



## 2018 WSO convention to be held on shore of scenic Green Lake

By **CHRISTINE ZIMMERMAN**  
WSO Convention Committee Chair

The 2018 Wisconsin Society for Ornithology convention will once again be held in May.

The 79<sup>th</sup> annual convention will run May 18-21, and be held at the Green Lake Conference Center, which will provide our primary lodging, along with being the center of activities during the convention. The GLCC is located on 900 scenic acres on the shores of Wisconsin's deepest lake in an area of abundant birding opportunities.

The WSO Convention Committee has again reserved a large block of rooms allowing members to take early advantage of special pricing. And once again the arrangement offers convention-goers a chance to stay at the site of the Friday evening awards ceremony, Saturday luncheon, annual meeting, workshops, paper sessions and Saturday evening banquet.

The GLCC is located at W2511 State Road 23 in Green Lake. The site facilitates field trip planning and allows convention organizers to take advantage of the diverse and bird-rich habitat within the region, and on-site.



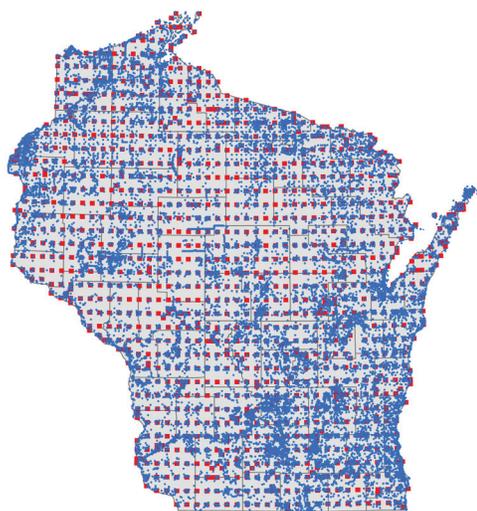
*The Roger Williams Inn is a central part of the Green Lake Conference Center, site of the 2018 WSO convention, May 18-21.*

Other details:

-- **CONVENTION REGISTRATION** at the hotel will begin on Friday afternoon. There again will be a picnic, included with registration, in the late afternoon.

-- **THE CORE CONVENTION SCHEDULE** will remain unchanged with registration continuing on Friday evening leading up to the

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*Here are all the Atlas checklists plotted on a map, representing over 30,000 individual locations. The red squares are atlas priority and specialty blocks, so you can see which blocks have sightings and which still need coverage.*

## Atlas II: 60% done with a long way to go

By **NICHOLAS ANICH**  
WBBA II Coordinator  
and **RYAN BRADY**  
Atlas Science Committee Chair

Field work for the second Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas is now 60% complete, with only two field seasons to go. And volunteer participation, vital to the project's success, has now passed the 1,400 mark.

Atlassers have now recorded 239 possibly breeding species, and confirmed 224 of those, which already brings the project near the 237 possibly breeding species and 226 confirmed species reported by Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas I in 1995–2000.

This past breeding season, the project added one species that was not confirmed during WBBA I, **KING RAIL**.

At least one pair nested at Horicon Marsh, and was seen by many. King Rails were detected in several blocks during

WBBA I, but not confirmed.

We also got a couple species off our back that we had been expecting to confirm, including **AMERICAN WIGEON** and **LECONTE'S SPARROW**.

Here are some other interesting finds:  
-- **CONNECTICUT WARBLER** appears to be one of biggest decliners, vanishing from the eastern portion of its range.

But a couple reports this year indicate they are still hanging by a thread in their southern (Jackson County) range.

-- **DICKCISSELS** irrupted into the state in big numbers in 2017, and were confirmed all the way into the northern tier of counties.

-- **WILSON'S PHALAROPE** was confirmed in Brown County.

-- **ACADIAN FLYCATCHER** nesting as far north as Barron County.

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# 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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## 'Tis the season! Give the gift of WSO!

A membership in the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology makes a great gift for friends and family. Give the gift of WSO this holiday season. Contact WSO Membership Chair Kim Kreitinger at [membership@wsobirds.org](mailto:membership@wsobirds.org) for details.

## Time to renew your WSO membership -- and you can do it online

WSO is pleased to offer you the ability to renew your annual membership safely and securely online. Just go to [wsobirds.org/members](http://wsobirds.org/members) and sign in using your email address. Click on the **RENEWAL** button and pay using your credit card or PayPal account.

As you may have heard, WSO is starting to use a new web-based system to enroll members, handle their renewals, secure payments and donations, and just generally improve communications. The new system is available at [wsobirds.org/members](http://wsobirds.org/members) and is hosted by Wild Apricot.

You can simply use your email address to log in to your member profile. Follow the instructions on the website to create your password. You then will be prompted to accept the terms and conditions. Please review your member profile and verify that your contact information is correct. And don't hesitate to contact us with any questions at [membership@wsobirds.org](mailto:membership@wsobirds.org)

Or, if you prefer to use the U.S. Postal Service, you can still beat the renewal reminder rush and send in your annual membership

renewal using the handy form on the last page of *The Badger Birder*. Just fill out the form, check off the membership level at which you are renewing, and mail the form along with your check to:

**Wisconsin Society for Ornithology  
c/o Kim Kreitinger  
P.O. Box 3024  
Madison, WI 53704-3024**

Either way, paying now will save WSO the cost of sending out annual renewal notices.

### **Welcome to new WSO members!**

The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology would like to welcome those new members who joined the organization between July 1 and Sept. 30, 2017:

Barry Baumann, Sheboygan, WI  
Sandra Mason, Madison, WI  
Debra McMahan, Clear Lake, WI  
Bradley & Mary Merrill, New Berlin, WI  
Jeff and Martha Purnell, Brookfield, WI  
Denise Runde, Madison, WI  
Dawn Stafford, Lake Tomahawk, WI  
Emily Weber, Green Bay, WI

## **KATE'S QUOTES**

*Naturalist KATE REDMOND offers us a monthly selection of quotes on nature, conservation and life around us:*

**"When you rise in the morning, give thanks for the light, for your life, for your strength. Give thanks for your food and for the joy of living. If you see no reason to give thanks, the fault lies in yourself.**

**- TECUMSEH, Shawnee Indian political leader and war chief**

I love the church  
of the osprey, simple  
adoration, no haggling  
over the body, the blood,  
whether water sprinkled  
from talons or immersed  
in the river saves us,  
whether ascension  
is metaphor or literal,  
because, of course,  
it's both: wings crooked,  
all the angels crying out,  
rising up from nests  
made of sticks  
and sunlight.

**- TODD DAVIS, winner of the Gwendolyn Brooks Poetry Prize**

# Cat Wars: The devastating consequences of a cuddly killer

Pete Marra, a world-renowned conservation biologist, will be making four appearances this month in Wisconsin to present the case for keeping cats indoors and to talk about his new book "Cat Wars," which tells the story of the threats free-ranging cats pose to biodiversity and public health throughout the world.



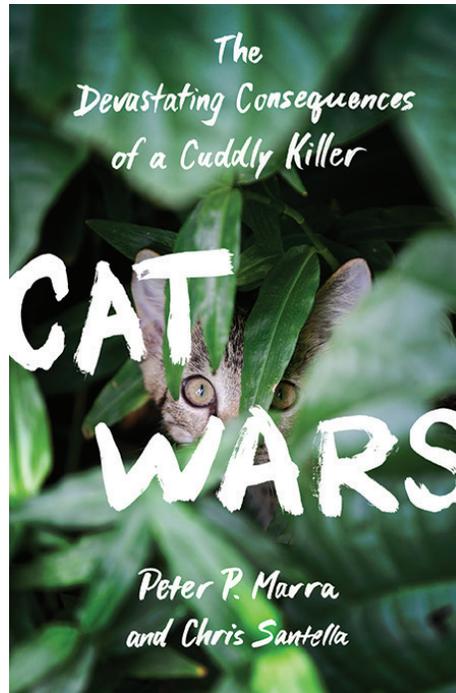
Pete Marra

The talks – in Milwaukee, Madison, Baraboo and Sheboygan -- and Marra's compelling book, provocatively titled: "Cat Wars: The devastating consequences of a cuddly

killer," trace the historical and cultural ties between humans and cats from early domestication to the current boom in pet ownership, along the way accessibly explaining the science of extinction, population modeling and feline diseases.

Marra, director of the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center, will discuss breakthrough studies on cat predation and the threats that outdoor cats pose to human and wildlife populations while also sharing details of the difficult, short lives that these cats lead.

"Cat Wars" paints a revealing picture of a complex global problem-- and proposes solutions that foresee a time when wildlife and humans are no longer vulnerable to the



impacts of free-ranging cats.

The Milwaukee presentation is free and hosted by Bird City Wisconsin, the Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory, American Bird Conservancy and the Urban Ecology Center.

It will be held:

**7-8:30 p.m., Friday, Nov. 10**

**@ Urban Ecology Center  
Menomonee Valley  
3700 W. Pierce St, Milwaukee**

The free Madison presentation is co-hosted by Madison Audubon, the UW-Madison Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies and Community Shares of Wisconsin. It will be held:

**7-8:30 p.m., Wednesday, Nov. 15  
@ Wisconsin Institute for Discovery  
330 N. Orchard St. Madison**

Bird City Baraboo will sponsor Marra at:  
**7-8:30 p.m. Monday, Nov. 13  
@ Baraboo Civic Center, Room 14  
124 2nd St., Baraboo**

A book sale and signing will be available after all three presentations.

Marra also will speak on a broader range of issues at the Elwood H. May Environmental Park's annual benefit banquet on Thursday, Nov. 9 at Pine Hills Country Club.

Tickets are \$75 and proceeds will support Maywood's Nature Based Preschool opening in fall 2018.

Marra earned his B.S. from Southern Connecticut State University, an M.S. from Louisiana State University and a Ph.D. from Dartmouth College in 1998.

He has authored over 190 peer-reviewed papers published in journals such as Science, Nature, Proceedings of the National Academy of Science and Conservation Biology.

## Endangered Hawaiian Gallinules killed by feral cats on Kauai

### AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY

**Washington, D.C.** – The endangered Hawaiian Common Gallinule is the latest documented victim of feral cat predation on the Hawaiian island of Kauai. A pair of breeding adults were attacked and killed while sitting on their nest in a national wildlife refuge in late April.

With no adults left to tend the nest, the birds' remaining three eggs and two hatchlings did not survive. The incubating parents of two more nests were killed by the same feral cat on April 22 and May 19, and six more eggs subsequently failed to hatch. The feral cat is still at large.

The attacks were captured on remote cameras installed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) in partnership with American Bird Conservancy (ABC). This predation by cats on endangered birds represents a major setback for conservation efforts and is a harsh reminder of the dangers feral cats and other invasive animals create for Hawaii's native species.

"Feral cats, whether they are dumped on the wildlife refuge by irresponsible owners or they find their way onto the refuge from nearby feral cat feeding stations, are having a very significant and tragic impact on Hanalei National Wildlife Refuge's endangered birds," said FWS deputy project leader Michael Mitchell. "Throughout Kauai, natural resource managers are doing everything they can to save our native birds. But some species are running out of time, and extinction is forever."

The recent attacks are among the latest in a long line of killings of endangered Hawaiian birds by feral cats, a non-native species. Unpublished data collected by FWS employees have documented at



Photo by Hob Osterlund  
for the American Bird Conservancy  
*Hawaiian Common Gallinule and chicks*

least 252 suspected cat kills of Hawaiian Common Gallinules, Hawaiian Coots, Hawaiian Stilts) Hawaiian Ducks and Pacific Golden-Plover in the Hanalei refuge between 2012 and 2014.

Seabirds are similarly at risk, especially while on the nest. Feral cats were suspected in the deaths of 22 Laysan Albatross chicks during a three-week period in 2015. Recently, a feral cat was caught on camera killing and dragging an endangered Hawaiian Petrel out of its nest by the Kauai Endangered Seabird Recovery Project (KESRP), an incident that is unfortunately recorded with regularity in remote seabird colonies on the island.

According to KESRP coordinator Dr. André Raine, "Feral cats are one of the worst of the introduced predators on the island of Kauai — they are widespread throughout the island, are highly adept predators, are capable of killing large numbers of birds in a very short period of time, and regularly kill breeding adult birds, which makes their long-term impact on a breeding population even more devastating."

## RARE BIRDS REPORT

# Late October cold snap yields a number of uncommon species

By **MARK KORDUCKI**

October temperatures started out well above normal over the first three weeks, but a cold snap near the end of the month brought some early snow to the northern part of the state. A good migration took place, including several rare species.

**SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHERS** were found in Ashland and Bayfield Counties. Both birds were photographed and were clearly different individuals.

A **WHITE-WINGED DOVE** in Racine was a good find at Wind Point, a historic vagrant trap. A late **SWAINSON'S HAWK** was seen well in Door County; another had been reported at the Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory in Ozaukee County on Sept. 27.

A Selasphorous hummingbird visited a feeder in Manitowoc. County. It was banded

and confirmed to be a **RUFIOUS HUMMING-BIRD**.

**HARLEQUIN DUCKS** were found along the lakefront in Kewaunee County and all three scoters were found in decent numbers. There also were several reports of scoters in the Madison area.

A **WESTERN GREBE** was a nice find in Oneida. A **WHITE-FACED IBIS** was found at Goose Pond in Columbia County. **PLEGADIS IBIS** were sighted in Chippewa and Dodge Counties. A **BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE** was found by the WGLBBO waterbird counter at Harrington Beach State Park in Ozaukee.

An early **SNOWY OWL** was found in Langlade County and turned into a rehabilitator. Others turned up early in Bayfield, Ashland and Trempealeau Counties.

At the end of month, single birds were

reported in Milwaukee, Manitowoc and Crawford Counties, suggesting that this may be an invasion year. *(See accompanying story and photo.)*

**RED CROSSBILLS** have been showing up in good numbers and a few redpolls were found along with Pine and Evening Grosbeaks.

A **TOWNSEND'S SOLITAIRE** was found in a yard in Richland County.

The reports are starting to take on a winter flavor but November is still a great month for fall vagrants and mega-rarities.

So get out there and check your favorite bird haunts.

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

## Snowy Owls already spotted; how many more will Wisconsin see?

Will this be another big winter for Snowy Owls in Wisconsin?

By Nov. 1, seven already had been reported in Wisconsin, according to Ryan Brady, a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources biologist in Ashland.

The records came from Bayfield, Ashland, Langlade, Trempealeau, Manitowoc, Milwaukee and Crawford Counties. All but the Trempealeau bird were reported in eBird, and that one was to be added shortly.

Most thus far seem to be hatch-year birds and several have been noticeably weak or even emaciated upon arrival, though not as extensively as the early flight of fall 2015, Brady said, adding:

"It will be interesting to see how November plays out, especially in light of above-average numbers of Rough-legged Hawks moving south as well.

Snowy Owls typically stay year-round near their nesting grounds above the Arctic Circle, but some spend the winter in southern Canada and the northernmost areas of the United States.

A few of these beautiful animals with large yellow eyes generally make it to Wisconsin, but some years many more than normal visit - creating what's called an irruption.

This was the case in the winter of 2014-'15, when 239 Snowy Owls were reported, and again in 2015-'16, when 248 were spotted. Last winter, a more standard number has been counted as of January: 51 in 27 counties, according to DNR reports.

Jim Edlhuber, a birder and photographer from Waukesha County, found a Snowy Owl



Photo by Jim Edlhuber

*This Snowy Owl was seen on the Milwaukee lakefront on Oct. 31.*

on the Milwaukee lakefront on Halloween morning.

"It had caught an American Coot for something to eat and was sitting on that during the picture taking," Edlhuber reported. "The bird never moved from the spot while I was present. First one of the fall season reported in the area that I know of."

Bob Domagalski, of Manitowoc County, found a juvenile Snowy Owl the same morning (Oct. 31). It was seen along the railroad tracks that run through Collins Marsh.

"The location was south of County JJ east

from the Mud Creek bridge," Domagalski reported. "This is a location that Snowy Owls have frequently been found in the past."

The same day, Rick Kinzie, of Crawford County, reported that a juvenile Snowy Owl spent a couple of hours on a fence post on the north side of Seneca.

"Gone by evening and not seen this morning."

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*For more photos: <http://www.windowtowild-life.com/snowy-owl-milwaukee-lakefront-october-31-2017/>*

## FIELD TRIP

# Hawkwatch finds just a few, but weather, other birds make for a nice trip

By **TOM SCHULTZ**

**WSO Field Trips Committee co-chair**

The weather was fabulous, with cloudless skies and mild temperatures that ranged from 60 to 72 degrees. Birders started arriving at Harrington Beach State Park in Ozaukee County a little before 8 a.m. and before long our group totaled about a dozen. We were pleased to find that the nearby trees were showing a fair amount of activity, with several **PALM** and **YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLERS** flitting about, and we also had **RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET** and **YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER**.

A few **PINE SISKINS** flew over from time to time, and a small hawk was spotted as it flew in and landed – a **MERLIN**! Fortunately, it remained in place for several minutes and everyone was able to get a nice look, though the distraction caused many in the group to miss the tiny **CAKCLING GOOSE** that was winging along among a small flock of **CANADAS**.

An **EASTERN TOWHEE** called from the nearby bushes, and was soon tracked down, while a couple of **EASTERN BLUEBIRDS** also provided good looks.

Unfortunately, the winds were out of the southwest and only about 10 m.p.h., hardly ideal for a hawkwatch. A **NORTHERN HARRIER** provided good looks overhead, and a distant **SHARP-SHINNED HAWK** flew past, but that was about it for a raptor flight.

A little before 9 a.m. the group left the parking area to hike down the road toward the observation area on the Lake Michigan shore. The birds continued to be active, with good numbers of **GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLETS** and many more **YELLOW-RUMPS** and **PALMS** along the way. A **NASHVILLE WARBLER** was also spotted, along with a couple of **BROWN CREEPERS**, and several thrushes – mostly **HERMITS**, but also a **SWAINSON'S** and a nice look at a **GRAY-CHEEKED**! A family group of four **WILD TURKEYS** also was observed as they foraged back in the trees.

One of the trip participants had brought along some sunflower seeds, and he began to hold some out to nearby chickadees. Sure enough they started to fly in, taking turns taking feeding from his open palm! They followed as we slowly walked along the road, and periodically flew in to grab more seeds.

We spent a short time near the beach, checking Lake Michigan and along the shoreline, but it was fairly quiet. We saw at least a half dozen **HORNED GREBES** on the lake, a nice flock of **DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS** flew southward, and a **BELTED KINGFISHER** also made an appearance. We worked our way back toward the parking area, and found a **COMMON YELLOWTHROAT** to add to the day's list.

From the parking area near Puckett's Pond we walked down toward the water, and spotted more **YELLOW-RUMPED** and **PALM WARBLERS**, along with several **EASTERN PHOEBES**. Other birds of interest were **WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW**, **GRAY CATBIRD**, **BELTED KINGFISHER**, **NORTHERN FLICKER** and **SWAINSON'S** and **HERMIT THRUSHES**.

With the minimal hawk migration we wrapped up the field trip around 11 a.m. with 47 species recorded. Thanks to Jeff Baughman for co-leading this outing, and to everyone who came to join us on this very lovely fall day!

Photos by Tom Schultz

**THE BIRDS OF HARRINGTON BEACH:** *The hawk watch portion of the Oct. 8 field trip produced both a perched Merlin and a windswept Northern Harrier (top). Closer to the ground were this Eastern Bluebird and a well-acclimated-to-humans Black-capped Chickadee.*



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<b>WSO BOOKSTORE ORDER FORM</b>		<b>Price/Unit</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Wisconsin</b> Covers 214 species in depth. Hardcover, 624 pages. Edited by Cutright, Harriman, and Howe. 2006	\$20.00	_____	\$ _____
	<b>Wisconsin's Favorite Bird Haunts</b> Describes birding hotspots in every Wisconsin County. Spiral bound 556 pages. Compiled, edited by Tessen. 2009	\$15.00	_____	\$ _____
	<b>Wisconsin Birds, Field Checklist</b> Three-panel card. 2016 update. <b>Pack of 25.</b>	\$5.00	_____ # of packs of 25	\$ _____
	<b>Wisconsin Birds: A Checklist with Graphs (Bluebook)</b> Depicts monthly abundance. 19 columns. 36 pages. 2003.	\$0.48	_____	\$ _____
	<b>WSO Passenger Pigeon Visor -- <u>NEW</u></b> Stone-colored visor with embroidered WSO logo. Adjustable. 2017	\$16.50	_____	\$ _____
	<b>WSO Passenger Pigeon Cap -- <u>NEW</u></b> Olive-colored cap with embroidered WSO logo. Adjustable. 2017	\$16.50	_____	\$ _____
	<b>WBBA II Scarlet Tanager Cap</b> Stone-colored cap with embroidered Scarlet Tanager Breeding Bird Atlas II logo. Adjustable. 2015	\$16.50	_____	\$ _____
	<b>WSO "We Brake for Birds." Bumper Sticker</b> Blue with white lettering. 3" x 12". 2013	\$2.00	_____	\$ _____
		<b>Item Total</b>		\$ _____
\$2.00 and less = \$1.50, \$2.01-\$20.00=\$5.00, \$20.01-\$40.00=\$6.50 \$40.01-\$55.00=\$8.00, \$55.01-\$70.00=\$9.50, \$70.01-\$85.00=\$11.00 Over \$85.00=call or email for amount		<b>Shipping and Handling</b> (refer to left for \$)		\$ _____
<b>Item Total plus Shipping and Handling Charges = Taxable Subtotal</b> <b>Figure tax (below) based on your county rate on this taxable subtotal.</b>		<b>Taxable subtotal</b>		\$ _____
<b>All counties 5.5% except as follows: Brown, Calumet, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Menominee, Outagamie, and Winnebago=5.0%; Racine and Waukesha=5.1%; Milwaukee, Ozaukee, and Washington=5.6%</b>		<b>Sales Tax</b> (refer to left for %)		\$ _____
<b>Include payment made payable to WSO Bookstore and mail with form to: WSO Bookstore, c/o Dar Tiede, 2809 Schaefer Circle, Appleton, WI 54915 Questions? Contact Dar at 920-997-9418 or bookstore@wsobirds.org</b>		<b>TOTAL</b>		\$ _____

# Outdoor recreation survey: Wildlife-watching up, hunting down

The much anticipated preliminary 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service finds a continuing increase in wildlife-watching, much of it centered on birds.

The purpose of this survey, the 13th in a series conducted every five years since 1955, is to collect and report data on the number of people who engaged in outdoor-associated wildlife activity, which activities they engaged in, and how much money they spent.

According to the report, participation in fishing and wildlife-watching went up, but the number of hunters dropped by about 2 million in the last five years.

Overall in 2016, more than 101 million Americans –40% of the U.S. population – participated in some form of fishing, hunting or other wildlife-associated recreation such as birdwatching or outdoor photography. And in doing so, we spent an estimated \$156.3 billion on equipment, travel, licenses and fees.

These expenditures represent 1% of the nation’s Gross Domestic Product – creating and supporting thousands of jobs and communities across the nation.

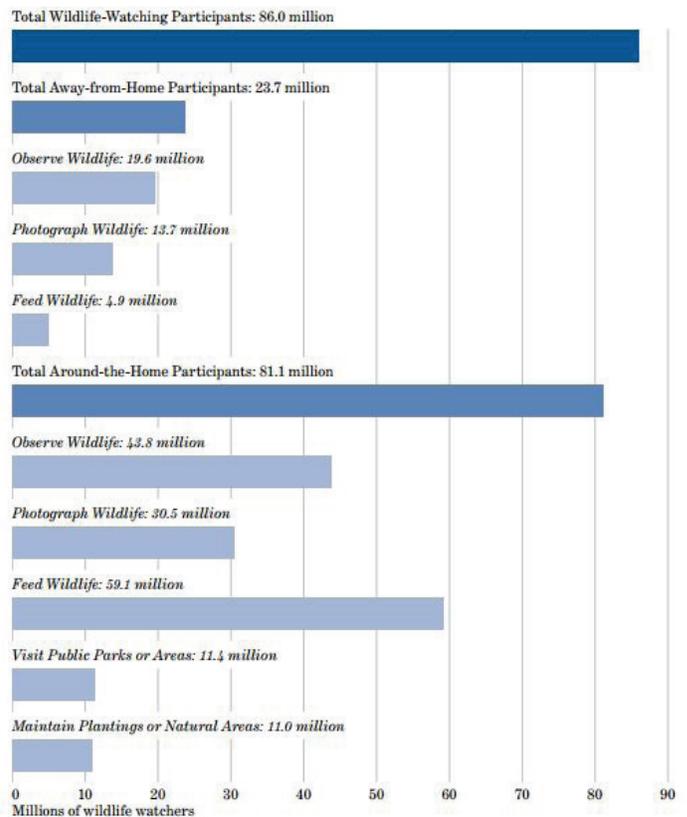
More than 35.8 million went fishing in 2016, while 11.5 million hunted and 86 million watched wildlife. This means that 14% of Americans 16 years of age or older fished, 5% hunted and 35% participated in wildlife watching.

Wildlife-watching activities increased 20% from 2011 to 2016, from 71.8 million to 86 million participants. The survey makes clear that the most significant increases involve observing, feeding and photographing wildlife. Birdwatching is understood to account for the lion’s share of this, but most of the birding data have yet to be mined.

We do know that “around the home” bird observers totaled 38.7 million. “Away from home” bird observers - those who travel a mile or more away from home to watch birds - number 16.3 million.

Expenditures by wildlife watchers also rose sharply -- 28% -- between 2011 and 2016, from \$59.1 billion to \$75.9 billion.

**Total Wildlife Watchers and Type of Participants: 2016**



Comparing some bird-associated and wildlife-associated expenditures between 2011 and 2016 is instructive: Optics shot up from \$919 million to \$1.8 billion, cameras and photo equipment went up from \$2.8 billion to \$3.6 billion, but bird food remained about steady at \$4 billion.

The final report has yet to be released, and birding enthusiasts hope to see another “Birding in the U.S., a Demographic and Economic Analysis,” as has been produced in the last few cycles of reports.

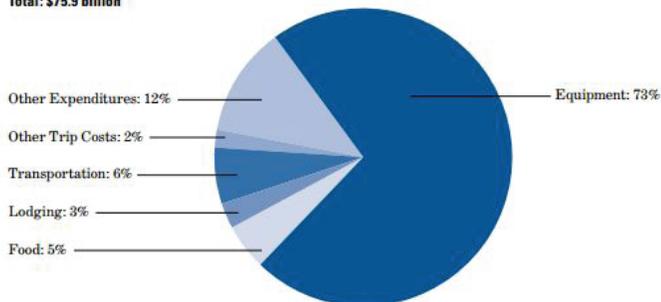
You can access the recent preliminary National Survey here: [https://wsfrprograms.fws.gov/Subpages/NationalSurvey/nat\\_survey2016.pdf](https://wsfrprograms.fws.gov/Subpages/NationalSurvey/nat_survey2016.pdf)

And, if you wish, compare it with the corresponding survey from 2011: <https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/migrated/news/pressreleases/upload/FWS-National-Preliminary-Report-2011.pdf>

This article is from the *Birding Community E-bulletin*. You can access all the past E-bulletins on the National Wildlife Refuge Association website: <http://refugeassociation.org/news/birding-bulletin/>

**Wildlife Watching Expenditures: 2016**

Total: \$75.9 billion



## Switch to the eBirder and enjoy color, fast delivery, no 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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@WSOBirds.org](mailto:membership@WSOBirds.org) to make the switch now ahead of your membership renewal.

# 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 27 species available from 239 offered 3 years ago*

Just 27 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 212 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](mailto: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

(11 species remaining  
of 156 total species offered)

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

# Time to make nominations for Passenger Pigeon awards

The WSO Board of Directors once again is asking for its members' input in selecting the winners of our 2017 Passenger Pigeon Awards. The deadline for offering nominations in six categories is Dec. 31.



The **NOEL J. CUTRIGHT CONSERVATION AWARD**, formerly the Green Passenger Pigeon - recognizes outstanding contributions to bird conservation in Wisconsin.

**BRONZE PASSENGER PIGEON** - presented to individuals who have made outstanding contributions in their local communities or in the state to promote the field of ornithology.

**GOLDEN PASSENGER PIGEON** - presented to individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the field of ornithology.

**SILVER PASSENGER PIGEON** - presented to members of WSO for distinguished service to the Society.

**CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT** - given to previous recipients of the Silver Passenger Pigeon who continue to provide exceptional service to WSO.

**SAMUEL D. ROBBINS LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT** - honors people who actively contribute to the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology above and beyond their having previously received the Silver Passenger Pigeon Award.

Limit your letter of nomination to one page and send it to WSO Awards Chair Wendy Schultz at [schultzw@centurytel.net](mailto:schultzw@centurytel.net). The awards will be presented on Friday May 18, 2018, at the Society's 79<sup>th</sup> annual convention in Green Lake.

There are two awards for which input from our members is most important. Please give special thought to those ornithologists, bird

watchers and conservation workers or volunteers who you feel deserve statewide recognition in these categories:

**NOEL J. CUTRIGHT CONSERVATION AWARD:** This award was initiated in 2005 to recognize outstanding contributions to bird conservation in Wisconsin. Recipients may be an individual/group/organization that made contributions in the following: working on behalf of endangered, threatened, and/or common species; promoting the establishment, management, and protection of bird habitat; educating the public on bird conservation issues.

**BRONZE PASSENGER PIGEON:** This award was initiated in 1994 to honor individuals who have made outstanding contributions in their local communities or in the state to promote the field of ornithology. The contributions may be through teaching (all levels); through conservation work (protection, preservation, restoration of habitat, etc.); or through organizational efforts (forming bird clubs or other groups which further ornithology).

Last year's honorees:

**GOLDEN PASSENGER PIGEON** TO **DR. ROBERT W. HOWE** of UW-Green Bay, who led the longest running volunteer bird monitoring program in our national forests.

**SILVER PASSENGER PIGEON AWARD**, for distinguished service to WSO, to web administrator **Paul Jakoubek**, of Madison, who spearheaded the modernization and expansion of WSO's web site and enabled it to host the 2nd Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas.

**BRONZE PASSENGER PIGEON AWARD**, honoring individuals who have made outstanding contributions in their local communities or in the state to promote the field of ornithology, to **Nicholas Anich**, DNR conservation biologist and lead coordinator of the atlas. Anich also was cited for his role in making Wisconsin eBird a widely adopted tool for the state's birders.

**NOEL J. CUTRIGHT AWARD**, recognizing outstanding contributions to bird conservation in Wisconsin, jointly to **Tom Hauge** and **Karen Etter Hale**, both of whom played a pivotal role in establishing the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative. Hauge resigned last October after serving as director of the Wisconsin DNR's Bureau of Wildlife Management for 24 years. Etter Hale, winner of the Bronze Passenger Pigeon in 2004, has chaired WBCI since its inception.

To see a complete list of past award recipients, go to <http://wsobirds.org/about-wso/awards>

## Crossley waterfowl ID guide available



The new *Crossley ID Guide: Waterfowl*, by Richard Crossley, Paul Baicich and Jessie Barry, has recently become available.

This new book, priced at \$34.95, with the award-winning Crossley-style plates, is geared to beginning and intermediate birders and kids. It is also destined to please legions of avid waterfowl hunters. There is something for everyone, from bird educator to wildlife manager. The book contains over 300 pages of images, using over 5,000 individual shots. The book covers all of North America's ducks, geese and swans. It has a friendly, interactive writing style covering identification, life history and vital conservation. For those who enjoy the challenge, there are also lots of mystery photos to explore.

View the waterfowl in their different and specific habitat backgrounds, see individual birds and flocks near and far, examine them from different angles, and study various plumages and behaviors, including flight.

To find out more and to order your own copy, go to <https://crossleybooks.com/>

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## KEEP LOOKING UP

# Reflections on the Golden Yellow

By **STEVE PETZNICK**

This story begins about 30 years ago when Dr. Gregg Miller, a Hortonville veterinarian, convinced Jim Anderson, then director of Mosquito Hill Nature Center in New London, to hang Prothonotary Warbler nest boxes in the 300 acre lowland forest on the center property. This past June we confirmed nesting by Prothonotary Warblers at Mosquito Hill. This article is a reflection of that 30 year journey.



*Steve Petznick*

Nicknamed the Golden Swamp Warbler and abbreviated PROW by bird banders, this southern species ranges north into Wisconsin along major waterways like the Wisconsin and Wolf Rivers. In fact, the bottomland hardwoods of the New London area are so close to the edge of this species' northern range, the species doesn't appear in older field guides as even being present in central Wisconsin.

The male has a loud, far-carrying song of 4 to 14 high-pitched ringing notes, sometimes likened to shouting "Tweet! Tweet! Tweet! Tweet!"

Despite viewing these brightly colored birds in the floodplain of the Wolf River on many occasions, we had many disappointing nesting seasons from Miller's wooden boxes. I had started losing interest in the effort. Then the DNR's Andy Paulios, who coordinated the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative (WBCI) until 2013, placed some nest boxes in southern Wisconsin and started finding success.

Instead of wood, Andy used four-inch diameter PVC drain pipe to make his houses and placed them over open water that had

low overhanging branches. With this new template, I quickly had PVC nest boxes constructed by a New London charter school. The boxes were placed in prime locations along the nature center's Oxbow Pond according to Andy's recommendations. The results: House Wrens, or were they?

The Prothonotary is only one of two cavity nesting warblers; the other being Lucy's Warbler of the arid Southwest. Prothonotary build nests that are very similar to those of the House Wren except PROWs include moss in their construction. PROWs also build dummy nests like House Wrens. Males start several nests but the female makes the final selection of a cavity and raises the young. It's also difficult to distinguish them by egg size and color, which again are surprisingly similar to House Wrens. The key factor in identifying PROW occupancy is the moss woven into the nest.

So after many years of having House Wrens in the PVC boxes, there were some instances where I thought there may have been Prothonotary nesting, but positive identification was too difficult to confirm.

In 2015, while cleaning out the six boxes, one box held a little ray of hope. In the nesting material lay a diminutive light gray feather with a tip of golden yellow. I was thrilled beyond belief! At least I knew a Golden Swamp Warbler had visited the box.

Last June 29th, while paddling the Oxbow Pond, Luke Al-Saadi and I saw a flash of yellow fly across the pond and land in a shrub. Then it flew back across; apparently finding insects in the button bushes. I knew we were on to something so we stationed ourselves below the bird's flight path as it flew back and forth several times, each time returning to the same shrubs. As we watched the PROW moving about in the bush, we noticed two small light gray colored birds in very close proximity. In fact, it would be unusual



*Prothonotary Warbler*

for different species to behave so calmly while so close to each other. We surmised that these two other birds were its young.

After so many years and so little to show for our efforts, it's finally nice to know this species is nesting in the backwaters of New London.

Many thanks to Andy Paulios for sharing his passion, to the nature center interns and summer employees who assisted with monitoring, to the charter school students and Richard Boyle, both of New London, for nest box construction, and to the late Dr. Miller, who had the insight and ambition to start this whole idea decades ago.

Success usually doesn't happen overnight, but when it does it is *Sweet! Sweet! Sweet! Sweet!*

**STEVE PETZNICK** is Assistant Naturalist at the Mosquito Hill Nature Center. He is also involved in monitoring Eastern Bluebirds, Wood Ducks and American Kestrels at Mosquito Hill.

## NRF expands its role in supporting environmental education

The Wisconsin Environmental Education Foundation (WEEF) has selected the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin to assume its state fundraising and grant-making efforts for environmental education.

While WEEF was successful at generating funds for environmental education, NRF said that the WEEF Board recognized that both the needs and opportunities in this area exceeded its organization's abilities. Because the NRF has been effective at mobilizing support for conservation and environmental efforts, the WEEF Board approached NRF

about taking on certain responsibilities.

The NRF will assume WEEF's role as the primary fundraising entity for environmental education and continue current efforts with the goal of increasing funding and resources for education. NRF said it believes that integration of WEEF's assets and expertise into NRF's programs will strengthen environmental education in Wisconsin.

After a transition period extending into 2018, WEEF will dissolve. A new Wisconsin Environmental Education Fund is a permanent endowment that will be used

to support environmental education. To donate, designate your gift to the Wisconsin Environmental Education Fund when you donate to NRF online or through the mail.

WEEF has transferred the Go Outside (GO) Fund to NRF. This means NRF will add the GO Fund to its portfolio of grant programs. The GO Fund connects students and teachers with outdoor learning experiences by providing funding for field supplies, transportation, or other resources for educators to get their students outside and learning.

# Nelson's Sparrow: *Ammodramus nelsoni*

By **DIANA HIERLMEIER**

A secretive sparrow with a brightly-colored face, the Nelson's Sparrow breeds along the edges of freshwater marshes and in wet meadows of interior North America, and in salt marshes along the northern Atlantic Coast.



Diana Hierlmeier

Formerly known as Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow, this is a fairly small sparrow with a short, rounded tail with pointed tail feathers. It can be identified by its broad ochre eyebrow, moustachial stripe and gray ear patch. The back is usually conspicuously streaked with grayish or buffy white; the yellowish-ochre breast is unstreaked (or faintly streaked). Immature birds are orange-ish all over with a few black stripes on the sides of chest. Both

sexes range in length from 4.3 to 5.1 inches, with a wingspan of 7.9 inches and weighing 0.7 ounces.

The Saltmarsh Sparrow formerly was considered to be of the same species as the Nelson's and collectively they were known as the Sharp-tailed Sparrow. The two forms have separate breeding ranges that barely overlap in Maine. They differ in genetics, songs and subtle plumage characters.

In our region, the secretive and highly localized Nelson's breeds in freshwater marshes where cord grass, squirreltail, whitetop and phragmites are common, in idle fields and planted cover. In the coastal areas they prefer dense sedge bogs with a few birch or willow trees and usually nest above the high tide line.

Courtship and breeding are initiated by late May through July. The Nelson's Sparrow exhibits a very unusual breeding system. Males do not defend territories, but move about large areas of marsh, singing to attract females. Both sexes are promiscuous, and no pairs are formed; males take no part in caring for the eggs or young. The nest is built by the female and consists of an open, bulky cup of grass, sometimes partially domed over, with a lining of finer grass. The typical clutch size is three to five eggs and the 11- 12 day incubation is done solely by the female. The young sparrows leave the nest about 8 to 11 days after hatching and may remain with the female for two to three weeks. It is not uncommon for this species to raise two broods per year. The Nelson's Sparrow is parasitized by Brown-headed Cowbirds.

The Nelson's vocalizations have been described as unmusical, dry, staccato "tschyy-drr" with the second part lower, often likened to water hitting a hot skillet. Their call is a dry, hard "stik." This sparrow reliably calls at dusk and after sunset.

Nelson's Sparrows feed predominately on insects; spiders and snails. In colder months their diet is supplemented with seeds and grains. They forage on the ground in dense grass or at the edges of shallow pools.

Approximately three-fourths of this population breeds in Canada. With destruction of coastal marshland and continued drainage of inland grasslands, it has suffered a sharp loss of habitat for breeding, wintering and migration. Typical fluctuations in rainfall and storm surges cause high nestling mortality. Mowing, draining, plowing, burning and spraying for insects all disrupt the Nelson's Sparrow's breeding cycle.

Nelson's Sparrows are exceedingly rare in Wisconsin, as the state lies at the southeast corner of the interior range. It is one of the latest sparrows to reach the state, not arriving until late April and throughout May. This secretive bird can be found in northern sedge meadows.

While its overall conservation status is listed as "least concern," it is a state Species of Greatest Conservation Need. This species regu-



larly spends the winter along the coast from Massachusetts south to Florida, and along the Gulf Coast to south Texas (mouth of the Rio Grande) and northeast to Tamaulipas; also regularly but uncommon along the Pacific Coast.

The oldest recorded Nelson's Sparrow was a male, and at least seven years, one month old when he was recaptured and re-released during banding operations in Maine.

The Nelson's Sparrow was named after Edward William Nelson who was born in New Hampshire. Nelson made a trip to the Rocky Mountains at the age of 17, accompanied by school friends and the famous paleontologist Edward D. Cope. While on that trip, Nelson collected the first specimens of Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow in the Calumet marshes of Chicago on Sept. 17, 1874. J.A. Allen named the species in his honor. Nelson believed the species was breeding in Illinois, but the late date suggests the birds he collected were migrants.

## **TO DIG MORE DEEPLY:**

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**Cutright, Noel J., Bettie R. Harriman, Robert W. Howe.**, *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Wisconsin*. Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Waukesha, Wis., 2006.

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

**Kumlien, Ludwig and Ned Hollister**. *The Birds of Wisconsin (1903)*. Kessinger Legacy Reprints, Milwaukee Public Museum, Milwaukee Wis., 1903.

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

**Shriver, W. Gregory, Thomas P. Hodgman, Alan R. Hanson**, *Nelson's Sparrow*. The Birds of North America, Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, Penn., 2011.

**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.

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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.

# Laser focus on priority blocks needed in Years 4-5

From Page 1

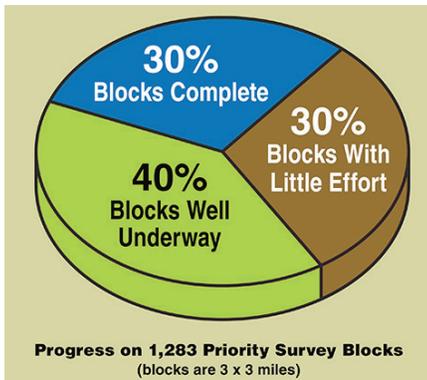
- **Peregrine Falcons** nested on natural cliffs in Door County.
- **PIPING PLOVERS** nested again this year in Ashland and Brown County.
- **EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVES** pushing north, here in Rusk County.
- **EVENING GROSBEAKS** were found feeding young in Vilas County.
- **BOREAL CHICKADEES** were seen feeding young in Iron County.

We are now down to only one species confirmed in more than two blocks during WBBA I that has yet to be confirmed in WBBA II: White-winged Crossbill, a finch that breeds in northern conifer bogs, but primarily after irruption years.

If an irruption does not occur during the period of this atlas, it's unlikely they will be found as breeders. But maybe 2018 will be the year?

There remains a list of very rare breeders found during Atlas I that have not yet been confirmed (number of WBBA I confirmed blocks in parentheses, zero means it was a possible or probable breeder in WBBA I):

- NORTHERN PINTAIL** (2)
- YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** (2)
- YELLOW RAIL** (2)
- BARN OWL** (2)
- PHILADELPHIA VIREO** (2)
- WORM-EATING WARBLER** (2)
- NELSON'S SPARROW** (2)
- LESSER SCAUP** (1)
- WESTERN GREBE** (1)
- SNOWY EGRET** (1)
- GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL** (1)
- GREAT GRAY OWL** (1)
- WESTERN KINGBIRD** (1)
- RUSTY BLACKBIRD** (1)
- EARED GREBE** (0)
- TENNESSEE WARBLER** (0)
- BAY-BREASTED WARBLER** (0)
- WILSON'S WARBLER** (0)



But compared to some of those rare breeders, we're just as likely to find another first state breeding record – so what will 2018 bring? Eurasian Tree Sparrow, Prairie Warbler, Chuck-will's-widow, or some other unexpected surprise?

For more possibilities, see <http://ebird.org/content/atlaswi/news/species-never-confirmed-as-breeders-in-wisconsin-yet/> and then keep your eyes peeled!

These graphics illustrate how far we still have to go. Our success will depend upon enlisting new volunteers and getting current atlasers to move on from completed blocks to blocks that need effort.

If you have been holding out or know of a birder in one of these areas, NOW is the time to step up!

If you live in Madison, Milwaukee or Green Bay, and your local blocks are well-covered, please consider traveling to help us finish off a few more.

There should still be a needy block near you. Check out the signup map at <http://wiatri.net/projects/WBBA/WBBAmapping.cfm>

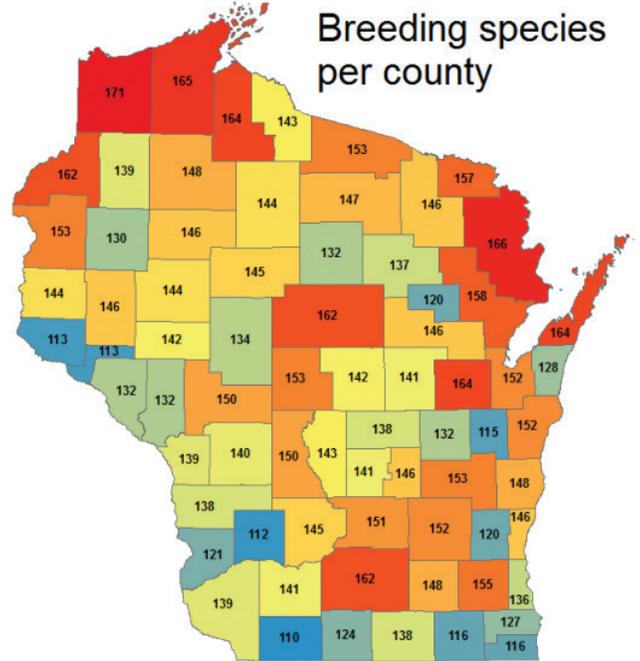
Now that we are filling in the state, and most of us have honed our atlasing skills, we're going to need a laser focus on priority blocks going forward.

So think about where you want to help next season. Ideally, every birder in the state needs to be out birding specifically in priority blocks next summer.

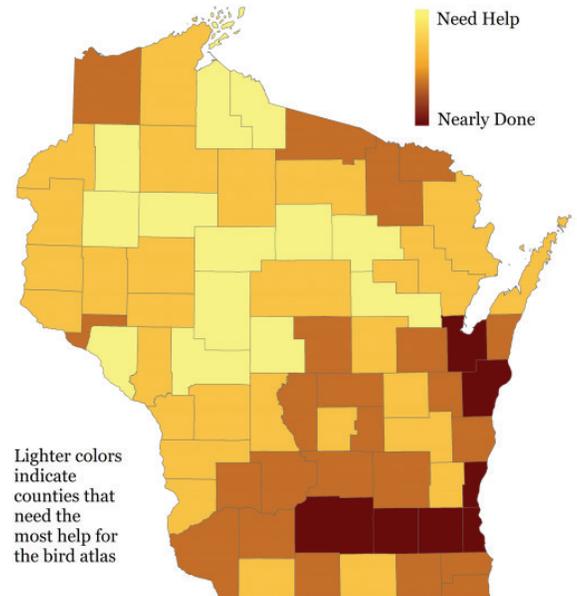
While we have a good start in a lot of blocks, we still have about 900 blocks to finish and only two years to do it!

Finally, stay up to date on the latest project news by signing up for our emails at <https://wsobirds.org/atlas-email-signup> or liking our main Facebook page

at <https://www.facebook.com/WIBreedingBirdAtlas> and our photos and discussion Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/570124803135917/>



A number of factors are reflected in this map, including county size, species diversity present (in general more species in the northern counties) and, of course, how much coverage each county has received.



This map reflects our progress after three years of field work, based on the average hours put into each priority block. The southeast in general is filling in, but we need lots of help beyond that region. The palest counties are in the need of the most help, so if you live in or travel to these areas, we need your help!

## WISCONSIN BREEDING BIRD ATLAS II

### Reminder: Fall cleanup tasks for Atlasers



Wisconsin  
Breeding Bird Atlas II

Spring and summer are the most active seasons for participants in the work of the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II, but Atlas organizers are reminding volunteers to take care of three vital “fall cleanup” activities before taking a winter break:

#### 1. Ensuring your mobile app is set back to regular eBird

Remember, it’s important to make sure you use the Atlas Portal for observations with a breeding code but use the “regular” eBird portal for non-breeding season reports. We don’t want atlas block hours inflated by Christmas Bird Counts! There’s a default portal setting on your phone, if you use the eBird mobile app, click the gear wheel to change it. Read about the mobile atlas app here: <http://ebird.org/content/atlaswi/news/mobile-atlasing-is-easier-than-ever/>

#### 2. Submitting outstanding observations

Not all checklists make it into eBird in a timely fashion, but Atlas organizers stress that they will still take observations from 2017 that have a date, location, and breeding code (if applicable). Atlasers should submit outstanding checklists ASAP because data review is underway now. Furthermore, any priority species -- here’s a quick reference <http://wsobirds.org/images/atlas/QuickReferenceGuide.pdf> -- sighted over the summer should be recorded with the appropriate documentation.

#### Data entry help is available

There are several sources of help available to anyone having difficulty submitting information. Volunteers can:

- access **data-entry tutorials** online at <http://wsobirds.org/atlas-tutorials>
- **contact their county coordinator** at <http://wsobirds.org/atlas-county-coordinators>
- **or contact the Atlas team** at [atlas@wsobirds.org](mailto:atlas@wsobirds.org) for help at any time.

#### 3. Submitting a non-birding effort reporting form

Atlasers spend a lot of volunteer time preparing to Atlas in addition to those hours spent in the field. Time spent on any Atlas activities and miles traveled to and from birding locations should be recorded and submitted to organizers via a **Non-Birding Effort Reporting Form**. It can be found online at <http://wiatri.net/projects/wbba/effort.cfm>

Volunteers are asked to report any time spent:

- **attending** training sessions
- **prepping** at home
- **scouting** locations
- **traveling** to and from an Atlas block
- **entering** data
- **doing** anything else directly associated with atlasing

Reporting this information only takes a short time, but it will have a huge impact on the Atlas. As a grant-funded project, volunteer hours and miles traveled help show funders how in-kind efforts are helping maximize the impact of their support dollars. In some cases it can even be used as an in-kind match to leverage additional direct funding.

#### 4. Entering priority species comments

If you detected any priority species this year, organizers are interested in obtaining more specific location and habitat information. For most species, this can simply be entered into eBird, but for very rare species, you should fill out a Priority Species Information Form.

- List of species that require information:** <http://wsobirds.org/images/atlas/QuickReferenceGuide.pdf>
- Priority Species Information Form:** [http://wiatri.net/nhi/birds/In1\\_locate.cfm](http://wiatri.net/nhi/birds/In1_locate.cfm)

County	Top Atlaser(s)	Confirmations
Adams County	Tom Reed	87
Ashland County	Nick Anich	81
Barron County	Matthew Berg	87
Bayfield County	Ryan Brady	105
Brown County	Jack Swelstad	90
Buffalo County	Shane Patterson	69
Burnett County	James Hoefler	90
Calumet County	Mack & Becky Whitmore	52
Chippewa County	Allen Swartz	70
Clark County	Nick Walton	81
Columbia County	Mark & Sue Martin	93
Crawford County	Dennis Kirschbaum	101
Dane County	Charles Henrikson	76
Dodge County	Jack & Holly Bartholmai	91
Door County	Melody Walsh	92
Douglas County	Frank Nicoletti	139
Dunn County	Pam Campbell	111
Eau Claire County	Anne Geraghty	74
Florence County	Kay Kavanagh	117
Fond du Lac County	Jeff Baughman	93
Forest County	Mary Maertz	87
Grant County	Dennis Kirschbaum	76
Green County	Quentin Yoerger	83
Green Lake County	Thomas Schultz	99
Iowa County	John Kivikoski	83
Iron County	Nick Anich	82
Jackson County	Randy Hoffman	110
Jefferson County	Aaron Stutz	92
Juneau County	Randy Hoffman	83
Kenosha County	Jennifer Wenzel	47
Kewaunee County	Adam Sinkula	78
La Crosse County	Scott Puchalski	49
Lafayette County	John Dadisman	63
Langlade County	Demetri Lafkas	74
Lincoln County	David Edlund	74
Manitowoc County	Robert Domagalski	105
Marathon County	Dan Belter	96
Marinette County	Skye Haas	96
Marquette County	Daryl Christensen	116
Menominee County	Tom Prestby	81
Milwaukee County	Norma Zehner	58
Monroe County	Eric Epstein	78
Oconto County	Stephanie Beilke	73
Oneida County	Shane Patterson	65
Outagamie County	Michael O’Connell	76
Ozaukee County	John O’Donnell	82
Pepin County	Shane Patterson	58
Pierce County	Dan Versaw	50
Polk County	Robin Maercklein	93
Portage County	Katie Kozak	73
Price County	Jim Krakowski	114
Racine County	Eric Howe	70
Richland County	Shane Patterson	78
Rock County	Joshua Cullum	80
Rusk County	Tony Del Valle	93
Sauk County	Aaron Holschbach	90
Sawyer County	Frank Nicoletti	72
Shawano County	Ellie Roark	71
Sheboygan County	Jim Frank	68
St. Croix County	Larry Persico	89
Taylor County	Mackenzie Goldthwait	73
Trempealeau County	Shane Patterson	66
Vernon County	Paul Hayes	78
Vilas County	Robert Spahn	78
Walworth County	Joe Jacyna	59
Washburn County	Matthew Berg	100
Washington County	Tom Schaefer	72
Waukesha County	Andrea Szymczak	93
Waupaca County	Michael O’Connell	89
Waushara County	Mike Reese	56
Winnebago County	Stuart Malcolm	81
Wood County	Tom Reed/Tom Prestby	83

# WSO recruiting CBC editor, research chair, young birder liaison

By **MICHAEL JOHN JAEGER**  
WSO President

I'm putting out a call for three volunteers to help WSO with some important roles. I'd be happy to talk further with you about any of these positions.

Please send me a note at [president@wsobirds.org](mailto:president@wsobirds.org) or give me a call at (608) 335-2546 if you think you might be interested in one of these three open positions:

## **AUDUBON/WSO CHRISTMAS COUNT EDITOR**

WSO provides Audubon with an evaluation of Wisconsin's 100+ annual Christmas Bird Counts. This is a seasonal job that requires following up with the count compilers to submit the data, edit it and get corrections made during January to April. The next step

involves analyzing the results and writing up a report that will be published in WSO's quarterly journal, *The Passenger Pigeon*, and become part of Audubon's worldwide CBC summary. There is also work in November and December, coordinating with WSO's CBC coordinator, to recruit compilers and record the dates of the counts.

## **WSO RESEARCH COMMITTEE CHAIR**

The chair of the Research Committee also is a member of the WSO Board of Directors. The Research Committee provides opportunities for WSO members to contribute to ornithological research in Wisconsin by initiating and organizing original research projects or by involving WSO on a voluntary basis in other ongoing programs. We accomplish this by providing research grants

to amateur and professional researchers, coordinating citizen/community science projects, hosting research symposia, and alerting our members to research opportunities. The Research Committee chair also coordinates peer review of academic articles for the *Passenger Pigeon*.

## **WSO YOUNG BIRDERS CLUB LIAISON**

WSO is considering teaming up with the Wisconsin Young Birders Club to offer long-term continuity and support. WSO might become the club's host organization, providing services such as website support, communications, financial and new member recruitment. To make this happen, we need a committed individual to be our coordinator and liaison between WSO and the Young Birders Club.

# Weather was an issue for this year's Big Sit! events

Here are results from four Big Sit! 2017 events reported to *The Badger Birder*:

## **WAUKESHA:**

From **Tim Hahn** of Pewaukee on behalf of the **Ben Goss Bird Club**:

It's been quite a streak. Three years in a row we have been blessed with exquisite weather for our Big Sit. And not coincidentally we have been blessed with great bird sightings as well!

Part of the Big Sit fun is attempting to find more birds than previous years, and this year our goal was 40 species, after finding 37 in 2015 and 39 last year.

As the morning of Oct. 8 progressed (after an Oct. 7 rain delay), we were able to hear an **EASTERN SCREECH OWL** in the distance, a new species for our Big Sit! The screech and then a few **GREAT HORNED OWLS** were good omens. Standard birds such as **FIELD SPARROWS**, a **HAIRY WOODPECKER** and a lone **NORTHERN CARDINAL** helped increase our species total.

Calm peaceful nights are a key factor in successful owling, and as a result

To reach our goal, however, we would need some new additions, and fortunately the luck we had in the morning would continue. **PINE SISKINS**, **SEDGE WRENS** and a **RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET**, new additions to the historical count list, increased the day's count into the high 30s.

As the sun continued to heat the air, the wind picked up, the raptors started soaring, and so did our hopes. **COOPER'S** and **RED-TAILED HAWKS** surveyed the landscape in decent numbers, and as a **NORTHERN HARRIER** flew by, we tied our record of 39! Vultures were all but guaranteed to be soaring on a warm, windy day, and as we said its name, a **TURKEY VULTURE** flew directly over the nature center! **WOO HOO!** Number 40!

The afternoon was slow, but the weather was great, and a stroll along the tree line

looking for a **YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER** was a success for the second year in a row. And just as we were resigning ourselves to leaving, Paula Stitch spotted a large bird heading south. We all put our binocs up and saw the arcing wings of species number 42 - an **OSPREY!** And with that, we called it a day.

## **PORT WASHINGTON:**

From **Dee Freeman** of Hartford on behalf of the **Noel J. Cutright Bird Club**:

If "the early bird gets the worm," then the early birder gets a **SONG SPARROW**. And so started our 2017 Big Sit list. By rule any birds heard or sighted by a participant who is inside the designated 17-foot circle, may be counted. On Oct. 7 the club conducted its 9th annual Big Sit on the Cowart Memorial Hawk Watch Platform at Forest Beach Migratory Preserve.

Organizer Dani Baumann and I were set up and ready to go by 6 a.m. and with hot coffee in hand and ears sharp, we heard the first notes of the day: **SONG SPARROW**, followed closely by "rain drops." We covered things, and we soon added **CANADA GOOSE**, **MALLARD**, and **AMERICAN GOLDFINCH**.

By 7 a.m. we had eight species. The next hour brought us **MERLIN**, **COOPER'S HAWK**, and **SWAINSON'S THRUSH**. The group of observers grew as folks came to spend a few hours braving the elements and helping to add to the day's list. As 10 a.m. rolled around we had recorded 30 species, including a lone **CHIMNEY SWIFT** and a **BELTED KINGFISHER**.

Although the heaviest rains stayed out over the lake, we faced intermittent showers and the warm breeze had picked up to a strong south wind, making it difficult to hear and causing our sightings to drop off as birds hunkered down to wait it out. The next couple hours offered only three new species, so we called it a good effort and packed up.

On the trek back to our cars we found **WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH**, **HOUSE**

**WREN**, **GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET**, **HERMIT THRUSH** and **AMERICAN PIPIT**, along with **FOX**, **WHITE-CROWNED** and **HOUSE SPARROWS**. They were lying low, near a creek, in the thickets and out of the wind. Although these eight species could not be included on our Big Sit list they were a nice way to finish.

The weather for the day affected turnout, effort and results. Comparisons with last year:

**2017** -- Cloudy, showers, SSW winds;

**2016** -- Sunshine, WNW winds

33 species vs. 53 species

7 birders vs. 27 birders

6 hours vs. 10 hours

But a heck of a lot of fun! (If you are a duck!)

## **HORICON:**

From **Matthew Herzmann** of Mayville on behalf of the **Horicon Marsh Bird Club**:

"I helped conduct the Big Sit on Oct. 7 at the Palmatory Overlook above Horicon Marsh. Conditions were poor for the event. Cloudy and windy conditions out of the south hindered night migration and kept sparrows hunkered down in the grass and difficult to see. The two hardy individuals who turned out for the event were able to observe 31 species. Most were expected marsh birds with the lone surprise being a calling **WILSON'S SNIPE** buzzing the circle before sunrise. As the rain moved in around noon, we called it a day."

## **MILWAUKEE:**

**BirdMilwaukee**, a two-member team captained by **Joseph Devereaux** and located at the Havenwoods State Forest in Milwaukee, recorded 24 species over nine hours on Oct. 7, including six raptors.

"There was a constant south wind and rain for about half of the day. Birds stayed very low. It was tough birding all day," Devereaux reported.

## FOUND IN OUR ARCHIVES

# Just like today, birders in 1952 flocked to field trips

**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**.

Birding in 1951 may have looked different than it does today, but only in style of clothing and make of car that got you into the field. People were chomping at the bit to get out there to find rare species and confirm common ones just as much as they are today. And just like today, they put a lot of energy into creating awareness and education around our feathered friends to the general public.

I found this Green Bay Bird Club program guide for 1952 in the WSO Archives, along with newspaper clippings from the Green Bay Press Gazette written by Clara Hussong. As you can see, throughout the year club members were gathering for field trips and presentations, just like today.

I sure wish I could have been at the March 16 event, "Camping with German Girl Guides." What a great program that must have been! On the back panel of the card are the continuing field trip and program dates, including the Christmas party. Those of you who know me know that I'm a big proponent of birders gathering socially. Hooray for those who in 1952 were making it happen!

I also found this Press Gazette clipping that seems worth sharing in its entirety. I'm unsure of the precise date, but believe it must be March 1951 if field trips were leaving monthly.

*"Swans were still plentiful on the bay Sunday, although not in the large flocks seen there last week, Green Bay Bird Club members found at their early morning field trip Sunday. The bay waters were clear of ice and small flocks were scattered all along the west shore. About 20 club members took part in the field trip.*

*"A total of 46 species of birds were seen by the group, including 14 varieties of ducks. A flock of about 300 Canvasbacks were observed off Little Tail, it was reported. Other duck species seen were Lesser and Greater Scaup, Ruddy, Mallard, Black, Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Redhead,*

FIELD TRIPS AND MEETINGS	
February 10	President's Meeting Fairland Penie—All Day Mr. and Mrs. Myron Duquaine Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Weber Gordon Delsart Eunice Rueppel NOTES: Western Trip Movies by R. P. Hussong
March 16	Up the River Road Afternoon trip Mr. and Mrs. Win Fonder Lila Stark Roselle Leidy Mrs. Eida Grebel NOTES: Evening meeting at museum at 7:30 P.M. "Camping with German Girl Guides"— Irene Krostag NOTES:
April 6	Swan Trip John Bender Cottage Breakfast on the Beach Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Weber Mr. and Mrs. John Aender Theresa Van Erem Mary Drula Ida Meister NOTES:
April 27	Arbutus Trip—All Day Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Holz Alicia Jacobson Eva McGill Eunice Rueppel Eland Redmond NOTES: State Ornithological Convention at Kenosha, Wis. NOTES:
May 18	High Bird Day—All Day Ed Cleary Paul Romig Ed Paulson Chester Krawczyk NOTES: Supper at Kerin cottage, 1 block east of Red Banks pavilion.
June 8	Stangelville and La Salle Park All Day Trip Chester Krawczyk Mrs. Ambrose Platten Esther Rahn Eunice Craanen NOTES:
July 13	Yankee Lake—All Day Mr. and Mrs. Quentin Van Vonderen Dr. Karl Schulze Erna Zapfe Helen Cline NOTES:
August 9-10	Cathedral Woods—Overnight Mr. and Mrs. Ray Hussong Mr. and Mrs. Myron Duquaine Mr. and Mrs. Ed Paulson NOTES:
September 14	Ridges Sanctuary and Door County—All Day Mr. and Mrs. Allan Kerr Mr. and Mrs. Ed Sogard Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Delsart NOTES:

*Ring-Neck, Red-Breasted, Hooded and American Mergansers, and Gadwall.*

*"Unusually early records for the Black-crowned Night Heron and Common Tern were established Sunday. Other birds noted were the Ring-billed Gull, the Mourning Dove and Phoebe. The Red-tailed and Marsh Hawks, and the Loon were also reported.*

*"The bird club's next field trip will be to the Al Holz cottage near Suring on April 29. This will be an all day trip."*

-- NANCY NABAK

## WSO receives grant for Honey Creek master plan

By **CAITLIN WILLIAMSON**  
NRF Director of Conservation Programs

The Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin has awarded \$27,945 to 29 applicants through the 2017 C.D. Besadny Conservation Grant Program. The program annually awards grants up to \$1,000 that support the conservation of Wisconsin's natural resources and support education and outreach.

For birders, three recipients stood out:

**WISCONSIN SOCIETY FOR ORNITHOLOGY:** Honey Creek Nature Preserve Addition Property Management Master Plan, Sauk County;

**WISCONSIN CHIMNEY SWIFT WORKING GROUP:** Feasibility of Partnering with Chimney Sweeps and Masons to Identify and Protect Chimney Swift Habitat, Dane, Rock, Waukesha, Brown, Milwaukee Counties;

**HOO'S WOODS RAPTOR CENTER,** Raptor Environmental Education Programs, statewide.

Other recipients:

**American Players Theatre,** Nature Trails at APT, Iowa County

**Bayfield Regional Conservancy,** Stewardship

and Monitoring Innovation Project, Ashland, Bayfield, Douglas, Sawyer Counties

**Boston School Forest,** Deer Exclosure Study Site, Portage County

**Cable Natural History Museum,** Bee Wonderful: Providing Homes for Native Bees, Bayfield County

**Crestwood Elementary School,** Crestwood School Native Pollinator Protection Project, Dane County

**Friends of High Cliff State Park,** Butterfly Pond Trail Enhancement, Calumet County

**Friends of Lake Wingra,** Monarchs for Schools, Dane County

**Friends of Schlitz Audubon Nature Center,** Firefly Education & Monitoring Project, Milwaukee, Ozaukee Counties

**Groundswell Conservancy,** Nature Station at Lake View Elementary, Dane County

**Harbor District, Inc.,** Harbor District Species Surveys – By Land and By Sea, Milwaukee County

**Hurley K12 School,** Multi Habitat Walking Trail, Iron County

**Malcolm Shabazz City High School,** Project Green Teen, Dane County

**Milwaukee Parkside School for the Arts,** Native Perennial Butterfly Garden Outdoor Learning Lab, Milwaukee County

**Mississippi Valley Conservancy,** Kickapoo Caverns, Crawford County

**Navarino Nature Center,** Natural Playscape at

Navarino, Shawano County

**Neighborhood House of Milwaukee, Inc.,** Nature Center Stewardship Project, Dodge County

**Northern Waters Environmental Charter School,** Weiss Public Library Prairie Learning Garden, Sawyer County

**Reedsburg Area High School,** Citizen Science in the Hydrosphere: Reedsburg High School Students Monitor the GLOBE, Sauk County

**River Valley School District,** Community Trail Project, Sauk County

**Southwest Badger Resource Conservation and Development Council,** Lafayette County Remnant and Invasive Survey Work, Lafayette County

**West Wisconsin Land Trust,** Punchbowl Safety and Accessibility Improvement Project, Dunn County

**Wisconsin Association for Environmental Education,** Nature-based STEM in Early Childhood, Statewide

**Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame Foundation,** Expanding Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame Website, Marathon County

**Wisconsin Friends of John Muir,** The Portable John Muir Nature Center Project, Marquette, Dane Counties

**WisCorps, Inc.,** Pollinator Garden Inclusive Trail, La Crosse County

**Woodland Dunes Nature Center,** Forest Enrichment and Diversification, Manitowoc County

# 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](http://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](mailto: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 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## WSO CONVENTION LIST

1	1939	May 6	Madison
2	1940	April 6	Milwaukee
3	1941	April 5	Racine
4	1942	May 1	Green Bay
5	1943	May 2	Milwaukee
6	1944	April 23	Milwaukee
	1945	<i>(no convention, due to WWII)</i>	
7	1946	April 16	Appleton
8	1947	May 10	Madison
9	1948	April 3	Waukesha
10	1949	April 22	Madison
11	1950	May 6	Two Rivers
12	1951	April 21	Milwaukee
13	1952	May 3	Kenosha
14	1953	May 2	Green Bay
15	1954	May 1	Madison
16	1955	April 30	Wausau
17	1956	May 5	Beloit
18	1957	May 4	Green Lake
19	1958	April 26	Milwaukee
20	1959	May 9	Green Bay
21	1960	June 4	Adams-Friendship
22	1961	May 20	Waukesha
23	1962	May 26	Rhineland
24	1963	May 25	Chippewa Falls
25	1964	May 23	Madison
26	1965	May 15	Stevens Point
27	1966	May 21	Racine
28	1967	May 20	LaCrosse
29	1968	May 18	Green Bay
30	1969	May 24	Beloit
31	1970	May 23	Fond du Lac
32	1971	May 23	Milwaukee
33	1972	May 20	Sevastopol
34	1973	May 19	Oshkosh
35	1974	May 18	Chippewa Falls
36	1975	May 17	Sevastopol
37	1976	May 22	Waukesha
38	1977	April 30	Stevens Point
39	1978	May 6	Madison
40	1979	May 19	Green Bay
41	1980	May 17	Ashland
42	1981	May 23	Beloit
43	1982	May 8	LaCrosse
44	1983	May 21	Sevastopol
45	1984	May 19	Fond du Lac
46	1985	June 1	Eau Claire
47	1986	May 17	Platteville
48	1987	May 16	Marshfield
49	1988	May 21	Waukesha
50	1989	May 13	Madison
51	1990	May 19	LaCrosse
52	1991	June 8	Green Bay
53	1992	May 30	Ashland
54	1993	May 22	Oshkosh
55	1994	May 20	Beloit
56	1995	May 18	Marinette
57	1996	June 6	Superior
58	1997	May 16	Manitowoc
59	1998	May 22	Eau Claire
60	1999	June 3	Fond du Lac
61	2000	May 19	Baraboo
62	2001	May 25	Stevens Point
63	2002	May 31	Ripon
64	2003	May 30	Green Bay
65	2004	May 21	Chippewa Falls
66	2005	May 20	Sheboygan
67	2006	May 26	Rhineland
68	2007	May 18	Richland Center
69	2008	May 16	Mequon
70	2009	May 21	Siren
71	2010	May 20	Sturgeon Bay
72	2011	May 12	LaCrosse
73	2012	May 17	Middleton
74	2013	May 23	Ashland
75	2014	May 15	Prairie du Chien
76	2015	May 22	Wausau
77	2016	May 13	Racine
78	2017	June 16	Carter
79	2018	May 18	Green Lake

# What year was *THAT* convention?

Every so often over dinner or an adult beverage, a discussion breaks out among the birders present over where a past WSO convention was held. That made it seem like a good idea to pull together a list (left) and publish it so that such a reference exists for folks to clip out and stick in their wallets or purses to have handy the next time someone asks.

Then it occurred to the Birder's editor that this list might cause members of WSO to look back to see how long they have been attending convention or how many they have attended in total. And that might make for an interesting article.

So drop me a line at [badgerbirder@wsobirds.org](mailto:badgerbirder@wsobirds.org) and tell me what year you first attended a WSO convention and how many you have attended altogether. Also include your first and also your best convention memories. Two of mine date to the same 1988 convention in Waukesha; I just might share both of them in the January Birder -- after I hear from all of you. (And if you have an old convention photo to share, all the better!)

-- CARL SCHWARTZ

## Birding opportunities near Green Lake include White River Marsh, Horicon, Buena Vista

*From Page 1*

annual Passenger Pigeon Awards ceremony and reception. Saturday will start early with local field trips, followed by a luncheon at the hotel, the annual business meeting, paper presentations and birding workshops.

### -- A SATURDAY EVENING SOCIAL

**HOUR** at the hotel will precede the banquet and keynote presentation.

-- **ALL-DAY FIELD TRIPS** will depart from the hotel on Sunday and Monday mornings, with a special "Birds and Beer" event planned for Sunday evening, tentatively to be held at Langford's Pub at The Golf Courses of Lawsonia, adjacent to the GLCC.

-- **THE HOTEL IS HOLDING A LARGE NUMBER OF ROOMS** for WSO at a discounted price. Prices range from \$98 to \$105 a night, depending on room type. There is an additional \$15 fee per person when more than two people share a room.

Rooms are available in Bauer Lodge, Lawson Lodge and the Roger Williams Inn. There is no free breakfast available, but rooms have access to a microwave, refrigerator and coffee pot, so plan accordingly. For details on the accommodations and amenities in the different lodging sites, you should consult <http://glcc.org/hotels.html>

### TO RESERVE, CALL 1-920-294-3323 AND MENTION WSO.

Rooms are reserved for WSO members from Friday, May 18 through Sunday, June 20, but it's first-come, first-served and all rooms will be released on April 15. There also are a limited number of rooms available on Thursday and Monday nights for anyone wanting to come early or stay the extra night.

If you wait until after the release date or all rooms do become reserved, you may end up paying a much higher room rate.

WSO Field Trip Chair Tom Schultz offers this additional convention preview:

There are a number of great birding opportunities in and around Green Lake. Field trips will visit places like White River Marsh and Grand River Marsh State Wildlife Areas, Puchyan Marsh, Mascoutin Trail Wetland, Germania Marsh as well as a number of local conservancy properties, several of which are right on the GLCC grounds.

A little farther afield, Horicon Marsh National Wildlife Refuge and the Buena Vista Grasslands are both within a reasonable driving distance -- especially for the all-day field trips.

The convention should coincide with the heart of spring migration, so besides the many breeding species we expect to find in the wetlands, prairies and woodland habitats we visit, there should also be a good variety of warblers, thrushes and other migrants passing through.



*Whooping Cranes that are part of Eastern reintroduction efforts now travel to the White River Marsh in the spring.*

# Sam Robbins Shorebird Fund put to work at Killsnake

By **STEPHEN P. EASTERLY**  
DNR Wildlife Biologist

With a \$3,000 boost from the Sam Robbins Shorebird Endowment Fund (SRSEF), established and maintained by the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology through the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, work is expected to get under way this fall and winter on a \$20,000 component of the Killsnake Wildlife Area Restoration Project.

Killsnake covers about 7,000 acres of publicly-owned land in southeastern Calumet and southwestern Manitowoc Counties. The landscape consists of prairie grasslands, uplands with a large wetland-grassland complex, bottomland hardwood forest, a small area of cedar swamp, a small area of tamarack and bog, agricultural landscape, small areas of upland forest and over 50 small wetland restorations.

Killsnake originally was established as a satellite area for both the local Canada Goose population, as well as a relief area for the large Horicon Marsh population.

Agriculture is an important part of Wisconsin's heritage and economy, and can also be a valuable part of maintaining wildlife populations. With those goals in mind there are several fields enrolled in sharecropping agreements which will benefit area farmers as well as the wildlife utilizing the property.

There are a few rivers running through the property (South Branch-Manitowoc River, Cedar Creek and Killsnake River), as well as numerous drainage ditches that bring water into the wetlands and enhance the variety of wildlife species found here.

The WSO endowment funds were committed four years ago to augment a \$16,841 Duck Stamp project approved by the Wisconsin DNR during fiscal year 2014-'15. But due to a wet-cycle, local wildlife managers have found it difficult to find the right site conditions to mobilize equipment to commence with the restoration, according to Jason Fleener, wetland habitat specialist in the DNR's Bureau of Wildlife Management. Drier conditions are important to minimize erosion, and allow contractors to do their work efficiently.

Over the years, the DNR has completed about 50 small wetland restoration projects on various parts of the property. When choosing a specific location, there are three basic questions we ask prior to moving forward with a project:

**The history of the site;** does the location have evidence or records showing wetlands existing in that location? **The existing vegetation;** are aquatic plant species present? Additionally, we need



Photo by Josh Jackl

*These shorebirds appreciate one of the many ponds on the Killsnake Wildlife Area near Chilton.*

to know if the soils present are suitable to wetlands – **will it hold water?** Known as hydric soils, these heavy clay soils are ideal for wetland restorations and enhancements. Adding a water control structure then allows for management capability on small impoundments or ponds. Manipulating water levels allows for mimicking seasonal and/or annual fluctuations of water levels, which allows for submergent and emergent vegetation, providing for a variety of waterfowl, shorebirds, water birds and associated wetland songbirds.

The local wildlife management staff is working on four additional enhancement projects funded partially by The Shorebird Management Project dedicated to the memory of beloved Wisconsin ornithologist Samuel D. Robbins, as well as by the federal Duck Stamp funds made available to states doing waterfowl habitat work.

These projects will include building a berm on two sites, with associated shallow scrapes, typically three to four feet in the deepest points. The scrapes provide open water areas as well as enhance sedge meadows and mud flats in the periphery of the ponds. Another part of the project will include a ditch plug and will also include a shallow scrape upstream from the plug.

Once completed these enhancements will provide for the future of common wildlife as well as species that are threatened and endangered, and those of special concern. They also will improve the property as a whole for both consumptive and non-consumptive users alike.

## NRF conservation endowment funds are seeking grant applicants

The 2018 grant cycle is now open for the Natural Resources Foundation's Donor-Advised Conservation Grants. Funding is available through these endowment funds:

**David and Joyce Weizenicker Fund for State Parks:** Grants up to \$1,000 are available for friends' groups of Wisconsin state parks.

**Hughes Jeffords Chippewa Flowage Conservation Fund:** Grants up to \$1,000 are available for projects that preserve, pro-

tect and enhance DNR, Lac Courte Oreilles and U.S. Forest Service-managed lands and waters of the Chippewa Flowage.

**Norma and Stanley DeBoer Quiet Trails Fund:** Grants up to \$1,000 are available for projects that support creation, maintenance and enhancement of hiking, skiing, snowshoeing trails.

**Turtle Flambeau Scenic Waters Area Fund:** Grants of up to \$5,000 are available for projects that preserve, protect and

enhance the Turtle Flambeau Scenic Waters Area in Iron County.

**Wisconsin Rare Plant Preservation Fund:** Grants up to \$1,000 are available for projects that protect Wisconsin's rare plants and lichens through monitoring, inventorying and/or preservation.

Applications are due Feb 1.

For more information and to apply, visit <http://www.wisconservation.org/how-we-work/donor-advised-competitive-grants/>

## BIRD DIGEST



### On the lookout for Black-backed Woodpeckers

**RYAN BRADY**, a DNR biologist who works in Ashland and lives in Washburn in adjacent Bayfield County, recently shared this interesting note:

"This morning I had another Black-backed Woodpecker fly by my house amid a larger landbird flight, marking the third I've had here since Sept 12 after none in the previous eight years of living at this residence. All have been moving south in concert

with other migrants, only one of them stopping briefly. Thankfully they vocalize frequently while in flight and are fairly easy to detect if within earshot.

"My house aside, larger numbers have been moving down Minnesota's north shore since late August. Hawk Ridge is getting several daily, as are observers closer to shore there. Incredibly, outstanding birder **TOM REED** tallied 25 in just two mornings as they moved south over Stoney Point, which is north of Duluth toward Two Harbors.

"I don't think anyone has good ideas as to why the uptick in numbers, if they will keep coming, or what the influx will translate to this winter. Time will tell but for now everyone birding the northern half of the state should be on the lookout. Lowland conifer bogs, dying upland spruce, and recently burned conifers are often preferred, but Black-backs can be fairly general in their forest habitat selection."

### Fall editor solicits hard copy reports

And then there was this post from WSO seasonal editor **BOB DOMAGALSKI**:

"There are a number of great birders in Wisconsin who do not do eBird reports. At one time such birders sent hard copies of their finds to the WSO through the WSO Bird Coordinator. The WSO **NO LONGER** has such a position and, thus, such birders have not had a place to send their information.

"Such information is very much still sought by the WSO. These birders now need to send their information to the individual seasonal editors. For the Fall Season, which runs from August through November, please send your reports to me -and I assure you they **WILL** be used.

"You can email your information to [rcd2@new.rr.com](mailto:rcd2@new.rr.com) or mail hard copies to P.O. Box 396, Saint Nazianz, Wis. 54232-0396."



### ICF honored for its outreach campaign



**Baraboo, Wis.** -- The International Crane Foundation's Whooping Crane outreach campaign, focused on reducing human-induced mortality, has received a regional Award for Conservation Partners through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Southeast Region.

The campaign was piloted in Alabama through the work of ICF Whooping Crane Outreach Coordinator **LIZZIE CONDON**.

"Alabama was chosen for this important work because it's a wintering area for Whooping Cranes in the Eastern migratory population," explains Condon. "This campaign is so important because these highly endangered birds still only number approximately 500 in the wild."

Through partnerships with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and state and non-government organizations, ICF has produced radio and television public service announcements, billboards, workshops for K-12 teachers, outreach events and even a Whooping Crane mascot, Hope, to raise public awareness to the plight of Whooping Cranes and the need to actively work for their recovery.

In addition, the foundation has been a key partner in expanding participation in the annual Festival of Cranes held at the Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge.



#### DNR Photo

*Thanks to help from the Nicolet Bird Club of Three Lakes, work is underway to improve opportunities to observe wildlife at Thunder Lake Wildlife Area.*

### Nicolet Club adopts Thunder Lake Wildlife Area

The Nicolet Bird Club of Three Lakes has joined forces with Department of Natural Resources staff to manage and enhance the Thunder Lake Wildlife Area in Oneida County through the Adopt a Wildlife Area program.

"From the outset, DNR staffs have been very supportive of the Nicolet Bird Club of Three Lake's creation and goal of making the Thunder Lake Wildlife Area a popular destination for birding and wildlife enthusiasts," said **Bill Lamon**, club president.

"Our club could not have accomplished what it has without DNR assistance. DNR staff have made presentations to the club and provided counsel and direction to ensure that club initiatives are consistent with DNR goals for the area."

To date, club members and DNR staff have accomplished the following:

- **Developed and maintained** two birding and hiking trails that provide easy access to the interior of the Thunder Lake Marsh.
- **Made improvements** in opportunities for the public to observe wildlife and wildflowers.
- **Constructed** a birding information kiosk at an improved parking area to inform the public about birding opportunities.

To learn more about adopting a Wisconsin Wildlife Area, visit <http://dnr.wi.gov/> and search on the keyword "volunteer."

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Inc.  
P.O. Box 3024  
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## *The Passenger Pigeon* invites your articles, photos, artwork

*The Passenger Pigeon* invites its members to submit articles -- research and otherwise -- plus photos and/or artwork pertaining to birds in Wisconsin.

*The Pigeon*, published quarterly, is WSO's official scholarly journal. Nonetheless, anyone, professional or not, is welcome to submit material pertaining to birds. Maybe you have insights into the local effects of global warming that you'd like to share. Perhaps you have a desire to write a biographical sketch of a person significant in Wisconsin's rich ornithological history. Your own fieldwork can often lead to good ideas.

Members of WSO receive a printed copy of each issue as it appears. If you are missing a copy, past issues from 1939 through 2014

can be found in the University of Wisconsin's digital archives at <http://uwdc.library.wisc.edu/collections/EcoNatRes/PassPigeon>.

Dates for receipt of material for a given issue are as follows:

**Spring: Dec. 1**  
**Summer: March 1**  
**Fall: April 15**  
**Winter: Aug. 1**

Non-research articles -- general interest articles and field experience not reliant on statistics -- should be sent to the editors, Chuck Heikkinen and Delia Unson, at [passengerpigeon@wsobirds.org](mailto:passengerpigeon@wsobirds.org).

Research articles go through a peer-review process. Please send any research articles to Peer-Review Editor Matt Hayes at

[mhayes315@hotmail.com](mailto:mhayes315@hotmail.com) Specific guidelines to follow for peer-reviewed material can be found on the WSO website at <http://wsobirds.org/peer-review-comes-to-the-passenger-pigeon>

If you have photos or other artwork you think might interest readers, please submit them to Art Editor Michael Huebschen at [mhuebschen4@gmail.com](mailto:mhuebschen4@gmail.com)

General guidelines for submitting articles are available at the back of *The Pigeon*, beginning with the Winter 2014 issue.

If you have photo or art-related questions, please contact Michael Huebschen.

All other material and questions should be sent to the Editors at [passengerpigeon@wsobirds.org](mailto:passengerpigeon@wsobirds.org)

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### **WSO MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL**

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