



January/February 2018

## 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 17 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.

All,

A good new year to you all.

As always, this month's meeting is our annual business meeting with a pot luck and a time to show your best pictures of the year. There is a need to fill the treasurer's position. Marty wanted to step down last year but we had no one step up to fill her position. Marty graciously continued to do the work the position required and for that I am thankful. I put out the call a few times last year to the membership to step up and fill the position but alas no takers. We can not and will not ask Marty to continue to fill a position due to lack of interest in the membership. So if there is again no interest from the membership to step up and fill this position, I will be forced to search for a resolution to this matter which could include the presentation to the board and membership for the dissolution of the Coulee Region Audubon. I understand this a drastic measure, but I also see lack of involvement in this organization, except for a core group, and wonder if it is worth the time, effort and resources it takes to maintain the organization.

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.*

### **February 21**

Dustan Hoffman, Ranger for the islands of the Green Bay National Wildlife Refuge, will be on hand to tell us about restoration efforts on Plum and Pilot Islands. These are remote islands near Washington Island in Door County, and serve as important migratory pathways and nesting grounds for many birds. He will also share a bit about the birding festival being planned in conjunction with the long running Washington Island Birding Festival.

## **Christmas Bird Count**

Thanks again to everyone who participated in this year's La Crosse / La Crescent Christmas Bird Count!! It is really great to have a large group of volunteers who are willing to give up time on a Saturday in the Christmas season to take part in this event each year!

Despite the perception by many of us that birding was relatively slow on Saturday, we had a great count. Our totals now stand at 12,349 birds of 68 species. Considering the low number and diversity of waterfowl, these are very good numbers – especially the species count!

One important reason for these results is the large number of people who take part in this event. This year, we had 52 section counters and 37 feeder counters (there are a two who counted both a section and at their own feeder, so we had 85 total participants). As a group, this represents over 350 hours of counting and compiling time!! Thank You for this effort!

Dan Jackson

## ***Upcoming Events!***

**January 20 – 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 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>

**March** – Mississippi Waterfowl Field Trip. No date has been set yet, but Dan Jackson will lead a waterfowl viewing field trip sometime mid-March. Watch for updated info in the next newsletter or the online facebook and club site. 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 14 - 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 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.

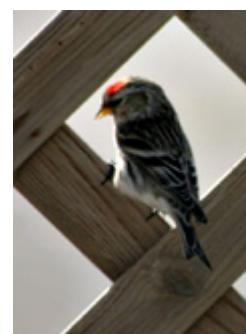
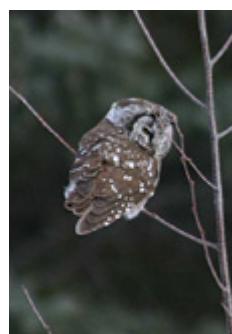
Shake the late winter doldrums and enjoy all things owl. For more information, Check the website at [www.festivalofowls.com](http://www.festivalofowls.com).

*In addition to the big festival, the Owl Center hosts monthly Owl Prowls to call in wild owls and pellet dissection days. Take the drive to Houston and see whooo's busy! Check the website for details. [www.internationalowlcenter.org](http://www.internationalowlcenter.org)*

### ***Birds of Winter in Wisconsin***

Yes, our neotropical friends have long since headed for warmer temperatures for a few months, but that isn't reason to put the scopes and binoculars away. As most of us already know, Snowy Owls have been irrupting all over the state, including several who spent a few days at the FWS Visitor Center on Brice Prairie before dispersing. Winter finches weren't predicted to make a big push, yet Crossbills, Redpolls and Pine Siskins are appearing at feeders in good numbers now.

Then there are those perhaps more spectacular winter visitors to the area; Golden Eagles riding the thermals above the bluffs, Northern Rough-Legged Hawks and various other more northern owls. Lately there's been a push of Boreal Owls along the North Shore of Lake Superior and into northwestern Wisconsin. Recently many of us have enjoyed seeking out a Townsends Solitaire hanging around below Miller Bluff in LaCrosse. While looking for these winter visitors, even the most ordinary Downy Woodpecker comes into sharper view as the leaves are down and not much else is out there coloring our landscape. Get out there and see what feathered fun you might find!



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