



Avian flu kills 64% of adult Caspian Terns in state

By **LESTER GRAHAM**
Michigan Public Radio

Wildlife biologists are finding whole colonies of **CASPIAN TERNS** dead or dying on islands in Lake Michigan. Caspian Terns are the largest terns in the world and migrate annually to the Great Lakes region to nest. They are listed as threatened in Michigan and endangered in Wisconsin.

"Caspian terns are magnificent birds. They've got that striking black cap and they fly along, looking down at the water while they fly and then suddenly plunge into the water to catch fish. They're exciting to watch," said **LISA WILLIAMS**, a contaminants specialist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

In recent years, the bird's population has been growing. In 2018 it peaked at about 10,000 in the Great Lakes region. Then rising water levels made nesting difficult.

Now it appears that Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza — bird flu — is killing hundreds and hundreds of the birds.

"Caspian terns nest very close together. And for a disease that's transmitted through the air, they're in close enough proximity that that can happen fairly readily on their colonies," Williams explained. The result is at least 1,476 adult terns dead on Lake Michigan islands.

SUMNER MATTESON is an avian ecologist with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. He said what he found on an island off of Wisconsin's Door Peninsula was horrific.

"Seeing hundreds of dead birds scattered in a line before you with



Photo by Sumner Matteson/Wisconsin DNR

A line of dead Caspian Terns with their exposed nests with eggs in the foreground.

others dying among those. And it's a -- it's a feeling of helplessness, knowing that there's nothing, absolutely nothing, you can do for those birds."

Matteson said that at this point, as estimated 64% of the adult Caspian Terns in Wisconsin are dead.

"Absolutely devastating. Catastrophic. It's going to take years for the Wisconsin population to recover," he said — and, after thinking about it, said it would more likely take decades.

Matteson said he's never seen anything so traumatic in his 42 years on the job. On other islands near the Door Peninsula, more

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WSO members elect new officers

In an election conducted largely online, WSO members have overwhelmingly elected to two-year terms the slate of officers proposed by the Board of Directors in May. On a vote of 197 to 2 (with 21-mail-in ballots), members elected these officers:

President: **SUNIL GOPALAN**
Vice President: **LYNN BARBER**
Secretary: **REBECCA GILMAN**

Barber and Gilman were elected to the WSO Board at its quarterly meeting in April. Gopalan, vice president since 2020, succeeds **MARY KORKOR** as president. Gilman succeeds **JENNY WENZEL**, who is retiring after serving 10 years as secretary.

For many decades, WSO members elected its officers during an annual meeting at its spring convention. Beginning in 2020, officer

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It was a great day for our birdathon

By **JENNIFER LAZEWSKI**
WSO Executive Director

We had a beautiful day at our Honey Creek Preserve for the 2022 Birdathon/Bandathon! The sun was shining, but it was cool and comfortable in between two short heat waves.

The annual event occurred about a month later than usual due to scheduling issues,

but this created a great opportunity to observe and gather new data. Rather than migratory birds, participants were able to observe resident birds and their breeding, nesting and feeding behaviors.

We had a wonderful time welcoming some WSO members who had never before visited Honey Creek along with some local residents stopping by. We also had some great conversations with returning

members and dedicated Honey Creek volunteers. Honey Creek Committee Chair **DAN PICKARTS** and his volunteer crew had cleared and widened the trails along the creek, and members expressed their appreciation.



JEFF BAUGHMAN did an incredible job of showing us what he knows and loves about the Honey Creek prop-

erty and the birds it supports. The hardy dawn chorus group got to experience the full sequence of awakenings and territorial singing of 42 species. (See **Jeff's report on Page 4.**)

Jeff's ability to get great views of birds seemingly on command delighted the main field trip participants with sightings of

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Support conservation of ducks, other species: Buy a Duck Stamp from WSO / Page 12

The Badger BIRDER



WISCONSIN
SOCIETY for
ORNITHOLOGY

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BIRDER PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

There will be a change in this year's summer Birder publication schedule. Expect your next eBirder on Aug. 15 (earlier than usual) and the following one on Oct. 1. (The black-and-white mail issues always arrive later.) With our 11 issues a year schedule, this shifts the second 45-day gap between issues to adjust for your editors' travel plans.

WSO FIELD TRIP CALENDAR

Field trips are only open to people who pre-register at <https://wsobirds.org/what-we-do/field-trips> and initially will be open only to WSO members; field trips are free for members. Non-members are able to sign up within 14 days of the trip for \$10 if spots remain open. Further details about trip logistics will be sent to registrants prior to a trip.

Aug. 14 (Sunday) 7 a.m. to noon

HORICON MARSH NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

We plan to visit areas around the marsh that may host a nice variety of birds. We expect to find a variety of shorebirds and water birds (ducks, rails, bitterns and herons), pelicans and raptors -- as well as resident and early migrant passerines. There will likely be some

hiking involved, and it could be warm, so you may want to carry a water bottle.

Questions? Contact trip leader TOM SCHULTZ at trschultz@centurytel.net

Coming up:

- **Sept. 10-** (Saturday): Green Bay Fall Warblers
 - **Sept. 23-25-** (Weekend): "Jaegerfest" at Wisconsin Point in Superior
 - **Oct. 8 or 15-** (Saturday): Harrington Beach State Park Fall Migrants/ Possible Hawk Flight
- *Flex date depending on current reports/conditions

Watch the WSO web site calendar for detailed trip posts in advance of these dates. Also, watch for postings on other regionally-led field trips.

Welcome to new members of WSO!

The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology would like to welcome new members who joined the organization between April 1 and June 30, 2022.

Thank you for your support! Your contributions make it possible for WSO to promote the enjoyment, study and conservation of Wisconsin's birds.



Ron Ballard, Boyceville, WI
Jeff Bentoff, Milwaukee, WI
Michael Bingham, Deerfield, WI
David Bolender, West Bend, WI
Emily Brown, Franklin, WI
O William Bruins, Middleton, WI
William Burke, Ward, SC
Amy Dixon, Monona, WI
Christopher Glass, Racine, WI
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Paula Lozano, Lakewood, OH
Kristi Lund, Chippewa Falls, WI
Lisa MacLaren, Milwaukee, WI
Mandy Martin, Sun Prairie, WI
Alex O'Brien, Appleton, WI
Katharine O'Connell Valuch, Milwaukee, WI
Jessica Lyn Rasmussen, Kenosha, WI
Lori Remeika, Lac du Flambeau, WI
Janet Rettig, Neenah, WI
Briana Rocha-Gregg, Reeseville, WI
Mary and Jim Schumann, Oshkosh, WI
Patti Jo Severson, La Crosse, WI
Janet Smith, Plover, WI
Laura Spaulding, Racine, WI
Katie and Marc Steele, Colgate, WI
Wendy Stein, Washburn, WI
Sharon Tavera, Mequon, WI
Sheryl Thormann, Cottage Grove, WI

KATE'S QUOTES

Each month, naturalist **Kate Redmond** offers us a selection of quotes on nature, conservation and life around us. For July, she found some reflections from the Wisconsin-born architect **FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT**:



"Early in life/in my career, I had to choose between honest arrogance and hypocritical humility. I chose honest arrogance and have seen no occasion to change."

"A doctor can bury his mistakes, but an architect can only advise his clients to plant vines."

SUMMER RARE BIRDS

Cassin's Kingbird would be a new state record



DAN BELTER photographed what has been identified as a **Cassin's Kingbird** in Marathon County on June 5.



This **Bullock's Oriole** photographed by **RYAN BRADY** visited a feeder near Washburn in Bayfield County.

By **MARK KORDUCKI**

The exciting spring for rarities continued into early June. In Marathon County, a trip to search for **DICKCISSELS** turned up a much more exciting surprise for a Wausau birder.

An unusual flycatcher was photographed and subsequently identified as a **CASSIN'S KINGBIRD**. If accepted, this would be the first documented record for Wisconsin. The kingbird proved quite reliable and was seen by several Wausau area birders that evening and by about two dozen birders from around the state the next day before it disappeared. Other vagrant flycatchers seen in June included a **WESTERN KINGBIRD** in Sauk County and a **SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER** in Price County.

A few great rarities were reported in late May after the last article was written. A very cooperative **BULLOCK'S ORIOLE** spent several days at a feeder in Bayfield County, which has been an outstanding location for rarities this year, including a stunning **PACIFIC LOON** in alternate plumage. A male **LAZULI BUNTING** was photographed at a private feeder in Burnett County.

Sheboygan usually produces a large

gull flock in early summer, and this year was no exception. A **BLACK-HEADED GULL** was a great find and proved to be a new state bird for many veteran Wisconsin birders. **LITTLE** and **LAUGHING GULLS** were the more expected rarities found here.

Brown County produced a great variety of shorebirds, including late spring migrants and a few birds that were spending the summer. Included in this list were both **MAR-BLED** and **HUDSONIAN GODWIT**, **AMERICAN AVOCET**, **WHIMBREL** and **RED KNOT**. **PIPING PLOVERS** successfully nested there as well.

By July 1, the beginning of fall shorebird migration was reported at several locations around the state. A group of **RED-NECKED PHALAROPES** were unusually early in Marathon County.

A **BLACK-BELLED WHISTLING DUCK** was a nice find in Ozaukee County. A group of 14 birds provided a first county record for Ashland County. **WHITE-FACED** and **GLOSSY IBIS** were both reported in Dodge County, and a **SNOWY EGRET** was present in Dane County. A **SNOWY OWL** in Kewaunee County was a very unusual sighting in June.

Traditional haunts in Sauk County once again hosted **WORM-EATING WARBLERS**. A **PRAIRIE WARBLER** was present near the Adams County location where **KIRTLAND'S WARBLERS** were once again on territory. In addition to returning birds in Ozaukee and Sauk, a singing male **BLUE GROSBEAK** was found in Waukesha.

With fall shorebird migration underway, passerines aren't far behind and it's a good time to check hummingbird feeders for vagrants. Late summer is also a good time to get out and search wetland areas for wading birds. Maybe Wisconsin will be the next state to add a **LIMPKIN!**

Formerly a south Florida specialty, Limpkins have been seen with increased frequency in the center of the United States the past two summers. Minnesota had a bird last year, and just last month one was found in Lucas County, Iowa, just South of Des Moines. They also have been seen this summer in Kansas, Oklahoma and Nebraska.

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



JIM EDLHUBER managed to locate and photograph this **Black-headed Gull** (note size and reddish bill) among the hundreds of other gulls around North Point in Sheboygan on June 13.



RYAN BRADY strikes again with this incredible group of 14 **Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks** at a private pond south of the city of Ashland. This was a second county record and the second largest group of adults recorded in state history (vs. 25 in Dane earlier this May).

Mid-June birdathon at Honey Creek finds breeders galore

By **JEFF BAUGHMAN**

On Saturday, June 18, WSO held its annual birdathon/bandathon at our Honey Creek property in Sauk County. It was the first time the event had been held outside the May migration, so the focus was more on species that breed in this State Natural Area. The birdathon portion included an early dawn chorus field trip and later a hike on our trails north of Skyview Road.



Honey Creek

The dawn chorus trip started at 4 a.m. at the intersection of Skyview and Alder Drive. It was a perfect morning for birding, with clear skies and no wind but a little chilly (mid 40s). Our

group of four walked east along Skyview listening to the beginnings of the dawn chorus.

Although it was still too dark to see anything other than silhouettes, our first songsters were **MOURNING DOVE**, **SANDHILL CRANE**, **GREAT HORNED** and **BARRED OWLS**, **WILLOW FLYCATCHER**, **TREE AND BARN SWALLOWS**, **GRAY CATBIRD**, **VEERY**, **AMERICAN ROBIN**, **SWAMP** and **SONG SPARROWS**, **RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD**, and **COMMON YELLOWTHROAT**.

As the sun began to show on the ridge tops, we continued east on Skyview for another 100 yards and then reversed course. With the increased morning light, the variety of birds we were able to see and hear increased too. We added a couple of flyby **MALLARDS**, **DOWNY** and **PILEATED WOODPECKER**,

ERS, **EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE**, **HOUSE WREN**, **CHIPPING SPARROW**, **BALTIMORE ORIOLE** and **YELLOW WARBLER**. At Alder Drive, we heard our first **BLUE-WINGED WARBLER** and **INDIGO BUNTING**, had a pair of flyby **YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOOS** and a **LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH** zipped by us.

West of Alder, we added a calling **YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER**, **HAIRY WOODPECKER** and **GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER**. Reaching the creekside trail we headed back toward the Cox Nature Center. Along Alder, we added a **BALTIMORE ORIOLE**, **NORTHERN FLICKER**, **WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH**, **BELTED KINGFISHER**, **ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK** and **GREEN HERON**.

We got back to the nature center at about 6 a.m. Our two-hour jaunt netted 42 species either heard or seen right from the road. (eBird Checklist: <https://ebird.org/wi/checklist/S113168818>)

At 8 a.m., 10 people had gathered for a hike up along Honey Creek. Most of the group was engrossed in observing the banding operation (right) that **ANNA PIGEON** had organized, but with a little coaxing, we started down Alder Drive. There were several banding nets lining the road, and this is where we found both male and female **ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAKS** caught in

a net. Once on Skyview Road, we heard both **BLACK-BILLED** and **YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOOS**, had a pair of **MALLARDS** fly by, as well as a **RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD** zipping by us. We also added **VEERY**, **WILLOW FLYCATCHER**, **NORTHERN FLICKER**, **SWAMP SPARROW**, **BLUE-WINGED WARBLER**, **BALTIMORE ORIOLE** and **INDIGO BUNTING**.

As we started down the hiking trail we soon added **YELLOW WARBLER**, **AMERICAN REDSTART**, **OVENBIRD**, **WOOD THRUSH**, **YELLOW-THROATED VIREO** and **EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE**. We then heard a singing **SCARLET TANAGER**. We talked about how similar its song is to those of the grosbeak and robin, but hoarser. The group was excited to see this scarlet-and-black bird at fairly close range as well. Continuing on to the first stream crossing we added a scolding pair of **HOUSE WRENS** and heard **GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER** and **YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER**. We saw a **TURKEY VULTURE** flying along the ridge.



This *Blue-winged Warbler* was a highlight of the bird banding at Honey Creek on June 18.

After crossing the stream, we encountered **NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW**, **EASTERN PHOEBE**, heard **RED-HEADED**, **RED-BELLIED** and **Pileated Woodpeckers**, and also heard our first **LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH** as we neared the second stream

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Bandathon nets 14 species – and an interesting question

By **ANNA PIDGEON**

The Honey Creek Bandathon was held on June 18, a sunny day with temperatures largely in the high-60s to mid-70s. We opened nets at 6 a.m. and they remained open until 11 a.m., by which time bird activity had slowed down greatly. We netted 32 birds of 14 species. Two **YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOOS** also were detained briefly in a net but escaped before we could get to them.

Of particular note were three recaptures: two **GRAY CATBIRDS**, one of which was first banded in 2020, the other in 2021, and a **SONG SPARROW** that was first banded in 2020.

The overall diversity of species captured also was notable, also including **BALTIMORE ORIOLE**, **BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD**, **YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER**, **RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD**, **AMERICAN ROBIN**, **ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK**, **COMMON YELLOWTHROAT**, **EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE**, **BLUE-WINGED WARBLER**, **BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE**, **CEDAR WAXWING** and **YELLOW WARBLER**. We were surprised, however, that some species were absent from the nets, notably **HOUSE WREN**, **DOWNY** and **RED-BELLIED WOODPECKERS** and **NORTHERN CARDINAL**.

We also noted a big difference in the number of individual **SONG**



WSO thanks **DR. ANNA PIDGEON** and her team for bird banding during the annual Birdathon/Bandathon at our Honey Creek Preserve.

SPARROWS captured during this banding session, held in mid-June, compared with banding sessions held in mid-May, when we typically capture many more per net hour. As short-distance migrants, **SONG SPARROWS** are able to initiate and complete nesting early.

It is possible that the difference in numbers captured is attributable to differences in movement patterns of **SONG SPARROWS** in mid-May versus mid-June. Many would have finished nesting by mid-June and may have started their prebasic molt, during which all feathers are replaced. Many birds exhibit reduced movement during molt, and if many Honey Creek birds were in molt, this would have made them less likely to have been captured. While the one captured **SONG SPARROW** was indeed in active molt, this explanation is speculation only.

DR. ANNA PIDGEON is the Beers-Bascom Professor in Conservation in the Department of Forest and Wildlife Ecology at UW-Madison. Others involved in the banding effort included graduate students **HEATHER COX**, **ASHLEY OLAH** and **SAGARA HALEHALI SATHYANARAYANA**; undergraduate **ELSE RADELOFF** and Baraboo District instructional coach **MELISSA McDONALD**.

Great Wisconsin Birdathon soars, raising \$117,000 for birds

By CAITLYN SCHUCHHARDT
Outreach Coordinator
Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin

Another record-breaking season for the Great Wisconsin Birdathon is in the books, thanks the dedication and commitment of Wisconsin's birding community. This annual fundraiser for the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin unites bird lovers from across the state in a shared mission to support Wisconsin's most critical and high priority bird conservation projects.

And wow, did our birders show up this year! Our 56 teams raised \$117,000 for NRF's Bird Protection Fund. That's 17% above our goal!

This money was raised by families and friends who share a love of birds, by children and classrooms eager to learn about Wisconsin's diverse number of species, by bird clubs out to make a difference, by nonprofit organizations looking to give back, and by dedicated birders like you who care deeply about bird conservation in Wisconsin.

This season has been extra special because the Great Wisconsin Birdathon has been around for a decade since its pilot year launch in 2012. The best way we could imagine celebrating this milestone is to do just what our birders did—raise as much as we can for the birds we love.

Speaking of those birds we love ... what did our teams find? Across our 56 teams birding in 36 counties, we collectively found 250 species! Four of our teams were lucky enough to spot our Bird of the Year, the **WHOOPIING CRANE**—congrats to *Cutright's Old Coots*, *Millennial Falcons*, *I'm With the Birds* and the *Horicon Marsh Wrens* on this special find!

Our teams also found some rare species, including the elusive **YELLOW RAIL**. A handful of teams reported this species, but the intrepid *Lake Superior eBirders* found not one but three of them!

The Good Godwits also rounded up a **BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING DUCK** and a **WESTERN KINGBIRD**. The *Scan da Avians* found a **CATTLE EGRET**, *Yes We Pelican!* members of the Feminist Bird Club snagged a **LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE**, and the *GLC Chickadees* made sure that Sheboygan's celebrated **HARLEQUIN DUCKS** were represented, too.

Our collective species list includes 33 considered to be of Special Concern in Wisconsin, 9 considered Threatened, and 8 considered Endangered. View the full list and enjoy bird photos submitted by our teams at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hm-DoDSGzxCayMD0XkAPUBtB0CuVDQtg-/view>



The Great Wisconsin Birdathon gave away a copy of *Wingspan*, the popular bird-themed board game, and the winner was one of our newest family teams from Wood County, the **Round Barn Birders!** Photo courtesy of their team captain, **LISA KOWALSKI** (left).



Thank you to the teams, donors, and sponsors of the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin's **2022 Great Wisconsin Birdathon!**



And if you're eager for more Birdathon stories, be sure to check out our Facebook page for team recaps and birder spotlights highlighting folks who have been birding with us for a decade—like WSO's **CARL SCHWARTZ**, whose *Cutright's Old Coots* team topped the charts again with \$18,400 raised for the birds. Incredible!

At its heart, this event is a fundraiser for bird conservation. But Wisconsin's birding community has made it more than that. Thank you for helping us support Wisconsin's birds, while also growing and strengthening Wisconsin's birding community!

The Great Wisconsin Birdathon will return next spring! Stay tuned for an update this fall when we announce the next round of Bird Protection Fund projects that will benefit from these funds.

Learn more at www.WIBirdathon.org. Have questions? Contact **CAITLYN SCHUCHHARDT** at WIBirdathon@WisConservation.org

Cautionary tips to document birds ID'd by Merlin app

By JASON THIELE

Wisconsin eBird Team

The Cornell Lab's Merlin Bird ID app for smart phones is a game changer in the birding world, especially for its sound identification feature. But like any new technology, it's not perfect, meaning eBirders should be careful not to report birds identified only by the app.

Birding, like virtually every other pastime, has been greatly influenced by advances in technology. Most advances in birding technology are simply updates to technology that's been around for quite some time. Others are almost revolutionary when they first appear.

For example, I would love to see the reaction that **ALEXANDER WILSON, JOHN JAMES AUDUBON** and some of the pioneers of ornithology would have to seeing bird migration on radar.

One of the most recent "game changers" is sound recognition technology, which uses artificial intelligence to identify birds from recorded vocalizations.

While there have been some computer programs and smart phone applications with these capabilities available for a few years, their popularity among birders was fairly limited because they were either expensive, unintuitive to use, or not really all that effective.

About a year ago, however, with an update of its popular (and free) Merlin Bird ID app (<https://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/>) the Cornell Lab of Ornithology introduced this technology to the masses. The app has exploded in popularity with birders of all skill levels.

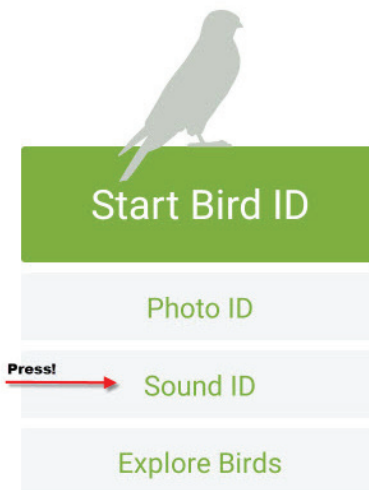
As an eBird regional reviewer, I am wholly supportive of any means that birders can use to make accurate identifications and, especially, to provide solid documentation for rare, out-of-range, or out-of-season species. The more tools people have at their disposal to identify birds, the more confident they will feel in sharing their observations.

Almost certainly, Merlin and other technological developments will help to increase our collective understanding of the distribution and movements of birds as more people make the jump from casual "bird watchers" to more intentional "birders" who report what they find.

However, birders can become overly reliant on Merlin or other apps for identifying birds.

Over the past several months, the Wisconsin eBird team has noticed a substantial increase in "flagged" records, with many of them attributed to birds that were identified by their songs or calls using Merlin. While some of these reports were likely correct, they were not adequately documented,

The Cornell Lab
Merlin
ID Help: 7,500+ Species



prompting reviewers to send out many follow-up e-mails to eBirders asking for more information.

Remember that whenever an observation in eBird is flagged for review (i.e., eBird prompts you to add comments when you submit your checklist), you should be providing details that allow a reviewer to be sure that you really encountered the bird/s you are reporting.

It is important for all birders to understand that "heard only" records are especially difficult to scrutinize, regardless of whether you have help from your smart phone.

With that in mind, the Wisconsin eBird team suggests the following pointers and best practices for documenting birds identified using the Merlin app:

1. "IDENTIFIED WITH MERLIN" IS NOT PROPER OR ACCEPTABLE DOCUMENTATION! Merlin can do a good job at identifying birds, but it's not infallible. "Merlin said so" is really only slightly better than "My Uncle Bob, who is a very good birder, said that's what it was." You can (and probably should) mention that you used the app in your comments, but don't stop there!

2. SAVE THE RECORDING OF THE BIRD TO YOUR DEVICE AND UPLOAD IT TO YOUR eBIRD CHECKLIST.

An online tutorial is available at: <https://support.ebird.org/en/support/solutions/articles/48001185783-sound-id#Do-recordings-automatically-get-shared-with-Macaulay-Library?-Can-I-share-my-recordings-with-eBird-and-the-Macaulay-Library?%C2%A0>

When you include a recording, it allows eBird reviewers to listen to the bird and to

study the spectrogram of the recording and confirm or correct the ID. It also provides a much more robust record for posterity. Decades from now, ornithologists should have little to no doubt about the identity of a species in a "historical" record if a quality recording of its vocalizations has been saved.

3. IF YOU'RE UNABLE TO MAKE OR SUBMIT A QUALITY RECORDING, YOU SHOULD AT THE VERY LEAST PROVIDE SOME SORT OF DESCRIPTION OF THE SONG OR CALL YOU HEARD.

Again, these are very subjective and not nearly as valuable for documentation as a recording, but descriptive phrases like "a high-pitched, squeaky series of two notes" or comparisons to another species' song like "similar to **RED-EYED VIREO** but raspier" or mnemonics like "teakettle, teakettle, teakettle" are much more helpful than "confirmed by Merlin" (see #1). Combined with other evidence (see #4), these notes may help to clinch an identification.

4. WHENEVER POSSIBLE, OFFER OTHER EVIDENCE SUCH AS A VISUAL DESCRIPTION OF THE BIRD, NOTES ABOUT ITS BEHAVIOR, AND/OR A PHOTOGRAPH OR VIDEO TO SUPPORT THE AUDIO ID.

Realize that some bird species sound very similar to others, some birds sing alternate songs that don't match the "textbook" version, birds of the same species that live in different regions can have different dialects, and some birds can do very convincing imitations of other species' vocalizations. Any of these scenarios can lead to misidentifications by Merlin or by birders (including eBird reviewers). More evidence is always better!

5. ABOVE ALL, BIRDING ETHICS SHOULD ALWAYS APPLY.

Don't let your efforts to get a better recording (or a really great look or sharp photo) override the need to ensure that the bird is not disturbed from its activities. Pay close attention to the bird's behavior in response to your presence; don't chase it around. Be judicious in your use of playbacks to elicit a response from the bird, especially in highly-birded areas. Likewise, do not trespass onto private property to obtain better documentation. Review the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology Code of Ethics: <https://wso-birds.org/about-wso/code-of-ethics>

Merlin and similar apps are already boosting birders' skills worldwide. That's a good thing! For now, though, they should be used as tools that suggest a possible identification, not an ultimate confirmation. Please eBird accordingly.

*The author thanks **RYAN BRADY** and **NICK ANICH** for providing comments and edits to improve the readability and content of this article.*

FIELD TRIP

Lots of WOW! moments in the Northern Kettle Moraine

By **JEFF BAUGHMAN**
WSO Field Trip Committee

Our group of 19 birders met at Jersey Flats Prairie Restoration Project parking lot at 6 a.m. to begin our WSO field trip through a small part of the Kettle Moraine State Forest-Northern Unit. After introductions and a brief itinerary, we took a short walk on a mowed trail into the prairie.

Soon we had nice scope views of our target species, **HENSLOW'S SPARROW**. We eventually heard four of these small, flat-headed sparrows as well as **SANDHILL CRANE**, a resident **RED-TAILED HAWK**, **EASTERN KINGBIRD**, **EASTERN BLUEBIRD**, **BROWN THRASHER**, **CLAY-COLORED** and **FIELD SPARROWS** and **EASTERN MEADOW-LARK**.

An **ORCHARD ORIOLE** singing across the road was a pleasant surprise. We have very few of these birds within the state forest. We returned to our cars and headed a short distance down CTH SS to where the bird was singing. We finally found a young male (yellow bird with a dark black bib) singing high in a tree right along the road. Unfortunately, he moved several times and only offered limited views.

[eBird checklist](#)

We then headed to the Zillmer Trail parking lot to organize carpooling and to bird around the parking lot., which is bordered by large Red Pines and is a good spot to find **PINE WARBLER**. Soon we heard one singing and eventually had him in view. A **BLACK-BILLED CUCKOO** was heard not far away. With a little coaxing we soon had excellent looks at this handsome bird less than 50 feet away. We also had **RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH**, **LEAST FLYCATCHER**, **RED-EYED VIREO**, **WOOD THRUSH**, a singing **CHIPPING SPARROW** (allowing a good comparison with the Pine Warbler's song) and **MOURNING WARBLER** (heard only).

[eBird checklist](#)

Next was a brief stop at the new entrance to New Prospect Horse Riders Camp. Our target was **MOURNING WARBLER**, and he didn't disappoint, singing from his usual perch high in a dead ash tree. Normally, they are found in dense cover and difficult to see, but this one likes this unobstructed singing perch. Other species seen and heard were **PILEATED WOODPECKER**, **EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE**, **YELLOW-THROATED VIREO**, **GRAY CATBIRD**, **EASTERN TOWHEE**, **OVENBIRD**, **SCARLET TANAGER** and **INDIGO BUNTING**.

[eBird checklist](#)

Our next site was Haushalter Lane. This site is one of the birding gems in the entire Northern Unit. This 1.2-mile dead end road passes through a variety of habitats and for the most part is fairly secluded. The road ends at a cul-de-sac where there are two trails.

We started on the east trail and walked about 0.4 miles to the spring pond. Along the way we had **RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD**,



Photos by Matthew Klemme

*Trip highlights for photographers: A **Common Nighthawk** sitting in a tree not far off the road. A singing **Cerulean Warbler**. **Baltimore Orioles** building their nest.*

a flyover **DOUBLE-CRESTED CORMORANT** (uncommon), **ALDER FLYCATCHER**, **FIELD SPARROW**, **EASTERN TOWHEE**, **NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH**, **BLUE-WINGED**, **CHEST-NUT-SIDED**, **BLACK-AND-WHITE**, **NASHVILLE**, **AMERICAN REDSTART** and **YELLOW WARBLERS**, an orangish **SCARLET TANAGER** and **ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEEK**. We then returned to the cul-de-sac and took the trail north to the bridge where we added **HAIRY WOODPECKER**, **YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER** (late migrant), **SEDGE WREN**, **VEERY**, **SWAMP SPARROW** and another **MOURNING WARBLER**.

We returned to the cars and slowly made our way out. Stopping at a select few spots for other target species. At the gas pipeline corridor, about halfway out, we stopped. Here we heard **OVENBIRD**, **BLACK-THROATED GREEN WARBLER** and our targets: **HOODED WARBLER** and **ACADIAN FLYCATCHER**, although we never got very good looks at either.

Haushalter Lane produced 11 species of warblers, a pretty good list of warblers for southern Wisconsin.

[eBird checklist](#)

Our next stop was Haskell Noyes Memorial Forest. From the small parking lot along CTH GGG there is a nice trail for any visiting birder if they have time. Instead, we opted to walk the road south a little ways. It's here that **ACADIAN FLYCATCHER** and **HOODED WARBLER** frequent areas not far off the road. Again, we heard both species well but only had glimpses of the Hooded as it flew from one side of the road to the other. Since they weren't being very cooperative we returned to our cars and headed to our next stop.

[eBird checklist](#)

Mauthe Lake Recreation Area is another gem. Because of its popularity for picnicking, hiking, and camping, it is often the top eBird Hotspot in Fond du Lac County by the end of the year. Mauthe Lake itself adds another habitat component. Our target here is **CERULEAN WARBLER**, often found right in the picnic area.

After parking our cars, we made our way along the road bordering the picnic area towards the campground. We met a group of Wausau birders that were camping here and one of them spotted a **COMMON NIGHTHAWK** sitting in a tree not far off the road. Both our groups had knockout looks, and photographers were able to take pictures of this uncommon sight.

Our group then took a short restroom break before continuing. Above the restrooms was a singing **CERULEAN WARBLER** and many photos were taken of this state-threatened species. Not far away we also found a pair of **BALTIMORE ORIOLES** in the process of building their nest.

Please turn to Page 16

CALL NOTES

The healing powers of nature – and friendship

By **JIM KNICKELBINE**

It's been a while since I've had an opportunity to write. It was an eventful winter for me -- a major surgery, weeks in the hospital and months recovering away from home in a large city. A life-changing challenge, which took me largely away from the birds I love but resulted in their becoming all the more special to me.



Jim Knickelbine

The first 10 days after surgery, I was in intensive care, in a room with a small window that looked out into a shaft between buildings. One could only see concrete, and barely a smidge of the sky. No chance of seeing anything living.

The next week was spent in a room with a broad view of the hospital campus, with the nearest bare, February trees a good quarter mile away.

One day I thought I saw a pigeon resting on a pipe running outside a building, but when it was there the next morning I realized it was just a valve. A day later a crow flew over, and later a gull. This was at the time when hotlines were reporting the redpoll explosion throughout the state, including the area where I was.

After that, I moved to a house across the street from the hospital, on a tiny lot on a very busy street. A single elm tree by the sidewalk, and no shrubs.

I immediately put up two feeders, fingers crossed. Nothing.

I ached to see a bird -- I've lived in the country all my life, and this was very foreign territory. The first animals to visit the feeders, or rather the ground underneath, were a couple of cottontails that came out in the middle of the night. After a couple more weeks, a small flock of **HOUSE SPARROWS** came and fed messily a few times, but that was it.

However, as the season progressed, I could hear robins just as the sky lightened in the morning, and when it was warm enough outside I could hear cardinals and **HOUSE FINCHES** along with the sparrows -- it wasn't quite a bird desert after all.

Before I had gone for surgery, I mentioned to a co-worker at Woodland Dunes that I had seen a remarkable study from Harvard, which documented that patients who could see a tree out their hospital window actually recovered faster than those who could not.

Well, sure enough, within days of my going to the hospital my outstanding co-workers and friends began sending photos of trees from the preserve. Then, as the season progressed, they began send-



Photo by Jim Knickelbine

The healing view from my home office window.

ing photos of birds. Some days, every few minutes, I would receive another text from someone.

I was overcome with gratitude. As I got stronger, I could visit a nearby park with a lake and see chickadees, ducks and finally a **RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD**. It was good enough to see common ducks and gulls on the lake, bathed in warm spring sunshine. I felt my soul heal along with my body.

In late April, I came home to very empty bird feeders and a greening yard. Within a few hours of refilling, chickadees and then the others were back, as if to say it's about time. The **WHITE-THROATED SPARROW** that had lingered late into winter was gone, but I was relieved to see that **RED-BREASTED NUTHATCHES** had stayed.

And as the trees put out their leaves, I felt embraced.

I am grateful to have successfully gone through this difficult experience, as it taught me several things. Among them: how much nature and the power of friendship have the ability to help you heal, and how they should never be taken for granted.

And, how enjoyable a cold, damp spring can really be.

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

DNR board approves revised prairie-chicken plan

By **PETER DUNN**

The Wisconsin Natural Resources Board (NRB) has approved the 2022-'32 **GREATER PRAIRIE-CHICKEN** Management Plan at its meeting on June 22.

The vote was not unanimous (4-3 in favor) because of concerns about how the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will achieve the plan's goals. The plan had been narrowed, after public comment in February, to focus on areas currently supporting populations of prairie-chickens, particularly the Buena Vista, Leola and Paul Olson Wildlife Management Areas (about 19,000 acres in central Wisconsin). This includes 60 acres that are owned by WSO and managed by the DNR.

Prairie-chickens have declined 66% over the last 20 years. The latest survey estimated

251 males in the state as of 2021. New analyses contained in the 2022-'32 management plan provide clear evidence that the decline has been caused by loss of habitat.

Thus, the focus in developing a new management plan has been on increasing and improving the quality of grassland habitat, which will benefit many grassland species in addition to prairie-chickens. The last 10-year management plan (2004-'14) and the earlier version of the 2022-'32 plan aimed to protect 55,000 acres of grassland habitat. This acreage is based on a goal of 1,100 male prairie-chickens in central Wisconsin (estimated in the early 1980s) and a required habitat of 50 acres per male.

The previous 10-year plan never achieved the goal of protecting 55,000 acres and, given the 10 year time-frame for the next plan,

the DNR decided to scale back the goal for 2032 to about 27,000 acres. This includes their existing land, so permanent protections would be extended to an additional 8,000 acres.

Much of the discussion and concern at the NRB meeting focused on how the DNR would achieve the management plan's goals, given that it will cost \$13.4 million over 10 years and funding is often a problem.

ERIC LOBNER, director of the DNR Wildlife Management Bureau, said that the DNR plans to "restructure our focus" and "put more energy and time on the specific management issues" facing prairie-chickens. The DNR already has identified "4,000 acres of land to acquire, collaborating with private landowners", and it plans to explore more opportunities for funding.

NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Jeff Bentoff: *'In the beginning, it was overwhelming ... but birders ... have been so encouraging and accepting that I stayed with it....'*

WSO's Membership Committee regularly highlights some of our new members. Here we chat with **JEFF BENTOFF**. If you are a new member and would like to be featured, please email dlturski@gmail.com

Please tell us a bit about yourself:

I live on Milwaukee's East Side. My career has covered journalism (Milwaukee Sentinel), government (Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist's administration), public relations and writing (Bentoff Communications), radio (co-founder of 88Nine Radio Milwaukee).

I'm a huge music fan, attending shows regularly. I've been playing guitar since junior high and learning piano in recent years.

I love taking photographs and created a drone video of Lake Park that's part of a Frederick Law Olmsted exhibition now at Milwaukee's Villa Terrace Decorative Arts Museum.

I also book the music for the Lake Park Friends' Musical Mondays series held in July and August.

How would you describe your involvement with birds?

I started birding last year in May after seeing wonderful warbler photos that my friend **ANNE REED**, Wisconsin Humane Society president and CEO, took in Lake Park and posted over the years.

It finally hit me – "wait, these wildly interesting and beautiful birds are in the park just down the street from my house, and I've never seen them."

So I bought a pair of binoculars, and I literally saw what I'd been missing. I began joining walks at Urban Ecology Center locations, Schlitz Audubon Nature Center and Lake Park, where I learn from walk leaders and fellow birders. I also make regular jaunts to parks on my own.

What led you to join WSO?

While running on a recent Sunday, I saw a birding group in Lake Park, stopped to see what they were finding, and was encouraged by one of the birders to join.

So here I am. I look forward to tapping into WSO to further my education and do more birding.

Do you have a favorite Wisconsin bird? If so, why that bird?

I like colorful and odd birds. **INDIGO BUNTINGS**, **CEDAR WAXWINGS**, eagles, warblers (currently **BLACK-THROATED GREEN** and **CANADA WARBLERS**). I never get bored of cardinals.

Have you had a recent memorable experience with birds or



JEFF BENTOFF: *"When I was in high school, I'd see the mother of a good friend leave their house with binoculars to go birding. She was a wonderful woman, but I thought her birding thing was just daffy. Now, here I am."*

while birding?

I saw two **COOPER'S HAWKS** perched on adjacent trees in my neighborhood along a residential street near the lakefront while walking with my wife. We watched one of them fly to a tree with nesting materials.

Unfortunately, I can't find that tree again. Last year, I was at Wehr Nature Center, noticed some activity in the pond, looked through my binoculars and was astonished to see dozens of waxwings hanging around the lily pads.

This year, thanks to timely info from the Wisconsin Birding Network email list and fellow birders, I was able to see several rare birds that visited –**CONNECTICUT** and **YELLOW-THROATED WARBLERS**, and the **PURPLE SANDPIPER** and **RUDDY TURNSTONE**.

Is there anything else you'd like to share about yourself, your work, or your experience with birds?

Birding is all very new to me. I'm slowly becoming more knowledgeable, thanks to great walk leaders, fellow birders, apps, books and Wisconsin photographers posting online.

In the beginning, it was overwhelming and a bit discouraging – "how will I ever figure out what's going on?" – but birders and leaders have been so encouraging and accepting that I stayed with it, and I'm glad I did.

When I was in high school, I'd see the mother of a good friend leave their house with binoculars to go birding. She was a wonderful woman, but I thought her birding thing was just daffy.

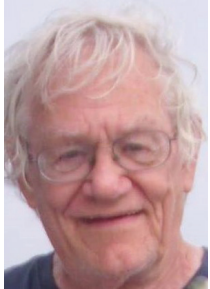
Now, here I am.

FOUND IN OUR ARCHIVES

Rockne Knuth: Where art and science meet

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

While looking at what was going on with birds in Wisconsin and the WSO organization 50 years ago, I became intrigued with the cover artwork for the Winter 1971 issue of *The Passenger Pigeon*. **ROCKNE KNUTH** had illustrated a pair of **COMMON GOLDENEYES** in flight. The artwork accompanied a story about wintering goldeneyes in Wisconsin.



Rockne Knuth

As WSO Historian, I pay attention every now and then, and I've heard Rockne's name associated with amazing wildlife artwork as well as his accomplishments for WSO. Digging a bit further, here's a little more that I found out about him from our archives. (Spoiler: You are going to like

this guy.)

-- Vice president of WSO in 1969-'70 and took the reins as president for 1970-'71.

-- Co-founder of the Owen J. Gromme Bird Club in Fond du Lac.

-- Illustrations and paintings on the cover or accompanying a story in the *Passenger Pigeons*: **ACADIAN FLYCATCHER, HOODED WARBLER, KIRTLAND'S WARBLER, LOUISIANA HERON** (since renamed **TRICOLORED HERON**), **MONK PARAKEET, HOUSE SPARROW, BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON, COMMON GOLDENEYE** and more.

-- His name appears in 271 searches in the *Passenger Pigeon* archives.

-- Contributed cover artwork for *Wisconsin's Favorite Bird Haunts*, as well as other illustrations to accompany the text.

-- Received the Silver Passenger Pigeon Award in 1983.

-- Discovered an immature **BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE** in Fond du Lac County in April 1976.

-- Won the Wisconsin Duck Stamp competition in 1979 and 1983.

His Silver Passenger Pigeon citation reads:

"This year's recipient of the Silver Passenger Pigeon Award for service in WSO, Mr. Rockne Knuth, started his contributions in 1967 when he painted a striking cover for *The Passenger Pigeon*. This was followed by four other excellent covers over a 10-year period. He is also the artist for the fine covers on the *Bird Haunts* books.

"Mr. Knuth accepted the important task of convention chairman for 1970 at Fond du Lac; he was vice-president for 1969-1970 and president for 1970-1971.

"Since 1971, Rockne has served as Spring seasonal editor; a demanding and time-consuming task. During these years mentioned, he also published several interesting and informative articles in *The Passenger Pigeon*.

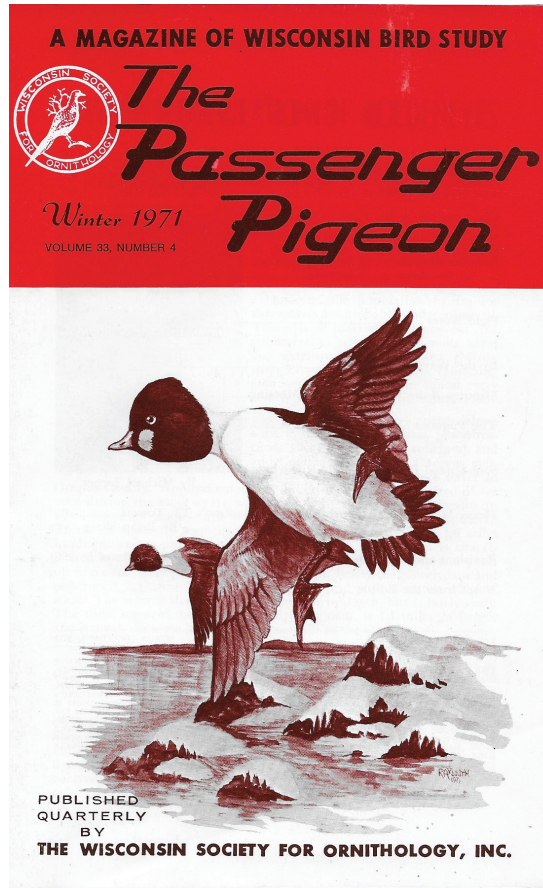
"In recognition of this valuable and devoted service, WSO is pleased to award the 1983 Silver Passenger Pigeon to Rockne Knuth."

Sure would have been cool birding with him when he found the kittiwake. I would have loved to have been at the

1983 banquet when he received his award.

If you know Rockne, now 81 and living in Oshkosh, tell him WSO appreciates all he did for us! We sure do!

-- NANCY NABAK



New nest guide includes work of 4 WSO members

By **NANCY NABAK**

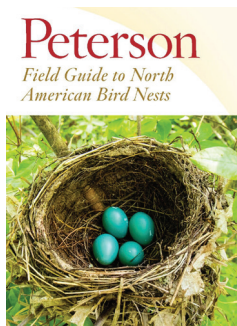
WSO members **TOM ERDMAN, JACK BARTHOLMAI, JOHN JACOBS** and **TOM SCHULTZ** were selected to contribute photos to the new *Peterson Field Guide to North American Bird Nests*, now available in book stores and online. In all, 22 images from Wisconsin appear in the guide. Erdman worked closely with the authors and half of the images are his.

According to co-author **DAVID MOSKOWITZ**, "We ended up working on this book through wildlife tracking -- bird nests being a fascinating and very special type of sign animals leave on the landscape. We shared frustration that there wasn't a really good, field-friendly guide for

them!"

Moskowitz said the book is designed to be comprehensive for North America (north of Mexico) with about 600 species. Not all species will have photographs, however. Where species nests are extremely similar, they are handled in group accounts with notes about how to distinguish them based on eggs, habitat, range or other features when possible. There are also different keys to help narrow down nests found in the field.

Erdman said the **LITTLE GULL** nest photos he took and submitted will be published as the species' first nest found in the United States. (They were documented nesting in Ontario a few years prior to Erdman's discovery.)



Casey McFarland, Matthew Monjello & David Moskowitz



WSO charter member **CARL RICHTER** assisted **HAL HARRISON**, author of the original Peterson series nest guide, "*A Field Guide to Birds' Nest in the United States east of the Mississippi River*," and is acknowledged in the guide for his assistance.

Nest guide description on Amazon

Beyond being a simple reference book, the Peterson Field Guide to North American Bird Nests is a practical, educational and intimate doorway to our continent's bird life. The diversity of nests and nesting strategies of birds reflect the unique biology and evolution of these charismatic animals. Unlike any other book currently on the market, this guide comprehensively incorporates nest design, breeding behavior and habitat preferences of North American birds to provide the reader with a highly functional field resource and an engaging perspective of this sensitive part of a bird's life.

NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Jennifer Anne: 'I ended up becoming a birding geek from my nature studies for art and printmaking.'

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

Please tell us a bit about yourself:

I relocated from Madison to the Manitowoc area three years ago. I'd had a 20-year career in marketing and graphic design and needed a change. I still visit Madison but am very much enjoying being on the lakeshore, in the Two Rivers/Manitowoc area.

How would you describe your involvement with birds?

When I first relocated to Manitowoc, I took a one-year sabbatical to volunteer and spend time on my art. I volunteered at the Lester Library and the Hamilton Wood Type & Printing Museum, where I am now an employee. For my art, I study patterns in nature such as those of animal tracks, bird feathers, tree bark and water ripples. During the sabbatical, I studied Wisconsin trees and birds, finding bark, wood grain or evergreen forms to print, then create multimedia pieces. I quickly discovered Woodland Dunes Nature Center which, among many offerings, has great programming around birds.

After getting to know **NANCY NABAK**, a staff member at Woodland Dunes and a WSO Board member, I joined the Bay Area Birding Club. I learned that this area in Wisconsin is a distinctive hotspot for birding with its microclimates, unique waterway system and position along flyways for seasonal bird migration. I enjoy hiking and paddling, and often have my binoculars along for birding.

What led you to join WSO?

Among the artist friends I have made here, **REBECCA JABS** stands out. I love her illustrations of Wisconsin's flora and fauna, including birds. She is an avid birder, and we often speak about birds and birding. She was slated to speak at WSO's 2020 convention before COVID necessitated its cancellation.

Do you have a favorite Wisconsin bird? If so, why that bird?

I am quite partial to **SANDHILL CRANES**. Their clattering calls always make me stop whatever I am doing so I can listen and hope to see them. When I was growing up in the '70s, they were still known to be a species of concern, so I always still cherish them. While participating in a Natural Resources Foundation event for banding migratory birds, I saw the bands used for different species. I will never forget the dramatic difference in the size of the bands for the **SANDHILL CRANES**, compared with the bands for kinglets or hummingbirds!

Have you had a recent memorable experience with birds or while birding?

Last year, I went on an NRF paddling trip down the Namekagon River, part of the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. While we paddled through this glorious river wilderness, our guides identified the bird calls we heard. What a sublime adventure.

Is there anything else you'd like to share about yourself, your work, or your experience with birds?

I ended up becoming a birding geek from my nature studies for art and printmaking. I find inspiration and materials for my art while birding, and I am birding whenever I'm out in nature, anywhere. Some of my art can be seen at: https://www.instagram.com/jenannetastic_outthere/



Jennifer Anne: "I enjoy hiking and paddling, and often have my binoculars along for birding."

BAH ON BIRDS

Bell's Vireo

By **MARIAMA BAH**

Welcome to a new installment of "Bah on Birds." I'm **MARIAMA BAH**, 15, author of "Bah on Birds" and a volunteer for the Wisconsin Society of Ornithology.

In my free time, I like to crochet, read books and learn new things, which is why I joined WSO. What I hope to accomplish with my volunteer work is to educate people about the endangered and threatened birds of Wisconsin and ways to protect these birds. I hope you enjoy these articles!

Vireo bellii, more commonly known as **BELL'S VIREO**, can be spotted across the Midwestern and Southwestern

United States, in habitats where the green vegetation is thick and tall. Bell's Vireos are small, round songbirds with gray and olive-colored bodies and white eye rings. Bell's Vireos are

invertivores, mainly feasting on insects and spiders. In fact, there is no reported observation of the bird drinking water, and many believe they can receive the water they need through their food.

Bell's Vireo caught my eye because of the interesting name. "Vireo" is a Latin word meaning "I am green," or when used in a bird-naming context, a green migratory bird. "Bell" comes from **JOHN GRAHAM BELL**, a taxidermist and birding companion of **JOHN JAMES AUDUBON**. Audubon spotted "the greenlet" when they were traveling up the Mississippi River in 1843 and named it after Bell.

In Wisconsin, the Bell's Vireo is listed as threatened. This is due to many reasons, one of them being the severe loss of their favored habitat. The shrubby thickets in open grasslands that Bell's Vireos nest in are disappearing due to the development of agriculture, rural communities and transportation corridors. The increasing development of agriculture is also contributing to the spread of parasitism from **BROWN-HEADED COWBIRDS**. These birds lay their eggs in other species nests and rely on the host to incubate and rear their offspring.

One way to help the Bell's Vireo is to support the conservation of prairies and grasslands. Organizations such as The Prairie Enthusiasts manage their properties to provide proper habitat for Bell's Vireos. Consider volunteering with a local nonprofit or the Wisconsin DNR to help preserve and restore Bell's Vireo habitat.



Bell's Vireo

Check out previous "Bah on Birds" articles about the **Great Egret** and **Piping Plover** by searching for "Bah on Birds" at <https://wsobirds.org/>

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.

Why Buy Federal Duck Stamps?

Conservationists buy Federal Duck Stamps because they know that the stamp is 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 between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023.



The pair of redheads for the 2022-23 Federal duck stamp is a record-breaking sixth design selected from artist James Hautman of Minnesota.

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, and Wisconsin Waterfowl Production Areas which preserve small natural wetlands and their associated uplands.

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

WSO purchases Duck Stamps in a consignment program and sells them at the price offered by other outlets. WSO does not make a profit on these sales. Stamps are available from WSO beginning late in June and ending December 25. **NO ORDERS WILL BE ACCEPTED BETWEEN DECEMBER 25 AND JUNE 30.**

You can order the 2022-2023 duck stamp from WSO either on-line or by mail.

To order on-line, use the store at the WSO website.

<https://wsobirds.org/support/wso-store/duck-stamp-2022-2023>

The on-line price (\$27.50) includes the standard cost of the stamp plus shipping/handling and credit card processing fees.

To order by mail send a check made payable to WSO for **\$25 for each stamp**, plus **one self-addressed stamped envelope**, to:

WSO Duck Stamps
c/o Christine Zimmerman
2708 Eisner Ave
Sheboygan, WI 53083

Questions?

For on-line orders: 920.997.9418 or bookstore@wsobirds.org

For mail orders: 920.980.8083 or jeff.chris@att.net

New WSO president outlines goals for new term

From Page 1

terms were extended from one year to two, with elections to be held every two years. Due to COVID 19, that election was held online and by mail.

WSO had hoped to conduct the 2022 election at its convention, but pandemic uncertainties again forced its cancellation and this May's election was again held online and by mail. One positive note: approximately twice as many ballots were cast as during most conventions.

Election results were announced at the online Annual Meeting held May 28 in conjunction with a meeting of the Board of Directors during which 11 members were re-elected. Terms for **JEFF BAUGHMAN**, **TIM HAHN**, **DAN PICKARTS**, **DAVOR GRGIC**, **QUENTIN YOERGER** and **GOPALAN** expire in 2024. Terms for **JACK COULTER**, **WENDY SCHULTZ**, **GREG BISBEE**, **MARY KORKOR** and **DANI BAUMANN** will expire in 2025.

Baumann also was re-appointed treasurer.

Gopalan has served on the WSO Board since 2019 and as vice president since 2020. He also has written the Spring Seasonal Report for *The Passenger Pigeon* since 2015 and administers WSO's websites. For a day job, he works full time at Epic, an EHR software development company, and has spent time playing various IT roles over the years.

A widely published bird photographer, WSO's new president has spent time birding on five continents but calls Middleton home with his wife Heidi and their two children.

In an email to members on July 11, Gopalan acknowledged "the unique difficulties posed by the pandemic these past couple of years, adding: "I know several of you have missed our convention, which has been postponed since 2020. We're committed to holding a convention in 2023, and I look forward to seeing all of you there. More details on the venue will be forthcoming."

He also announced that WSO would be kicking off a strategic planning process this year to help better fulfill the organization's potential and appeal to as diverse an audience as possible.

"We intend to do that by meeting everybody wherever they might be on the wide spectrum of how people enjoy birds. From backyard birders to dedicated listers, casual photographers to professional ornithologists, and everyone in between. We intend to be a home for everyone with an interest in birds by providing support and programming that helps shape the bridge from enjoyment to study to conservation.

"That will include the opportunity for you all to weigh in. But you certainly do not have to wait. My email inbox is always open and I'm eager to hear your thoughts on the future of WSO and the birds it protects at president@wsobirds.org "

Gopalan began his email by expressing his thanks to "our members, volunteers and donors for your support of the WSO and all



Sunil Gopalan

that it stands for," saying:

"We are all here because of our mutual love of birds and the joy they bring us. Promoting the enjoyment, conservation and study of Wisconsin's birds. It's a simple set of words, but in no way a disjointed set of priorities. Each one is integrally related to the other and cannot exist in a vacuum. We love what brings us joy. We are moved to conserve what we love. And knowledge is the key that helps us understand how to conserve what we love.

"The history of the WSO is a rich one and it has been working to protect Wisconsin's birds since 1939. The first issue of *The Passenger Pigeon* declared the intent to unite the state to protect bird life in Wisconsin. Our birds faced several challenges at the time and continue to face significant and evolving challenges today. These threats range from local ones like cats in our backyards to global ones like the devastating impact of climate change. As an organization, we are evolving to meet these new challenges as well.

"I'm starting my term as the WSO is undergoing some big changes - we hired staff for the first time in history with **JENNIFER LAZEWSKI** as our first Executive Director and **DONNA MILLER** as our Administrative Assistant. Staff is a new concept for an organization with a long history of being completely volunteer run. We didn't make the decision to bring staff on board because we intend to lean less on our volunteers. We did so to increase our capacity to do the work we are committed to do and to use the resources of our members, volunteers, and donors in a strategic manner to further our mission."

"I have no doubt that the WSO will have a significant positive impact in the near and long term. I am excited about the future and hope you will share in my excitement!"

*Biographical background on WSO's new officers appeared in the May issue of **The Badger Birder** at <https://wso.wildapricot.org/Badger-Birder>*

There's nothing like spending a day at WSO's Honey Creek

From Page 1

SCARLET TANAGERS, both species of cuckoos, and an **ACADIAN FLYCATCHER**.

While that group did a full trail loop through the preserve's Dischler addition, newly-elected Board Secretary **REBECCA GILMAN** led a shorter hike along the creek later in the morning. The second group also had a wonderful time and stayed out longer than expected enjoying good birding and

great weather.

DR. ANNA PIDGEON and her students banded 32 birds with a few return captures from past years.

The **COMMON YELLOWTHROATS** proved how "common" they are, a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker voiced his complaints, and the feisty grosbeaks got in a few good nips. The students were most excited about handling a **Cedar Waxwing** for the first time and understanding how it got the "waxwing" name,

but the rest of us probably enjoyed the Blue-winged Warbler best. All were resident birds. (*See Anna's report on Page 4.*)

It was a great day to be outdoors at a special place, and I appreciated every conversation with members who were having such a good time. Honey Creek Preserve is open to members and the public. We hope you will visit it this summer to create your own memories of this incredible birding paradise.

BIRD OF THE MONTH

Black-billed Magpie: *Pica hudsonia*

By **DIANA HIERLMEIER**

The **BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE** is a mid-sized bird that measures 18–24 inches from tip to tail. Its appearance is distinguishable from other magpies by its dense plumage, shorter and rounder wings, longer tail and its iridescent blue feathers. The tail of a Black-billed Magpie is made up of long, layered feathers, the middle pair of which protrude farthest of all. The beak is oblong and slightly curved toward the tip.



Diana Hierlmeier

These birds are slightly larger than jays with much longer, diamond-shaped tails and heavier bills. The upperparts are mostly black with a white patch in the outer wing and two white “backpack straps.” Average weight ranges from 5.1 to 7.4 ounces, with a wingspan ranging from 22.1 to 24.0 inches.

Vocalizations consist of a series of rough, scratchy calls. The call has been described as a *ka-ka-ka-ka*, often preceded with a *skah-skah*. When threatened, the Black-billed Magpie utters a shrill scream.

HABITS AND HABITAT

Black-billed Magpies are noisy and have a habit of sitting very conspicuously at the tops of trees or fenceposts, so they can be easy to hear and see. In flight, their trailing tail feathers and bright, flashy white wing patches make them unmistakable.

Black-billed Magpies are social, inquisitive birds that frequently gather in large flocks at carrion. Magpies move in groups and give a variety of trill, cackle and whistle calls. They flap steadily in flight, alternating deep and shallow wingbeats, and use their very long tails to negotiate abrupt turns. Magpies are widespread in towns, fields and stream corridors of the West. They also concentrate in flocks at feedlots and other areas where food is easy to find.

These birds feed on insects more consistently than most members of the crow family; they eat grasshoppers, caterpillars, flies and beetles. They also kill small mammals such as squirrels and voles, and raid birds’ nests. Carrion is also a main food source, as are the fly maggots found in carrion. Sometimes they steal meat from the kills of coyotes and foxes. Vegetable matter such as berries, seeds, and nuts may be eaten more in winter.

Black-billed Magpie pairs share the work of building their domed

Breeding in Wisconsin!

On April 6, two **BLACK-BILLED MAGPIES** were spotted in far northern Bayfield County. Two days later the birds were respot- ted; two days after that, an amazing three birds were found, with two associating very closely with each other.

By April 20 it was very clear the birds were nest building! This marked the first documented nesting attempt by Black-billed Magpies in Wisconsin history and appears to be the easternmost breeding record in North America. Unfortunately, the birds have not been seen since May 3. Perhaps they were young birds just practice building. Or the nest failed for some reason. Or increased disturbance near the nest site could be to blame.

Black-billed Magpie now joins **MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD** (hy-brid pair with **EASTERN BLUEBIRD**), **BLACK-BELLIED WHIS- TLING-DUCK**, and **EURASIAN TREE SPARROW** (hybrid pair with **HOUSE SPARROW**) as outstanding footnotes to our second Wis- consin Breeding Bird Atlas project. All were confirmed breeding since the project concluded field work in 2019, and interestingly, all represent first state breeding records.



Photo by Cornell Lab of Ornithology

nests, which vary widely in size but are typically about 30 inches high and 20 inches wide and can take up to 40 days to construct. The male gathers sticks for the exterior. The female tends to the interi- or, forming a mud cup and lining it with grass. The female can lay between one and nine eggs per brood, with incubation lasting 16 to 19 days and the nesting period from 24 to 30 days.

They build their dome nests in conifer trees, deciduous trees, shrubs, utility poles, and even in deserted buildings. They will nest in open woodlands, riparian thickets, farm fields and suburban areas.

CONSERVATION

Black-billed Magpie populations have seen a cumulative decline of about 38% from 1966 to 2019, according to the North American Breeding Bird Survey, and are considered of low conservation concern. In the past, Black-billed Magpies were considered vermin, but today they are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

FUN FACTS

-- Historical records of the American West indicate that Black-billed Magpies have been associates of people for a long time. Magpies frequently followed hunting parties of Plains Indians and fed on leftovers from bison kills. On their expedition, Lewis and Clark reported magpies boldly entering their tents to steal food.

-- Like most members of the jay family, the Black-billed Magpie is a nest predator, although eggs and nestlings make up only a tiny portion of the bird’s overall diet.

-- The Black-billed Magpie frequently picks ticks from the backs of large mammals, such as deer and moose. The magpie eats the ticks or hides some for later use, as members of the crow and jay family often do with excess food.

-- The longest-living Black-billed Magpie on record was at least nine years, five months old when it was recaptured and rereleased in Saskatchewan in 2021.

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

Bent, Arthur C., *Life Histories of North American Jays, Crows and Titmice Part One*. Dover Publications, New York, N.Y., 1964.

Trost, Charles H. *Black-billed Magpie* version 2.0. in *The Birds of North America*. Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, N.Y., 1999.

DIANA HIERLMEIER, her husband and their black Lab Molly enjoy an acre of farmland in Random Lake that is a Certified Wildlife Habitat and an Advanced Bird Habitat through the National Wildlife Federa- tion.

Partnership on the Oneida Nation seeks volunteers for wetland restoration and bird monitoring

*This article on the deep and engaging collaboration that informs the Oneida Nation's landscape restoration efforts was originally published in **Wisconsin Wetlands**, the newsletter of the Wisconsin Wetlands Association.*

When the Oneida first arrived in North-east Wisconsin from what is now New York State in the early and mid-1800s, the landscape consisted of extensive wooded swamp and ephemeral wetlands. Unfortunately, that is no longer the case.

As is true across much of Wisconsin, the Oneida Nation has lost many of its historic wetlands as well as many ecological and social functions of the landscape. To understand how to repair our landscape and restore these functions, we need to look at how people altered the landscape in the past. Some of the change that brings us to where we are today is unique to the Oneida Nation and other tribal nations.

The Dawes Allotment Act of 1887 divided the Oneida reservation into 100-acre allotments, one for each family in the Nation at that time. That land was also taxed—a foreign concept to these families—which incentivized people to see their land as a commodity that could be logged, converted to agriculture, or sold—which is exactly what happened. Thirty years later, the reservation had gone from 65,480 acres owned by tribal members to less than 30 acres. We



Photos by Erin Giese

Volunteer bird monitors enjoyed visiting Oneida restoration sites and learning about Oneida culture and language.

lost 80% of our forests, 75% of wetlands and 95% or more of what little prairie grassland had existed.

Today, two-thirds of that initial reservation land base is agricultural, and the ecological web of connections is still damaged. The loss can be discouraging, but it's important to remember that it also means there are *lots* of opportunities for restoration.

Since the early 2000s, the Oneida Nation has restored nearly 3,000 acres of agricultural land to native wetland, grassland, prairie, and forest, providing important habitat for wildlife and helping to reduce watershed runoff.

But how can we gauge how well it's working? What species are using it? And how should we manage these lands moving forward to maintain and improve habitat for species using these restored sites?

Our partnership with the Northeastern Wisconsin (NEW) Audubon Society, Audubon Great Lakes and UW-Green Bay launched a bird monitoring program to help us answer these questions.

Since 2021, the Northeastern Wisconsin (NEW) Audubon Society, Audubon Great Lakes, and UW-Green Bay have implemented a bird monitoring program on Oneida Nation's restored wetland and grassland sites, collecting bird data on breeding marsh and grassland birds in the summer and migratory shorebirds and waterfowl in the fall.

During the 2021 field surveys, volunteers counted and docu-

mented more than 100 species of birds and more than 15,000 individual birds at these restoration sites. The sheer number of birds and species we recorded at the Coyote Run and Trout Creek sites is a testament to the incredible restoration work done by the Oneida Nation. The bird data collected as part of this partnership have already informed—and will continue to inform—land management decisions on the Oneida reservation, including water level manipulation, prescribed burns and mowing. The data also are informing future restoration efforts.

Volunteer bird monitors enjoyed visiting these Oneida restoration sites and learning about Oneida culture and language.

This partnership also has fostered cultural exchange thanks to a valued member of the Oneida Nation who has shared Oneida's rich culture, history and language with the bird monitors. Learning about Oneida culture has been a highlight for volunteers on this project. Over the coming years, we plan to engage more birdwatchers, expand the Oneida cultural exchange, analyze more data, and collect data at new and existing restoration sites to inform Oneida's land management decisions. We also hope to establish an Important Bird Area.

This project is open to volunteers of any experience level. If you are interested in volunteering, please visit <https://newiaudubon.org/oneida-bird-project> for more information and to sign up.

*This article was written by **TONY KUCHMA**, project manager for the Oneida Nation's Environmental Quality Department, and **ERIN GIESE**, senior research specialist at UW-Green Bay and president of the NEW Audubon Society.*



Photo by Brian Hansen

*Volunteers counted and documented such species as **BOBOLINK** (here), **HENSLOW'S SPARROW**, **WILSON'S PHALAROPE**, **AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER** and **AMERICAN BITTERN**.*

Avian flu impacts Caspian Tern population

From Page 1

birds were found dead.

SADIE O'DELL is a wildlife biologist at the Gravel Island National Wildlife Refuge. She said those birds that were still alive could barely hold their heads up. They were experiencing tremors from the neurological damage caused by the bird flu virus. Some of the birds were on their nests, still trying to incubate eggs when they died.

In Michigan, on Bellow Island in the Grand Traverse Bay, another scientist discovered colonies that were wiped out.

JIM LUDWIG is an environmental consultant who's studied birds in the Great Lakes for decades.

"Last count, prior to the time we were out there, was 201 nests, and we found 255 dead adults," he said.

Likely more than that died elsewhere. Some might have died somewhere out in Lake Michigan. Scavengers might have car-

ried off some of the others.

FRANCIE CUTHBERT is a professor with the University of Minnesota's Department of Fisheries, Wildlife and Conservation Biology. She said these massive die-offs also mean the loss of a new generation of Caspian Terns.

These large terns can live about 30 years. They don't start breeding until they're at least three years old.

"Losing all these older, experienced breeders is also very important because they tend to increase in terms of their productivity and just their knowledge of how to raise young," Cuthbert explained.

Why Caspian Terns are being hit so hard by avian influenza, but other close-nesting seabirds have not experienced the same kind of devastation, is baffling to the scientists.

There have been deaths among **RING-BILLED GULLS**, pelicans and others, but not at the rate of Caspian Tern deaths.

On a more optimistic note:

BRAD BUMGARDNER, executive director of Indiana Audubon, has been heavily involved in the avian flu response in Indiana and is the contracted drone pilot for surveys on the Indiana Lakefront for nesting cormorants, night hewrons, terns and gulls. His observations:

"We saw significant mortality the spring with cormorants (thousands). Terns and gulls did not suffer to the extent cormorants did and most of the illness spread quickly in April and early May.

"Our shared colonial waterbirds are all IUCN low concern species with increasing trends in overall populations. A single year event is always surprising and will cause concern among the birding public but hopefully it's just a temporary blip and not cause for any serious concern just yet.

"The Northwest Indiana **CASPIAN TERN** colony actually increased in size this year by about 20%. They segregate themselves from the gulls and cormorants, so that might have helped them."

88 species identified on spring Kettle Moraine field trip

From Page 7

We then walked along the lake to the boat landing. Along the way we had **EASTERN PHOEBE**, **PINE WARBLER** and a **YELLOW-THROATED VIREO**. Across the lake was a **GREAT EGRET** and **GREAT BLUE HERON**. At the boat landing we saw **SWAMP** and **SONG SPARROWS**, **COMMON YELLOWTHROAT**, **YELLOW WARBLER** and a pair of **CEDAR WAXWINGS** building their nest. From the bridge that crosses the Milwaukee River we saw a **BALD EAGLE** nest to the south, but no adults were present. Here we added **WILLOW FLYCATCHER**, but the usual **ALDER FLYCATCHER** was not present.

Much of the area around Mauthe Lake abounds in dead ash, victims of the Emerald Ash Borer, and the bird life has changed dramatically. Hopefully, other species (woodpeckers?) may take advantage and this area can again diversify. [eBird checklist](#)

From Mauthe Lake we made a brief stop at the Dundee Sportsman Club, where the locals have erected a nesting platform for **OSPREY**. Upon arriving we found both adults and at least one chick

at the nest. There also were several **CLIFF SWALLOWS** flying around the buildings. [eBird checklist](#)

Our final stop was at Spruce Lake Bog. Here the flora is often the attraction, especially when you arrive at 12:30 p.m. But we did have **WOOD DUCK**, **GREAT EGRET**, **NORTHERN HARRIER**, **BELTED KINGFISHER**, **EASTERN BLUEBIRD**, **CHIPPING**, **FIELD** and **SONG SPARROWS**, **NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH** and **NASHVILLE WARBLER**. But it was the bog plants that were in bloom that had us looking down.

Plants like Pink Lady Slippers (moccasin flower), Pitcher Plant, Royal Fern, the floating sedge mat, three-leaved gold-thread, American starflower, partridgeberry, common winterberry, leather-leaf, bog-rosemary, poison sumac and yellow blue-bead lily to name a few.

[eBird checklist](#)

Our trip concluded here at about 1 p.m. We had a wonderful group (as always) and were able to see or hear 88 species. Here is the link to our day's [eBird Trip Report](#).

WSO's Honey Creek again showed its diversity and its beauty

From Page 4

crossing. We made the second crossing and walked the trail a ways but had difficulty seeing the waterthrush because of the vegetation. I elected to return to the stream and go back across to the trail that connects to our new Dischler tract.

DAN PICKARTS and his crew had done an excellent job of clearing the hiking trail along the stream corridor, but they didn't have time to complete the entire trail up to the Dischler addition. With some effort, we finally located the main trail and continued our hike up the ridge to the mature maple/oak forest habitat. Here we again heard **SCARLET TANAGER**, a couple of **OVENBIRDS**, **GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER**, **RED-EYED VIREO**,

AMERICAN REDSTART, **DOWNY WOODPECKER** and **WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH**.

We finally heard and saw one of our target birds in this habitat, an **ACADIAN FLYCATCHER**. It was somewhat disappointing though that we didn't have **CERULEAN WARBLER**. A bird that is threatened here in Wisconsin as well as throughout most of its normal range.

For the remainder of the hike, we enjoyed the natural beauty around us. Especially the views from the ridgetop down to Honey Creek a hundred feet below. After leaving the ridgetop we walked the meadows down to Skyview Drive and continued back to the nature center.

Our 3-mile, 2-hour hike ended at about 10 a.m.. Our species total was 50, but the com-

radery, the learning, and the stories shared were enjoyed by all.

(eBird Checklist: <https://ebird.org/wi/checklist/S113192919>)

The 2022 Honey Creek Birdathon ended with a total of 57 species either seen or heard, about 30 to 40 fewer than when the birdathon has been held during mid-May migration.

Thanks to all that participated in this worthwhile event. I would encourage everyone to visit WSO's Honey Creek Property. You won't be disappointed!

[eBird Birdathon Trip Report: https://ebird.org/wi/tripreport/64881?welcome=true](https://ebird.org/wi/tripreport/64881?welcome=true)



Photos by Arun Christopher Manoharan

The BIPOC Birding Club of Wisconsin visited the Waupaca Biological Field Station at Emmons Creek for a bird banding event.

BIPOC Birding Club events are building community

By **RITA FLORES WISKOWSKI**

The BIPOC Birding Club of Wisconsin was invited by ecologist **BOB WELCH** to the Waupaca Biological Field Station at Emmons Creek for a bird banding event on Sunday, May 22.

Twenty of us were able to attend. We arrived on Saturday afternoon. Bob was an exceptional host, welcoming us, helping us set up camp, accompanying us at a restaurant for Saturday dinner, recommending nearby birding spots and showing us around.

On Sunday, we woke before dawn to a pair of **BARRED OWLS** calling near our camp. Soon the **WHIP-POOR-WILLS** joined in, and when the day broke the dawn chorus consisted of **VEERIES**, robins, **WOOD THRUSHES**, **RUFFED GROUSE** and more.



Sunday bird banding was truly memorable and joyful. For most of us, holding a bird and releasing it was a new experience.

Feeling a bird's warmth and heartbeat and seeing it up close was remarkable. The highlights were a pair of **BLACK-BILLED CUCKOOS** that we assumed, and then confirmed through measurements, were a male and female, and a beautiful **BLUE-WINGED WARBLER**.

Bob introduced us to environmental science majors from UW-Stevens Point and an 11-year-old girl named Joy who has nine years of bird-banding experience. Conversations flowed through our mutual interests and experiences.

On Saturday, June 4, the BIPOC Birding Club partnered with Madison Audubon and the Henry Vilas Zoo to celebrate Black Birders Week. We believe this was the first official Black Birders Week event held in Wisconsin.

Close to 100 people gathered at Henry Vilas Zoo before the zoo was opened to the public. We gathered for opening remarks about the importance and history of Black Birders Week. Then the crowd broke out into four separate groups led by experienced BIPOC birders.

One of those leaders was aspiring ornithologist **ROMAN POMMERENING**, a 7-year-old who has almost a year of birding experience, and a life list of over 120. He can identify birds by sound and sight, can point out and identify birds in flight, and exudes excitement and joy that is contagious.

Roman was able to point out many birds, including a **BLACK-BURNIAN WARBLER** to his group. He is looking forward to leading more birding events and so are we.



Photo by Kaitlin Svabek/Madison Audubon
ROMAN POMMERENING, 7 years old and with almost a year of birding experience and a life list of 120 species, pointed out many birds for a BIPOC group during a Black Birders Week event at the Henry Vilas Zoo in Madison.

After an hour of birding, we were treated to a continental breakfast, where participants joined others that they had just met for food and conversation.

And afterwards we enjoyed the goat yard (the aviary was closed due to avian flu) and the carousel. We heard from many in the days that followed that the event was meaningful and memorable. We are building community!

The BIPOC Birding Club of Wisconsin was created by and for people of color to enjoy the outdoors through birding. We invite other BIPOC nature enthusiasts and our allies to join us.

To keep updated on club news and events, follow us on Facebook, visit our website at <https://www.bipocbirdingclub.org/> and sign up for our newsletter.

RITA FLORES WISKOWSKI leads the Milwaukee BIPOC chapter and also is manager of foundations and corporate relations at Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan.

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	ABA Field Guide To Birds of Wisconsin 479 color photographs featuring 299 species in natural habitats. 368 pages, flex-cover Charles Hagner, 2019	\$17.50	_____	\$ _____
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FWS delays delisting decision on Ivory-billed Woodpecker

BIRDWATCHING MAGAZINE

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced July 6th that it is giving itself six more months to decide whether to delist the **IVORY-BILLED WOODPECKER** “due to extinction.”

The agency also is reopening the public-comment period on the proposed delisting rule for 30 days. All comments must be received before midnight Aug. 8.

Last September, the agency published a proposed rule to remove 23 species from the federal list of endangered and threatened wildlife and plants due to extinction. The woodpecker was on the list and drove most of the media coverage of the proposal. Unfortunately, many of the stories

claimed that the agency had already decided that the bird is extinct, giving the public the impression that the bird is gone for good. Several long-time Ivory-bill searchers reacted to say that delisting the bird would be “absurd” and “really premature.”

After the September proposal, the agency opened a 60-day public-comment period, and on Jan. 26, at the request of advocates with Mission Ivorybill, it held an online public hearing in which most participants argued against delisting the bird. Another 30-day public-comment period was opened after the hearing.

“Recognizing substantial disagreement among experts regarding the status of the species, the Service is extending the deadline

to allow for additional time to review information,” the agency said in announcing the six-month extension.

“The Service is seeking new information during the 30-day reopening, including clear video or photographic evidence of the presence of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker that can be repeatedly interpreted the same way by independent observers, such as definitive photographic evidence collected by a field observer,” the agency said. “Comments provided during the initial proposal and the previous reopening do not need to be resubmitted.”

Information on how to submit comments before Aug. 8 is available at www.regulations.gov

BIRD DIGEST

Understanding bird populations, how they change

7 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesdays Oct. 11 – Nov. 1

4 synchronous online sessions

Instructor: William Mueller is director emeritus of the Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory; conservation chair, Wisconsin Society for Ornithology (2002-'12).

The course: In less than a single human lifetime, 2.9 billion breeding adult birds have been lost from the United States and Canada, across every ecosystem, and including some of the most abundant and familiar bird species. In this course we will examine how we determine the abundance and distribution of different bird species, for both bird populations in Wisconsin and at the national level. We will also consider how bird populations have changed, what species are currently “at-risk” and why, and how monitoring programs can be used in management and conservation.

Course fee: \$60.

Questions or to register by phone: 414-227-3200

The warblers of Magee Marsh

The Birds of Magee Marsh is an exciting new publication that describes spring birding opportunities at this warbler hotspot, and you can add this new publication to your library simply by downloading a free copy at <http://www.mageemarsh.org/>

Featuring 70 remarkable color photos of warblers and other songbirds in its 106 pages, this book was written and lavishly illustrated by **W.H. MAJOROS**, who also provides excellent information about how to photograph these species.



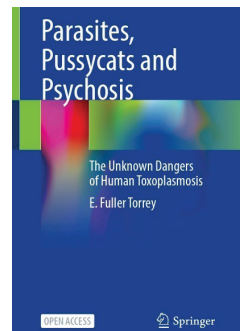
Kauai enacts feral cat controls

The Kauai County Council has enacted new provisions to manage feral cats and protect people and wildlife. Regulations that take effect in January 2023 prohibit the abandonment of cats across Kauai and the feeding of cats on county properties, such as beach parks and neighborhood centers. Predation by cats is a major threat to birds on all of Hawaii's islands, many of which are threatened with extinction.

Exploring cat disease, human psychosis

In his new book, *Parasites, Pussycats, and Psychosis*, **DR. E. FULLER TORREY** explores the relationships between domestic cats, the parasite that causes toxoplasmosis (*Toxoplasma gondii*), and human psychosis (e.g., schizophrenia). Relying on his decades of study and including hundreds of citations on these topics, Torrey reviews the causes and consequences of *T. gondii* infections in people and wildlife, the evidence for a relationship between infection and human psychosis, and then suggests four priority actions to help solve “the toxoplasmosis problem.”

This book underscores the need for keeping cats indoors to prevent the spread of *T. gondii* among cats, as well as from cats to other domestic animals, humans and wildlife.



Research puts the lie to starling tale

Birding Community e-Bulletin

It's a great story: in 1890 and 1891, an eccentric by the name of **EUGENE SCHIEFFELIN**, a man obsessed with importing all the birds mentioned by Shakespeare, became instrumental in releasing a few dozen European Starlings in New York's Central Park, virtually across the street from the famed American Museum of Natural History.

The birds then began to breed, spread, and flourish, proliferating from coast to coast within a few decades.

Recently, however, **JOHN MACNEIL MILLER**, an Allegheny College professor in Pennsylvania, and **LAUREN FUGATE**, a student collaborator, concluded that crucial sections of the story are simply not true. Schieffelin did not seem to have a particular affinity for Shakespeare; there were multiple releases of the European Starlings starting in 1872 from various locations (e.g., New York, Ohio and Oregon); wild-flying birds were also caught and reported elsewhere before 1890 (e.g., Massachusetts in 1876 and New Jersey in 1884), and there is genetic ambiguity on the origins of “our” European Starling.

“Shakespeare's Starlings: Literary History and the Fictions of Invasiveness” was published in *Environmental Humanities* in November 2021: <https://read.dukeupress.edu/environmental-humanities/article/13/2/301/234995/Shakespeare-s-StarlingsLiterary-History-and-the>



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ICF update on eastern Whooping Crane population

This is the most recent update for the Eastern Migratory Population of **WHOOPI-NG CRANES**. It was prepared by **HILLARY THOMPSON**, North America Program crane analyst for the International Crane Founda-tion in Baraboo, WI.

As of June 29, there were five Whoop-ing Crane chicks in the Eastern Migratory Population:

- W1-22 with 12-11/5-11
- W11- 22 with 9-05/13-03
- W12-22 with 13-02/24-08
- W13-22 with W1-06/W10-15
- W14-22 with 5-11/29-08

Population Estimate

The current estimated population size is 77 (38 female, 37 male, 2 unknown).

Seventeen of these 77 individuals are wild-hatched, and the rest are captive-reared.

To the best of our knowledge, as of June 1, there were at least 70 Whooping Cranes in Wisconsin and 2 in Michigan. The remaining birds' locations have not been confirmed in the last month. Last known locations are shown on the accompanying map.

Reproduction

As of June 1, there were 6 active nests in Wisconsin, and 31 total nests this season.

Active nests: 5 re-nests in Juneau County, 1 re-nest in St. Croix County

Completed since May1: 6 in Juneau Coun-ty (1 hatched, 3 had eggs collected due to black flies, 1 re-nest and 1 first nest failed for unknown reasons), 5 in Green Lake County

(1 predated, 4 hatched), 1 in Portage County (hatched), 1 in Sauk County (hatched), 1 in Marquette County (Unknown outcome), and 1 in Dodge County (hatched).

A huge thank you to the staff of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Departments of Natural Resources of flyway states, the ICF and all the volunteers who help keep track of the cranes throughout the year. We appreciate your contribution to the recovery of the Whooping Crane Eastern Migratory Population.

To view ICF's interactive "Where are the Whoopers" map for more details, including bios on each of the cranes. <https://whooper-map.savingcranes.org/>

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