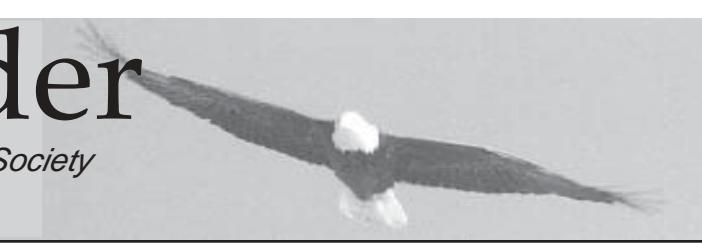


# Coulee Birder

*Newsletter of the Coulee Region Audubon Society*

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

September-October 2009



## Events

### **NOTICE - 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 handicapped accessible.

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

#### September 16

Michael Mossman and Lisa Hartman, a husband/wife team who have worked together for 25 years on turkey vulture research will present a program on vultures.. Both are research scientists with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. They were featured on the Wisconsin Public Television special on the Great Wisconsin Birding Trail, taking viewers to the fall gathering of vultures at Devils Lake State Park.

#### October 21

Mike Reese, an educator from Wautoma, will give a presentation on Butterflies of the Coulee Region.

Mike Reese has been an educator for over 25 years, and spends much of his spare time taking nature photographs throughout Wisconsin. He also maintains a website on the butterflies of Wisconsin (<http://www.wisconsinbutterflies.org>), but often has been distracted from butterflies to take other insect photos, especially damselflies, dragonflies, tiger beetles, and robber flies. He provided most of the photos for the book *Damselflies of the Northwoods*, has maintained the North American Butterfly Association (NABA) sightings page since 2001, writes a quarterly article for their American Butterflies magazine summarizing

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## **President's notebook**

### **Hooked on dragons & damsels**

**By Dan Jackson**

This summer, I added a new hobby to my already busy life. As I am sure many of you know, I am already "addicted" to bird watching and spend quite a bit of time looking for, watching, and taking pictures of birds. Early this summer, as the spring migration was winding down, I started to take notice and eventually started watching and taking pictures of Dragonflies and Damselflies.

It turns out that the Dragons and Damsels of the insect world are very interesting and photogenic creatures. Within a couple of weeks I was hooked

and was chasing them during my lunch hour and sometimes on my way home from work. I added to my fun by participating in the Wisconsin Odonata Survey and submitted my sightings via their web site. I spent more hours than I want to admit stalking Halloween Pennants, Russet-tipped Club tails, Wandering Gliders, Slender Spread wings, and other interesting members of the Odonata family.

On one evening after work I had to go to a meeting in West Salem at 7 p.m. Since I got out of work at 5, I

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## **Birding report offers recruiting opportunity**

The just-released report on Bird Watching offers a great opportunity to build awareness of the Audubon mission and local efforts to connect people with birds, nature and the power to protect us all, according to an advisory from National Audubon..

Released July 15 by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the report shows that an astounding one of out of every five Americans watches birds. It reveals that birdwatchers contributed \$36 billion to

the U.S. economy in 2006 alone, the most recent year for which economic data are available.

"Who better than your Chapter to reach out to the local media to explain why this is good news for our communities and for our future?" the advisory said. It continued: " You can discuss bird watching as the first step toward discovering and conserving nature. It is a prime

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*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 November/December issue is November 2. Send information to: [dskoloda@earthlink.net](mailto:dskoloda@earthlink.net).*

# ***Listers gain a new challenge in Laos: A bald songbird***

Newswise — An odd songbird with a bald head living in a rugged region in Laos has been discovered by scientists from the Wildlife Conservation Society and University of Melbourne, as part of a project funded and managed by the mining company MMG (Minerals and Metals Group) that operates the Sepon copper and gold project in the region..

Dubbed the “Bare-faced Bulbul” because of the lack of feathers on its face and part of its head, it is the only ex-



ample of a bald songbird in mainland Asia according to scientists. It is the first new species of bulbul – a family of about 130 species – described in Asia in over 100 years.

A description of the new species is published in the July issue of the Oriental Bird Club’s journal *Forktail*.

“It’s always exciting to discover a new species, but this one is especially unique because it is the only bald songbird in Asia,” said Colin Poole, director of Asia programs for the Wildlife Conservation Society. “The discovery also underscores how much there is still to learn from wild places around the world.”

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had a little time to wait and decided to check out the ponds at Veteran’s Memorial Park.

When I got to the park, I grabbed my camera and net (yes I carry a net with me to collect specimens of rare species — I really am a nerd) and started checking out the edge of the ponds. After I had checked about 100 yards of shoreline, two boys walked up and asked what I was doing. I explained that I was

looking for dragonflies and damselflies. They weren’t impressed. Instead, the oldest asked “Have you seen any snakes?”. I told him that I had seen a Northern Water Snake on the far shore and they charged off in pursuit as fast as they could go.

I kept going around the pond and eventually ran into them again. They hadn’t caught any snakes and were a little

disappointed. They asked again what I was doing so I took the opportunity to catch and show them a damselfly. Within seconds, I had 2 scouts who were checking every weed for more critters that I could catch with my net. Each quarry that they spotted was netted and handed to one of them. For each one, I shared a little information about the species and life history. The boys held onto each specimen until they got so excited about a new sighting that the “bird in the hand” was forgotten and they would accidentally let it go.

After about 15 minutes and a couple dozen catches, I looked at my watch and realized that it was time for me to leave. When I told the boys that I had to leave, they were disappointed. Dragonflies and damselflies were lots of fun!

When I got to my car, I spotted an old insect net that I had bought for my kids several years ago. I took it out and called the boys over and handed it to them. The smile and look of excitement in their eyes made my summer. After a hurried thank you, they charged off toward the weeds to catch their own damselflies and dragons.

In 20 minutes, I would like to think that I opened up a whole new world for those 2 boys. In addition, it turned out to be a great experience for me. It is really fun to share outdoor experiences with young kids. If you get the chance, I urge you to take the opportunity to share your love of nature. Who knows, the time that you take may be just what it takes to start an interest that will last a lifetime.

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the sightings, and has been the editor for the Wisconsin NABA butterfly counts since 2002. In addition, he is the state coordinator for the Butterflies and Moths of North America web site.

### **WORK DAY**

**Saturday, October 10** from 2 to 5 p.m. Seed collecting on the New Amsterdam Grasslands, in partnership with the Mississippi Valley Conservancy.

We will pick prairie seeds and broadcast seed that same day into another part of the property.

Volunteers should bring canvas bags or buckets to put seed in and rakes if they have them.

Directions: Take Hwy 35 north out of Holmen to Old NA, about 2 miles. Turn left (west) on Old NA and continue about 2/3 of a mile to the MVC parking lot on the north side of the road.

Contact Dan Jackson at [DanJackson@LBWhite.com](mailto:DanJackson@LBWhite.com) for more

information.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

#### **September 20**

Mississippi Valley Conservancy hike/celebration at Borah Creek Prairie. Check their web site at [www.mississippivalleyconservancy.org](http://www.mississippivalleyconservancy.org) for time and directions.

#### **November 7**

Fred Lesher will lead a Lansing Loop field trip on Saturday, November 7. Interested participants should meet at 9 a.m. at the La Crescent Kwik Trip at the La Crescent stop light.

Birds likely to be sighted include Tundra Swans and assorted waterfowl at stops along the route.

Trip route will go south to Lansing, from La Crescent on Hwy. 26, cross into Wisconsin at Lansing, then north on Hwy. 35 back to La Crosse. There is a possible adventure to Red Oak Road, a Mississippi

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# Scientists to study bird hazards in wind power

Newsweek—Thirty top wildlife scientists have announced agreement on some of the highest research priorities to help America's rapidly growing wind energy industry produce much-needed alternative energy while also providing safe passage for birds and bats.

This coalition of scientists from industry, government, nongovernmental organizations and universities met recently in Racine, Wis., to address unanswered questions about how continued wind energy development will affect migrating birds and bats. The meeting was hosted by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the American Bird Conservancy and the Johnson Foundation at Wing-spread.

"Billions of birds migrate annually, taking advantage of the same wind currents that are most beneficial for producing wind energy," said Andrew Farnsworth, a postdoctoral research associate at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology who serves on the steering committee of the coalition.

The scientists addressed some of the critical information that could be collected using such cutting-edge tools as weather surveillance radar, thermal imaging and microphones directed skyward to map migrations by day and

night. New research will build upon monitoring and research studies of birds and bats before and after construction of existing wind energy facilities as well as work done by other researchers.

"Conducting this research will help the wind industry make informed, science-based decisions about where future wind energy projects can be built and how they can be operated to minimize the impact on migrating wildlife, while still providing much-needed alternative energy," said John Fitzpatrick, director of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

The coalition identified such top research priorities as:

- Studying bird and bat behaviors, and

more accurately estimating mortality at existing wind turbines;

- Using current and newly obtained information on bird and bat population numbers and distribution to focus research on critically important migratory routes and timing;

- Documenting how interactions of birds and bats with turbines are affected by such factors as weather, topography and their distribution within airspace swept by wind turbine blades;

- Establishing standardized methods for pre- and post-construction studies for assessing bird and bat behavior at wind facilities; and

- Conducting research on best practices for mitigating the impacts of wind energy development on birds and bats.

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opportunity to cultivate stewardship and support of regional Important Bird Areas, as well as the Audubon At Home program, with tips on how people can create bird-friendly backyards. Bird-watching is often described as the second-fastest growing hobby in the USA, after gardening. You can tell people how Audubon combines the two!

"Finally, urge people to join Audubon as a way to learn more about birds, help protect the environment we share, and work with Audubon to diminish climate change."

The report - Birding in the United States: A Demographic and Economic Analysis ([http://library.fws.gov/Pubs/birding\\_natsurvey06.pdf](http://library.fws.gov/Pubs/birding_natsurvey06.pdf)) shows that to-

### Thanks, Ho Chunk Nation!

Thank You to the Ho Chunk Nation for hosting Coulee Region Audubon Society for the past 5 years. Their facility and personnel support for the organization has been helpful and very much appreciated.

We have moved our meetings to the Eco Park because they are a partner in our efforts for environmental education and we are hoping to offer pre-meeting activity options there that are not available at the Ho Chunk Nation building.

tal participation in birdwatching is strong at 48 million, and remaining at a steady 20 percent of the U.S. population since 1996.

Participation rates vary, but are generally greater in the northern half of the country. The five top states with the greatest birding participation rates include Montana (40 percent), Maine (39 percent), Vermont (38 percent), Minnesota (33 percent) and Iowa (33 percent).

The report identifies who birders are, where they live, how avid they are, and what kinds of birds they watch. In addition to demographic information, this report also provides an estimate of how much birders spend on their hobby.

## Brandenburg exhibit at Winona museum

The Museum Marine Art Museum will host a photography exhibit by world-renowned Minnesota nature photographer Jim Brandenburg titled "Chased by the Light: A 90 Day Journey". The exhibit runs to Nov. 14. The exhibit is sponsored by Merchants Bank of Winona.

Admission rates are adults \$6, students (K-college) \$3, children under 4 are admitted free. Tuesdays remain free for all students. The Museum is open 10 am to 8 pm, Tuesday; 10 am to 5 pm, Wed. through Saturday, and 11 am to 5 pm on Sunday. The Museum is closed on Monday.

The Minnesota Marine Art Museum is located at 800 Riverview Drive in Winona, MN. For more information, call 507.474.6626 or visit the website at [www.minnesotamarineart.org](http://www.minnesotamarineart.org).

## USGS to celebrate 50 years with open house Sept. 12

The U.S. Geological Survey Upper Midwest Environmental Sciences Center will hold an open house from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 12, to celebrate "50 Years of Science for a Better World."

The center is located at 2630 Fanta Reed Road. Take the airport exit from I-90 westbound.



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River backwater closed area 15+/- miles south of Lansing as well. sing with a return to La Crosse about 3 p.m.. There is no charge for the trip. at 783- 1149 or e-mail him at corax6330@yahoo.com

There will be a stop for lunch in Lan-

For more information, contact Fred

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### **Coulee Region Audubon Society Local Membership**

\$15 Household     \$30 Supporting

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