

NOVEMBER MEETING

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2009

Native Reptiles and Amphibians of Wisconsin

Matt Heeter, vice-president of the Coulee Region Herpetological Society, will be giving a presentation on the Native Reptiles and Amphibians of Wisconsin and will also be showing and discussing live exotic reptiles and amphibians at the monthly meeting of the Coulee Region Audubon Society, on Wednesday, November 18, 2009. The meeting will begin at 7:00 PM in the Myrick Hixon Eco Park building located just off La Crosse Street in La Crosse. The meeting is free and open to the public.

Matt is an avid outdoorsman and is also an independent reptile researcher. He has been researching Timber Rattlesnakes in the Coulee Region since 2002 (in conjunction with the Wisconsin DNR) and has taken part in other survey and research projects with Massasauga Rattlesnakes, Wood Turtles, Cricket Frogs, Glass Lizards, Box Turtles, Black Rat Snakes, Ringneck Snakes, and Blue-spotted Salamanders.

Matt has also worked in the pet industry for 15 years and has owned over 3,000 reptiles and amphibians of over 200 species. He has bred 5 species of herps in captivity and has worked with 1/6 of the venomous snake species of the world.

Matt is an avid photographer and videographer and is especially interested in taking pictures and videos of reptiles and amphibians. He is currently working on a DVD field guide to the Reptiles and Amphibians of Wisconsin.

OCTOBER MEETING

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2009

Sand Prairie Ecology and Restoration on Local Army Lands

Kurt Brownell will be giving a presentation about prairie ecology at the monthly meeting of the Coulee Region Audubon Society, Wednesday, October 21st. The meeting will begin at 7:00 PM in the Myrick Hixon Eco Park building located just off La Crosse Street in La Crosse. The meeting is free and open to the public.

This month's scheduled speaker, Mike Reese of Wautoma, had to cancel his presentation on the Butterflies of the Coulee Region due to family illness.

Kurt Brownell, a 30-year member of our chapter and a long-time member of the board of directors, has graciously agreed to take his place (on very short notice). Kurt will be giving a presentation titled "Sand Prairie Ecology and Restoration on Local Army

Lands".

Kurt is a Natural Resources Specialist for the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers and currently works on the upper Mississippi River where his duties include the restoration of historic sand prairies. Although Kurt has a degree in Wildlife Management and Biology, he has a strong interest and background in botany. Kurt has been interested in prairies since he was a teenager when he went "botanizing" with John Zoerb of La Crosse Floral on some of the goat prairies above La Crosse.

Sand or "dry" prairies in this region were once common on the broad sand terraces bordering the Mississippi, Wisconsin, Black, and Chippewa Rivers, as well as in areas of central Wisconsin known as the "Sand Counties." Conversion of these areas by European settlement to farms and cities and the suppression of fire have reduced this community to a relic of its past extent.

Army lands in this region comprise more than 80,000 acres. The unique ecology of the sand prairie ecosystem gives managers the opportunity to restore this vegetation community.

Sand prairie restorations have been used by the Army Corps of Engineers to create habitat on a water control embankment near Genoa, WI and adjacent to a water control embankment near Alma, WI; reclaim lands used for disposal of materials dredged from the Mississippi River navigation channel; and provide cover on a closed landfill at Fort McCoy, WI. The largest restoration (131 acres) is located near Kellogg, MN and it just completed its fifth growing season. Part of a sand prairie complex known as Weaver Dunes, this restoration was created on fallow farmland where more than 1 million cubic yards of dredged materials were hydraulically placed. A diverse blend of locally collected and purchased seed was planted into soil containing an already diverse seed bank of native sand prairie species.

SEPTEMBER MEETING

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2009
Turkey Vultures

Turkey Vulture researchers, Mike Mossman and Lisa Hartman will present a program on "The Natural History of Turkey Vultures" which will include a visit from Uncle Butzie, a live turkey vulture at the Coulee Region Audubon meeting Wednesday, September 16. Mike is a wildlife ecologist with the Wisconsin Department of Natural History and Lisa is an educator with the Sauk Prairie School District.

The meeting will be held at 7:00 PM in the Myrick Hixon Eco Park building located just off La Crosse Street in La Crosse.

(Note that this is a new location for Coulee Region Audubon Society meetings.)

The program will include information they gained from studying turkey vultures in Wisconsin, as well as stories and facts about them throughout this hemisphere. Their long-term study involved capturing adult and young turkey vultures on their nests, marking them with wing tags, and monitoring their movements. Their captive turkey vulture, Uncle Butzie, will be with them, giving the audience a rare chance to observe a tame vulture close-up.

This is an opportunity for people to learn the inside story of these fascinating birds who have the largest breeding distribution of all the breeding birds in the western hemisphere.

NEW MEETING LOCATION:

Beginning with the Sept.16 meeting we will be at the new Eco Park building located in Myrick Park, off of La Crosse Street. There is easy-access parking nearby and the entire building is handi- capped accessible.

Watch for Audubon signs as you enter the entrance on the south side of the building. Meetings begin at 7 p.m.

The program is free and open to the public.

MAY MEETING

WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, 2009

Coulee Region Birds

Abbie Meyer, Conservation Specialist for local land trust Mississippi Valley Conservancy (MVC) will present a program on Coulee Region Birds at 7 p.m. at the Ho Chunk Nation building, lower level, 725 Main Street, La Crosse, across from the Main Branch of the La Crosse Public Library.

Mississippi Valley Conservancy owns several nature preserves throughout the Coulee Region. Learn where these preserves are, how to access them for hiking and birdwatching and what birds you may find as you visit them. Possibilities range from grassland to wetland to woodland birds.

Habitat loss is frequently cited as a cause for declining bird populations. Abbie will discuss what MVC is doing to manage these preserves for bird habitat and what you can do locally to help out Wisconsin birds!

Abbie has a B.S. in Biology from Loras College and spends her time at MVC working

with private landowners to permanently protect their land. This includes doing site assessments, species inventory, and habitat restoration. Abbie has been working in Natural Resources since 1997.

The program is free and open to the public.

APRIL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2009
Wild Cats of Wisconsin

The Coulee Region Audubon Society will meet Wednesday, April 15th at 7 p.m. at the Ho Chunk Nation building, lower level, 725 Main Street, La Crosse.

Dr. Eric Anderson, a professor in the Wildlife Program at the University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point will present a program on The Wild Cats of Wisconsin. Wisconsin is home to 3 native cat species: bobcat, lynx, and mountain lion which is making its return after a 100 year absence from the state. Find out about the natural history and current status of these cats, as well as the role they play in Wisconsin's ecosystems. Join us as we explore what we know and don't know about the feline predators of Wisconsin and how concerned we should be about our safety in the woods.

Dr. Anderson teaches courses in conservation biology, ecology, biostatistics, and wildlife field techniques. He has won numerous teaching awards. Although teaching is his passion, he maintains an active research program. His work has focused primarily on carnivores, particularly bobcats, wolves, and black-footed ferrets, but he has also worked with songbirds, turtles, bats, and flying squirrels.

He has authored numerous scientific journal articles on North American carnivores, and particularly on the bobcat. He has also co-authored 6 book chapters dealing with carnivores and wildlife habitat selection. Currently, Anderson and his graduate students are modeling the distribution of bobcats in the state and investigating the return of the cougar to the wilds of Wisconsin.

The program is free and open to the public.

MARCH MEETING

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 2009

Trumpeter Swan Reintroduction Project

Pat Manthey, Wisconsin DNR, Bureau of Endangered Resources will present a program on the Trumpeter Swan Reintroduction Project. Trumpeter swans - named for their resonant, trumpet like call - are the largest native waterfowl species in North America. Adults have white plumage and can stand up to four feet tall and weigh between 20 and 30 pounds.

Trumpeter swans were found in Wisconsin until the 1880s, when market hunting and feather collecting almost drove the species extinct.

Beginning in 1989, Wisconsin biologists flew to Alaska for nine consecutive years to collect surplus trumpeter swan eggs that were then hatched in incubators at the Milwaukee County Zoo. After they hatched, the young swans were either placed in a captive rearing program or decoy rearing program until they were released to the wild. Pat will discuss the progress of the project and resulting success.

The meeting begins at 7 p.m. at the Ho Chunk Nation Building, lower level, 725 Main Street, La Crosse.

The program is free and open to the public.

FEBRUARY MEETING

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2009

How to Ruin the River...

The Coulee Region Audubon Society will meet Wednesday, February 18th at 7 p.m. at the Ho Chunk Nation building, lower level, 725 Main Street, La Crosse.

Speaker will be Rick Kyte, director of the D. B. Reinhart Institute for Ethics in Leadership at Viterbo University. Kyte is also president of the Coulee Region Chapter of Trout Unlimited. His presentation is titled, "How to Ruin the River or Ten Practical Steps that Anyone Can Take to Ensure that the Upper Mississippi River Valley Becomes Just Another Indistinguishable Place on the Way from Here to There."

Kyte will discuss several Trout Unlimited grants and projects as well as answer questions.

The meeting begins at 7 p.m. at the Ho Chunk Nation Building, lower level, 725 Main Street, La Crosse.

The program is free and open to the public.

JANUARY MEETING

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28, 2009

Annual Election and Potluck

Christmas is over and the new year has started. This means that the annual meeting of the Coulee Region Audubon Society is almost here! On January 28th, we will hold our annual elections. For this meeting, we will also have a potluck dinner and give members an opportunity to share their pictures of special trips and of the outdoors. It is always a fun meeting and I urge you to show up with a dish to pass!!

The potluck will start at 6:00 and the business part of the meeting will start around 7:00. The election process will not take long so we should have plenty of time to share special pictures. Otherwise, please bring your own equipment.

In addition to pictures, please bring along ideas about field trips and/or speakers that you would like to see in the next year. The board is always interested in ideas to make our programming even better and fresh ideas are always appreciated.

The meeting begins at 6 p.m. at the Ho Chunk Nation Building, lower level, 725 Main Street, La Crosse.

The program is free and open to the public.
