



January/February 2015

Meetings

Monthly meetings are held the third Wednesday of the month at the Myrick Park Center, starting at 7PM. They are free and open to the public.

January 21 Important!

As mentioned in the President's message, this month's meeting is a little bit different. Our annual meeting and potluck will begin at 6PM, followed by election of officers and then sharing of photos. See elsewhere in the newsletter for complete information.

February 18

Alan Stankevitz will be presenting a program on bird photography this month. Alan and his wife Jo live in southeastern Minnesota and while building their home there, he became reacquainted with his love of nature and specifically bird photography. His photos have won numerous awards, and have been published in books, periodicals and internet sites. Many of us are photographers, and for the rest, we can marvel at his wonderful images.



President's Message

By Dan Jackson

Despite the cold, I always enjoy the start of a new year. For me, it is a great excuse to rekindle my excitement for birds. During the summer, I find that I get side-tracked by my interest in dragonflies and I don't spend much time bird watching. With a new year, I start new lists and even House Sparrows and European Starlings attract my attention for a while. Whether you keep lists or not, I encourage you to take advantage of the New Year to rekindle your interest in birds, other wild critters, and the great outdoors. In this busy world, taking a little time to slow down and enjoy the beauty of nature is a great way to bring a little balance to life.

The next several months are busy ones for Coulee Region Audubon. In this issue, you will find a pretty extensive list of currently planned activities. I hope that they look interesting and that everyone finds something of interest. All of these activities are free and open to the public and most are kid-friendly.

We are always looking for new ideas for speakers, field trips, and other nature-related activities. If you have suggestions, we would love to hear about them! We strive to make our monthly meetings and activities as interesting as possible so that they meet the needs and interest of as many people as possible. It is very easy to run the same field trips each year. However, there might be new events or locations that would be even more exciting. We definitely welcome new ideas!!

If possible, we would like to deliver this newsletter as well as other communications via e-mail. If you aren't already a member of one of our e-mail lists, please consider that as a green alternative to printing and mailing the newsletter. We have a "Newsletter-Only" list that is only

Continued on p. 2

President's message from p. 1

used for meeting notifications and newsletters and we also have an "Information" list that includes those items as well as bird sighting, notifications about field trips and events, and issues in the news. If you would like to be added to either, please send an e-mail to DEJackson2256@gmail.com and specify the list to which you would like to be added.

I am looking forward to this month's pot luck, meeting and picture presentations. I hope to see you there!! It is always great to see everyone in a more social setting and to get to see the photos that our members have taken.

Dan Jackson, President

Annual Meeting and Potluck, January 21

The Annual Meeting and Potluck for the Coulee Region Audubon Society will be held on Wednesday, January 21st at the Myrick Park Center (formerly called the Myrick/Hixon EcoPark). The potluck will start at 6:00 and the actual meeting part of the night will begin at 7:00. Everyone is welcome but if you would prefer to not take part in the potluck, you are welcome to come at 7:00 for the meeting and slide shows that will follow.

For those who would like to take part in the Pot Luck, please bring a dish to pass and your own plates and silverware. Coulee Region Audubon will provide milk and lemonade for beverages. If you would prefer something else, please plan to bring it along.

The actual annual meeting part of the night will be short with an election of officers and a brief overview of our chapter finances and activities for 2014. It will begin at 7:00 and should be done around 7:30.

This year, the three board positions up for election are those of the Treasurer, Secretary, and one of the at-large board positions. Mary Lohman has agreed to return as Treasurer and we have found individuals interested in the other two positions as well. However, if you are interested in any of these positions, please contact Dan Jackson or any other member of the board. A real election with multiple candidates would be welcome!

When the business portion of the meeting is complete, members 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. We have many great photographers and this should be great!! **If you bring photos, please limit yourself to no more than 25 pictures.**

Christmas Bird Count

The La Crosse Christmas Bird Count was held on Saturday, December 20, 2014. The weather did not cooperate with the count since it was overcast and foggy in the morning. Despite that, the counters did a great job and we recorded 13,916 individual birds of 61 species. This represents a fairly high count for a year with little open water and on which the count was held quite a bit after the river froze up and chased the waterfowl out of the area!! Some of the more unusual sightings included Northern Saw Whet Owl, Merlin, Trumper Swan, Ruby Crowned Kinglet, Wilson's Snipe and Golden Eagle.

For this year's count, we had 75 participants who traveled 882 miles and logged at least 370 hours counting birds!!

Thanks again to all who helped with the La Crosse Area Christmas Bird Count!! This is a great example of the power of Citizen Science and I really appreciate the help!

Upcoming Events!

January 17 – Golden Eagle Survey. The National Eagle Center in Wabasha puts on a Golden Eagle Survey in the driftless area each January. Check their website at www.nationaleaglecenter.org for more information.

February 14 – North Woods Birding. Dan Jackson will lead a day trip to the north woods around Clam Lake in search of winter finches, Pine Grosbeaks, Grey Jays, and other north woods specialties. We will leave early and come back well after dark.

March 21 – Mississippi Waterfowl Field Trip. Dan Jackson will lead a waterfowl viewing field trip on Saturday, March 21. 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 18 - 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 La Crosse County this year. Other area counties are also looking for volunteers.

Past participants will receive an email from Scott in early April inviting you 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 25 - 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, plan on meeting afterwards for lunch at Corky's Restaurant in La Crescent.

April ? - Prairie Chicken Viewing. If blinds are available, Dan Jackson will lead a trip to the Buena Vista grasslands to watch booming Prairie Chickens. The date will be set later this spring. Last year, this event was cancelled due to a severe decline in the population of these birds. Let's hope that the population has rebounded enough for this viewing to happen again!

International Festival of Owls, March 6-8 Houston Minnesota

This festival always offers something for the owl lover in all of us, even those who aren't really birders. From a banquet, owl prowls, serious science and many family activities, there's sure to be something this weekend for even the most discerning of folks. Karla Bloem, our November speaker, will be on hand with Alice the Great Horned Owl. This international event grew from a small town celebration of Alice's "Hatch Day" into what grows with each passing year.

Shake the late winter doldrums and enjoy all things owl. For more information, Check the website at www.festivalofowls.com.

Coulee Region Audubon Society

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