game and Species of Greatest Conservation Need and in proximity to major metropolitan areas (Milwaukee, Madison and Eau Claire)."

The Cherish Wisconsin Outdoors Fund is a permanent endowment fund. All donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law. <https://donatenow.networkforgood.org/CherishWisconsin/>

Three bird clubs across the state plan a Big Sit! on Oct. 7

Big Sit! events appear to be taking place in at least three locations this fall in Wisconsin, all of them hosted by local bird clubs on Saturday Oct. 7.

There were 157 counts in 40 states and 4 international counts last year as part of the annual, international, noncompetitive birding event held during the second weekend in October and hosted by Bird Watcher's Digest.

The Big Sit! is like a Big Day or a birdathon in that the object is to tally as many species as can be seen or heard within 24 hours. The difference lies in the area limitation from which you may observe.

Some people have called it a "tailgate party for birders."

Find a good spot for bird watching — preferably one with good views of a variety of habitats and lots of birds.

Next, create a real or imaginary circle 17 feet in diameter and sit inside the circle for as long as 24 hours, counting all the bird species you see or hear.

Here are three 2017 Big Sits! in Wisconsin:

Goss Bird Club

This event will take place at Retzer Nature Center, S14 W28167 Madison St. in Waukesha. The circle is on the south facing slope of the hill, just south of the main building.

Birders will arrive before first light to listen for nocturnal birds such as owls and American Woodcock. A flurry of activity will take place just as the sun comes up with robins, bluebirds and waxwings heading out to scour for breakfast.

Throughout the day, birds will continue to fly past, including hawks and vultures taking advantage of the late-day thermals. And as much as The Big Sit! is about birds, a full day of birding provides ample time for socialization with club birders and visitors to the nature center.

During its inaugural Big Sit! in 2015, Goss tallied 37 species, beat that with 39 in 2016 and aim to break 40 this year. Check out <http://www.gossbirdclub.org/>

Horicon Marsh Bird Club

The longest-running Big Sit! in Wisconsin is staged by the **Horicon Marsh Bird Club** at the Palmatory Street Observation Deck in Horicon, which affords a view of the southern end of **Horicon Marsh**. This year's count is the 15th conducted by the **Old Coots** team led by Jeff Bahls.

Said Bahls: "Last year we had 43 species, which is on the low end. Best birds were both kinglets." Past totals have ranged from 38 to 73.

The count runs from 5 a.m. to late afternoon and anyone one can participate. Participants are allowed to come and go from the



Photo by Kate Redmond

Birders from the Cutright Bird Club had warm weather for their 2015 Big Sit! at Forest Beach Migratory Preserve.

circle—especially for the purpose of bringing food back into the circle.

Noel J. Cutright Bird Club

The 31-year-old club will host its ninth annual Big Sit! at Forest Beach Migratory Preserve all day Saturday Oct. 7. The club invites everyone to come out and spend all or part of the day, beginning at 6 a.m. If you show up for the early morning shift you may get to sample some incredible pastries.

The Sit's 17-foot circle is on the perfectly-sized Bill Cowart Memorial Hawk Watch Platform at Forest Beach, north of Port Washington at 4970 Country Club Rd., site of the Old Squires Golf Club.

Dani Baumann is again leading the club's team, dubbed the Mighty Merlins. A total of 27 birders spent 10 hours looking for and finding 53 species on Oct. 8, 2016. The record for species seen at this event was set in 2014 when 70 species were tallied.

The late Noel Cutright launched the Forest Beach count in 2009 as a way for the Riveredge Bird Club (since renamed in his honor) to support the then fledgling Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory, which has its headquarters at Forest Beach.

Switch your phone portal to Wisconsin eBird

Now that we're all out watching late migrants, remember to change the portal on your eBird mobile app to the regular Wisconsin eBird portal for checklists without breeding codes. Access your app settings by touching the gear icon in the lower right corner of the app's home page.

If you're not sure which portal a checklist is in, there's an easy way to find out: Open a checklist after logging into the full eBird site and look for the WBBA II logo in the top left corner of the webpage. If you see it, then you know the checklist was submitted via the Atlas portal. If you've accidentally sub-

mitted any non-Atlas checklists via the Atlas eBird portal, you can easily fix them by using the "Change Portal" button on the bottom right of the checklist.

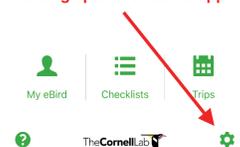
In short, if one or more species on your checklist has a breeding code of Possible or higher, use the Atlas eBird portal. If it doesn't, use the traditional Wisconsin eBird portal. Even though the Wisconsin eBird portal will accept breeding codes as part of its global system, Atlas observations should not be entered there! They will not be related to the Atlas's unique block system or integrated into Wisconsin-specific atlas

results and outputs.

The Atlas team's full set of tips on using the correct eBird portal walks you through the process at <http://ebird.org/content/atlaswi/news/please-check-your-checklist-portals/>



Touch here for option to change portal on eBird app



Congress needs to hear birders in support of migratory bird bill



Each spring, more than four billion birds make their spectacular migration from their winter habitats in Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean to their breeding grounds throughout North America. Due to continuing habitat loss on these wintering grounds and migratory stopover sites – as well as other threats —many of these species

are experiencing significant population declines and are in need of serious conservation action.

The Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act, re-titled the **Migratory Birds of the Americas Conservation Act** in a bill seeking its renewal, is the only federal grant program available throughout the Americas specifically dedicated to the conservation of migratory birds. It has supported **510 conservation projects** on more than **4.2 million acres of critical bird habitat**, resulting in crucial progress for migratory birds like the **CANADA WARBLER**. Additionally, NMBCA has kept rapidly declining species such as the **CERULEAN WARBLER** and Long-billed Curlew off the Endangered Species List.

“This legislation is urgently needed to help the Americas’ diminishing migratory bird populations,” said Jennifer Cipolletti, program policy officer at the American Bird Conservancy in urging the birding community to contact their senators and representatives and urge their support.

An important reminder on Wisbirdn etiquette

Peter Fissel of Madison, administrator/monitor for Wisbirdn, posted an important reminder to listserv users:

“You may have noticed that (a post) contained a lot of “gibberish.” It’s VERY important when forwarding an email that contains photos, graphics of ANY sort, etc., that you strip all of those out before hitting “Send” or the code will come through to Wisbirdn, which does not allow any images. (Similarly, Android devices tend to send messages in rich hypertext, rather than plain, which is why those usually come through looking like an alien language.)

Unfortunately, this may also trigger some email servers to treat that Wisbirdn message as spam....

Lastly, I’ve noticed a bunch of messages ... recently with no name/location appended to them. Remember, it is a requirement of the listserv that you put your name (first AND last) and location (preferably city/town and county) at the end of your posts.

Wisconsin eBird offers help on documenting Red Crossbills

From **Ryan Brady**, DNR biologist in Bayfield County:

“**RED CROSSBILLS** are moving across the state, especially in the Northwoods. Types 2, 3, 4, 5 and 10 have all been recorded.... Type 4 is rather rare in the East. Moreover, my recording of a Type 5 marks the first known state record and only second known record east of the Mississippi. Learn more about the types and how to help document them (it’s



easy!) in this new Wisconsin eBird story.

<http://ebird.org/content/wi/news/red-crossbills-are-on-the-move-but-which-type-are-they/>

Multiple impacts on birdlife from Hurricane Harvey

The **International Crane Foundation’s field office** in Rockport, Tex., was destroyed when Hurricane Harvey stormed ashore. ICF staff members were not harmed, and the foundation has successfully



completed a campaign for donations to rebuild.

Harvey’s winds and floods also forced the **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service** to close at least 10 national wildlife refuges for several weeks; most have reopened, but check ahead before making birding plans on the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast at <https://www.fws.gov/southwest/hurricaneinfo/harvey/index.html>

The **WHOOPING CRANES** that winter in and around the Aransas refuge are still on their breeding grounds in Canada and will begin to arrive in Texas in mid-October. While no official word has been made yet of the storm’s impact on the refuge, the National Wildlife Refuge Association said “catastrophic damage is expected.”

The storm also has raised concerns about the population of **ATTWATER PRAIRIE-CHICKEN**, the endangered subspecies of Greater Prairie-Chicken that occurs in the wild at only two locations south and west of Houston: the Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge near Eagle Lake and on private lands in Goliad County. A *Washington Post* article reports that Harvey may have devastated the prairie-chicken population due to floods and the floating masses of fire ants that feed on the insects the chickens also eat.

Border wall threatens wildlife refuges on Rio Grande

Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas is currently under an immediate threat from the Trump administration’s border-wall plans. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and its subcontractors have taken soil samples and are making other preparations to build a huge and intrusive 18-foot border-wall through the north end of the refuge.

Some 400 bird species have been recorded in the refuge, including migratory waterfowl, raptors, warblers and a suite of “South Texas specialties” that are Mexican in character and barely range into Texas. Moreover, Santa Ana is an essential part of that intricate network of natural hotspots in the four-county valley area that draws an economic income of over \$465 million a year from eco-tourists and birders.

By initiating the border-wall on federal property, the Trump administration can avoid the logistical and political nightmare of dealing with private landowners in building a wall through their backyards. Presently the plan is to build the wall on the levee that goes through and beyond the north end of the refuge. If building the wall through Santa Ana becomes a reality, nearby properties upriver and downriver will also be at risk.

If you wish to express concern about this issue to Congress, you can access a template letter from the National Wildlife Refuge Association that you can edit at: <http://refugeassociation.org/action/#/87>

This item is from *The Birding Community E-bulletin*. You can access an archive of past E-bulletins at <http://refugeassociation.org/news/birding-bulletin/>

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Inc.

P.O. Box 3024

Madison, WI 53704-3024

DATED MATERIAL PLEASE EXPEDITE

Switch to eBirder, enjoy color and avoid \$10 printing surcharge

If you use email but still are getting the snail mail version of *The Badger Birder* you are missing out on a lot.

And next year it also will cost you more money. Under the dues restructuring approved at WSO's annual meeting at the June convention, a \$10 surcharge will 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*. The *eBirder* has added many color photos (most of them of birds) and graphics along with the increased 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. In addition,

the *EBirder* goes out to members almost as soon as it is completed, generally around the 1st of the month, while the snail mail version reaches folks at least a week later by the time it's printed and mailed.

So if you already use email, all it takes is an email request to membership@WSO-Birds.org to make the switch now ahead of your membership renewal.

WSO MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL

Name _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip _____
Phone _____
E-Mail _____

PLEASE CIRCLE APPROPRIATE MEMBERSHIP LEVEL:

Student/\$25
Senior/\$25 (No Passenger Pigeon)
Household/\$40
Sustaining/\$100
Conservation Advocate/\$200

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

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