

Coulee Birder

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Audubon Society

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

May/June 2010



Events

Meetings

We are meeting in the 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.

May 19 - Mike Reese will present a program on Butterflies of the Coulee Region. Mike Reese has been an educator in Wautoma, Wisconsin for over 25 years, and spends much of his spare time taking nature photographs throughout Wisconsin. He also maintains a web site on the butterflies of Wisconsin (www.wisconsinbutterflies.org), but is often 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 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.

June 16

Potluck and bird walk in Myrick Marsh. Potluck starts at 6:30 p.m. with a bird walk after in the marsh for those who are interested.

Bring a dish to pass and your own eating utensils. (Note earlier start time.)

No meetings scheduled in July and August. Regular meetings resume September 15th

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President's notebook

Migration hits its stride

By Dan Jackson

May is here! The passerine (perching bird) migration has finally started to hit its stride with new species being seen every day in Wisconsin. If you have been sitting down to wait for a great time to get out and check out the woods and waters, don't wait much longer. Before you know it, the waves of new migrants will have passed through and summer will be here. There are lots of birding field trip opportunities in May. See the Events column on Page 2. Make sure that you get out and enjoy those birds!!

This spring, we have invited a couple of experts on insects to come to make presentations for us. For those

who might have missed it, Bob DuBois gave a great talk in April on Odonata (damselflies and dragonflies) and his presentation will be followed in May by a presentation by Mike Reese on butterflies.

In addition to the fact that both of these gentlemen are among the best in Wisconsin in their respective areas of expertise, they also share another common interest. Both are working hard to get more citizen involvement in observing and collecting data on the critters found here in Wisconsin. Bob Dubois was a key player in setting up the Wisconsin Odonata Survey and the creation of a great website on the

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Audubon president cites risks to bird life from Gulf oil spill

Reports of oil reaching the Chandeleur Islands mark the initial assault of the massive Gulf Oil Spill on the first of 25 recognized Important Bird Areas (IBAs) that line the Gulf Coast from Louisiana to south Florida.

**By Dr. Frank Gill
Audubon President**

This is another sad milestone in a disaster unfolding in slow motion. This massive oil slick is churning around in the Gulf and emulsifying into a thick,

deadly 'mousse' that will extinguish life and destroy habitats.

Seabirds like the Northern Gannet and an array of marine life have already been hit and now, many more will

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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 September/October issue is Sept. 1. Send information to: dskoloda@earthlink.net.

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Field Trips/Walks/Hikes

May 8

International Bird Day event that will be hosted by the Myrick Hixon EcoPark on the morning of Saturday, May 8th. The event will run from 6:00 am to noon with birding field trips in the Myrick Marsh and the Hixon Forest, bird banding, and many other family oriented activities.

The event is a joint effort of the Myrick Hixon EcoPark, the US Fish & Wildlife Service, the US Geological Survey, and the Coulee Region Audubon Society.

See their web site at www.info@mhecopark.org for details.

May Morning Bird Walks

Join Pat and Bobbie Wilson and Dan Jackson for weekday morning bird walks from 6:30 to 8 a.m. to enjoy spring migration and to see our regular residents return. Feel free to leave early or stay later.

Tuesdays: May 11, and 18 (La Crosse River Marsh, meet at the

R.A.B.B.I.T. trail, near new Myrick Hixon EcoCenter parking lot)

Thursdays: May 13 and 20 (Hixon Forest, meet at the Hixon Forest trail parking lot, off Milson Court)

Saturday, May 15

Coulee Region Audubon president, Dan Jackson leads a field trip to Wyalusing State Park. Meet at the park entrance at 6:30 a.m. We will bird until 11 or noon. Wyalusing has lots of great birds including several species that are difficult to find in other areas of Wisconsin. Park specialties include Kentucky, Yellow-throated, Cerulean, and Prothonotary Warblers, Acadian Flycatchers, Henslow's Sparrows, Red-headed Woodpeckers, Black and Yellow-billed Cuckoos, and many more.

Dan will probably look for dragonflies, butterflies, and/or reptiles afterwards if anyone is interested in joining him in those activities.

Saturday, May 15

Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge Bird Festival from 9 to 4 on the Refuge.

Activities for all ages include bird and

wildflower hikes, bird banding demonstrations, food and lots of talks by birding experts.

Sunday, July 11

Dan Jackson will lead a dragonfly field trip from 1 to 4 p.m. at Veteran's Memorial Park in West Salem

Salazar says climate change imperils birds

Climate change threatens to further imperil hundreds of species of migratory birds, already under stress from habitat loss, invasive species and other environmental threats, a new report released recently by Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar concludes.

The State of the Birds: 2010 Report on Climate Change <http://www.allaboutbirds.org/> follows a comprehensive report released a year ago showing that nearly a third of the nation's 800 bird species are endangered, threatened or in significant decline.

Salazar said climate change "could dramatically alter their habitat and food supply and push many species towards extinction."

Audubon members pick up I-90 trash

**By Mark Webster
Adopt-a-Highway coordinator**

After two soggy postponements, the CRAS Spring Adopt-a-Highway Trash Pick-up went off without a hitch on Saturday, May 1. The weather was perfect - albeit a little breezy, but clear skies and warm temps were welcome. Seven volunteers filled 23 large trash bags along our 2 mile stretch from Dresbach to Dakota, Minn. We even had time to do some of the median strip.

Then afterwards, all of us went to Corky's Restaurant in La Crescent for lunch and we shared some good camaraderie, including comparing what interesting and strange things we found along the way. I also noted that all the plastic we picked up (and there was a lot), would

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Odonata of Wisconsin. The site is a great resource that citizens can use to identify and report the damselflies and dragonflies that they find in our state.

Mike Reese has created a very similar site for Wisconsin butterflies. The Wisconsin Butterfly website is filled with fabulous information on every species of butterfly that has been found in Wisconsin. Like the Odonata site, it also can be used to submit your information on the butterflies that you find when you are out and about in the wilds of Wisconsin.

There aren't enough scientists out there to adequately cover all of the habitats and locations throughout our state, nation and world. That is where you can help. If you are interested in dragonflies, butterflies, or birds, I encourage you to make your hobby pay off a little

for the scientific community. Keep records of what you are seeing and submit those sightings via the Wisconsin Odonata, Butterfly, and e-bird websites. Your sightings can then be used by professionals to get a better understanding about the creatures that we care about. If you haven't already done so, check out these web sites. Links can be found on the Coulee Audubon Website at <http://www.couleeaudubon.org/> and <http://www.couleeaudubon.org/>.

To go along with these presentations, I am planning to lead a dragonfly field trip in July. It will be held on Sunday July 11 from 1 to 4 p.m. at Veteran's Memorial Park in West Salem. The pond there is great habitat and is home to many species of dragonflies and damselflies. I encourage you to come out and have fun checking out these magnificent creatures.

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tims are now likely to succumb. We may never know the full extent of the damage to the creatures that spend their lives beneath the waves or suspended between sea and sky. Millions of birds migrate across the Gulf at this time of year, returning from their winter homes in South America.

Audubon is taking action in the face of this crisis. We are strengthening partnerships with state and federal agencies and forging new alliances to ensure that when more birds and habitats are affected, the Audubon grassroots network of concerned Americans can spring into action and do what needs to be done. But the recovery will be slow and difficult for people and wildlife alike. We already are launching new efforts that go beyond the emergency response. Thousands of citizen-science volunteers will help to confirm the location and status of birds now and to monitor the impact after the deadly oil arrives.

Birds may be the most visible indicator of how this disaster is affecting the ecosystems that sustain human and wild communities across the region. By pro-

Minnesota bird survey seeks volunteer help

Birding volunteers can contribute to bird conservation efforts in Minnesota by becoming a volunteer surveyor for the Minnesota Breeding Bird Atlas (BBA). The breeding bird atlas is a comprehensive, systematic field survey of the occurrence and distribution of breeding birds.

Beginning in 2009, volunteers throughout Minnesota began surveying the northeast quadrant (3mi x 3mi) of every township in the state. Participants select a Priority Block and survey the habitat types within that block, recording the breeding status of each species seen.

Volunteer bird watchers with all levels of experience can contribute.

Check out <http://www.mnbba.org> for the Regional Coordinator in your area and for more information, or contact the Project Coordinator, Bonnie Sample, at 651-739-9332, or bsample@audubon.org

tecting birds, preserving and restoring habitats, and investing in communities along the Gulf Coast, Audubon has been helping wildlife and people for decades. And we will not stop now. We will be here as this disaster unfolds, doing everything we can to mitigate harm and support cleanup and recovery efforts. And we will be here long after the headlines fade, doing our job for the sake of birds, other wildlife, and the human communities that call the Gulf Coast home.

(For updates on Audubon initiatives and what people can do to help to to www.audubon.org)

Threatened species in harm's way

Threatened bird species include:

Brown Pelican - The state bird of Louisiana nests on barrier islands and feeds near shore. Their breeding season just began and many pairs are already incubating eggs. Removed from the U.S. Endangered Species list only late last year, Brown Pelicans remain vulnerable to storms, habitat loss and other pressures.

Beach-nesting terns and gulls (Caspian Tern, Royal Tern, Sandwich Tern, Least Tern, Laughing Gull, Black Skimmer) - These birds nest and roost in groups on barrier islands and beaches. Some species have begun nesting or building pair bonds in preparation for nesting. They feed on fish and other marine life. Roosting and nesting on the sand and plunging into the water to fish, they are extremely vulnerable oil on the surface or washing ashore.

Beach-nesting shorebirds (American Oystercatcher, Wilson's Plover, Snowy Plover) - These birds nest on the ground on barrier islands and beaches. They feed on small invertebrates along the beach or - in the case of oystercatchers - on oysters.

Large wading birds (Roseate Spoonbill, Ibises, Herons, Egrets) - Many herons, egrets and other species feed in marshes and along the coast and nest in large colonies called rookeries. They are vulnerable if oil comes ashore in these areas.

Marsh birds - (Mottled Duck, Clap-

per Rail, Black Rail, Seaside Sparrow, Marsh-Dwelling Songbirds) - Many of these birds are extremely secretive, hindering understanding of their population dynamics. Recovery efforts would be difficult or impossible if oil accumulates in the coastal salt marshes where they live

Ocean-dwelling birds - Birds that spend a significant portion of their lives at sea, including the Magnificent Frigatebird, may be affected by oiled waters. Contact with oil could lead to ingestion or damage to feathers. Oil also threatens their food supplies.

MVC seeks help with bird surveys

Mississippi Valley Conservancy is seeking assistance on bird surveys this spring.

Abbie Church, conservation specialist for MVC, says, "We need experienced birders to volunteer to come out for a morning listen.. We hope to schedule days during the last week in May and the first week in June. Let us know if there's a certain date you're available and we can work around your schedule. Carpooling from La Crosse may be available.

If you would like to help with one or more of these surveys, please call Abbie Church at 784-3606. Sites:

Newton - Bad Axe River - three sites on the Bad Axe River. Known species - Cerulean Warbler

Wauzeka - scenic grassland site. Species we hope to document include: Bobolink, Meadowlark, Field Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow and more.

La Farge - 1250 acres on the Kickapoo River. Combination of forest, savanna, and grassland. Scheduled for June 5th.

Boscobel - scenic wooded bluffs, prairie and savanna overlooking the Wisconsin River and the city of Boscobel.

Gays Mills - floodplain forest, wetland, and a stretch of the Kickapoo River. This area has a reputation for Hooded Warblers, Cerulean Warblers, and Louisiana Waterthrush.



Coulee Region Audubon Society,
P.O Box 2573
La Crosse, WI 54602

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be that much less that would eventually end up in a Garbage Patch in our Oceans.

Thank you to the following CRAS

members for volunteering to make our highways and our environment just a little

cleaner: Mark & Jean Ledman; Janice Hatt; Humphrey; John Schuppel; and last but not least, Marilyn Webster.

Contacts

PRESIDENT

Dan Jackson
DanielEJackson@earthlink.net
608-483-2271

BOARD MEMBER

Janice Hatt
608-498-1191
wooliesrus@charter.net

VICE PRESIDENT

SueFletcher
jiren@centurytel.net

BOARD MEMBER

Kurt Brownell
Kurt.A.Brownell@mypo2.usace.army.mil
608-269-6124

TREASURER

Mary Sullivan
608-785-7095
marysullivan@hotmail.com

NEWSLETTER EDITORS
Dave and Gretchen Skoloda
608-781-7502
dskoloda@earthlink.net or
gskol@charter.net

SECRETARY

Mark Webster
608-787-6398
mvweb@charter.net

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