

COULEE Birder

MARCH - APRIL 2011

EVENTS

Meetings begin at 7 p.m. at the Eco Park building located in Myrick Park off La Crosse Street. There is easy access parking and the entire building is handicapped accessible.

March 16 - Jon Stravers will present a program on Red-shouldered Hawks.

Jon currently serves as the Driftless Area Coordinator for Audubon's Mississippi River Initiative, and has been working on inventory and monitoring projects involving Red-shouldered Hawks and other birds along the Upper Mississippi River since 1982. In cooperation with the various agencies and other conservation organizations along the Mississippi River, Jon has developed an inventory for Red-shouldered Hawk nesting along the Mississippi River and subsequently located and documented Red-shoulder nesting in 58 sites along the Upper Mississippi River. He has maintained a 25 year record of monitoring the reproductive success of 12 active Red-shouldered Hawk territories within the "Driftless" region of northeast Iowa.

Since 1982, Jon has operated an autumn raptor banding station along the Mississippi River in northeast Iowa. At the raptor banding station along the Mississippi River, he and his co-workers have captured migrating raptors that were previously banded in Alaska, Greenland, and Mexico. Birds banded at the station along the Mississippi River have been recovered in Costa Rica and in areas around the Southern and Midwestern United States.

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President's Report

By Dan Jackson



These are scary times – especially for the environment. Over the past couple of years, politics at the state and federal level have become very polarized. Both Republicans and Democrats have focused much of their attention on appealing to their base supporters and have become increasingly uninterested in working together and considering compromise.

Currently, this is resulting in a tremendous attack on environmental legislation and policy. Programs that both parties have agreed on and developed together over several decades are the targets of attack under the guise of budget control. Lobbyists and large corporate interests have spent hundreds of millions to influence public policy and that expense is currently paying off in the U.S. Congress and in state politics.

Last week, spending legislation was passed by the House that radically cuts and in some cases eliminates funding of environmental programs and agencies whose job it is to protect our environment. They also have proposed legislation aimed at gutting the enforcement powers of the Environmental Protection Agency. At the state level, the Wisconsin governor pushed a bill through the system that eliminated the environment protections for small

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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 May/June issue is May 1. Send information to: gskol@earthlink.net.

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wetlands in Brown County in order to allow a single developer to bypass current law and build a Bass Pro Shop on a small wetland (even though Bass Pro Shops aren't interested in building a store on a wetland).

Although it is extremely important that our state and federal governments get spending and the current levels of deficit spending under control, this needs to be done without eliminating the safeguards that have been set up to protect our environment. Although it is important to help businesses find ways to make new jobs and to expand in a time of economic adversity, it is also important that this is not done without regard to

potential permanent damage to the world that we live in.

I urge you to pay attention to what is going on in state and national politics and to let your representatives know when you agree and disagree with what is being proposed. In this time of political radicalism, we need to remind our representatives that winning a slight majority in any election is not a mandate for political extremism (on the left or the right). We need to make sure that we can be proud of the state, nation, and world that we pass to our children and grandchildren.

VP Sue Fletcher is recent, but fervent convert to birding

Sue Fletcher, Coulee Region Audubon's vice president, was born in Long Island, New York and says she has always been an 'outdoor' person. "I was lucky enough to be close to the water, and spent a lot of time fishing and swimming as well as biking." But she added that as far as she knew, there were only robins, mallards and seagulls in the world.

She attended college in upstate New York, and enjoyed hiking in the forests - a welcome change from flat, sandy Long Island. She earned a degree in Cultural Anthropology and began studying comparative religion. And she began volunteering at a local hospital, which led to a



career as Hospital Chaplain when she moved to Idaho.

She moved to La Crosse about 25 years ago, and has worked as a chaplain at Franciscan Skemp Medical Center for 23 years. She specializes in end of life care and bereavement, and has served in the Hospice Program for 17 years. Five years ago, Sue bought a pair

of binoculars and started birding – and, as she puts it, "it's a blast! I love birds, and am continually amazed by their beauty, their resilience and their behaviors. I am especially fond of raptors, and watching a kestrel devour a vole forced me to buy a camera to record these sightings. I am a beginning birder, and I've learned a lot from the more experienced birders who share their experience."

She volunteers for the Fish and Wildlife Service in Trempealeau and Brownsville for seasonal interpretation and hopes to use her experience and photography to educate and inspire others to learn about and conserve our natural resources.

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Jon has also conducted inventories for neo-tropical migrant bird species within the Bird Conservation Area of northeast Iowa. These surveys have had a special emphasis on species that are listed as Species of Greatest Conservation Concern, such as Cerulean Warblers, Prothonotary Warblers, and Veerys.

April 20 - Stan Tekeila will present a program on Amazing



Jon Stravers and Cooper's Hawk Hummingbirds.

Naturalist, wildlife photographer and writer Tekeila is the originator of the popular state-specific field guides for birds, wildflowers and trees. Over the past two decades Stan has authored more than 100 field guides, nature appreciation books and wildlife audio CDs for nearly every state in the nation, presenting many species of birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians, trees, wildflowers and cacti.

Holding a Bachelor of Science degree in Natural History from the University of Minnesota and as an

active professional naturalist for more than 20 years, Stan studies and photographs wildlife throughout the United States and has received various national and regional awards for his books and photographs.

Also a well-known columnist and radio personality, his syndicated column appears in over 20 newspapers and his wildlife programs are broadcast on a number of Midwest radio stations. He is a member of the North American Nature Photography Association and Canon Professional Services along with many other professional organizations.

Field Trips and Other Events

March 4, 5 and 6 - International Festival of Owls at the Houston Nature Center, 215W. Plum St., Houston Minn. Call (507) 896-4668 for more information or to register.

March 19th, Mississippi River Waterfowl Viewing

The Coulee Region Audubon Society will host a waterfowl viewing along the Mississippi River south of La Crosse. We will meet at 8 a.m. at the entrance to Goose Island County Park near the Goose Sign. This location is south of La Crosse off of Hwy 35. The road into the park is called County Road GI and this intersects with Hwy 35 about 1 1/2 miles south of the intersections of Hwy 35 and Hwy 14/61 on the south edge of La Crosse.

Migrant waterfowl congregate on Pool 8 of the Mississippi R., and are viewable from either side of the River. Our field trip will start at Goose Island and then proceed south along the river as far as Ferryville. We will make various stops along the way to look at migrating waterfowl, Peregrine Falcons at the Genoa Power Plant, and any other birds that we can find including a potential side trip into the hills near Rush Creek.

This trip is a shortened version of the Lansing Loop that was led by Fred Lesher in previous years. The field trip will end between 11:00 and 12:00 and people can return to Goose Island or go on their own from that point. Car pooling from Goose Island County Park is encouraged and we can park extra cars in a parking lot in the park.

April 9 - Adopt-A-Highway Clean-up. Meet at 9 a.m. at the Dresbach Information Center parking lot just off I-90 in Minnesota. Plan on 2 1/2 hours of work and wear sturdy shoes and work gloves. Safety vests and trash bags are provided. We meet for lunch afterward in La Crescent. Call Mark Webster at 787-6398 for more information.

April 16 - Crane Count, 5:30 to 7:30 a.m. Sue Fletcher will be coordinating this event. Contact her at 796-9820 to register to help with the count or go to <http://www.savingcranes.org> for more information about the count.

April 3, 23 or 24, Buena Vista Prairie Chicken Viewing, Buena Vista Marsh, Portage County

We would like to find out if anyone is interested in making an early morning trip to the Buena Vista Marsh to view Prairie Chickens. We would need to arrive 2 hours before sunrise and therefore would leave La Crosse as early as 2:30 a.m. Currently, there are 18 seats available for 4/3, 22 seats available for 4/23 and 16 seats available for 4/24.

Please e-mail Dan Jackson at DanJackson@LBWhite.com by 3/9 if you are interested in going and what days you might consider. We will make plans based on current blind availability at that time. This

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trip will include a walk of up to 1/4 mile to reach the blind. If

anyone prefers to travel the night before, we can make

arrangements to meet at the viewing location.

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