

# Coulee Birder

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2013

## Events

### Meetings

Monthly meetings are held in the Lower Level of the Ho Chunk Nation Headquarters at 724 Main Street, La Crosse and begin at 7:00 p.m. They are free and open to the public.

### January 16

#### 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.

### February 20

Matt Heeter will be giving a presentation on Wisconsin Amphibians and Snakes and will have live reptiles and amphibians at the presentation.

Matt is an avid outdoorsman and is also an independent reptile researcher. He has been researching Timber Rattlesnakes in the Coulee Region since 2002 (in conjunction with the Wisconsin DNR) and

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## President's Report

By Dan Jackson

The last month has definitely given me a renewed appreciation for all of the important things in my life. On December 7, 2012, I suffered cardiac arrest while working out at the YMCA in Onalaska before work. Luckily, that is definitely the place to have something like that happen. The director of the fitness center and another Y member responded in seconds and were able to use a defibrillator to restart my heart. I ended up

being sent to Mayo in Rochester and eventually had open heart surgery to do a triple bypass and I also had another surgery to install an automatic defibrillator. At this point, I am definitely on the road to recovery and am doing very well. I am still restricted in terms of what I can lift and also how much I can move my left arm in order to let my chest heal and to make sure that the defibrillator leads are embedded properly. I

have to go much slower than I am used to. However, I am getting stronger every day and am feeling great. In fact, life is pretty darn good!!

The response of family and friends has been amazing and has been a big part of my recovery. Thanks to everyone who called, or sent e-mails and cards. Your thoughts and prayers are really appreciated and really have really made a difference!!

At this point, I am not able to go to work yet. However, that is where my interest in birds has really paid off. Watching the birds at my feeder has been a great way to spend the time while I am recovering from my surgeries. Luckily, the birds have really cooperated. Today at my feeders

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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 newsletter is March 1. Send information to: [gskol@earthlink.net](mailto:gskol@earthlink.net).  
*Bald Eagle photo (above) by Dan Jackson*

## President's report from page 1

I have seen about 200 birds of 15 different species. These included a very confused Eastern Towhee that looks like it is going to spend the winter here, a Pileated Woodpecker, 8 turkeys, 50 Goldfinches, 45 Juncos, 30 House Finches, and lots of other fun-to-watch winter birds.

To me, this is just one more reason that an active interest and participation in outdoor activities can be an important part of life. Without an interest in the outdoors, life would be very boring right now. However, my bird watching has been relaxing and has also been a fun way to pass the time – in fact, it has been just what the doctor has ordered during this time.

Obviously, family and friends are even more important and this holiday season has been very special for me and my family. There is nothing like an experience like this to help you appreciate all of those special people in your life and to appreciate the time that you get to share with them during the holiday season. I hope that all of you were also treated to a wonderful holiday season surrounded by those you love!!

Have a great New Year filled with special family time and many birds and other great experiences in the great out of doors!!

## CBC sets national record in participation

Seventy-three participants identified 73 species of birds during the La Crosse Christmas Bird Count. See the details of the count of some 27,000 birds at our website [www.couleeaudubon.org](http://www.couleeaudubon.org)

David Yarnold, CEO and president of National Audubon, and his daughter Nicole were among the birders in an area just north of Manhattan. In a letter thanking all the nation's CBC volunteers he noted that the 63,223 volunteers participating in the count is a new record as is the number of counts, 2,248.

CBC data are becoming increasingly important not only in documenting current climate change but in predicting the future effects of climate change on North American bird populations. In 2013, using data from the CBC and other sources, Audubon will publish an unprecedented look at potential future bird ranges based on scientific models that illustrate anticipated effects of climate change on hundreds of species in the United States and Canada. If we know what

to expect, we can start taking action now to do something about it.

By coincidence, there were also 73 volunteers who counted birds in New York City's Central Park, where the 113<sup>th</sup> annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count began on December 25, 1900. There, according to Audubon, as elsewhere all across the country, evidence emerged of this year's massive southward irruption of hungry seed-eating birds from Canada's boreal forests, where cone crops failed this year. Data from decades of counts are used to interpret such events and to distinguish annual variations like this year's irruption from long-term trends, like the clear, long-term northward shift in the winter ranges of dozens of species due to climate change.

According to John Rowden, Associate Director for Citizen Science for NYC Audubon, "2012 witnessed higher numbers than seen in 2011, and there were a number of unusual species seen this year, possibly as a result of irruptions from the north. Notable species included 2

Common Redpolls and 4 White-winged Crossbills. Also, we had a lot of Tufted Titmice, double the number counted last year. They made it onto our list of top 10 most abundant species." Central Park is a vital oasis for birds along the Atlantic Flyway, and total number of species can reach 275 during spring migration.

### Minnesota Vikings asked to be bird friendly

The Minnesota Vikings are planning a new stadium, one that may take three years to build and could cost up to \$975 million. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has urged project designers to make the stadium "bird-friendly." If the new stadium is to have prominent glass features, the designers should consider using angled glass or "fritted glass," which can provide visual cues to birds to prevent collisions.

Other ways to make the stadium collision-proof could include using window films, internal shades and blinds, and visible external markings.

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has taken part in other survey and research projects with Massasauga Rattlesnakes, Wood Turtles, Cricket Frogs, Glass Lizards, Box Turtles, Black Rat Snakes, Ringneck Snakes, and Blue-spotted Salamanders.

Matt has also worked in the pet industry for 15 years and has owned over 3,000 reptiles and amphibians of over 200 species. He has bred 5 species of herps in captivity and has worked with 1/6 of the venomous snake species of the world.

### Field Trips

**January 12**, a few of us will be heading to Milwaukee to join the WSO Lake Michigan field trip. The field trip starts at the South Shore Yacht Club at 8:00 and usually winds up at Sheboygan by about 4:00. Targets are waterfowl, Snowy Owls, Gulls, etc.

We will car pool and leave from the outer section of the Office Max parking lot at 4 a.m. Please e-mail Dan Jackson or Scott Puchalski (e-mail addresses on Page 4) if you would like to attend so that we can plan for rides.

**January 19** MVC Snowshoe hike on the Mathy Quarry. Meet at the end of Cty FA at 10 a.m.

**February 2 & 3**  
Saz-Zim Bog and Duluth Birding field Trip

We will once again be taking a trip to visit it the Duluth area and the famous Sax – Zim bog. This trip will be limited to 20 people and we will once again hire a local guide to help lead the group if participation is high enough to justify splitting the group in half.

If you are interested, please call or e-mail [Dan Jackson](#). We need to gauge interest in order to decide whether or not to hire Erik Brunke as a guide for the weekend.

### March 1-2 Aldo Leopold

Weekend events include:

Friday, March 1, presentations at the EcoPark, 7 p.m. by Rick Kyte on Leopold and Dick Thiel on wolves in Wisconsin, a species of special interest to Leopold.

Saturday, March 2, beginning at 9 a.m., a day of family oriented events at the new Fish and Wildlife Service visitor center on Brice Prairie.

Saturday, March 2, 7 p.m., concert and readings from the Sand County Almanac at the EcoPark. Music by Grand Picnic.

## ***Congress misses chance to boost conservation***

### **From Birding Community E-Bulletin**

It got close to the finish-line, but it never got across. That's the Sportsmen's Act of 2012 (S. 3525), a package of outdoor sporting-and-conservation issues that grew from about 15 separate bills in September to a mega-package of over 20 bills three months later.

It was a coalition and compromise effort, a consensus-oriented package. The mix included Making Public Lands Public (dedicating a percentage of the Land and Water Conservation Fund for hunting, fishing and other recreational access), Target Practice and Marksmanship Training Support, creating an electronic Duck Stamp and the ability to raise the stamp price through the Department of the Interior in consultation with the

Migratory Bird Conservation Commission, and the official authorization of Migratory Bird Joint Ventures. The package would also reauthorize critical conservation programs, including the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA), the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act, the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act, Nutria eradication and control programs, and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) reauthorization. Toward the end of package-building last month, an important Sodsaver provision was added to protect ancient native prairie.

A very broad coalition of groups backed the effort. Despite good support on the Hill and an extraordinary breadth of outside groups backing the package, the

mega-bill was in the hands of the least-productive Congress in memory. And unfortunately Congress was up to its justly-acquired reputation.

First, there was resistance to Duck Stamp changes, hinging on Republican Senators' accusations of budget violations. (Some observers opined that the bill's provisions would put the Stamp price on the table every three years, and, at the same time, take the power of the purse away from Congress.)

Clearly, not everything in the huge package was perfect, but the clock had run out for further compromise or meaningful discussion. There would be no Sportsmen's Act of 2012 passed by the 112th Congress. It will have to wait for 2013 and the new 113th Congress. One can hope that it gets a timely and fair hearing.

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

## Help wanted

• Mary Sullivan, CRAS treasurer for many years has decided that she would like to hand the job over to someone else.

If you would like to know more about the treasurer duties and time commitment, please call Mary at 785-7095.

• Gretchen and Dave Skoloda have been producing the newsletter for the past 11 years and would like to turn over that job to someone new by June of this year.

## Contacts

President  
Dan Jackson  
[DEJackson2256@gmail.com](mailto:DEJackson2256@gmail.com)  
608-483-2271

Vice President  
Scott Puchalski  
[obsidianblur@gmail.com](mailto:obsidianblur@gmail.com)  
608-769-2563

Treasurer  
Mary Sullivan  
608-785-7095  
[marysullivan@hotmail.com](mailto:marysullivan@hotmail.com)

Secretary  
Mark Webster  
608-787-6398  
[mvweb@charter.net](mailto:mvweb@charter.net)

Board Member  
Ms. Marty Lohman  
1529 Hoffman Place  
Onalaska, WI 54650  
[mdlohman@gmail.com](mailto:mdlohman@gmail.com)  
(608) 769-6144

Board Member  
Kurt Brownell  
[KurtBrownell@gmail.com](mailto:KurtBrownell@gmail.com)  
608-269-6124

Newsletter  
Dave and Gretchen Skoloda  
608-781-7502  
[dskoloda@earthlink.net](mailto:dskoloda@earthlink.net)  
or [gskol@earthlink.net](mailto:gskol@earthlink.net)

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