



January/February 2017

## Meetings

*Monthly meetings are held the third Wednesday of the month at the Ho-Chunk Nation Building, 724 Main St. in LaCrosse starting at 7PM. They are free and open to the public.*



President's Message  
By Scott Puchalski

### **January 18 Important!**

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. If you have photos you think our members would enjoy, please do limit yourself to no more than 25, so all who want to share have a chance.

### **February 15**

Author Doreen Pfost will talk about the importance of the central Platte River to migrating cranes and waterfowl and will share the story of an irrigation project that threatened the river's demise. A grassroots campaign in the 1970s, spearheaded by fledgling Audubon chapters, stopped the Midstate Reclamation Project, and led to creation of Rowe Audubon sanctuary on the threatened stretch of river.

Copies of Doreen's book, *This River Beneath the Sky: A Year on the Platte River*, will be available for purchase.

All,

As always a new year means a fresh year for all of you that keep yearly lists of the birds that you see. Personally I enjoy keeping a list like that, but I have found that it has become a bit stale for me. I have been thinking of ways to bring a bit of excitement back to seeing the "usual" bird's that I see on a daily basis. My personal goal this year is to slow down and really observe the birds and there surroundings. I know this may sound easy enough but sometimes the pace of life creeps into our pace of enjoying the outdoors, at least I know it does for me. I don't remember the last time I really watched a Chickadee, I see and hear them everyday, but have not observed them and their behavior in a while. My wish for you all in 2017 is you find fulfillment in the goals that you have set.

Enjoy the Outdoors,

Scott

*Our January meeting will include election of officers. This year, the office of Treasurer is open. Marty Lohman has served in this position for several years and hopes someone will step up to take over the excellent job she's done. Please contact any of the Board members for more information.*

## **Christmas Bird Count**

This year, we had 27 reports from 29 available sections and we also had 41 feeder counts. Conditions were poor, but we still were able to find just over 12,000 birds of 66 species. That included some great species that are normally unusual for this count. The best were a Rose-breasted Grosbeak and White-winged Scotters, but other unusual species included Northern Saw-whet Owl, Hooded Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, Winter Wren, Northern Harrier, Fox Sparrow, Trumpeter Swans, and Golden Eagles. Great results on a tough day to count!!

Effort-wise, we had 48 section counters and 45 feeder counters who contributed over 330 hours of effort. That is truly impressive and I want to say thanks again for your help with this year's La Crosse Area Christmas Bird Count!!!

I hope that you had a great holiday season and that the new year is a great one!

Thanks again for your help,

Dan Jackson

## ***Upcoming Events!***

**January 21 – 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](http://www.nationaleaglecenter.org) for more information.

**February 17-20 Great Backyard Bird Count** Bird watchers of all ages count birds to create a real time snapshot of where birds are. To learn more and participate in this citizen science project, visit their website at: <http://gbbc.birdcount.org>

**March 19** – Mississippi Waterfowl Field Trip. Dan Jackson will lead a waterfowl viewing field trip on Saturday, March 19. 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 8 - 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. 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](mailto:obsidianblur@gmail.com) and he will help you get started.

More information on the Crane Count can be found at: [www.savingcranes.org](http://www.savingcranes.org).

## **International Festival of Owls, March 3-5 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 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 one that 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](http://www.festivalofowls.com).

## **The Journals of Fred Lesher**

Fred is a long time member of CRAS and retired UW Lacrosse professor. He has donated his birding journals to the Murphy Library at UWL. The journals cover his lifetime of birding from 1957 to 2004. The 14 volumes are now housed in the Special Collections unit of the Library. All the volumes have been scanned and are available to the public in the Library's digital collection. To view the journals go to the UWL website, click on Murphy Library then Special Collections then Digital Collections then Browse Digital Collections. When viewing the journals there are 2 pages on each scanned image so page numbers and scan numbers do not agree.

Take some time this winter to explore some of Fred's old haunts. Find the story about his favorite roads in Vernon County or his tame Barred Owl from his college days or his detailed observations of his Purple Martin house or his chronicle of Cooper's Hawk nestlings. Enjoy his old fashion journaling skills; recall that he was an English professor.

CRAS has taken on the challenge to transpose all the data in Fred's journals to eBird. At this point we have entered 414 pages of the 3028 pages in the journals generating 286 eBird checklists. We have also created a spreadsheet of all the locations Fred reports in his journals. We need volunteers for the eBird project and have checked out from the Library Volumes 4 – 8 to work on this winter. If you use eBird you would find it a relatively straight forward process especially now that eBird Reviewers can cross reference checklists directly with the original documents. If you are interested in working on this project contact Paul Hayes at [pjhayes@mwt.net](mailto:pjhayes@mwt.net) (notice it is a .net)



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