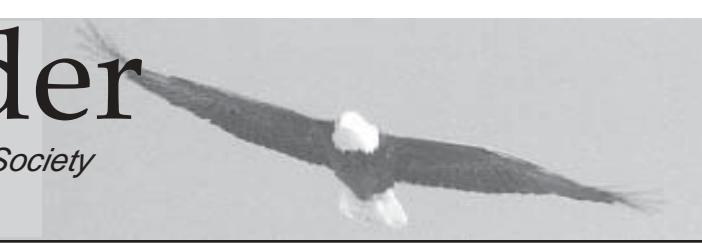


Coulee Birder

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Audubon Society

Website: <http://couleeaudubon.org/>

March-April 2007



Events

Meetings

Coulee Region Audubon Society meetings are held starting at 7 p.m. at the Ho Chunk Nation Building, lower level, 724 Main Street, La Crosse.

March 21

Alyssa Rod from the International Crane Foundation will present a program with pictures on the 15 species of cranes that are found around the world and what is being done to save them and their habitats from extinction. She will focus on native Sandhill and Whooping Cranes found in this area and address how attendees can help the crane population by participating in the Annual Midwest Crane Count.

Alyssa is the Lead Naturalist of the Conservation Education Department at the International Crane Foundation in Baraboo, Wisconsin. She has worked at ICF for six years and is Co-coordinator for the Annual Midwest Crane Count and the Children's International Art Exchange. Originally from Mendota, Illinois, she received her Bachelor of Sciences from Northland College in Ashland, Wisconsin.

ICF works worldwide to conserve cranes and the wetland and grassland ecosystems on which they depend. ICF is dedicated to providing experience, knowledge, and inspiration to involve people in resolving the threats to these beautiful birds.

April 18

John Fieth - "Bird Song and Birding By Ear." Check our website and local news media for details of this program recommended by members of Coulee Region Audubon.

See **Field Trips**, page 2

President's notebook

Working together, reaching out

by **Dan Jackson**

In the past couple of months, the Coulee Region Audubon Society has been asked to work together with three other area conservation organizations with various events. To me, this is an exciting opportunity to reach out to even more people in our area and to build a strong relationship with other organizations that share our interests in working to preserve our natural resources. We were asked if we could provide a leader for a nature hike and presentation at Norskedalen in April, we have been asked if we could help find birders who could act as leaders for several Mississippi Valley Conservancy hikes, and we were asked to provide readers for the recent Aldo Leopold commemoration in

Holmen. These events, in addition to our ongoing collaborations with the Sierra Club to find high profile speakers, show great promise for the days and years to come. Our environment and our natural resources are under more pressure than ever from the impacts of the human race. Global warming, habitat destruction, urban sprawl, rain forest destruction, and pollution are just a few of the issues that are impacting our natural world. We need to do everything that we can to make our society aware of these issues and to bring them to the front of our society's consciousness. As an organization, the Coulee Region Audubon Society tries to accomplish this through

See **NOTEBOOK**, page 3

eBird site helps the public track bird sighting, activities in Wisconsin

MADISON — How many bird species were seen in Dane County last year? Where can one go to find a boreal chickadee in February? When do sedge wrens begin arriving in southern Wisconsin?

Searching for answers to these and

other questions about birds in Wisconsin is now only a mouse-click away at Wisconsin eBird [ebird.org/wi/], a new Web site devoted to tracking bird

See **eBIRD**, page 3

We need your contributions of material for the Audubon newsletter. Please send your suggestions for articles, news of events and other things birders need to know. Deadline for copy for the next issue is April 19. Send information to: dskoloda@earthlink.net.

Highlights of the Christmas Bird Count

BY RICK KINZIE

The Lax CBC was held on Saturday Dec 16th. There were 21 field observers with 1 feeder report and 55 species tallied. The weather for the CBC followed the pattern of the last few years. Early cold weather had frozen up much of the Mississippi and its tributaries and what snow had fallen earlier in the fall had melted. Almost all backwater areas were still frozen over and this was reflected in the low total numbers of waterfowl. We still managed 2 Great Blue

Heros in spite of the ice. Nine different Raptor species were seen along with 3 Owl species and 2 N. Shrikes.

There were still good numbers of Robins around, especially in the Catholic Cemetery and 11 E. Bluebirds were reported.

With all the open ground conditions on count day the numbers reported might be down slightly from average. If there was an award given for effort, that award would go to Matt Paulson for the 2006 count. Matt left Whitewater Friday night after work, drove back to La Crosse, ar-

riving somewhere around 1 a.m., and spent the rest of the early hours owling around his count area. At daybreak Matt and his father, Lance, covered their area and then made it up to the potluck hosted by Mike Furr, where he appeared to be bright, awake, and lucid. Nice effort Matt!

I would like to take this time to announce that I would like to step down as compiler for the Lax CBC. The constraints brought on by our business have eaten up most of my free time in December and I have not done as thorough a job as needs to be done and I would like to apologize for the lateness getting the results out.. This count needs someone from the La Crosse area as compiler who can spend a little more time working with local newspapers and possibly TV to promote and recruit more participants. You could become famous! I will work with whoever decides to volunteer going over maps/routes and reporting procedures. If you have some free time please think seriously of volunteering!

(To view the spread sheet from the CBC, please go to our web site at www.couleeaudubon.org/)

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Field Trips

March 17

The Lansing Loop is Saturday, March 17. Meet at the entrance to Goose Island County Park at 7AM off Hwy 35 south of the junction of Hwys 35 & 14 south of LaCrosse. Caravan will assemble along the park entrance road just west of the RR tracks alongside Hwy 35. This is an all day tour both sides of the Mississippi River in Wisconsin, Iowa, & Minnesota. Target birds are Bald Eagles (nesting), other raptors including possibly nesting Peregrines, migrant waterfowl, and early migrating passerines. Buy your own lunch in Lansing, Iowa, or bring a bag lunch.

This is about a 65 mile+- auto tour, birding from roads.

Fred Lesher, Coulee Region Audubon trip leader. For more information call Fred at 608-783-1149.

May Weekday Morning Bird Walks -

La Crosse River Marsh Bird Walks, Tuesday mornings, May 1, 8, 15. Meet at the Rabbit Trail, near the Zoo parking lot.

Hixon Forest Bird Walks, Thursday mornings, May 3, 10, 17. Meet at the Hixon Forest trail parking lot, off Milson Ct.

All bird walks start at 6:30 a.m.,

and the plan is to finish at 7:45 or 8:00 a.m. Feel free to leave early or stay later. Bring binoculars if you have them.

Leaders: Pat and Bobbie Wilson, (608)788-8831

April 28

Highway clean-up - Saturday, April 28. Meet in the Dresback parking lot at 9:00 AM. We should be done in 2 hours with a stop for lunch after.

Audubon e-advocate praises Washington training program

Here's a correspondence from board member Mark Webster congratulating Audubon board colleague Kurt Brownell about his acceptance in the Audubon Environmental Advocate training program, a program Webster also completed.

"Kurt: Congratulations! You're going to love it! I had such a great time in DC. It was extremely valuable training and a fun day on Capitol Hill! The Audubon DC Staff are wonderful. They were very professional, well organized, fun, and very grateful that we all volunteered our time to be there. We should all be grateful to belong to such an incredible organization. I hope every Auduboner who is interested in being an Environmental Advocate gets a chance to attend this type of training. It is very empowering!"

"I just met this AM with Kind's staffer,

Karrie Jackelen in La Crosse as a follow-up to my visit last week with one of his DC staffers. Ron was voting on the House floor that day for the 2007 Budget Continuing Resolution (CR), to keep the government running. The 2007 Federal Budget is a mess, and probably won't be cleaned up until fiscal 2008 starts on Oct. 1, 2007. So, I did not meet directly with him, but Rep. Kind called me at work on Monday as a follow-up, which was very nice. There were 21 people attending the Budget & Appropriations Training in DC from 12 states, and only two from Wisconsin. It was the first time that Audubon had done Budget & Appropriations training. They have reported that it was very successful based on com-

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meaningful programs and activities. Highlighting the Operation Migration, purchasing Audubon Adventures curriculum packages for schools, and running field trips that will hopefully ignite an interest in our natural world are some examples of the tools that we use today. However, we need to continue to come up with new ideas for reaching out to even more people. Please help the board think about ways that we as an organization can do this. We are always looking for new ideas and would welcome your input. As individuals, what we do is also important. Calls or letters to leg-

islators, purchase decisions, and how we respond to teaching opportunities are all important for the future of our natural world. The next time that you are out on a nature hike or bird watching or just enjoying the natural beauty of the world around you, try to share some of your observations with people passing by. You never know how sharing a look at a bird or a bug will impact someone's life and outlook on the world. It is worth a try. It may reap huge rewards.

eBIRD from page 1

sightings and bird activities in the state.

"For centuries people have been keeping track of the birds they've seen, and where and when they've seen them," says Andy Paulios, coordinator of the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. "Oftentimes those records are kept in a field notebook or another place where they can easily be lost and which are unavailable to others. With eBird, this critical information is both secure and immediately available to researchers, educators, conservation biologists, and other birders."

Wisconsin eBird is an online database for recording and exploring bird sightings in the state of Wisconsin. Wisconsin eBird is the product of a partnership between the Wisconsin DNR, the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative [www.wisconsinbirds.org] and the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology (WSO) [www.uwgb.edu/birds/wso/] (both links exit DNR).

"If you are interested in keeping track of your personal sightings or you are curious about the locations, migratory timing, or other aspects of birds, eBird is a great tool for you," Paulios says.

The Wisconsin eBird Web site will be routinely updated with stories about bird

identification, rare bird alerts, monitoring programs for birders to participate in, birding events and the latest bird research and monitoring efforts impacting "our" birds. From the Web site visitors can surf online to explore any and all bird sightings in Wisconsin as well as keep track of the sightings they have submitted.

The data compiled in eBird will be used to map and inventory species distributions, phenology, and populations and to plan management activities.

The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology has also begun incorporating eBird records into its records system. WSO members who regularly use eBird can now be assured that their eBird records are being used by WSO and all of its partners.

"eBird is free and can be used by beginners and experts alike," Paulios says. "People can start now by entering their latest sighting or by exploring the interactive mapping tools and histograms. For example, you could create a seasonal checklist for your backyard, your neighborhood, or your county! Wisconsin is currently one of the most active eBird states in the country...let's make sure we stay that way!"

WEBSTER from page 2

ments from Congressional staffers.

"The other Wisconsinite and I met with a Feingold Environment and Energy staffer first thing in the AM, who was great, and then later, a staffer for Sen. Herb Kohl. They both were on board with all three Audubon Budget Items (Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF); National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRs); and Everglades Restoration), as was Kind's staffer.

"However, Bush's Proposed 2008 Budget is just more of the same - in fact he's proposed to slash the LWCF by 30%, from FY '07 of \$85 Million to \$58 Million in '08. (This fund is supposed to be funded at \$900 Million per year per Congressional mandate in 1964 - and funded from Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Offshore oil & gas leasing fees!

"The NWRs did not fare much better, with only a paltry increase of \$2.4 Million from FY '07. Still over \$300 Million underfunded! We have our work cut out for us.

Audubon Action

As Audubon enters its second century of conservation, it challenges all Americans to take action to protect birds and the environment. Here is the first of 10 recommendations from Audubon on what to do. For more see the Audubon.org website.

1. GET OUTSIDE

Spend at least two hours a week doing something out in nature—take a walk, ride a bike, work in the garden—and notice the birds and other wildlife that you see and hear.. Take one of the Audubon field trips (see "Field Trips", page 2), visit a wildlife refuge, a state park or a Mississippi Valley Conservancy property (see mississippivalleyconservancy.org)—and take the kids with you!

How will this help?

We protect what we value. And we value what we use. But with today's hectic lifestyles it is increasingly difficult for

See **ACTION**, page 4



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many of us, especially children, to enjoy the outdoors on a regular basis. Roper research shows that in 2003, only one in

five Americans reported participating in outdoor recreation several times a week—and nearly a third did so less of-

ten than once a month.

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