

Photo by Heather Ray of Operation Migration

## An ultralight view of the White River Marsh

Many members of WSO have spent time this spring in the White River Marsh, either on the regular field trip or during the 79<sup>th</sup> annual convention at nearby Green Lake Conference Center. Field trip leader Tom Schultz notes: "We had a neat experience during our May 5 hike at White River Marsh – one that involved the Operation Migration ultralight used in the Whooping Crane reintroduction program! I shot photos of them, and they shot one of our group – providing the most unique photo ever of a WSO field trip! **Field trip report and more photos on Pages 14-15; convention coverage on Pages 4-5.**

## Honey Creek BB: Great species count, record support

The Saturday night camping and cookout thing didn't work out (weather intervened!) but in all other respects the 2018 Honey Creek Birdathon/Bandathon was a great success.

Mary Korkor, WSO's new vice president and development chair, reports that the Mother's Day event raised more than \$15,000, thanks to the generous response to an all-member mail appeal that sought to broaden the base of support for ongoing habitat maintenance and restoration efforts at the 372-acre preserve in the Baraboo Hills of Sauk County.

The record total was 50% more than the \$10,000 goal set for the event. Funds are used to cover the preserve's property taxes, to pay for removal of invasive species, for maintenance of trails and the Cox Nature Center.

"It was a big success despite the weather and this was really needed with the new 105-acre Dischler Addition. I think we are off to a great start!" Korkor said,

*Please turn to Page 13*

## WBCI, Bird City target plight of flying bug-eaters

The Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative and Bird City Wisconsin are sending out an S.O.S. for our flying bug eaters. That is, in fact, the title of a conference scheduled Sept. 6-8 in Pewaukee that will look at the issues -- and potential solutions -- for long-term declines in Wisconsin's aerial insectivores.

This is the third joint WBCI Annual Meeting and Bird City Summit and will feature the latest research on Chimney Swifts, Purple Martins, nighthawks, swallows, flycatchers -- and bats. The Thursday night through Saturday afternoon conference kicks off with both a Birds & Brews event and a Swift Night Out field trip

"If you haven't yet witnessed dozens - or hundreds - of swifts going to roost in the evening, this event may be your chance," said WBCI Chair Karen Etter Hale.

Keynoting the conference is Dr. Pamela Hunt, senior biologist in avian conservation at New Hampshire Audubon.

**A registration form and complete agenda appear on Pages 20-22 of this newsletter.**

# 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.

**Editor:** Carl Schwartz  
**Design:** Barbara Schwartz  
badgerbirder@wsobirds.org  
7239 N. Barnett Lane  
Fox Point, WI 53217  
414-416-3272

## WSO OFFICERS

**President:** Myles Hurlburt  
1825 Flameflower Rd.  
Wausau, WI 54401  
715-574-1003  
president@wsobirds.org

**Vice President:** Mary Korkor  
262-442-7530  
P.O. Box 217  
North Lake, WI 53064  
vicepresident@wsobirds.org

**Secretary:** Jennifer Wenzel  
secretary@wsobirds.org  
262-488-8077

**Treasurer:** Dani Baumann  
treasurer@wsobirds.org  
654 W. Hillcrest Road #202  
Saukville, WI 53080  
262-617-1268

**Membership:** Kim Kreitinger  
membership@wsobirds.org  
P.O. Box 3024  
Madison, WI 53704-3024  
415-265-9153

**The Passenger Pigeon editors:**  
Charles A. Heikkinen and  
Delia O. Unson  
5018 Odana Road  
Madison, WI 53711  
608-274-4043  
passengerpigeon@wsobirds.org

**WSO Bookstore Manager**  
Darwin Tiede  
2809 Schaefer Circle  
Appleton, WI 54915

## Charles Hagner, former *BirdWatching* editor, to lead Bird City Wisconsin

Bird City Wisconsin has announced the hiring of former *BirdWatching* magazine editor Charles Hagner as its new director.

Hagner, a Wisconsin native, is a writer and editor specializing in birds, birding and conservation and chairs the Board of Directors for the Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory in Port Washington. He was the editor-in-chief of nationally distributed *BirdWatching* from 2001 to 2017.



Charles Hagner

“Editing a magazine devoted to wild birds and birding presented ample opportunities to study not only the myriad challenges faced by birds but also the many innovative, effective ways we all can help them. Bird City is one of the best,” says Hagner. “I’m excited to get to work for Wisconsin’s birds.”

Hagner succeeds Dr. Bryan Lenz, who served as the Bird City’s director since 2014. He is leaving to become the bird collisions campaign manager with the American Bird Conservancy, a non-profit organization that works to conserve native birds and their habitats throughout the Americas.

Lenz also was chief scientist at the Western Great Lakes Bird & Bat Observatory and has played a critical role in developing the Midwest Migration Network. Lenz

will work from Wisconsin, as part of ABC’s Great Lakes regional program led by ABC Vice President Shawn Graff, and will work closely with Dr. Christine Sheppard, director of ABC’s glass collisions program, and the policy team in Washington, D.C.

Bird City was created in 2009 and has spawned similar organizations in Indiana, Iowa and Minnesota. A program of the Milwaukee Audubon Society, it has its offices at the Schlitz Audubon Nature Center in Bayside.

Bird City recognizes Wisconsin municipalities for the conservation and education activities that they undertake to make their communities healthy for birds... and people.

To be recognized as a Bird City, a community must meet criteria spread across six categories: habitat creation and protection, community forest management, limiting threats to birds, education, energy and sustainability, and the official recognition and celebration of World Migratory Bird Day.

Bird City also offers High Flyer recognition for communities that go above and beyond in their conservation and education programs.

To date, 109 Wisconsin communities have been recognized as a Bird City, while 23 communities have qualified for High Flyer status.

Hagner can be contacted at [director@birdcitywisconsin.org](mailto:director@birdcitywisconsin.org)

## KATE’S QUOTES

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

“It was a spring without voices.  
On the mornings that had once throbbled with the dawn chorus of robins, catbirds, doves, jays, wrens and scores of other bird voices there was now no sound; only silence lay over the fields and woods and marsh.... Even the streams were now lifeless....

No witchcraft, no enemy action had silenced the rebirth of new life in this stricken world.

The people had done it themselves....

-- **RACHEL CARSON**, author of “*Silent Spring*”

“For too long in the United States,  
a stump was our symbol of progress.”

-- **ALDO LEOPOLD**, Wisconsin environmentalist

“Normality is a paved road:  
It’s comfortable to walk, but no flowers grow on it.”

-- **VINCENT VAN GOGH**, artist

# Best migration season in years enchanted Southeast Wisconsin

By **MARK KORDUCKI**

In sharp contrast to the frigid early part of April, May began with summer-like highs in the 70s and 80s. This rapid warm-up produced an incredible migration of passerines in the Milwaukee area. Beginning on May 1, birders routinely tallied 20+ species of warblers and good individual numbers of many of them.

This trend continued for a solid two weeks without a slow day in the bunch. It was the best migration in the southeast part of the state in years. Much of the rest of the state also experienced good numbers of Neotropical migrants during the first two weeks of May. The delayed leaf-out also produced some good viewing conditions, although it was very wet during this stretch, with some areas reporting over 6 inches of rain.

There was quality to go with the quantity. A **SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER** was seen and photographed in Milwaukee County. Joining the list of unusual passerines in our most populated county were **YELLOW-THROATED, PRAIRIE** and **WORM-EATING WARBLERS**, several **YELLOW-BREASTED CHATS**, multiple **NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRDS** and both **BELL'S** and **WHITE-EYED VIREOS**. A **WESTERN Tanager** was a nice find at Lion's Den Gorge in Ozaukee County. It was the third sighting of this vagrant at this location in the last five years.

Brown County also produced **WORM-EATING** and **PROTHONOTARY WARBLERS** which are quite unusual so far north. **SMITH'S LONGSPURS** made their nearly annual appearance in Dane County. A **BLUE GROSBEAK** was seen at Wind Point in Racine County and a **LARK BUNTING** was recorded on the Buena Vista Grasslands in Portage County.

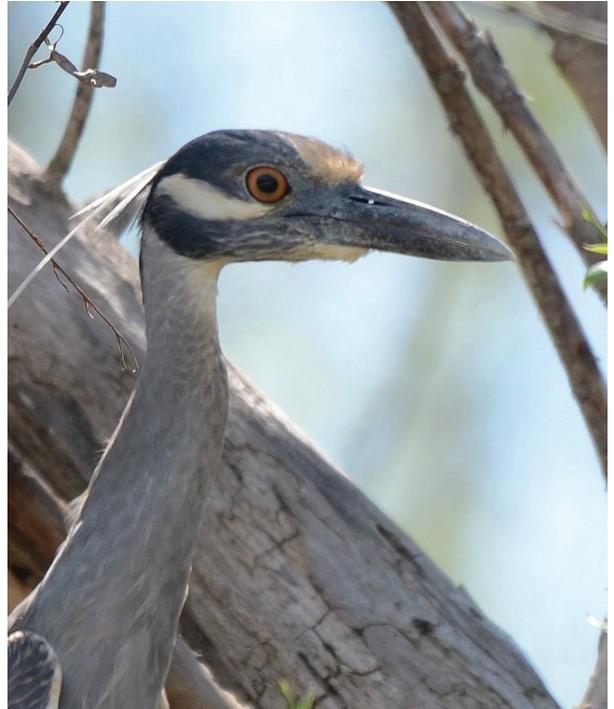
It also was a good month for wading birds. Dane had two different **YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT HERONS**. These were the first for the county in over 20 years. Another was found in Dodge County. A **LITTLE BLUE HERON** was sighted in Waukesha County, and **WHITE-FACED IBIS** were reported in multiple counties as far north as Brown. The Horicon Marsh produced as many as three of them along with a **GLOSSY IBIS**. A **SNOWY EGRET** was found in Dodge and Fond du Lac Counties, while **LAUGHING GULLS** were seen in Sheboygan and Milwaukee Counties.

Bayfield hosted a late **EURASIAN WIGEON**. **EARED GREBES** were seen at scattered locations across the state, including as far north as Oconto. A **BLACK-NECKED STILT** was seen outside its normal range in Door County. Up to two dozen were found in the Horicon Marsh where this species continues to expand its range. **AVOCETS** and **WILLETS** were found in good numbers at the start of May. A late avocet was a nice find in Brown along with **RED KNOT, WHIMBREL** and **PIPING PLOVER**. Both godwits were found at scattered locations across the state.

It was an exciting month. Don't put those binoculars away yet as spring migrants are still trickling through and June is a good time for vagrants. Plus it's a great month for atlasing.

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



Doug Pellerin photographed this **Yellow-crowned Night Heron** on May 7 at Horicon Marsh.



Jeffrey Fortier photographed this **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** on May 4 at Warnimont Park along Lake Michigan in Milwaukee County.



Wayne Rohde photographed this **White-eyed Vireo** at Delavan's Springs Park on May 4.



Myles Hurlburt photographed this **Smith's Longspur**, first reported by Steve Thiessen at Larsen Road Pond in Dane County on May 3.

## WSO CONVENTION: GREEN LAKE



Photo by Tom Schultz



Photo by Nancy Nabak

The 79<sup>th</sup> annual WSO Convention kicked off with a picnic on the lawn of the Green Lake Conference Center Tea House.

During ceremonies on Friday night, WSO Awards Committee Chair Wendy Schultz handed out the Society's annual Passenger Pigeon awards to an amazing set of bird conservationists.

**Front row from left:** Peter McKeever, Silver; Larry Michael and Jeff Bahls, Bronze. **Back row from left:** USFWS's Brad Strobel, USGS Patuxent's Robert Doyle, the DNR's Davin Lopez and Operation Migration's Joe Duff and Heather Ray, all members of Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership (WCEP), which received a Special Recognition Award; Betsy Abert, Friends of Grant Park (FoGP), Cutright Conservation Award; JCF's Anne Lacey, WCEP; and Rita Flores Wiskowski, FoGP.

Friday's convention activities included a nocturnal field trip to Comstock Bog in search of **YELLOW RAILS**. No luck with that species but the hardy bog-walkers heard **WILSON'S SNIPE, BARRED OWL, EASTERN WHIP-POOR-WILL** and **SEDGE WREN**.

Thanks to all those who participated in the planning of the convention and to those in attendance.

See you next year in Eau Claire!

Photo by Tom Schultz



# Attendees elect leaders, honor conservation champions

Members of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology elected a new president and vice president during the Society's 79<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting on Saturday May 19 at the Green Lake Conference Center. They also re-elected the current secretary and treasurer. All terms are for one year.

-- **MYLES HURLBURT**, from Rib Mountain in Marathon County, who has served as vice president for this past year, was elected president. **MARY KORKOR**, from Hartland in Waukesha County, who also chairs WSO's Development Committee, was elected vice president.

-- **DANI BAUMANN**, from Saukville in Ozaukee County, was re-elected as treasurer, a post she has held since January of 2017, and **JENNY WENZEL**, from Caledonia in Racine County, was re-elected secretary, a post she has held since 2012.

Stepping down as president after serving the standard two consecutive terms was **MICHAEL JOHN JAEGER** of Madison, who plans to remain on the board and chair the Conservation Committee.

As vice president, Myles oversaw a recent board retreat to review the organization's strategic plan and is leading efforts to find successors for several committee chairs.

Myles works for Sentry Insurance in Stevens Point and has a B.S. in Business Administration from Cardinal Stritch University and an associate degree in computer science from Chippewa Valley Technical College.

Mary began her service to WSO on the Conservation Committee. She later became chair of its Development Committee and has worked on the fundraising campaigns for the annual Honey Creek Birdathon/Bandathon and for Dischler Addition to the Honey Creek Preserve. Prior to joining the WSO Board, Mary served on the boards for Wisconsin Public Radio, the Kettle Moraine Garden Club and her local library foundation.

On Friday night **WENDY SCHULTZ**, WSO Awards Committee chair, presided over a well-attended ceremony recognizing individuals and organizations that have made outstanding achievements in advancing bird conservation, promoting the field of ornithology and contributing to the Society.

The **SILVER PASSENGER PIGEON AWARD**, presented to members of WSO for distinguished service to the Society, went to **PETER MCKEEVER**, a Madison-area attorney who has provided legal counsel to WSO since 2014 and who served for 10 years as state director of The Nature Conservancy's Wisconsin Chapter.

McKeever, who also serves on WSO's Conservation Committee, was cited for the body of work he did on the recent addition to WSO's Honey Creek Nature Preserve. His legal expertise and experience with land acquisitions were critical as he guided the board through the transaction.

The **BRONZE PASSENGER PIGEON AWARD**, presented to individuals who have made outstanding contributions in their local communities or in the state to promote the field of ornithology, went jointly to **JEFF BAHLS** and **LARRY MICHAEL** for their work at the Horicon Marsh, where they continue to influence and educate bird-watchers both near and far.

Bahls heads the board that organizes the 16-year-old Horicon Marsh Bird Festival — the first and largest such event in Wisconsin. He leads many of the festival's field trips and helps coordinate the hosting groups. Bahls has served as HMBC president since the retirement of Michael, its founder. He writes a monthly club newsletter, compiles three Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs), leads the HMBC Big Sit and has been a BIGBY birder. He worked for the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas I and currently is helping with Atlas II, taking on many blocks that are tough to access and using his kayak to obtain crucial data in areas that were not previously covered well by the atlas.

Michael grew up in Horicon and approached Bill Volkert, then DNR's wildlife educator/naturalist at the marsh, and suggested they begin a Horicon Marsh Bird Club. Michael served as president for many years and always had new ideas for members to enhance their experience on the marsh, introducing the Big Sit, various field trips and numerous educational programs. He organized and launched the bird festival in 1997. He got club members involved in CBCs, the Midwest Crane Count, the first Atlas, the Wisconsin Marsh Bird Survey and the Great Lakes Owl Survey.

When Michael lost his eyesight, he stepped down from most birding activities. Ten years later, he began contributing to WBBA II. With his heightened hearing, he does an amazing job of birding by ear and has done nocturnal surveys for several priority blocks.



*The 2018 WSO Convention was held at the 900-acre Green Lake Conference Center, on the shore of Wisconsin's deepest lake. WSO's 80<sup>th</sup> convention will be next May in Eau Claire.*

The **NOEL J. CUTRIGHT CONSERVATION AWARD**, recognizing outstanding contributions to bird conservation in Wisconsin, was presented to the **FRIENDS OF GRANT PARK (FOGP)**, the South Milwaukee organization dedicated to preserving the natural areas of Grant Park, encouraging use of the park and providing a mechanism for private contributions to supplement public funding. Because of the group's efforts, Grant Park, on the shore of Lake Michigan in southern Milwaukee County, has become a birding hot spot. Members are passionate about the park and have been a great partner in bird conservation.

The **SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD** was created to recognize the collective effort of a far-reaching project or partnership that increases the public's awareness and appreciation for birds, their habitats or the need for conservation. This year, WSO recognized the work of the **WHOOPIING CRANE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP**, specifically **Operation Migration**, the **International Crane Foundation**, **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**, **Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources** and the **USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center**.

WCEP was organized in 1999 as a next step in the recovery of Whooping Cranes in North America. After a decision to restore a self-sustaining migratory flock to eastern North America, the partnership came together to plan and carry out this project, coordinating the work of nine government and private organizations and more than 70 people. Those WSO members visiting the White River Marsh during the convention were able to see the fruits of their work.

# White-nose syndrome ravages state cave-bat populations

*Gains made in treatment, vaccine research will help surviving bats and other states*

## WISCONSIN DNR

**Madison** - Winter cave and mine surveys in 2018 show that white-nose syndrome continues to ravage Wisconsin's cave bats and the steep loss of these beneficial insect-eaters is likely to be seen this summer in nighttime skies, according to state endangered resources officials.

"We're still seeing new sites with infection and bigger declines in the numbers of bats we're surveying in winter," says J. Paul White, Wisconsin Bat Program lead with the Wisconsin DNR. Pepin was added to the list of counties with infected hibernacula.

White and other Wisconsin conservation biologists did find some silver linings in their 2018 winter surveys, and federal and university research efforts that the DNR is assisting with are showing progress in developing vaccines and treatments, White says.

"These efforts can potentially help our remaining bats and also bats in other states where the disease has not yet been detected," he says.

Bats play an important role in Wisconsin's ecosystems and are voracious insect eaters. A 2011 North American study estimated that bats save Wisconsin's agriculture industry between \$658 million to \$1.5 billion annually in pesticide costs. University of Wisconsin research now underway analyzing bat guano collected at sites across Wisconsin confirms that bats consumed 17 distinct types of mosquitoes, including nine species known to carry West Nile virus.

All 60 hibernacula visited in winter 2018 were infected and at those sites, DNR conservation biologists found a 99% decrease from historic averages at the first documented infection site; a 92% drop



**DNR Photo**

*White-nose syndrome causes hibernating bats to frequently wake, depleting their energy and causing them to die from starvation, dehydration or exposure to the elements.*

at sites in their fourth year of infection, and an 85% drop at sites in their third year of infection. Twenty-five of the 28 counties with known bat hibernacula now have WNS or the fungus that causes it.

Severe decreases in populations of hibernating bats are also showing up in the summer nighttime surveys volunteers conduct. For example, the average decline in summer roost populations across the state in 2017 was 80%.

White, a conservation biologist with the DNR's Natural Heritage Conservation Program, expects more places to notice a lack of bats this summer. "There are some pockets of Wisconsin that have experienced the declines already," he says. "People are telling us they used to have hundreds of bats in their area at night in the summer, and now, nothing."

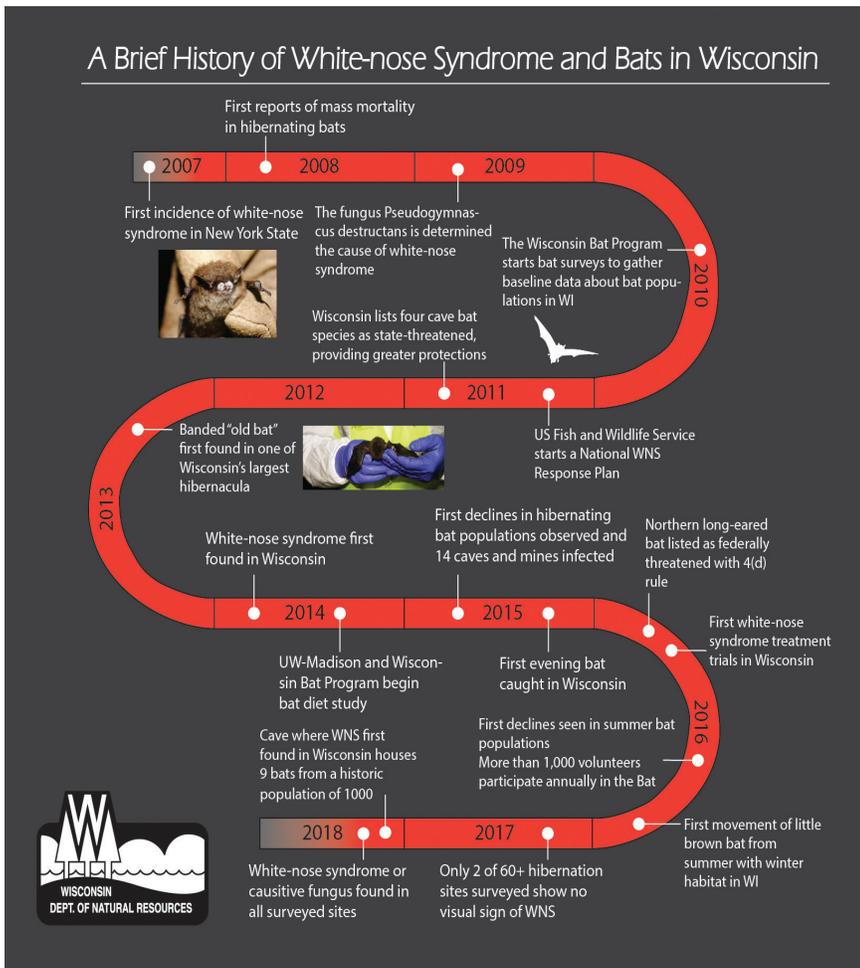
White-nose syndrome does not affect people or other animal species, but causes hibernating bats to frequently wake, depleting their energy and causing them to die from starvation, dehydration or exposure to the elements.

Since the discovery of WNS in 2006 in New York, more than 6 million bats have died and the disease has spread to 32 states, says Owen Boyle, species management section chief for NHC.

While there has been some evidence of bat populations starting to come back on the East Coast, it's too early to tell in Wisconsin, Boyle says.

DNR biologists and research partners banded more than 100 bats this winter to be able to keep tabs on them in coming years in order to guide bat recovery efforts.

People who want to help cave bats surviving white-nose syndrome are encouraged to build and install a bat house following instructions on the DNR website, to participate in summer bat counts, to donate to the Endangered Resources Fund and to volunteer at the Wisconsin Bat Festival Aug. 25 in Ashland.



# Metro Audubon serves southern Milwaukee County birders

*The Badger Birder* is offering an occasional look at organized birding groups in Wisconsin. This month we profile the Wisconsin Metro Audubon Society. This report was written by the chapter president, **DIANE LEMBCK**.



## Tell us about the history of your club.

Jim and Lavone Reis founded Wisconsin Metro Audubon Society out of need for an Audubon chapter in the southern part of Milwaukee County.

The first meeting of the chapter was held at Wehr Nature Center on March 19, 1980. It was the 75th anniversary of the National Audubon Society and for the first program a movie entitled "It Began with Birds" was shown. It provided information about the birth of the society.

## What are some of the society's activities?

The mission of Wisconsin Metro Audubon is to inform the public and encourage wise environmental practices through education and conservation.

We have six indoor programs a year with that goal in mind as well as educational field trips to learn about wildlife areas in Southeastern Wisconsin through hikes with our local DNR educator.

Favorite spots for our bird walks include Seminary Woods in St. Francis, Bender Park in Oak Creek and, at the invitation of its manager, even Forest Home Cemetery in Milwaukee. Our meetings and field trips are free and open to the public.

Maintaining an email list, we invite people to our programs and ask them to forward an invitation to friends. We also join in birding at Richard Bong State Recreation Area.

Our indoor programs are still held at Wehr Nature Center. We invite well-known speakers and our own members who would like to share information about their birding trips to give presentations.

Our volunteers are active in projects at Wehr maintaining a Purple Martin house complex, Wood Duck and Eastern Bluebird houses.

Each Monday morning, you can find us out with a group called "Phenology Walkers" who help record wild flowers in bloom and birds observed for Wehr.

In addition, we have helped support Halloween Haunts there for over 25 years. That popular event involves 450 children. We enjoy holding a Christmas Bird Count in partnership with the nature center.

Our conservation chair is involved with restoration of an area at Stahl/Conrad Homestead, a historical site in Hales Corners. Buckthorn was removed and he is helping to restore the area with native plants for birds and pollinators. Volunteers also are helping with pond studies in Milwaukee County.

We are still working toward getting more communities involved in Bird City Wisconsin after initiating recognition for Hales Corners early in the program.

Members are encouraged to use eBird to report their sightings and to participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count. Some members also are helping with observations for the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II.

## Other reasons someone would want to join?

Plans for next fiscal year include assisting Wehr Nature Center to add to its birding programs and starting a "Birding Buddies" program where people wanting to get more experience birding can arrange to have an experienced birder spend time with them in the field.

## How about more information?

We publish four editions of *The Trumpeter* each year. The newsletter and more information about Wisconsin Metro Audubon Society are available at [www.wimetroaudubon.org](http://www.wimetroaudubon.org) and from our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/AudubonWMAS>

Would you like to see your birding group profiled in *The Badger Birder*? Contact **CARL SCHWARTZ** at [cschwartz3@wi.rr.com](mailto:cschwartz3@wi.rr.com)



Photos by Diane Lembck and Jennifer Ambrose  
The Wisconsin Metro Audubon Society is active at the Wehr Nature Center in Hales Corners, installing a house for Purple Martins and mulching an extensive trail system.

## WISCONSIN BREEDING BIRD ATLAS II

# An Atlas guide to priority species by habitat

By NICHOLAS ANICH  
WBBBA II Coordinator

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas is especially interested in a suite of Priority Species — rare to uncommon breeders that are of high conservation interest.

We will not detect most of these species in high numbers during atlas point counts, so any instance where you can track down a priority species is useful.



Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II

You can find the list of priority species on the Quick Reference Guide.

We ask that when you find one of these species, you provide additional information about the habitat and location (often just in eBird, more rarely via the Priority Species Information Form.

This information is needed because, in many instances, these breeding records will go into the Natural Heritage Inventory database.

We have been profiling Priority Species in a series we call Species Survey Strategies (SSS). Here, we've tried to organize the list of Priority Species and the list of SSS by habitat, so you can decide which habitats you might have, and which species you need to look for.

For help figuring out which habitat types are in your block, don't forget you can use the land cover layers on the interactive map.

### **NORTHERN CONIFEROUS/MIXED FOREST**

#### **Atlas Priority Species:**

Bay-breasted Warbler, Boreal Chickadee, Connecticut Warbler, Northern Goshawk, Long-eared Owl, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Spruce Grouse, Swainson's Thrush, Tennessee Warbler

#### **Species Survey Strategies:**

**Rare Forest Raptors** (Northern Goshawk, Red-shouldered Hawk)

**Boreal Residents** (Spruce Grouse, Black-backed Woodpecker, Boreal Chickadee, Gray Jay)

**Boreal Non-residents** (Olive-sided Flycatcher, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Palm Warbler, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher)

**Irruption Finches** (Pine Siskin, Red Crossbill)

**Chimney Swift**

**Nocturnal Atasing Part III** (Owls and

nightjars)

### **SOUTHERN FOREST**

**Atlas Priority Species:** Acadian Flycatcher, Carolina Wren, Cerulean Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Red-shouldered Hawk, Worm-eating Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler

#### **Species Survey Strategies:**

**Rare Forest Raptors** (Northern Goshawk, Red-shouldered Hawk)

**Southern Forest Birds** (Acadian Flycatcher, Louisiana Waterthrush, Cerulean Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Yellow-throated Warbler)

### **MARSH**

**Atlas Priority Species:** American Bittern, American Wigeon, Black Tern, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Black-necked Stilt, Common Tern, Eared Grebe, Forster's Tern, Great Egret, Horned Grebe, King Rail, LeConte's Sparrow, Least Bittern, Nelson's Sparrow, Northern Pintail, Red-necked Grebe, Snowy Egret, Western Grebe, Whooping Crane, Yellow Rail, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Wilson's Phalarope

#### **Species Survey Strategies:**

**Colonial Waterbirds Part I** (American White Pelican, Black-crowned Night Heron, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Herring Gull, Ring-billed Gull)

**Colonial Waterbirds Part II** (Caspian Tern, Common Tern, Forster's Tern)

**Secretive Sedge Meadow Specialists** (Yellow Rail, Nelson's Sparrow, Le Conte's Sparrow)

**Black Tern** (Special 2015 Survey Protocol)

### **PINE BARRENS**

**Atlas Priority Species:** Common Night-hawk, Connecticut Warbler, Kirtland's Warbler, Long-eared Owl, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Upland Sandpiper

#### **Species Survey Strategies:**

**Irruption Finches** (Pine Siskin, Red Crossbill)

**Common Nighthawk**

**Threatened Grassland Species** (Upland Sandpiper)

**Nocturnal Atasing Part III** (Owls and nightjars)

**Boreal Non-residents** (Olive-sided Flycatcher)

### **EARLY SUCCESSIONAL**

**Atlas Priority Species:** Golden-winged Warbler, Philadelphia Vireo, Wilson's War-

bler, American Woodcock

### **SHRUBBY**

**Atlas Priority Species:** Bell's Vireo, Lark Sparrow, Loggerhead Shrike, Northern Bobwhite, Yellow-breasted Chat

### **GRASSLAND**

**Atlas Priority Species:** Cattle Egret, Greater Prairie-Chicken, Henslow's Sparrow, LeConte's Sparrow, Long-eared Owl, Northern Bobwhite, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Short-eared Owl, Upland Sandpiper, Western Meadowlark

#### **Species Survey Strategies:**

**Secretive Sedge Meadow Specialists** (Yellow Rail, Nelson's Sparrow, Le Conte's Sparrow)

**Threatened Grassland Species** (Upland Sandpiper, Henslow's Sparrow)

**Nocturnal Atasing Part III** (Owls and nightjars)

### **NORTHERN LAKES**

**Atlas Priority Species:** Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye

### **URBAN/YARD**

**Atlas Priority Species:** Common Nighthawk, Carolina Wren, European Goldfinch, Great Tit, Peregrine Falcon, Purple Martin

#### **Species Survey Strategies:**

**Common Nighthawk**

**Chimney Swift**

**European Escapes** (European Goldfinch, Great Tit)

### **COASTAL**

**Atlas Priority Species:** Caspian Tern, Common Tern, Great Black-backed Gull, Peregrine Falcon, Piping Plover

#### **Species Survey Strategies:**

**Colonial Waterbirds Part I** (American White Pelican, Black-crowned Night Heron, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Herring Gull, Ring-billed Gull)

**Colonial Waterbirds Part II** (Caspian Tern, Common Tern, Forster's Tern)

**Nocturnal Atasing Part III** (Owls and nightjars)

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**Editor's note:** This article is being published in large part for those readers who lack easy access to the internet; if you have such access, read a more complete version with hyperlinks to the much needed additional information on species survey strategies at <https://ebird.org/atlaswi/news/guide-to-priority-species-by-habitat>

## ATLASER SPOTLIGHT

# Jim Frank: 'eBird's tie-in with the 2nd Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas has been absolutely fascinating'

*The Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II is a volunteer-driven effort to survey the distribution and abundance of our state's breeding birds. Since the project started in 2015, our volunteer team has grown to include more than 1,600 atlasers who have submitted nearly 100,000 checklists.*

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

**NAME:** Jim Frank

**HOME COUNTY:** Ozaukee

**AGE:** 65

### NUMBER OF YEARS BIRDING:

I'm currently keeping my 55<sup>th</sup> "year list." The first ones were for birds in Whitnall Park in Milwaukee County.

### OTHER CITIZEN SCIENCE EXPERIENCE:

Over the years I have done bird censuses for the DNR, conducted the Port Washington Breeding Bird Survey route for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (for over 20 years now), and participated in the Milwaukee Christmas Bird Count (looking forward to doing my 40th consecutive count this year).

I also served on the WSO Bird Records Committee (20 years), participated in Wisconsin's first Breeding Bird Atlas in the '90s, and found an increased enjoyment with the entrance of eBird onto the scene 12 years ago.

### FAVORITE BIRD:

If forced to pick a favorite bird I guess Avocets still have a leg (wing?) up on Merlins, Spruce Grouse, Black-throated Blue Warblers and Wilson's Phalaropes.

### MOTIVATION TO ATLAS:

I developed an interest in atlasing back in the late 1970s when Vermont initiated the first breeding bird atlas for any state.

Now eBird's tie-in with the second Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas has been absolutely fascinating. To be able to see what is being confirmed where and when, watch the "up to the day" maps for each species take shape, and determine where my efforts can be used as I travel around the state is

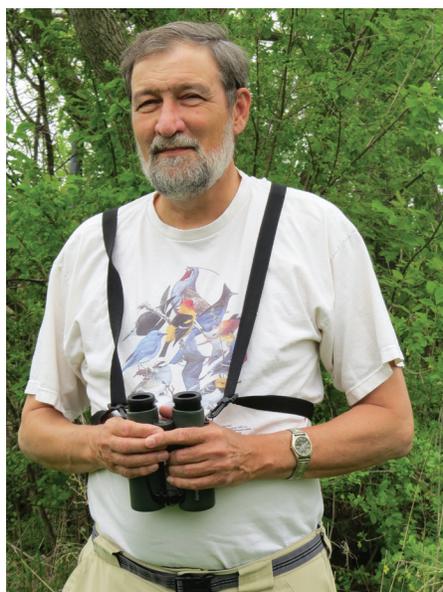


Photo by Carrie Becker

**Jim Frank:** "I never stopped to realize Wisconsin's breeding bird season runs from January (Great Horned Owls) to September (Wild Turkey fledglings). All it took was stopping to take the time to LOOK."

beyond anything I ever could have imagined.

Hats off to Nick (Anich), Ryan (Brady) and their "behind the scenes" staff that have made this project incredible.

### WHERE DO YOU ATLAS?

Living in Southern Ozaukee County for the past 30+ years has kept my birding focus close to Milwaukee, but I do get to wander around the state as well. I have done priority Atlas blocks in Sheboygan (5), Dodge (3), Washington (2), and Bayfield (1) with countless other "incidental" visits to other areas, especially Ozaukee County.

I also have been conducting point counts for the Atlas in Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Sheboygan, Washington, Dodge and Waukesha Counties to build a population database to go along with the geographic distribution portion of the Atlas.

### MOST INTERESTING ATLAS FIND:

If I have to pick my most exciting confirmation to date, it would have to be last year at Horicon. I was watching the King Rails that had settled into an unexpectedly observable spot on the Auto Tour. I was simply enjoying "seeing" a King Rail for the second time in my life (the first being 45 years earlier). The rail was seemingly foraging, but

at one point it started rummaging very focally in a grassy hummock in the edge of the cattail barrier. The next thing I knew it was walking back into the cattails with an 8-10-inch ribbon of dried grass flagging behind it.

This was the beginning of building the nest that would ultimately fledge young for anyone with time and patience to observe. This is the first (and thus far only) confirmed breeding of a King Rail in either the first or second Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas.

That said, I still get a special satisfaction confirming a Blue Jay. As raucous as anybody at other times, they are so stealthy during breeding season that it is very difficult for me to confirm them. I have come to think they will stop looking for nesting material and won't carry food away to feed nestlings if they notice me watching.

So my game plan for them while atlasing is to take notice if a Blue Jay is QUIET, because those are the ones "up to something" useful for confirmation.

Other little side games I have fallen into are finding Red-tailed Hawk nests (89 so far), Great Horned Owl nests (37 so far), and hearing American Woodcock "peents" (64 blocks so far).

### MOST REWARDING PART OF ATLASING:

There is something very satisfying about following a block through the breeding season — noting who arrives when, who starts building nests when (why do Red-wings make such an effort to arrive so early in March but not build nests until 2+ months later?), what sort of specific habitats are favored by different species, which juveniles of which species look alike, and systematically notching the needed confirmations in that block.

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

This sort of birding has added so much to my understanding of each species. And I never stopped to realize Wisconsin's breeding bird season runs from January (Great Horned Owls) to September (Wild Turkey fledglings). All it took was stopping to take the time to LOOK.

### ADVICE FOR SOMEONE "ON THE FENCE" ABOUT PARTICIPATING:

Hooking up with someone and seeing what it is like can only increase your knowledge and enjoyment of birds.

## CALL NOTES

# Bernie Brouchoud: Woodland Dunes is his legacy

By JIM KNICKELBINE

May is the time of year that birdwatchers long for. Millions of migrants of all kinds are returning to and passing through the area.

As I write, orioles are gulping orange pulp and grape jelly while warblers are singing in the trees. The trees, themselves, are getting ready to blossom. Despite the hardship of winter, and just three weeks after a blizzard, new life presses on and washes over the land.



Jim Knickelbine

It was in this season more than 80 years ago, that Bernie Brouchoud was born. Bernie was the founder of Woodland Dunes Nature Center and Preserve and was the most curious person I've ever known.

He spent countless hours of his boyhood in Mishicot and Two Rivers exploring the woods. He taught himself about birds and wildflowers and grew to know them in extraordinary ways. He became a good friend of local naturalist, bird bander and writer Winnie Smith of Two Creeks, and he later attended the University of Wisconsin to study more formally.

Bernie lived an unconventional life, and although his early passion was for natural history, jobs in the field were not easily found. Yet Bernie always kept nature in his life. He was a Fuller Brush salesman, which allowed him to be out on the road where he could keep track of birds. He ran a gas station that had a bird banding station in the backyard. He managed the produce department of an A&P grocery store, yet found time to band birds before or after work.

More than 50 years ago, he recognized the importance of the big woods between Manitowoc and Two Rivers. This area was full of birds, and he banded tens of thousands of them there. He also worked with groups of students in the process. Bernie talked with others and assembled a group focused on preserving what is now Woodland Dunes. He orchestrated the first land purchase by the nonprofit in 1975.

Bernie was the first board president of Woodland Dunes and for more than 30 years its executive director. He received many awards for his conservation work, including from the Isaac Walton League,

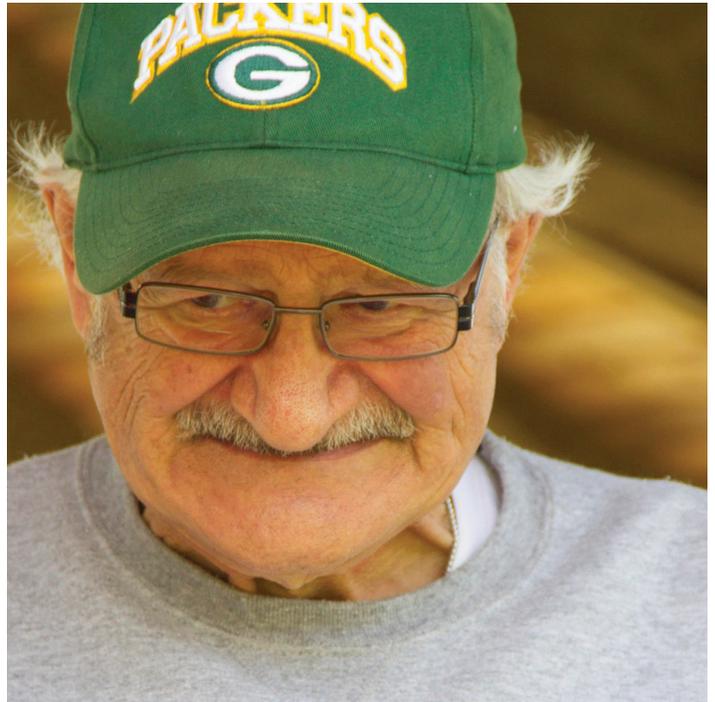


Photo by Nancy Nabak

Bernie Brouchoud retired in 2004 could still be found at Woodland Dunes until quite recently.

the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology and the Manitowoc County Conservation Hall of Fame.

But his greatest accomplishment? His wonderful and loving family.

Wanting to learn about bird banding, I first visited the newly-created Woodland Dunes in 1975 as a high school student. In the 1980s, I found a pelican in the West Twin River and decided to stop at the little nature center to find out if they were common. This was the first time I really talked with Bernie one-on-one. He convinced me that I should put my conservation degree to work and become a volunteer. A few years later, I would join him on the staff, part-time. I'm glad he gave me the nudge.

In 2004, Bernie retired as executive director but remained active in the organization for the rest of his life.

From the first 40-acre parcel of woods purchased in 1975, the nature preserve has continued to grow to the 1,500 acres it is today. Each year, thousands of schoolchildren come to learn and thousands of people visit to enjoy the preserve and its trails. While Bernie worked single-handedly for a long time, the demands of our education programs and land management have grown to need six staff people.

Bernie passed away on May 9 at Aurora BayCare Hospital in Green Bay. He was 80 years old. A man with a great legacy has left a large gap in our community, and there would be no Woodland Dunes without him.

Although he is no longer with us in the physical sense, his presence will always be felt and he'll be remembered. It's almost a gift of nature that he passed during this special time of year. It's as if his spirit was lifted by the beautiful birds he loved so much and carried tenderly on their journey in the sky.



For many years Bernie Brouchoud demonstrated the banding of Northern Saw-whet Owls to groups of children and adults.

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

# Horicon, Chequamegon Bay festivals treat participants to birding

The 2018 **HORICON MARSH BIRD FESTIVAL**, held over the Mother's Day weekend, May 11-14, tallied 158 species, about average for the 21 years of the festival.

Horicon Marsh Bird Club President Jeff Bahls said the weather was mostly good (except for a day-long cold rain on Friday).

"New for this year's festival was Eurasian Collared Dove, a bird that has been on our radar for a couple of years but we couldn't locate during past festivals," Bahls said.

(One has been seen regularly of late near the intersection of CR-I and Highway 49.)

Other "good" birds during the festival were Summer Tanager and Peregrine Falcon, both spotted on Horicon Marsh boat tour events.

This year was particularly good for warblers with 25 species tallied. Ziegler Park in Mayville was the most productive.

Nearly all bus trips had 15+ species for their time afield, and, as always, there were good showings of marsh birds. American and Least Bitterns, Black-crowned Night Herons, Sora and Virginia Rails all were spotted at some point during the



Photo by Ryan Brady

The 12th annual Chequamegon Bay Birding & Nature Festival in Ashland drew more than 400 participants who enjoyed 115+ programs and field trips over 3 days.

festival. Black-necked Stilts and Yellow-headed Blackbirds made the list mainly from Highway 49. Shorebirds were at a premium with only 13 species sighted.

The 12th annual **CHEQUAMEGON BAY BIRDING & NATURE FESTIVAL** in Ashland attracted more than 400 participants to 115+ programs and field trips the following weekend, May 18-20. Festival organizer and DNR biologist Ryan Brady reports: "The weather was largely dry throughout, even if quite cool with that pesky lake breeze we know all too well this time of year."

The preliminary species total stands at 184, just two shy of the record set in 2016. Highlights included Eurasian Wigeon, Summer Tanager, two Northern Mockingbirds, a Gray Jay out of range on Bark Point, American Avocet, Marbled Godwit, Wilson's Phalarope, Long-tailed Duck, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Rough-legged Hawk, LeConte's Sparrow, Red Crossbill and 26 warbler species (plus several Brewster's). Many of the late migrants had just arrived, including Black-billed Cuckoo, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Philadelphia Vireo, Cedar Waxwing, Mourning Warbler and Connecticut Warbler.

"Shorebird numbers were very low (poor habitat conditions) and we missed a number of regularly-occurring species like most plovers and peeps, while warbler numbers were very good, although locally distributed and somewhat quiet due to the colder conditions," Brady said.

## 3 common birds now in trouble

BirdLife International recently reviewed species that were once considered quite common and widespread but whose numbers are now plummeting. Three of these occur in North America:

**SNOWY OWL** -- Experiencing a rapid decline, most likely driven by climate change. Disruptions to snowmelt and snow cover can affect the availability and distribution of prey.

**ATLANTIC PUFFIN** -- Regional overfishing and climate change have created serious food shortages.

**BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE** -- Rising sea temperatures are driving catastrophic declines in plankton populations, with an impact to the rest of the food chain, including fish. Plastics at sea (consumed by the kittiwakes) may be another threat.

For more details and the full listing, see <https://tinyurl.com/Bird-LifeSurprises>

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Photo credit: Diawe Simonich

## FOUND IN OUR ARCHIVES

# 'Scarlet Teenager' drawing is full of clues about an era 70 years in the past

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**.

There are times when I look at the files and folders in the WSO Archives and think to myself, "Who really cares about all of this paperwork?" And in a flash of a second, I realize I do. And of course, a myriad other birders out there who want to track trends, or re-visit a rare bird documentation, or just let their curious mind wander back in time.

I'll admit that I'm not always bitten by the "archive bug" helping me to decide what to write about, but this time it was a cinch. I discovered this goodie in a file that was hand delivered to me at a recent WSO Board meeting.

I believe this overhead projector transparency came from the late Dr. Noel Cutright's stash. This widely known and respected ornithologist spoke widely across our state from the late 1970s until 2013. I'm not sure where this item was used or if in fact it was used at all, but it's too precious not to share. There are more of these transparencies in a file, so you just might see another one pop up some time.

This Scarlet Teenager is so telling of a different time. Hot rods, cigarettes and a "telephone." My guess is that this Scarlet Teenager is from the '50s, based on the genus name: *Bobbisoxae Smartalickae*, and the other clues here.

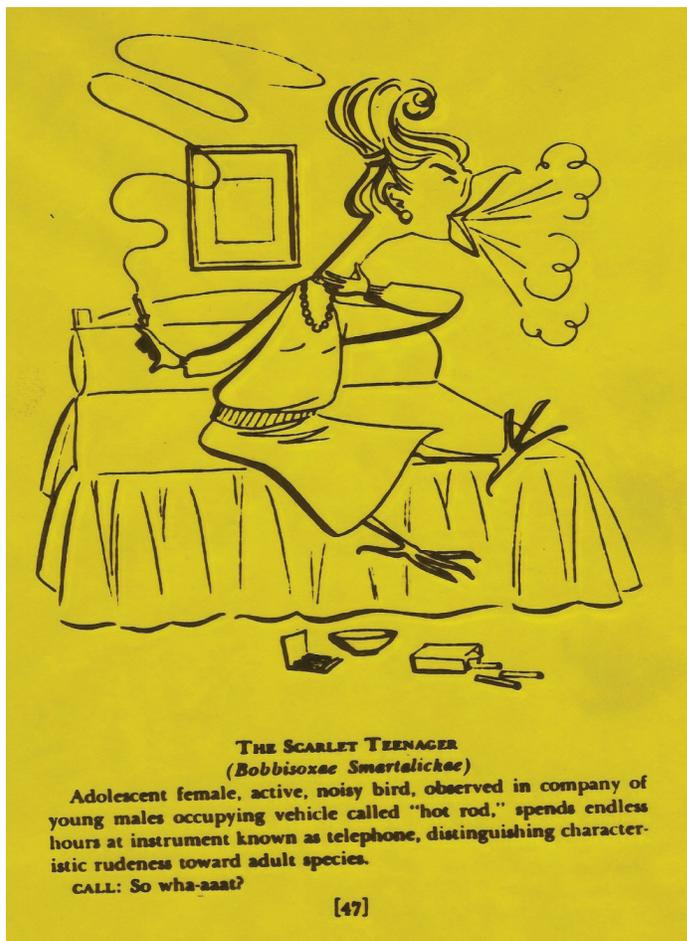
Under the Teenager drawing is a descriptive caption:

**"Adolescent female, active, noisy bird, observed in company of young males occupying vehicle called "hot rod," spends endless hours at instrument known as telephone, distinguishing characteristic: rudeness toward adult species.**

**CALL: "So wha-aaat?"**

This cheeky little drawing has my mind so curious as to its origins. If anyone out there knows, please contact me at [nnabak@sbcglobal.net](mailto:nnabak@sbcglobal.net)

Above all, it has me wondering what some WSO Historian will unearth from our Archives 70 years from now, deem it antiquated yet clever, and feel the need to write about it.



## Statewide birdathon at 70% of its \$100,000 goal

With two weeks left in the official birding period, the Great Wisconsin Birdathon had reached 70% of its fundraising goal. Teams have been birding by foot, bike, kayak and car since the cold days of late April to the mid-90s of late May in an attempt to reach a \$100,000 "Year of the Bird" fundraising goal.

"Two weeks is plenty of time to hold a low-key birdathon and send out a few fundraising letters," said coordinator Diane Packett. "Last year we even had a team in the field on June 15—the Namekagon Naturalists, representing the Cable Natural History Museum."

For those not on a team, Packett urged those wishing to support priority projects under the Bird Protection Fund, established by the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, to donate to any of the 47 teams and 89 registered participants by going online to <http://wi-birdathon.dojiggy.com/>

The GWB's six Signature Teams have raised nearly \$30,000 and are close to meeting their fundraising goals: **CUTRIGHT'S OLD COOTS:** \$10,320; **LAKE SUPERIOR EBIRDERS:** \$5,710; **FINCH GANG:** \$3,988; **SCAN DA AVIANS:** \$3,715; **SECRETARY BIRDS:** \$1,445; **OBIGRAY & THE CHEWBACALACAS:** \$1,063. Among the remaining 41 teams, 19 represent bird clubs, Bird Cities and other environmental organizations raising funds for their own local projects.

The priority projects of the Bird Protection Fund, chosen by representatives of the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative, Wisconsin DNR and the Natural Resources Foundation, target:

- Conservation of endangered Kirtland's Warblers and Whooping Cranes
- Research, education and habitat protection in Costa Rica and Peru
- Monitoring of shorebirds, waterbirds and waterfowl by the Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory
- Community engagement and habitat protection through Bird City Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Stopover Initiative
- The Wisconsin Bird Monitoring Program and Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II.

Follow Facebook for team stories, and after June 15, watch the GWB website for a new "stories from the field" page where we'll collect all the Big Day reports we can find, including those of the mysterious kayaking super-team River Raptors, which has raised nearly \$4,700.

# Tall boots in order for the walk up Honey Creek valley

From Page 1

vowing to try again next year with plans for a potluck picnic and camping around the fire pit.

Honey Creek is designated a State Natural Area and provides habitat for some of the state's rarest and most beautiful birds.

Over 170 species have been documented on the property. University of Wisconsin-Madison Professor Anna Pigeon led the netting and banding effort, while WSO Field Trips Co-chair Tom Schultz led the birdathon activities. Here are their reports:

## THE BANDATHON

The weekend was chilly, with thunderstorms on Saturday evening. However Sunday May 13 dawned warmer than anticipated, with the temperature at 52 degrees at 7 a.m. The diversity of species that we mist-netted was high, with greater numbers of warblers than in recent years.

We banded 31 individual birds, representing 18 species. Notable among them were three **GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLERS**, six **NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH** and one each of **MAGNOLIA**, **ORANGE-CROWNED**, and **TENNESSEE WARBLERS**, plus **LEAST FLYCATCHER**, **VEERY**, and **ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAK**.

The banding team worked steadily through the morning, and included sub-permittees Ashley Hannah and Maia Persche, and Melissa McDonald.

It was clear that those who observed the birds in the hand were delighted to see these precious gems up close. The audience who participated in releasing birds after they had

been measured and banded ranged from preschoolers, assisted by their parents, to octogenarians.

-- Anna Pigeon

## THE BIRDATHON

This year's Birdathon started under dark and drizzly skies in the predawn hours, with fairly cool temperatures in the 40s. Fortunately, the sprinkles ended fairly early, although the sky remained cloudy. Several owls could be heard calling – **EASTERN SCREECH, BARRED, AND GREAT HORNED** – and both woodcock and snipe were performing their courtship displays. Soon other birds were starting to be heard, as the darkness slowly began to lift.

**NORTHERN CARDINALS** and **BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEES** were singing their songs of spring, and the loud and boisterous notes of **NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH** could be heard from the surrounding wetlands.

Several of us worked our way up the Honey Creek trail, which was quite muddy in several places from all the recent rains.

Many more species were added to the day's list, including **BLUE-WINGED AND BLACKBURNIAN WARBLERS**, and the distinctive jumbled song of a **LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH** also was heard further up the stream (and later we got to see one pretty well during our official hike up the Honey Creek Valley).

We wrapped up the early hike around 7:30 or so, with about 60 species.

Around 8 a.m. those interested in participating in the hike up Honey Creek Valley gathered at the trailhead on Skyview Drive – a group of about 15.



Photo by Tom Schultz

*This singing male was one of three Louisiana Waterthrushes found along Honey Creek on May 13.*

Tall boots were definitely in order, with a number of muddy and wet spots along the trail – not to mention the stream crossings through water nearly a foot deep in places!

The group added a number of birds to the list, including an **OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER** spotted near the Cox Nature Center, so the final total for the day was 78 species.

Here's my eBird checklist:

<https://ebird.org/atlaswi/view/checklist/S45640230>

--Tom Schultz

## Where in the world are our 5 Snowy Owls?

One of five Snowy Owls tagged over the winter in Wisconsin -- one of the SNOWiest on record with an estimated 280 documented here -- has wound up delivering one of the biggest surprises of the season.

Although Project SNOWstorm scientists had suspected the tracking season already was over, they got a great surprise on Memorial Day when **AUSTIN** checked in for the first time in almost three weeks -- with almost 900 backlogged data points, a real treasure-trove.

The last time trackers had heard from this juvenile male, trapped at Austin Straubel Airport in Green Bay and relocated to the Buena Vista Grasslands with a transmitter funded by the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, he was just over the Canadian border in southern Manitoba. Since then, he continued to move northwest, traveling 735 miles along and across Lake Manitoba and Cedar Lake May 15-20, and on May 23 overflying the mining center of Flin Flon on the Manitoba/Saskatchewan border. On May 28, he was just 12 miles from the McArthur River uranium mine, the largest-producing such mine in the world, and connected with a cell tower.

On his current heading, Austin is just 165 miles from the Northwest Territories, but any further news is going to be a matter of luck. Project SNOWstorm had suggested a week earlier that it was at the finale of the 2017-'18 winter season, with only a single Snowy Owl checking in and 8 to 10 days since they had last heard from any of the more than two dozen others moving north.

Sadly, **ARLINGTON**, who was tagged Jan. 4 at Madison Audubon's Goose Pond Preserve, was found dead along a road near St. Cloud, Minn., on April 29, apparently the victim of a vehicle collision -- and the third such loss this winter. The Minnesota DNR recovered Arlington and the transmitter, sponsored by Madison Audubon.

After holding tight to a farm near Freedom, Wis., all winter, **BADGER** took off May 5 and flew up to Lake Superior, and two days later had reached the Keweenaw Peninsula. At the same time, **BANCROFT** (with a transmitter funded by WSO) was crossing the western nose of Lake Superior from the Apostle Islands to the northern shore, a 36-mile overwater flight, and by May 11 was northeast of Atikokan, Ontario.

**STRAUBEL**, the fifth Snowy tagged in Wisconsin this winter, moved well to the northwest and crossed into Manitoba. At the last report on May 10 Straubel was at the southern tip of Lake Winnipeg.

## FIELD TRIP

# Near perfect weather yields some special moments at White River Marsh – and a long checklist

By **TOM SCHULTZ**  
WSO Field Trips Co-chair

The morning was about as perfect as it could be as our group gathered at 5 a.m. -- 48 degrees, with calm winds and clear skies. Birds were singing all around us, with **SWAMP SPARROWS**, **AMERICAN BITTERNS** and **SORA** and **VIRGINIA RAILS** calling from the marsh. A pair of **GREAT HORNED OWLS** called in the distance, and from time to time bugled their unison calls from all directions.

We slowly hiked along the gravel White River Road, listening and watching all around us. Several **MARSH WRENS** sang their jerky chirping songs, and a little further along we began to hear **SEDGE WRENS**.

**YELLOW WARBLERS** and **COMMON YELLOWTHROATS** delivered their distinctive songs from the willow bushes, along with a number of **RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS**. A few **BLUE-WINGED TEAL** flew past, along with **MALLARDS** and **WOOD DUCKS**, and several **SONG SPARROWS** and a **WHITE-CROWNED** were seen hopping along the road.

At one point someone in the group spotted a **WHOOPIING CRANE** flying across the marsh, and we watched this magnificent white bird until it dropped down among the cattails. Upon landing, it immediately started unison-calling with its mate! This is the same pair that nested in the marsh last year, and we were very pleased to see and hear them.

During our hike we spotted an ultralight aircraft flying in our general direction. It turned out that it was part of the Operation Migration team, flying over the marsh in an attempt to spot a possible nest location for that Whooping Crane pair. That sure added a fun dimension to our field trip.

As our group approached a small oak island we began to hear a **YELLOW-THROATED VIREO**, but unfortunately it only sang a few times, and we were unable to spot it. Other birds present included **YELLOW-RUMPED** and **PALM WARBLERS**, **EASTERN TOWHEE**, **GRAY CATBIRD**, **ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAK** and **BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER**. A **NORTHERN HARRIER** also flew past.

On the way back to our cars we spotted a male **HOODED MERGANSER**, and we heard a **WILSON'S SNIPE** winnowing overhead. We drove east, pausing to check a grassy meadow just down the road. A **HENSLOW'S SPARROW** was heard singing, and we were able to view it through a spotting scope. Several **BOBOLINKS** also were present, singing their bubbly songs.



Photo by Tom Schultz

*Early morning light greeted a crew of dedicated birders along Rustic Road.*

Along Big Island Rd. we spotted another **WHOOPIING CRANE**, this time much closer. From its combination of colored bands this bird was determined to be #30-16. Just down the road we had **EASTERN MEADOW-LARKS** and more **BOBOLINKS**, along with **BLUE-WINGED TEAL**. A couple of **BALD EAGLES** were present in the distance – walking around on the ground like turkeys!

After a relatively fruitless check down Hopp Road we headed out to Hwy. D, where we stopped at a parking area near the White River. Another **YELLOW-THROATED VIREO** was heard (but this time also seen), along with a **GRAY CATBIRD**. A number of warblers were present, including **YELLOW-RUMPED**, **PALM**, **BLACK-AND-WHITE** and **NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH** – as well as a couple of **RUBY-CROWNED KINGLETS**. We noticed a pair of **BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEES** visiting the end of a fallen tree trunk repeatedly – each time carrying out a mouthful of wood chips as they were apparently excavating a nest cavity.

Continuing on, we stopped at a DNR prairie restoration where we heard and then eventually saw a **GRASSHOPPER SPARROW**. Nearby was a nest box for **AMERICAN KESTRELS**, and we watched a male fly into a big dead tree carrying a snake. After a couple of minutes it flew down to another branch, next to his mate, and he passed the snake over to her and then took off. It was very cool to observe this courtship activity!

Our next stop took us down a narrow gravel road through some tall pines, where **PINE WARBLERS** typically nest. We were

able to get good looks at a male in the trees overhead, and also saw a couple of **BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLERS**. An **OVENBIRD** sang from the forest nearby.

After a rest stop in Princeton, we continued south to the village of Marquette on the shore of Lake Puckaway. There from the boat launch we were able to observe a number of **AMERICAN WHITE PELICANS**, along with **DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANTS** (many in a large nesting colony at the lake's east end), **GREAT BLUE HERONS**, **GREAT EGRETS**, **FORSTER'S TERNS**, **BONAPARTE'S GULLS** and **NORTHERN HARRIERS**. After passing through Kingston, we stopped near some Amish farms to watch **PURPLE MARTINS** flying near colonial nest boxes.

We continued on to Lake Maria, where we scanned the waters from the boat launch. A nice variety of ducks was seen, including **RING-NECKED**, **BUFFLEHEAD**, **COMMON GOLDENEYE**, **COMMON MERGANSER** and **RUDDY**. A breeding-plumaged **HORNED GREBE** also was spotted, along with a few more pelicans. A nearby pond on Lake Maria Road added **AMERICAN WIGEON**, **GREEN-WINGED TEAL**, **GADWALL** and **CANVASBACK**. Also present were **NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW** and **SPOTTED SAND-PIPER** -- along with **GREATER AND LESSER YELLOWLEGS**.

Our final stop was a flooded field just to the south on Hwy. AW, where we found three dozen **BONAPARTE'S GULLS**, a couple of **SOLITARY SANDPIPERS** and both yellowlegs species. We wrapped up the trip about 1:15 p.m. after a great day that had produced a total of 106 species!

## FIELD TRIP



Photos by Tom Schultz

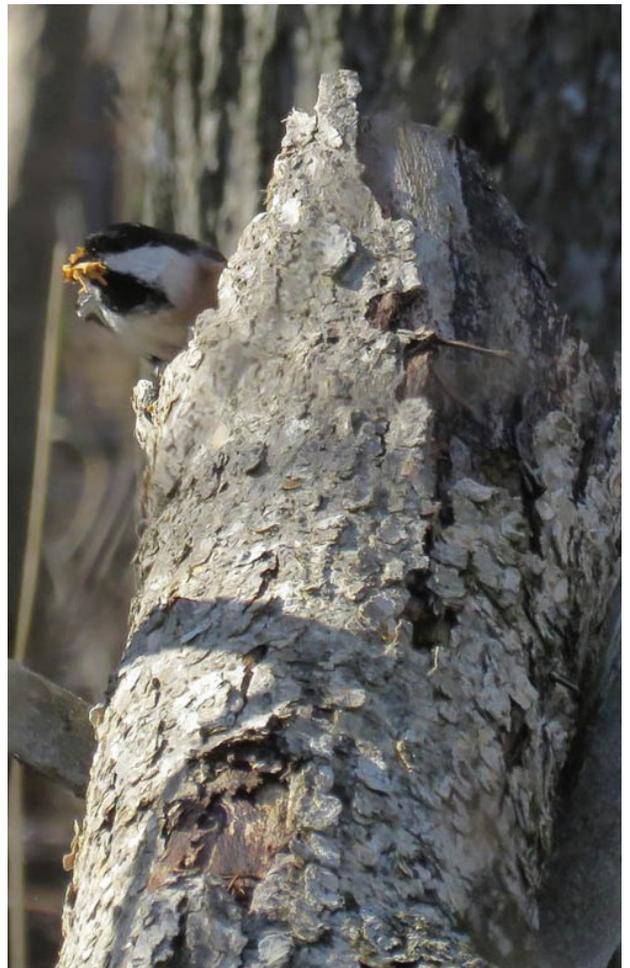
### A beautiful spring day in the White River Marsh

*For many veteran WSO field trip participants, dawn along Rustic Road in the White River Marsh is one of the nicest moments of the year – particularly in decent weather as was the case on May 5. The birds are a big part of that, and topping the list this year was a Whooping Crane. But great looks at more common birds also made the trip special: A Black-capped Chickadee excavating a nest cavity, a Virginia Rail coming out to the road in response to a call.*



Photo by Tom Schultz

*Operation Migration ultralight aircraft are now being used to locate Whooping Crane nests at the White River Marsh. This one was spotted by those on the WSO field trip there May 5.*



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2018-2019 Duck Stamp Art – Mallards

### 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 **\$28.50 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; **if you are ordering stamps only, do not use this form.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## A New Way to Help Finish Biggest Citizen Science Project in State History!



### Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II

### Adopt-a-Block

**THE NEED:** The dedicated efforts of more than 1,525 conservation-minded volunteers have brought us a long way since 2015, but with only two years of field work left to go, we still have hundreds of blocks to complete (see map).

**THE CHALLENGE:** Completing surveys of those blocks will ensure coverage of the entire state. Some of them may even harbor rare breeders found during Atlas I but not yet confirmed for Atlas II, including Northern Pintail, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Yellow Rail, Barn Owl, Worm-eating Warbler, Nelson's Sparrow, Lesser Scaup, Western Grebe, Snowy Egret and Great Gray Owl, among others. We need to survey those blocks!  
**The Adopt-a-Block campaign will directly support that effort.**

**WHAT THAT WILL TAKE:** We need the time and skills of professional ornithologists to conduct breeding bird surveys for at least 20 hours in each of several hundred under-surveyed or unsurveyed blocks (9 square-miles each). Following field surveys, data will be reported on the custom-designed Atlas eBird web site.

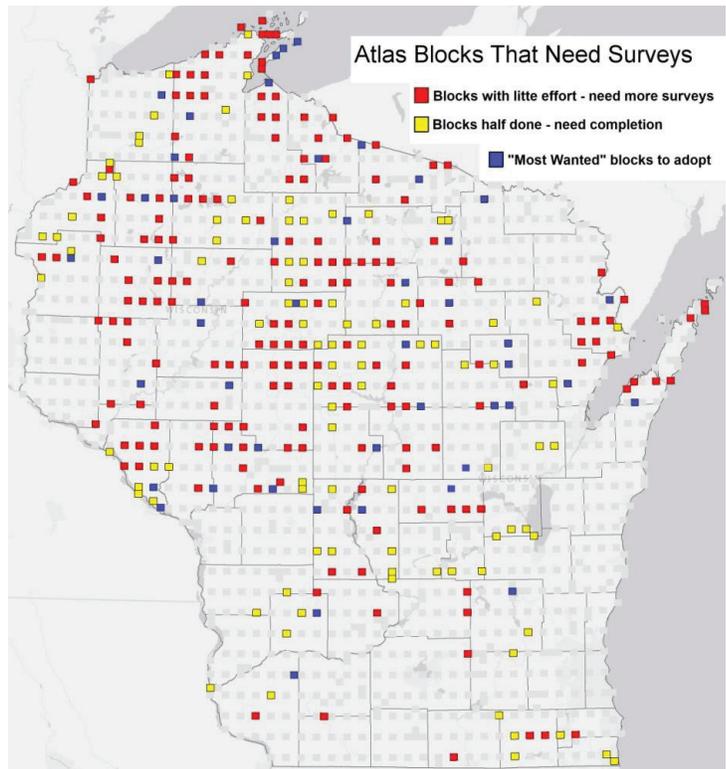
#### HOW YOU CAN HELP:

**1) Adopt a "most-wanted" block.** We are continuously updating our "most-wanted" list of unsurveyed or under-surveyed blocks. (Current ones are shown in blue on above map.) With your support, we will assign an expert birder to survey one of those blocks and send the results to you when work is completed.

**2) Adopt any block because its location is *of interest or importance to you*.** Send us your preferred block name, an address or the name of a park or lake (or other geographic feature) and we will pinpoint the closest block and assign it to you. We will provide you with the block's name, a location map and its current Atlas results (but with no guarantee that additional survey work will be done in that block). *You may choose a site that you have personally atlased or that is special to someone you want to honor or memorialize.*

**WHAT YOUR ADOPTION WILL COST:** \$600 per block -- the cost to hire a professional ornithologist to survey the important, often hard-to-reach, blocks.

**WHAT YOU WILL GET:** Prominent recognition on our website and in all published forms of the second Atlas and personal satisfaction in helping complete the largest citizen science project in state history that will, in turn, shape conservation planning in Wisconsin over the next two decades.



Visit the Atlas website to adopt-a-block! [www.wsobirds.org/adopt-a-block](http://www.wsobirds.org/adopt-a-block)

Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II  
**ADOPT-A-BLOCK** Contribution Form

Please fill out this form **in its entirety** to adopt a block in support of the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II project. If you choose to adopt one or more “most-wanted” blocks, we’ll provide you with information about that block and send results once surveyed. **Block adoptions are \$600 each**, payable in one or two installments.

\_\_\_\_\_ **I wish to adopt one or more of the 50 “most-wanted” Atlas blocks** (9 square miles). Please assign me a block! How many? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **Or alternatively, I wish to adopt a block that is personally meaningful to me** (e.g., an Atlas block I surveyed, my address, my community, key geographic feature). Please describe block here:

---

---

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street or PO Box \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I wish to receive occasional e-mail updates about WBBA II.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am making this contribution in HONOR of \_\_\_\_\_ (name).

\_\_\_\_\_ I am making this contribution in MEMORY of \_\_\_\_\_ (name).

\_\_\_\_\_ I wish for my contribution to be ANONYMOUS.

Adopt-a-Block payment options:

\_\_\_\_\_ 1-time payment of \$600/block      \_\_\_\_\_ 2 installments of \$300/block each (before June 2019)

\_\_\_\_\_ I enclose my CHECK (**payable to WSO/Atlas Project**) in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

Your contribution of any amount will be acknowledged with a paper receipt mailed separately. Your contribution is tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by the law. **THANK YOU** for supporting the **Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II** project!

**Please send this form and your payment to:**

**Christine Reel, Atlas Treasurer, 2022 Sherryl Lane, Waukesha, WI 53188**

## BIRD OF THE MONTH

# Piping Plover: *Charadrius melodus*

By **DIANA HIERLMEIER**

The Piping Plover is a stout, sparrow-sized shorebird with a large, rounded head, short, thick neck and a stubby bill. It is sand-colored, dull gray/khaki.

The adult has yellow-orange legs, a black band across the forehead from eye



Diana Heirlmeier

to eye and a black ring around the neck during the breeding season.

During the non-breeding season, the black band becomes less pronounced. Its bill is orange with a black tip. Size ranges from 5.9 to 7.5 inches in length, with a wingspan ranging from 14

to 16 inches and weighing an average of 1.5 to 2.3 ounces.

During courtship, males perform display flights over their breeding territory, with slow wing-beats and a piping call note. On the ground the male approaches the female, stands upright with neck stretched and rapidly stamps its feet with an odd high-stepping gait.

Despite traveling hundreds of miles between wintering and breeding sites, many Piping Plovers return to the same sites to breed and to spend the winter. Individuals that return to breed with the same mate often nest within 128 feet of their previous nest site.

This species prefers habitats of sandy beaches and tidal flats. They nest in open, sandy situations near water in a variety of settings: beaches along the Atlantic Coast and Great Lakes, sandbars along major rivers on the northern Great Plains; gravel or sand flats next to alkali lakes.

The female lays her clutch of eggs ranging from two to often four in a small, shallow nest lined with pebbles or broken shells. Incubation is done by both parents and averages 26 to 28 days.

The downy young may leave the nest a few hours after hatching and the young are capable of feeding themselves. Both parents brood the young during cool weather at first, but the female often deserts them within a few days, leaving the male alone to care for the young birds. The young are able to fly when 21 to 35 days old. Piping Plovers that nest early in the season are more likely to successfully raise young than their counterparts who nest later.

Intruders near a Piping Plover nest are chased and may be pecked or bitten. In Manitoba, one Killdeer was observed entering Piping Plover territory where it was bitten so hard on the leg that it limped for the rest of the summer.

Piping Plovers have a unique way of feeding. They run a few steps, then pause, then run again, pecking at the ground whenever they spot something edible. They will sometimes hold one foot forward and shuffle it rapidly over the surface of the sand or mud as if to startle small creatures into moving. Their main food stuffs include: insects, marine worms, crustaceans and other marine invertebrates. Those populations in inland areas feed mostly on insects, including small beetles, water boatmen, shore flies, midges and other small prey.

While many shorebirds have wide distributions, this species is a North American specialty, barely extending into Mexico in winter. Many of its nesting areas are subject to human disturbance or other



threats and the species is now considered endangered or threatened in all parts of its range. Measures to protect the birds' habitat are conducted each year, including controlling human access to nesting areas, nest monitoring and protection, limiting residential and industrial development and properly managing water flow. To protect nests from predators during incubation, wire enclosures are used to thwart crows, cats, raccoons, foxes and other small predators. Natural hazards to eggs and chicks include storms, high winds and abnormal tides.

Historically, the Great Lakes population nested on beaches in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, Wisconsin and Ontario, Canada. The species was never abundant, with pre-settlement populations in the Great Lakes estimated at 492 to 682 breeding pairs. As shoreline development expanded, the plovers lost their breeding habitat. By the time it was listed under the Endangered Species Act in 1985, the Great Lakes population

numbered 17 breeding pairs and its breeding area had been reduced to only northern Michigan.

In recent years, the Great Lakes population has gradually increased and expanded to the south and west. In 2000, 30 pairs of Piping Plovers nested on U.S. Great Lake shores, but all of these pairs were in northern Michigan. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has designated 35 critical habitat units for the Great Lakes population. In Wisconsin those are located in Douglas, Ashland, Marinette and Manitowoc Counties. In 2016, for the first time in more than 75 years in Lower Green Bay, Piping Plovers successfully nested on the restored Cat Island Chain and three chicks were fledged. The chicks were banded with specific green and gold leg bands, since Lambeau Field could be seen from their nest site.

The oldest record for a Piping Plover was at least 16 years old when it was recaptured and rereleased in 2015 during a banding operation in North Dakota. It had been banded in Saskatchewan.

### **TO DIG MORE DEEPLY:**

**Bent, Arthur C.** *Life Histories of North American Shorebirds, Part II.* Dover, New York, N.Y., 1962.

**Chandler, Richard J.** *North Atlantic Shorebirds.* Facts on File. New York, N.Y., 1989.

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

**Robbins, Jr., Samuel D.** *Wisconsin Bird Life; Population & Distribution, Past & Present.* University of Wisconsin- Madison Press, 1991.

**Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources web site:** <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/EndangeredResources/Animals.asp?mode=detail&SpecCode=ABNNB03070>

**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.

# S.O.S. FOR OUR FLYING BUG EATERS

## ADDRESSING DECLINES IN WISCONSIN'S AERIAL INSECTIVORES



Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative  
Bird City Wisconsin Conference

Thursday–Saturday, September 6–8, 2018

Country Springs Hotel (soon Ingleside Hotel)  
2810 Golf Road, Pewaukee, WI  
<https://www.countryspringshotel.com>



**RESERVATIONS:** (800) 247-6640 (Call by **MONDAY, AUGUST 6**, and identify yourself as with the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative for special discounted rate) **Registration deadline is Tuesday, Aug. 21.**  
Walk-ins are welcome (cash / check only), but lunch may not be available.

### CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

NAME (Print name as it should appear on your badge) \_\_\_\_\_

AFFILIATION – WBCI ORGANIZATION \_\_\_\_\_

COMMUNITY – BIRD CITY WISCONSIN \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

HOME/OFFICE PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ CELL PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

DIETARY RESTRICTIONS (for lunch Friday and Saturday) \_\_\_\_\_

### REGISTRATION FEES AND DETAILS

Registration (\$69 covers both days / \$30.00 student) ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Educational Display Table (\$125 covers table and two-day registration fee for 1 person) ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Payment ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Evening field trips are included with registration.*

Thursday evening Chimney Swift field trip: Number attending ..... \_\_\_\_\_

Thursday evening Birds and Beers/Delafield Brewhaus, 3832 Hillside Dr., Delafield, Wis. number attending \_\_\_\_\_

Friday evening Chimney Swift field trip: Number attending..... \_\_\_\_\_

Educational Display Table – group represented \_\_\_\_\_

*Online registration is available (and easy) at <https://wso.wildapricot.org/WBCI-2018>*

All other payments by check only; no credit cards accepted by mail. Make check payable to Wisconsin Society for Ornithology (or WSO). Send this registration form and check no later than **AUGUST 21** to:

WBCI, c/o Karen Etter Hale  
P.O. Box 22  
Lake Mills, WI 53551  
Registration questions: [wbcibird@gmail.com](mailto:wbcibird@gmail.com)

# S.O.S. FOR OUR FLYING BUG EATERS

## ADDRESSING DECLINES IN WISCONSIN'S AERIAL INSECTIVORES



### Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative Bird City Wisconsin Conference

Thursday–Saturday, September 6–8, 2018

Country Springs Hotel (soon Ingleside Hotel)  
2810 Golf Road, Pewaukee, WI



#### Thursday evening

- 6:45–7:45 p.m. **FIELD TRIP:** Swift Night Out! Location TBA  
6:30–9:00 p.m. **BIRDS AND BREWS,** Delafield Brewhaus

#### Friday morning:

#### AERIAL INSECTIVORES: OVERVIEW AND CONSERVATION ISSUES

- 7:45–8:30 a.m. **REGISTRATION:** Continental breakfast provided during this networking opportunity  
8:30–9:00 a.m. **WELCOME:** Celebrating Our Successes; Meeting Our Challenges (Karen Etter Hale, chair, Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative, and Chuck Hagner, director, Bird City Wisconsin)  
9:00–9:45 a.m. **KEYNOTE:** Overview: What are aerial insectivores? What pressures do they face? What factors affect their populations? (Dr. Pam Hunt, New Hampshire Audubon)  
9:45–10:30 a.m. Airspace as habitat (Dr. Robb Diehl, U.S. Geological Survey)  
10:30–10:50 a.m. **BREAK**  
10:50–11:15 a.m. Pesticides: Heeding Rachel Carson's warning (Sarah Warner, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)  
11:15 a.m.–Noon Aerial Insectivores in Wisconsin (Bill Mueller, director, Western Great Lakes Bird & Bat Observatory)  
Noon–1:00 p.m. **LUNCH** (provided)

#### Friday afternoon:

#### RESEARCH AND COORDINATED MONITORING OF AERIAL INSECTIVORES

- 1:00–1:30 p.m. Tree Swallows and the effects of climate change (Dr. Peter Dunn, UW-Milwaukee)  
1:30–2:00 p.m. Three decades of Purple Martin banding (Dick Nikolai, Wisconsin Purple Martin Association)  
2:00–2:30 p.m. Flycatchers & other birds that love insects that love lakes (Paul Schilke, Ph.D. candidate, UW Madison)  
2:30–2:50 p.m. **BREAK**  
2:50–3:20 p.m. Whip-poor-wills and Project MOON (Tara Beveroth, Illinois Natural History Survey)  
3:20–3:50 p.m. Common Nighthawks: Secrets of a rooftop nester (Gretchen Newberry, Ph.D. candidate, University of South Dakota)  
3:50–4:20 p.m. New ways of monitoring urban Common Nighthawks (Jana Viel, Ph.D. candidate, UW-Milwaukee)  
5:00–6:30 p.m. **SUPPER ON YOUR OWN**  
6:45–7:45 p.m. **FIELD TRIP:** Swift Night Out! Location TBA

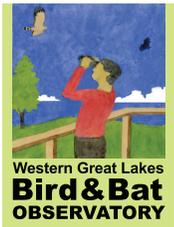
**Saturday morning: HOW YOU AND YOUR COMMUNITY CAN HELP OUR FLYING BUG EATERS**

- 8:00–9:00 a.m. **REGISTRATION** / Continental breakfast provided during this networking opportunity
- 9:00–9:20 a.m. What we’re learning about aerial insectivores in Wisconsin and the Midwest (Bill Mueller, Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory, Inc.)
- 9:20–10:00 a.m. Conserving Chimney Swifts in the Urban Landscape (Kim Grveles, Wisconsin Chimney Swift Working Group)
- 10:00–10:30 a.m. Chimney Swift monitoring in Green Bay and Milwaukee (Bryan Lenz, Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory and American Bird Conservancy)
- 10:30–10:50 a.m. **BREAK**
- 10:50–11:20 a.m. Wisconsin Nightjar Survey (Ryan Brady, WI DNR; WBCI Bird Monitoring Coordinator)
- 11:20–Noon Building a better life for Wisconsin’s bats (Heather Kaarakka, WI DNR)
- Noon–1:00 p.m. **LUNCH** (provided)

**Saturday afternoon: WHAT YOU CAN DO**

- 1:00–2:00 p.m. Nest boxes, nest structures, and other citizen science activities to benefit aerial insectivores (roundtable of lightning presentations on best ideas)
- 2:00–2:15 p.m. What communities should do: How Bird Cities can support bug eaters (Chuck Hagner, diirector, Bird City Wisconsin)
- 2:15–3:15 p.m. What you can do: Real life stories from the field (roundtable of Bird City representatives who already are leading the way in helping our aerial insectivores)
- 3:15 p.m. **CONFERENCE ADJOURNS**

**MEETING SPONSORS:**



Funds matched by the **Jaeger-Mellerop Family Charitable Trust**

Additional funding provided by: **Wisconsin Metro Audubon Society, 1000 Friends of Wisconsin**

Host partners: **Benjamin F. Goss Bird Club, Wildlife in Need Center, Wisconsin Metro Audubon Society**

# A block-busting summer of Atlas opportunities

The 2018 breeding season will be another pivotal year for the WBBA II, and birders statewide will be needed to pitch in to complete this monumental effort by 2019.

Here are some opportunities, and in each case you will find additional information by clicking on the specific event at <https://wsobirds.org/atlas-events>

## FRIDAY-SUNDAY, JUNE 8-10

Door County Atlas Blockbusting Blitz

For details contact Tom Prestby at [jjprestby@msn.com](mailto:jjprestby@msn.com)

## SATURDAY, JUNE 16

Calumet County Atlas Blockbusting Blitz

## MONDAY & TUESDAY, JUNE 18-19

7 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Door County - Clearing Workshop 2018: Birding Hot Spots

## FRIDAY-SUNDAY, JUNE 22-24

Marinette County - Blockbusting Blitz

## SATURDAY, JUNE 2

6:30- 10:30 a.m.

Oconto County - Atlasing Field Trip in the Oconto Falls South-CE Priority Block

## SATURDAY, JUNE 30

7 a.m.

Dodge County Breeding Bird Atlas Blockbusting Event

## FRIDAY-SUNDAY, JULY 6-8

Marinette County - Blockbusting Blitz

## THURSDAY, JULY 12

6 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Dunn County Blockbuster: Lower Chippewa River IBA

## FRIDAY-SUNDAY, JULY 13-15

Lincoln County Atlas Blitz

## FRIDAY, JULY 13

6 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Eau Claire County Blockbuster: Coon Forks & Eau Claire Barrens SNA

## SATURDAY, JULY 14

7 a.m.

Dodge County Blockbusting Event

## SATURDAY, JULY 14

8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Atlasing in Chiwaukee Prairie SNA

## SATURDAY, JULY 21

6:30 - 10:30 a.m.

Oconto County - Atlasing Field Trip, Oconto Falls South-CE Priority Block

## BIRD DIGEST

### Decorah webcam star disappears

So where is Decorah Dad?

This is the question that legions of dedicated webcam nest-viewers are asking. While eagle-cams may no longer be a novelty, they still draw millions of viewers. Indeed, millions. The Decorah, Iowa, eagle-cam has had nearly 358 million hits. In fact, there has been major drama at this site since the evening of 18 April. That's when the adult male, perhaps 21 years old, was last seen.

For over a decade, he had served as the subject of "enjoyment, education and wonder for millions of people," according to John Howe, director of the Raptor Resource Project, host of the eagle-cam. But despite searches by many volunteers (including the Decorah Fire Department Search & Rescue Team), there seem to be no answers to Decorah Dad's whereabouts or his fate. Was Dad struck by a vehicle when getting roadkill for the eaglets at the home-nest? Was he electrocuted or caught in a power line? Was he shot? Was he chased off by a rival local male Bald Eagle? Theories abound.

Although Dad may have disappeared, Mom seems to be playing an excellent role as the lone parent, feeding and protecting the young eaglets. As for Dad, Howe told the Birding Community E-bulletin: "Death and succession is part of the natural order, but that doesn't make it less sad when it happens. We watch the Decorah eagles and love them, but they belong to no one but themselves."

Watch the live eagle-cam at <http://www.ustream.tv/decoraheagles>

### More Florida bird-trafficking

Birding Community E-bulletin

The illegal U.S. cage bird trade situation has not improved. In April, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Florida announced that six individuals were charged in six separate cases with illegally trafficking over 400 birds. The species included species from Puerto Rico (Puerto Rican Spindalis and Puerto Rican Bullfinch), Cuba (Yellow-faced Grassquit and Cuban Bullfinch), and several from the U.S. mainland (Indigo and Painted Buntings, Blue and Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Summer Tanager and Gray Catbird).

The methods of trapping included sophisticated birdcalls using power systems with solar panels, mist nets, and primitive glues spread on tree limbs and sticks. The shipment and smuggling methods involved boxes with false bottoms, concealment of the birds in hair curlers, and birds taped to smugglers' legs beneath baggy pants.

One of the six defendants had previously pled guilty in 2016 to smuggling birds from Cuba into the U.S. in a fanny pack. In 2017 and 2018, while on probation, the smuggler offered Yellow faced Grassquits and additional migratory birds for sale.

More than 130 of these birds - all birds native to the U.S. - were released at an event run by the partners at the Everglades National Park headquarters near Homestead, Florida. For a video of the release, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=poCVXe1OqTc>

### You can collect data on your windshield

Peter Dunn, professor at UW-Milwaukee, notes that birds that eat aerial insects (swifts, swallows, Nighthawks) are declining in many areas, and one hypothesis for their decline is that their food supply is also declining. "There is good evidence that insects are declining sharply in Europe but we don't know much about what is happening in North America," Dunn notes.

"My colleague in Europe, Anders Møller, is starting a project to look at the abundance of flying insects using a very simple technique that allows you to help collect more data. You simply count the number of insects killed on your windshield! So while you are driving around Wisconsin looking for birds, you can collect data that can help us understand why these birds are declining."

If you want to participate in this very easy and potentially important project, please visit [http://www.insectcount.dk/?page\\_id=46](http://www.insectcount.dk/?page_id=46) to get more instructions and a datasheet.

Note that *zero* dead insects is also useful information, so don't forget to record times when you have no dead insects on your windshield. You can also do this just driving to work every day; multiple samples along the same route will be valuable

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Inc.

P.O. Box 3024

Madison, WI 53704-3024

**DATED MATERIAL PLEASE EXPEDITE**

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**WSO CALENDAR**

**Field Trips**

**June 2 (Saturday)**

**Southern Unit - Kettle Moraine  
State Forest**

Meet at 6 a.m. at the parking lot of Scuppernong Ski/Hiking Trails on Hwy ZZ (north side of road), approximately one mile east of Hwy 67. Carpooling is advised as participants will go on an odyssey beginning in Waukesha County and traveling into Jefferson and Walworth Counties.

This trip mixes a couple of 1/4 mile hikes along level, well-groomed trails with roadside stops that will take travelers through habitats ranging from pinewood forests to the largest wet prairie east of the Mississippi. Target species will vary depending on which specialties are being found in the forest. Common and rare birds present in recent years have included Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-shouldered Hawk, Acadian Flycatcher, Blue-headed Vireo, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Black-throated Green, Hooded, Kentucky, Pine, Cerulean,

and Prairie Warblers, Yellow-breasted Chat, Henslow's and Lark Sparrows and Orchard Oriole. Bring along water and snacks. If you have questions about this trip contact Andrea Szymczak at [hARRIERHAWK1@gmail.com](mailto:hARRIERHAWK1@gmail.com)

**WSO Board of Directors**

**July 22 (Sunday) 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

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