

Coulee Birder

MARCH - APRIL 2013

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.

March 20 - Alyssa Jarosh and Barb Thompson will describe their experience starting a new environmental education camp in Russia. The connection began through the International Crane Foundation. The migration of cranes led Barb and others to develop a camp in eastern Russia. Through various connections Barb was asked to develop a new camp in partnership with an already functioning camp on the White Sea. Their passion is to teach children around the world the importance of taking care of our planet. They also provided many learning experiences through activities, a very different way for Russian children to learn.

April 17 - Noel Cutright, Current Historian and past President of WSO will discuss Facts, Fiction and the Future. He is a member of Coordinating Council of WBCI, founder of Riveredge Bird Club and retired as Senior Terrestrial Ecologist at We Energies after 28 years. Cutright founded the [Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory](#) located at the Forest Beach Migratory Preserve in Ozaukee County, Wisconsin.

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President's Report

By Dan Jackson

I would first like to say thanks to everyone for your kind words, thoughts, prayers, and support over the past few months. Your support has meant more than I can say and has really helped me on my road to recovery. I am doing great and have been cleared to resume my normal activity. Since the spring migration and the new dragonfly and damselfly flight season are fast approaching, that is really good news to me!

This winter has seemed especially long. I suppose that is partially because I was kept cooped up during the first part of my recovery and also due to the fact that this has been a very normal Wisconsin winter with plenty of cold and lots of snow. However, recent events are starting to get me excited. The days are getting longer, the birds are starting to sing (I have been hearing Cardinals, Chickadees, Titmice, and even Robins (over wintering birds)), and I have also seen Horned Larks and have heard about Sandhill Cranes and Turkey Vultures and other early migrants that are moving into Wisconsin.

All of these signs are helping to give me the strength that I need to handle any last icy blasts that come at the end of this long winter. I know that the snow will soon disappear and that in only a couple of months the woods will be full of bird songs and the marshes and fields will be graced with the darting shapes of butterflies, dragonflies, damselflies and other neat creatures.

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

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The spring season is always a very busy time in terms of activities and field trips. I urge you to take a look at the upcoming events and to make a point to take part in them if they are of interest to you. There are quite a few birding opportunities on the way and there are also a couple of volunteer opportunities available as well. It would be great to have more people help with the Highway Clean-up on April 20th and there is always room for more

counters for the Crane count – especially in counties that surround La Crosse County in both Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Make a point to spend some extra time in the woods, fields, and marshes this spring. It is a great way to recover from a long winter and is just what the doctor ordered for stress reduction and good health!!

Global bird count shatters records

Audubon news -From Antarctica to Afghanistan, bird watchers from 103 countries made history in the first global Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), February 15–18, 2013. In the largest worldwide bird count ever, bird watchers set new records, counting more than 25.5 million birds on 120,000+ checklists in four days—and recording 3,144 species, nearly one-third of the world's total bird species. The data will continue to flow in until March 1.

Building on the success of the GBBC in the United States and Canada for the past 15 years, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Audubon, and Bird Studies Canada opened the count to the rest of the world for the first time this year, powered by eBird, a system that enables people to report birds globally in real-time and explore the results online. Bird watchers are invited to keep counting every day of the year at www.eBird.org.

Cornell Lab director Dr. John Fitzpatrick says:

"This is a milestone for citizen science in so many respects—number of species, diversity of countries involved, total participants, and number of individual birds recorded. We hope this is just the start of something far larger, engaging the whole world in creating a detailed annual snapshot of how all

our planet's birds are faring as the years go by."

Audubon Chief Scientist Gary Langham: "People who care about birds can change the world," said Audubon chief scientist Gary Langham. "That's why this year's record-setting global participation is so exciting. Technology has made it possible for people everywhere to unite around a shared love of birds and a commitment to protecting them."

Other Key Preliminary Findings:

Top 5 Most Reported Species (reported on highest number of checklists): Northern Cardinal; Dark-eyed Junco; Mourning Dove; Downy Woodpecker; House Finch

Top 5 Most Common Birds (most individuals reported): Snow Goose; Canada Goose; Red-winged Blackbird; European Starling; American Coot

Finch Invasion: A massive number of northern finch species moved into the U.S. including the Common Redpoll, reported in a record 36 states. Scientists believe these periodic movements are related to natural fluctuations in crops of conifer cones and other seeds in Canada.

Hurricane Sandy: The weather system that caused Sandy's landfall also blew some European birds to North America and evidence of this is still showing up in GBBC

results. The colorful, crested Northern Lapwing was reported in Georgia, New Jersey, and Massachusetts during the GBBC.

GBBC First: A Red-flanked Bluetail has wintered at Queens Park, Vancouver, and was also reported for the GBBC's first record ever. This British Columbia bird has been drawing bird watchers from all over the U.S. and Canada hoping to see this rarity. This little thrush is one of the only birds in the world with a striking blue tail and is native to Asia; the other GBBC report of this species this year was from Japan.

Bluebird video shows determined pair

Leif Marking has put a video of bluebird predation on youtube.

Marking for years has headed the bluebird project of the Brice Prairie Conservation Association, which has seen thousands of bluebirds fledged from boxes maintained by BPCA.

Marking studied predation by raccoons at his farm on County Highway S near Onalaska. A pair of bluebirds produced 19 eggs in a two-month period. The first three nest attempts were destroyed. The fourth nesting fledged successfully after the raccoon was destroyed. Here's the link:

<http://youtu.be/vT8d3cqxiFo>

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Among his many accomplishments, he served as the Senior Editor for the Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Wisconsin,

May 15 - Andy Paulios will talk about the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative (WBCI) and Bird Monitoring. Paulios is the coordinator for the WBCI, a partnership of over 160 organizations, agencies and businesses across the state, working together to conserve Wisconsin's bird populations through planning, monitoring habitat conservation, education and outreach.

WBCI goals are to keep partners up-to-date on relevant current events, including diseases, pesticides, tower kills, effects of free-ranging cats on bird populations, road mortality, window collisions, and other topics through regular communication and to recommend strategies to address problems such as how best to reduce overabundant populations that are in conflict with other wildlife and humans.

June 19 - Pot-Luck and Spring Hike - 6:00 with the location to be announced. See the May/June newsletter or www.couleeaudubon.org for details closer to the date.

Field Trips

March 23 – Mississippi Waterfowl Field Trip. Dan Jackson will lead a waterfowl viewing field trip on Saturday, March 23. 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 13 - 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 volunteers 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. Scott Puchalski will coordinate the La Crosse County count this year.

Past participants will receive an email from Scott in the next few weeks inviting them to participate again. If you have not counted before and would like to join the count, please send Scott an email at: obsidianblur@gmail.com and he will help you get started.

More information on the Crane Count can be found at: www.savingcranes.org.

April 20 - 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 20? - Prairie Chicken Viewing. Dan Jackson will lead a trip to the Buena Vista grasslands to watch booming Prairie Chickens. This is tentatively set for April 20th – e-mail if interested. 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 or staying overnight in a motel in that area. 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 21 – Earth Fair at the Myrick Hixon EcoPark. Lots of activities are scheduled including birding hikes. Dan Jackson will lead a one hour hike that starts at 12:15 PM.

April 22-26 - Warbler Presentation. Dan Jackson will be presenting a warbler identification workshop at Ho-Chunk Nation Building during the last week of April. Check the website and Facebook page for the final date. It will begin at 7:00 p.m. and last between 60 and 90 minutes. The seminar is free and open to the public.

May 4 – International Migratory Bird Day event at the Myrick/Hixon EcoPark. This will include bird-related activities for the entire family including bird banding, birding field trips, and much, much more.

May 11 – International Migratory Bird Day event at the Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge. Another great event with bird-related activities for the entire family.

May 18 - 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

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

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is the home to a number of special species of birds.

April 30, May 7 and May 14 -
Myrick Marsh Bird Walks. Start at

6:30 AM at the EcoPark building parking lot.

May 2, May 9 and May 16 -
Hixon Forest Bird Walks.
Leaders are Pat and Bobbie Wilson

and Dan Jackson. Meet at 6:30 at the Hixon Forest parking lot. See our web site www.couleeaudubon.org for further information.

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