

Coulee Birder

November/December 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.

November 15

Markus Mika will be on hand to introduce us to the migratory Flammulated Owl. He is an associate lecturer in biology at UW-L. He spends his summers conducting research in northern Utah and southeastern Arizona, studying reproduction, parental investment and juvenile condition in these small owls.

December 16

Our “meeting” this month will be the annual Christmas Bird Count. Please see Dan’s article in the newsletter for more information, And please consider joining us. It’s always fun!



President's Message

By Scott Puchalski

Hello All,

The year has flown by. It has been an interesting one to say the least. My hope is that you all were able to get out and enjoy nature a bit. I would like to say that I was able to get out as much as I usually do, but this year the rat race got in the way and trying to figure out how to get off that wheel has been an impossible task. I often wonder if birds get tired of the grind. Are the rarities the ones who got tired of the same old thing every day and take a trip? Had to see something new? Wanted to taste new bugs? Got tired of the scenery and wanted to see what else was out there? I know it's silly trying to anthropomorphize them, maybe. I have not come to a conclusion on that yet. I know that other animals have "emotional responses" that we associate with our own. Which leads me back to the first question; do they get tired of the grind? I know many of you now are saying, Scott quit trying to associate your first world problems with the birds. You're right in saying that, but many times when I am stuck trying to figure a problem or issue out, once I get out of my own head (easier said then done), I often look to nature to figure it out. That was a long way of saying that sometimes things stink, but it always smells better outside.

Enjoy the Outdoors,
Scott

Your newsletter editor welcomes your submissions. Please send them by December 31 to gwyntells@gmail.com

Christmas Bird Count

The 2017 Audubon Christmas Bird Count is getting close and it is time to start to get it organized. This is a big event and we can always use more help!!

The Audubon Christmas Bird Count was originally started to create an alternative to the bird shoots that were traditionally held around Christmas and New Years Day. Luckily, someone had the great idea that it would be better to count birds during the holiday season than to shoot them. After 117 years, it is safe to say that this idea caught on and has been a great success. In fact, this tradition has turned into one of the leading citizen science projects on the North American continent and, with so many years of data it is a valuable tool for scientists!

The Audubon Christmas Bird Count is actually made up of hundreds of local Christmas Bird Counts. For each of these local counts, the object is to try to count all of the birds found within a fifteen mile “count circle” on a specific count day which must occur between December 14 and January 5. On that count day, participants count birds in pre-assigned sections of the circle or at their own feeders (if they are located within the count circle). When the day is done, the count data is tallied and submitted to the National Audubon Society who combines the data from all of the counts and analyzes it to look for trends and interesting events regarding bird populations and distribution.

The La Crosse Area count will be held on Saturday, December 16. If you enjoy counting birds, your help with the count would be greatly appreciated! The La Crosse Area Christmas Bird Count, which is hosted by the Coulee Region Audubon Society, counts all of the birds found inside a count circle that is centered on the La Crosse County courthouse in downtown La Crosse. The limits of the circle are approximately the lower end of Goose Island Park to the south, the southern tip of Brice Prairie to the north, $\frac{1}{4}$ mile east of County OA to the east, and the far edge of Hokah to the southwest. It includes all of La Crosse, La Crescent, Onalaska, Barre Mills, Hokah, and part of Dakota.

If you are available on Saturday, December 16 and would be willing to help out with the La Crosse Area Christmas Bird Count, we would really appreciate your help! Birders of all skill levels are encouraged to attend. Whether you are a beginner and would like to help on a team or an experienced birder who would prefer to work on your own, we can really use your help. If you can help with the La Crosse Area count, please contact Dan Jackson (e-mail: danjackson@lbwhite.com or phone: (608) 483-2271).

Upcoming Events!

November 11-Waterfowl Field Trip. We will be meeting at the La Crescent Kwik Trip (the one on the south end of town, at the intersection where the stop lights are) at noon on the 11th. From there we will be heading south on the Minnesota side of the river, making a few stops before our final destination being the Brownsville overlook to view the Tundra Swans.

January – 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 16-19 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>

International Festival of Owls, March 2-4 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.

In addition, if you'd like to get out and prowl for owls with the experts, they are hosting monthly Owl Prowls.
December 2 6:30 PM
December 31 6:30 PM

The Owl Center is also offering pellet dissection opportunities with admission to the Owl Center on November 18 and December 16. This would be a great way to enjoy time with your children, grandkids or really, anyone young at heart, while introducing them to a closer look at life as an owl.

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

About those winter doldrums.....

We live where we get winters, it snows, we have to bundle up just to spend time outside. Why not embrace it? One place to start would be a visit to the Sax-Zim Bog just outside Duluth Minnesota. Anyone who has read the book or seen the movie, The Big Year, knows that the first scenes involved all of the three birders heading there in hopes of spotting a Great Grey Owl.

In the past few years, they've built a Visitor Center, and February 16-18, 2018, the 11th Annual Sax-Zim Bog Birding Festival will take place. You can learn more by visiting their site at: saxzimbirdingfestival.com Maybe 2018 will be your year to spot a Hoary Redpoll at last!

If that isn't to your liking.....

Look into the activities and field trips available through the *Wisconsin Society for Ornithology*. They offer guided field trips throughout the year...and the state, as well as listing many smaller local events. Maybe if you find yourself on the road, you could check their calendar for a birding event along the way.

www.wsobirds.org

The Wisconsin Natural Resources Foundation also hosts a variety of events and field trips. Though they aren't all bird related, there's likely to be something of interest to nature lovers.

<http://www.wisconservation.org/>

Closer to home, we have the Kickapoo Valley Reserve. The annual Winterfest is January 13, 2018.

<http://kvr.state.wi.us/Home>

Coulee Region Audubon Society

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Thanks!

