



November/December 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. The next two months are different. Please take note!

November 11 Sunday!

Mississippi River Waterfowl Viewing – November 11, 2018

We will meet at noon on Oak Street behind the Kwik Trip at the stop lights in La Crescent (Hwy 14 / 16 intersection at the end of the causeway). From there, we will head south and checkout the mudflats below the entrance to the Wildcat Landing in Brownsville and we will also stop at the refuge overlooks just south of there. This is a great opportunity to see Ducks, Geese and Swans.

December 15

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 Jonathan Ringdahl

Hello birding family,

We hope the fall migration has brought you some interesting birds. There has been abundant waterfowl activity. Be on the lookout for swan activity as well. The Brownsville, Minnesota overlook will soon be swan central. Our upcoming field trip will give you the chance to see waterfowl and the amazing spectacle of large numbers of swans. Please see the event description for more details.

We will not have our November meeting due to its proximity to Thanksgiving. We will still be doing the Christmas Bird Count. We will be holding our next meeting in January. It is our annual meeting where we will be holding elections. If you are interested in helping lead exciting changes to help birds, please consider running to be on our board. You can make a difference for birds! It is also a potluck and your chance to show your beautiful photography. Please come up and introduce yourself if I have not had the pleasure of meeting you yet. I am new to the presidency and want to get to know all of you.

Thank you to those who have filled out surveys. We appreciate your feedback. We will be using it to improve our chapter. If you have not completed a survey yet, we would love you to complete one.

Happy birding,
Jonathan

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

Christmas Bird Count

The 2018 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 118 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.

This year, there will be at least 2 Christmas Bird Counts held in the Coulee Region. The La Crosse Area count will be held on Saturday, December 15th and the Trempealeau count will be held on Sunday, December 16th. If you enjoy counting birds, your help with either or both counts would be greatly appreciated!

The La Crosse Area Christmas Bird Count, which is hosted by the Coulee Region Audubon Society, counts all 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, ¼ 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.

The Trempealeau Christmas Bird Count has a count circle with its center point in the middle of the village of Trempealeau. It is only a half-circle as it only includes the area east of the state line which runs down the main channel of the Mississippi River. The count includes Perrot State Park and a significant part of the Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge (northeast to Marshland). It also extends 3 miles north of Centerville and covers Galesville, the Van Loon Wildlife Area, New Amsterdam, and a portion of Brice Prairie.

If you are available on Saturday, December 15th and/or Sunday, December 16th, and would like to take part in the La Crosse Area and/or Trempealeau Christmas Bird Counts, 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 would love to have you join the fun! To help with the La Crosse Area count, please contact Dan Jackson (e-mail: DEJackson2256@gmail.com or Phone: (608) 483-2271). To take part in the Trempealeau count, please contact Al Wernecke (e-mail: aaja701@triwest.net or Phone: (608) 534-6330).

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.

Lake Michigan Lakefront Birding - January 12, 2019

We will join the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology (WSO) field trip along the shore of Lake Michigan. The trip starts at the South Shore Yacht Club in Milwaukee at 8:00 AM and goes as far north as Sheboygan. This trip is a great chance to see waterfowl including Scoters and Long-tailed Ducks as well as other specialties including Snowy Owls and rare gulls. We will carpool from La Crosse. Details will be announced via e-mail in December.

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.

International Festival of Owls, March 1-3 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. This international event grew from a small town celebration of Alice's "Hatch Day" into one that grows with each passing year. Alice has officially retired this year, but there will be plenty of owls for you to enjoy during the Festival.

In addition, if you'd like to get out and prowl for owls with the experts, they are hosting monthly Owl Prowls.

November 24, 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 17 and December 22. 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.....

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

Keep an eye out for these winter visitors, too.

PURPLE FINCH *Haemorhous purpureus*

The Purple Finch is an irregular winter bird at our feeders. Roger Tory Peterson described this bird as a "sparrow dipped in raspberry juice." They are a bird often confused with House Finches which are displacing them in many parts of their range. Purple finches are sparrow-sized birds with large conical beaks shaped to crush and extract seeds, buds and nectar of flowers. They do eat some insects. Purple Finches breed in moist coniferous forests in North America and a small portion of Mexico. In winter they migrate and can be found in a variety of habitats. Their song is an extended musical warble. They are often seen in mixed flocks of birds especially with Goldfinches and Pine Siskins. You can attract Purple Finches by planting some coniferous trees and shrubs and feeding thin sunflower seeds in feeders, on platform feeders and the ground.

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Male Purple Finch



Female Purple Finch

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Coulee Region Audubon Society

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