

COULEE Birder

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2011

Events

Meetings

Coulee Region Audubon meetings are held at 7 p.m. in the Eco Park building in Myrick Park off La Crosse Street. There is easy access parking nearby and the entire building is handicapped accessible. The meetings are free and open to the public.

January 19

Pot-Luck and Annual Meeting

Pot-luck begins at 6 p.m. with a brief meeting for the election of officers and a financial review of the year from 7:00 to 7:30. Please bring a dish to pass and your own dishes and utensils. Everyone is welcome but if you would prefer to not take part in the potluck, please come at 7:00 for the meeting and slide shows that follow.

Members and guests are invited to share pictures of wildlife or other outdoor related items and experiences. There will be a notebook computer and projector available if you would like to share digital pictures. Otherwise, please bring your own equipment. We have many good photographers and there will be many interesting photos and experiences to share and discuss.

February 16

Richie Swanson, Winona environmentalist, will present a photo slide show entitled "Beautifully Abundant Birds I Desire."

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President's letter

By Dan Jackson

It is hard to believe that 2010 is over and that a new year has begun. It seems that each year rolls by just a little quicker than the last. For me, last year was a good year for birds and other critters but not a great one. The spring migration seemed to be a non-event due to weather and other factors. Birds that I normally see every year went through so fast or so late that I missed them. I picked up a few species during the summer months in northern Wisconsin but I definitely had some unexpected holes in my year list.

Of course, one of the reasons my year list was a little light on birds is that I spent quite a bit of time chasing dragonflies and damselflies over the summer months. It is hard to do both and since I was having fun taking pictures of Odonata, my birding time was more limited than it has been in prior years. I never made a mid-summer

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CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT REPORT

Here's the tally from the 2010 Christmas Bird Count. We have reports of 11,244 birds of 51 species. These were counted by 86 participants who logged a total of 427.25 hours of

counting time. Although the species count is somewhat low compared to prior years (due almost entirely to the lack of open water and therefore very few species of waterfowl and

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We welcome contributions of material for the newsletter. Please send suggestions for articles, news of events and other things birders need to know. Deadline for copy for the March/April issue is March 1. Send information to: gskol@earthlink.net.

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trip to Horicon or Lake Michigan and therefore missed some easy birds that I typically see several times each summer.

The start of a new year means the start of new year lists and therefore some new excitement to my birding. With a new list comes a new appreciation for sightings of birds that are seen on a regular basis. Even birds that I consider to be pests, such as House Sparrows and European Starlings, are a new addition to my list and therefore exciting once again. A new year also gives me the chance to review my priorities and make new resolutions and plans for a new year.

Now that a new year has arrived, I definitely want to spend more time outdoors – preferably birding or taking pictures. At times over the past year I have become too busy to take part in these

activities. Since they are a couple of my primary stress relievers, that has not always been a good idea....

Since it is a new year, I have also made some resolutions for the new year. Among those resolutions, are resolutions to reduce my carbon footprint and to do more to promote awareness of our environment and the world around us. In my case, I plan to work harder to reduce my use of electricity and fossil fuels at home and at work and to continue to create programs and events aimed to get more people interested and involved in the great outdoors. I hope that everyone who has started the year with new resolutions is successful in making them stick.

Happy New Year and many birds to all!!

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water birds), our count number is one of the highest in the last 20 years. If waterfowl were taken out of the previous counts with higher total numbers, this year's count would be at least comparable with those counts. This is partially due to a very high level of participation although the counting conditions were also favorable. This year's count is significantly higher than the counts of the past couple of years that had relatively similar numbers of volunteers and poorer counting conditions.

The most interesting birds found on this year's count were a Golden Eagle, a Red-shouldered Hawk, and 2 Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers. As expected, the species with the highest counts were House Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos, Rock Pigeons, and European Starlings. Other sightings of note were 319 Robins, 101 Bald Eagles, and only 62 Red-tailed Hawks. Personally, my group only had a single Red-tailed Hawk in the Goose Island Count section. In recent years, I have seen as many as 15 in just that one area.

Once again, I would like to say thank you to everyone who helped out with this year's count!! It was really great to have so many people who were willing to participate in this year's count that took place on a cold December day!! I hope that all of the counters enjoyed their day as much as I did!

Dan Jackson

Key birding area gets state help

SUPERIOR, Wis. – State grants will help create a management plan to secure the future of Wisconsin Point, an area of wetlands, forests and sand dunes on the Lake Superior shoreline that is regarded as one of the most important birding areas in the state.

The combined \$50,000 in grants, provided by the Department of Administration's Coastal Management Program and the Department of Natural Resources, will help pay to assess the 2,800-acre site's natural resources, conduct a public outreach effort to gather citizens' ideas and desires for the area and develop a plan to achieve and sustain those goals.

Wisconsin Point has long been a favorite recreational area for picnickers, hikers, birdwatchers, anglers, duck hunters, and swimmers. The northern end of the point area is the Wisconsin entry to the Duluth-Superior Harbor and is also the site of an historic Native American village and burial ground. The Fond du Lac Tribe is an important partner in the planning effort.

The point is jointly owned by The City of Superior and Douglas County, who are the largest landowners, the U.S. Coast Guard, the City of Superior School System, the DNR and private owners. The area covers about 5.5 miles of shoreline and its location at the

intersection of marsh, lake and woodland habitat types makes it one of the best migrant bird areas in Wisconsin in the spring. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service designates the point as critical habitat for piping plover, a tiny, iconic shorebird species listed as endangered in Wisconsin.

The next steps are to conduct an initial assessment of the natural resources present on the site. Partners will gather maps and data, do an inventory of land use and habitat types, and then ask area residents what features and uses of the site are most important. The end result of the project will be a plan to guide the public landowners' management of the area.

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The photos were taken by Hiawatha Valley Audubon photographers in the Aghaming Park and Preserve, a 1,000 acre park owned by the City of Winona and surrounded by the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge and the Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge.

The presentation begins with photos of great-horned owls and red-shouldered hawk nests on the frozen river. They tell stories about birds as they appear, migrate and breed. Highlights of the show will include flood plain specialities such as prothonotary warblers and rusty blackbirds.

Field Trips January 8

Matt Paulson and Dan Jackson are planning to join the WSO Lake Michigan field trip on Saturday, January 8, 2011. The event starts from

the South Shore Yacht Club in Milwaukee at 8:00 and then heads north with stops at the Milwaukee River, North Point in Milwaukee, Doctors Park, Port Washington, Herrington Beach, 6 Mile Road, Kohler Andrae State Park, and North Point in Sheboygan.

This field trip is a great way to start a new birding year and often results in sightings of Lake Michigan specialties including Scoters, Long-tailed Ducks, Harlequin Ducks, Barrow's Goldeneye, Mute Swans, Snowy Owls, Snow Buntings, Lapland Longspurs, and as many as 7 species of gulls (including Thayer's, Iceland, Glaucous, Great Black-back, Lesser Black-backed, as well as Herring and Ring-billed).

We will leave the La Crosse area at 4:00 a.m. in order to get to Milwaukee

before the event begins. Return time to La Crosse is approximately 8 p.m..

We will car pool to share expenses and the vehicle choice will depend on participation.

E-mail Dan Jackson at DanielEJackson@earthlink.net to sign up and for more details regarding the meeting place for departure.

February 18 to 21 - Great Backyard Bird Count

For more information and how to participate go to gbbc@cornell.edu

February 19 - Mississippi Valley Conservancy and the Mississippi Valley Archeology Center will host a snowshoe hike on the Cade Archeological District beginning at 1 PM. For more information or to sign up: www.mississippivalleyconservancy.org

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

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For a complete listing of field trips
and events for 2011 with the

Madison Audubon society go to
www.madisonaudubon.org

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