

COULEE Birder

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2011

Events

Meetings

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.

September 21

Don Arnosti, Policy Director for Audubon Minnesota will be speaking about the Upper Mississippi Birding Initiative and Audubon's land conservation along the river.

Don rejoined Audubon Minnesota as Policy Director in 2010, a decade after he left Audubon to take his family to Argentina for a sabbatical year. His career in conservation spans 25 years in Minnesota, including 10 years previously as Executive Director of Audubon Minnesota (1990-2000). During his previous decade with Audubon he led the effort to pass Minnesota's Wetland Conservation Act, worked to establish sustainable forestry practices in Minnesota, and organized the team which developed our Mississippi River Flyway Campaign.

Don has worked for a number of environmental organizations as grass roots organizer, lobbyist, and policy and program director focusing on bird, wildlife and habitat conservation, agriculture, forestry, clean water and renewable energy policies, as well as sustainable development. Don has a degree in Botany, Phi Beta Kappa,



BY DAN JACKSON

As many of you know, I have become a dragonfly and damselfly enthusiast as well as avid birder (how do you say addicted?). My interest in 'Damsels and Dragons' developed from my interest in birds and bird photography. When I was wandering around with a camera looking for birds, sometimes something unexpected would catch my eye. For me, that something unexpected was a group of dragonflies. After taking a few shots of dragonflies, I was hooked. In fact, during the flight season, I now spend more time looking for dragonflies than I do looking for birds – which probably explains the lack of birding e-mails this summer.

My interest in dragonflies has resulted in my spending lots of hours with field guides, reference books, talking and trading information with experts, and even leading field trips and doing surveys. As I have

learned more, I have become even more interested and even more aware of this group of insects. My interest in 'Damsels and Dragons' has in turn led to an awareness and interest in more groups of insects and other creatures. I now look for butterflies, robber flies, bees, wasps, turtles, frogs, snakes, and anything else that looks strange and interesting while I am out and about with my camera. All of these have become subjects for my photography and all have led to further time spent with various references.

This effort has resulted in much more awareness and appreciation of the world around me. Last night, when I was sitting in my back yard

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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 November/December newsletter is November 2. Send information to: gskol@earthlink.net.

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eating dinner, I was never 'tuned out' from nature. Without thinking about it, I heard and identified the Eastern Towhee, Wood Thrush, Gray Catbirds, and a Red-eyed Vireo that were scolding me or each other and going about their business in the woods that are only 15 feet away. I didn't get to see them, but a familiarity with their songs allowed me to visualize each bird as it called and that added quite a bit to an already great experience.

When taking a walk in the fields around my work over a lunch hour, I can now identify most of the dragonflies and butterflies, and also many of the other insects that I see. Although this has taken quite a bit of work, to me, it has certainly been worth the effort. In fact, I would encourage each of you to try to spend a little time to get even more familiar with all the creatures in the world around you.

You don't need to be as carried away as I am to have a good time. If you already enjoy birds, start there. Spend some time with John Fieth's bird song training CD and learn how to identify a few more species of birds by ear. In that way, your next walk in your neighborhood or in the Hixon Forest will be just a little bit more rewarding.

From there, expand your horizons. Try to spot one new critter that you have never paid any attention to

Audubon launches new center in Texas

From Audubon news -- The National Audubon Society has just opened a 205-acre Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center (DCAC) located 16 miles south of downtown Dallas, Tex. The land is part of the White Rock Escarpment, where species from east and west converge. As a result, the Canyon is the only place in the world where one can find, for example, the Black-chinned hummingbird of west Texas nesting in the flowering dogwood tree of east Texas.

The vision for Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center began to take shape in 1999 when amateur naturalist David Hurt discovered a stand of flowering dogwoods in the canyon—a remarkable find, as dogwood are generally absent from shallow clay soils of limestone regions. This was the first of

and then spend some time watching it go about its business. You never know what you will see.

A week ago, I spent some time taking pictures of a Common Sootywing (a small black butterfly). As I shot pictures of it nectaring on a flower, I was startled when it suddenly started thrashing and was then pulled head first into the flower. It turned out that there was an assassin bug hiding in the blooms waiting for an unwary insect. Spending some time watching a butterfly feed allowed me to see nature in action. It was a neat (and somewhat disturbing) experience!

For those of you who are bird watchers, remember that the fall migration is going strong. I saw my first fall migrant warblers last week. If you want another look at these beauties before next spring, you better look for them now. The snow will be flying before you know it!

When I look for migrant songbirds in the fall, I spend my time looking for and listening for Chickadees and their cohorts, the nuthatches and Titmice. Migrating warblers often feed in flocks and they like to join the local Chickadees as they forage for insects. Since fall warblers are often quiet and Chickadees are usually noisy, it is much easier to find the Chickadees and let them lead you to the migrants.

many rare combinations of flora and fauna discoveries in the canyon, including orchids, Western Ashe Juniper, Eastern Red Cedar, Red and Shimmer Oaks, Mexican Buckeye and Eve's Necklace. Birds include the Painted Bunting, as well as the Black-Capped Vireo and Golden-Cheeked Warbler, both of which are endangered.

The new center includes a 6,000 square foot Visitor's Center, a sustainably built structure, from the architectural design to the selection of materials, including eco-safe paints and sealants. The Center was designed to achieve LEED Silver certification.

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from Lawrence University, with additional course work in forestry at the Institute for Paper Chemistry. He lives with his family in Saint Paul, enjoying canoeing, camping, hiking and international travel.

October 19

Douglas Johnson will talk about grassland birds in the Dakotas. He is a research statistician with the USGS Northern Prairie Wildlife

Research Center at the University of Minnesota in St. Paul.

November 16

Scott Mehus from the National Eagle Center will speak on Golden Eagles. He will bring Donald, their Golden eagle.

See the web site, www.couleeaudubon.org for more details on the October and November speakers.

Field Trips

Saturday, October 22, 10 a.m. Gays Mills Seldom Seen Farm, 51834 Zintz Road. Tribute to author Ben Logan and Nature Hike on "Seldom Seen Farm" sponsored by Mississippi Valley Conservancy. See www.mississippivalleyconservancy.org for more information and directions to the farm.

Who's who on the board...

Hatt credits Audubon for spurring interest

Janice Hatt, Coulee Region Audubon board member, was born in Dubuque, Iowa. She grew up in northeast Iowa and upon high school graduation, began her career in a local community bank working in the accounting department and later as a teller for 13 years. She then decided to pursue a career in the healthcare profession. Janice relocated to Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to earn her nursing degree.

In 1993, she moved to La Crosse, Wisconsin, where she currently lives with her husband, Vince, and her house bunny, "Jake". She has worked as a registered nurse the past 18 years for the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration both at Villa St Joseph on

the ridge and St. Rose Convent in La Crosse, WI, where she is currently employed.

As a child, Janice was often curious about the natural world. She would delight in hearing the cheerful chirps of the first robins to arrive in Spring. That curiosity remained dormant until her move to La Crosse where the bluffs, trails, and Mississippi River "...called me by name!"

In 2004, she dusted off an old pair of Master View (really old) binoculars and began to observe any and every creature bearing two wings including birds, raptors, owls, butterflies and dragonflies. Her intense interest was further developed by joining the

Coulee Region Audubon Society. The recent purchase of a Nikon Monarch 8x42 pair of binoculars has added to her "birding addiction."

Today, Janice still considers herself a novice birder. "I have learned so much about birds and their behaviors thanks to the expert birders I've met in the forests, prairies and marshes of the Coulee Region. Yet, there is plenty more to learn before my appetite is satiated."

The odds are quite good that you'll find Janice along the Myrick marsh trail looking upwards through her brand new binoculars. Be sure to say hello.

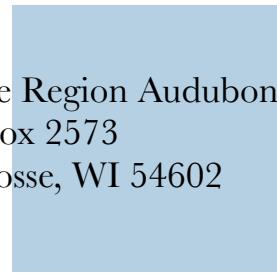
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A key reason for establishing the Center is to educate young and old about the incredible diversity in the Canyon and how we can all work together for a healthy environment. Audubon's science-based programs improve critical thinking skills, and foster stewardship of natural resources. The Center has already hosted a few Audubon Adventure Camps this summer, and will begin a full slate of programs after the grand opening.

Wisconsin has only one of 37 centers operated by NAS, The Schlitz Audubon Center at Milwaukee. There are five additional centers operated by partners plus some chapter-run centers.

Information on the new Texas center and directions at www.dogwoodcanyonaudubon.org

Coulee Region Audubon Society
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Christmas Bird Count analysis confirms climate change impact

A new analysis conducted by Audubon scientists using 40 years of Christmas Bird Count data provides new and powerful

confirmation that global warming is having a serious impact on natural systems. Read the report at:

http://www.audubon.org/sites/default/files/documents/bacc-ecologicaldisruptioninmotion_feb2009.pdf



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