

COULEE Birder

MARCH - APRIL 2012



Events Meetings

March 21 - *Mixed Flock Madness: Cheddarheads descend on Southeast Peru*

Craig Thompson will weave a whopping good yarn about a group of Wisconsin birders who recently traveled to remote southeast Peru to enjoy some of the best birding on the planet while helping to protect this remarkable biodiversity hotspot.

The intersection of the rugged Andes and the verdant Amazon give rise to the greatest expression of life on Earth. The region's forests have the world's highest species diversity and provide important wintering habitat for many migratory birds that call Wisconsin home - Cerulean Warbler, Canada Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, etc.

Craig works for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and coordinates the department's International Migratory Bird Conservation Program.

Despite frequent trips south of the border, he has yet to see a Rufous-vented Ground Cuckoo.

April 18 - Scott Lee will give a program on his trip to the Galapagos Islands in 2011. See the web site in April for further information.

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President's Report

By Dan Jackson

It is March and spring is fast approaching. For those of us who are bird watchers, this is an exciting time. Spring migration is already under way and the current trickle of northward migrants will soon turn into a wild torrent with an exciting array of old friends returning to our area or passing through on their way to northern breeding areas.



Dan and friend

Don't miss out on this fabulous time. Get out and do some bird watching or, if that is not your thing, at least do some hiking or other outdoor activities. After a long and sometimes ugly winter, I am sure that we all need to spend a little more time outside.

This is also a time that many of us start thinking about yards and gardens. If you have been sneaking peeks at the seed catalogs with dreams of new flowers and bushes that you can use to add beauty to your yard, try to also think about plantings that will help out our feathered and non-feathered friends as well.

See **PRESIDENT**, page 2

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 newsletter is May 1. Send information to: gskol@earthlink.net.
Snowy Owl photo (above) by Dan Jackson

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There are wonderful bushes and flowers that provide food and shelter for both resident and migratory birds. Adding some of those to your plans will provide beauty and the extra benefit of being able to attract some new visitors to your yard throughout this year and the years to come.

The beginning of spring also means that the election season is in full swing. Although the extreme politics of the last couple of years has been difficult to bear, the polarization of our political system definitely requires us to stay tuned to the debates and proposed new policies and laws. Pay

attention and let our elected officials know what you think about what they are doing. Big money is not the only way to influence the people in Madison and Washington. Whether you agree or disagree, let your representatives know how you feel. It is important to let them know that we care about what they are doing and to remind them that they are in office to represent us – their constituents.

Enjoy spring! It is a fabulous time of the year and it is bringing the warmth and sunshine that we are all looking forward to.

News briefs

Mark Webster to attend Audubon's Mississippi Flyway Action Network

Coulee Region Audubon Board Member, Mark Webster, with support from Coulee Region Audubon, will be attending Audubon's upcoming Mississippi Flyway Action Network (MFAN) workshop in New Orleans. As part of Audubon's new strategic plan, Audubon is using the four flyways as a way to organize its work and tell the story of how we all work together to protect birds and habitat. This Mississippi Flyway Action Network is the first grassroots, chapter leader program as part of that new framework. Workshop sessions will include such topics as; using social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) to promote Mississippi Flyway Education, bird and habitat preservation, and how to effectively build local coalitions, among many other things.

Board OKs duck donation to USFWS

The board voted to donate a total of \$220.00 (\$110 per specimen) to the USFWS for purchase of two stuffed duck specimens for the purpose of environmental education. They will replace duck specimens that have deteriorated beyond being useful.

Earth Fair set for Earth Day

The 2012 Earth Fair will be held on Earth Day, April 22, to celebrate this year's theme: "Earth Day is Every Day!" To build on the success of the 2011 Earth Fair at the EcoPark, the 2012 Earth Fair will showcase a preview of the new outdoor adventure playscapes at the EcoPark.

This is the 4th Annual Earth Fair put on by Coulee Partners for Sustainability (CPS). CPS is a non-profit organization that formed in 2007 with the purpose of increasing environmental awareness in the Coulee Region through a variety of educational events. CPS's aim is to involve people of all ages to share and spread the knowledge of environmental issues and discuss ways in which we can better our society and create a sustainable community. For more information on CPS, visit www.cpslax.org.

Pulchaski elected to CRAS board

Scott Pulchaski was elected to the Coulee Region Audubon Society board of directors at the annual meeting in January. He replaces Janice Hatt.

Board officers re-elected are: Dan Jackson, president; Sue Fletcher, vice-president; Mark Webster, secretary; Mary Sullivan, treasurer, and Kurt Brownell, board member.

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Field Trips

March 24 - Mississippi Waterfowl Field Trip

Dan Jackson will lead a waterfowl viewing field trip on Saturday, March 24. Meet at 8 a.m. at the entrance to Goose Island. We will head south and look for waterfowl and other early migrants as far as Genoa or Rush Creek and finish around noon. The trip is free and open to everyone.

April 14 - Annual Midwest Crane Count - 5:30 a.m.-7:30 a.m.

The Annual Midwest Crane Count is one of the largest citizen-based wildlife surveys in the world. One of the primary purposes of the Crane Count is to monitor the abundance and distribution of cranes in the Upper Midwest. Each year, the Crane Count involves over 3,000 volunteer participants spread over 100 counties in six states.

The Crane Count is organized by county in Wisconsin and portions of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, and Minnesota. Sue Fletcher will coordinate La Crosse County this year.

Past participants will receive an email from Sue Fletcher in the next few weeks inviting participate again. If you have not counted before and would like to join the count, please send Sue an email at: jiren@centurytel.net and she will help you get started. We will be

using e-Bird this year to document our results, and she can assist you with that but we will still have paper field count sheets. More information on the Crane Count can be found at: www.savingcranes.org.

April 21 - The CRAS Spring Adopt-a-Highway Clean Up

Meet at 9 a.m. at the Dresbach, MN. Info Center Parking Lot on I90/Hwy 61. Plan on beautifying the highway for 2 to 2 1/2 hours. Please bring work gloves and wear comfortable, sturdy shoes. MN. DOT provides Safety Vests and Trash Bags. For those interested, we'll plan on meeting afterwards for lunch at Corky's Restaurant in La Crescent.

April 21 - Prairie Chicken Viewing

Dan Jackson has reserved 6 spaces in the blinds for viewing Prairie Chickens. We need to meet the coordinators 2 hours before sunrise in the marsh. Sunrise that day is about 6:05. This will mean leaving La Crosse about 2:00 a.m. in order to get there on time. Spaces will be filled on a first come/first served basis. Cost for viewing is \$15 which is non-refundable. Other dates are available if anyone would like to go on their own. Please contact Dan at DanJackson@LBWhite.com to reserve a spot on this trip.

April 22 - Dan Jackson will lead a one hour hike that starts at noon at the Myrick Hixon Ecopark. This will be part of the Earth Fair event there.

April 22 - Warbler Presentation Dan Jackson will be presenting a warbler identification workshop at Wild Birds Unlimited in the Shelby Mall on the south side of La Crosse (Mormon Coulee Road near Shopko). It will start at 2 p.m. and last between 60 and 90 minutes. The seminar is free and open to everyone.

May 19 - Wyalusing Field Trip

Dan Jackson will lead a Coulee Region Audubon field trip to Wyalusing State Park starting at 6:30 at the entrance to the park. Wyalusing is the best birding destination in western Wisconsin and is the home to a number of special species of birds.

May 1, May 8 and May 15 - Myrick Marsh Bird Walks

May 3, May 10/ and May 17 - Hixon Forest Bird Walks

Leaders are Pat and Bobbie Wilson and Dan Jackson. More details will be included in the May/ June newsletter and on the web site, www.couleeaudubon.org

Photographers can get up close with cranes in Nebraska

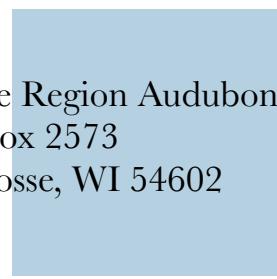
For the photography freaks among us, there is this opportunity to get really close to 10,000 cranes at the Rowe Preserve on the Platte River in Nebraska..

Photo blinds are set up very close to the major crane roosts.

Blinds are available for \$200 per night (plus tax) from March 17th through April 7th, with a maximum capacity of two people. Because of the close proximity of the cranes, you are not allowed to leave the blind until a staff person or

volunteer comes to get you. The safety of the cranes is their highest priority, so the rules are enforced. Each blind has a porta-potty. For additional information click [here](#) or call 308-468-5282.

Coulee Region Audubon Society
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Audubon offers free online guide to birds

The Audubon Online Guide to North American Birds is FREE to use on the Audubon.org homepage. This searchable online guide to North American Birds

features 750 species of birds in 22 Orders and 74 families.

The guide covers all of North America's breeding birds--approximately 580 species--as well

as an additional 180 non-breeding species that visit the U.S. and Canada.



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