

BIRD SONGS

Newsletter of the North Lakeland
Discovery Center Bird Club



September, 2016; Volume 12, Issue 3

Ingrid Stephan, Editor

12panda47@gmail.com

Officers

Carne Andrews, President

Cynthia Krakowski, Secretary

David Foster, Treasurer

Linda Dunn, Membership Director

Linda Dunn, Acting Program Director

President's Message

Carne Andrews

COMINGS AND GOINGS

Is summer flying by fast enough for you? It never ceases to amaze me how quickly May, June, July and August go by. It doesn't seem that long ago spring migrants in search of mates filled the air with bird songs and our summer club activities were underway. Today, an intriguing and intense breeding season is winding down especially for those club members engaged in the Breeding Bird II project and signs of the next change of seasons are popping up everywhere. Have you noticed shorter hours of daylight, cooler temperatures, summer wildflowers setting seeds, declining numbers of bird species and hummingbirds at your feeders, and the early morning serenade now reduced to raucous calls and clicks of Blue Jays, nasal yank calls of the nuthatches, and the shorter and lower pitched calls of the chickadees?

Yes, fall migration is well underway when the departure begins for over a hundred species of our summer birds who split the year between breeding in the northwoods and wintering to our south and in Central and South America. Several club members recently witnessed this phenomenon on our trip to Necedah N.W.R. and Horicon Marsh where several species that breed north of Hudson Bay and pass through Wisconsin on their way to their wintering grounds were observed. You can read the details of this trip's sightings in this newsletter edition's Life List column by Guy David.

Each change of season brings with it an anticipation of the arrival of new groups of birds at our feeders and perhaps adding a rare bird to your own life list. I must admit I'm starting to wonder if there'll be more finches and Pine Siskins this year? Will the few pair of Pine Grosbeaks and a Northern Cardinal be regular guests again at the yard feeders? Will there be a repeat this year of open water for the Christmas Bird Count? While saying goodbye to summer may be bittersweet, I'm already looking forward to what's coming next. Come learn more about what to expect by attending our next meeting on September 12 at 7 PM at the Minocqua Library when John Bates' will present a program on "Winter Birds", following the Bird Club business meeting at 6 PM . Our Thursday morning outings will also continue through October offering weekly opportunities to learn about the "comings and goings" of fall migration first hand! Hoping to see you out there!!!



Snowy Owl

Guy David

SNOWY OWL FINDS A HOME

Carne Andrews

This spring the Bird Club offered to sponsor the addition of a mounted Snowy Owl (SNOW) to the NLDC Nature Nook's avian collection. One evening last fall, Bird Club member and past president, John Randolph received a telephone call reporting an intact dead SNOW on the southern shore of Lake Superior near Little Girls Point, MI. John notified the NLDC and the next morning, Licia Johnson, NLDC naturalist, retrieved the bird. Subsequently, the SNOW spent several months in a frozen state while research was conducted to determine the cause of death of multiple SNOW's found along Great Lake shorelines during fall migration.

Although the results of this research have not been released, permission to proceed with mounting was received from the Wisconsin and Michigan DNR's.

Al Lampo, taxidermist from Lac du Flambeau, was commissioned and recently completed a fantastic mount now on view in the Nature Nook. The SNOW is displayed on a fence post reflecting the typical open field feeding behavior of the species. The Bird Club is pleased to sponsor this effort to support public awareness and to promote education about avian wonders found in the northwoods. Stop in the Nature Nook to see this incredible display!

Thanks to the Bird Club and individual members Donna Roche, John Randolph, Pam Imler, Katie Foley and Carne Andrews for the added financial support of the project and to Al Lampo for discounting his usual fees by 50%.



QUARTERLY QUIZ

Carne Andrews

Certain groups or families of birds have a characteristic flight pattern. Being able to recognize this is a great help in narrowing down the possibilities when trying to identify a species. In this quiz match the family with the flight description.

DESCRIPTION

BIRD GROUPS

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| _____ 1. Able to fly backwards | a. Accipiters |
| _____ 2. Fly with ultra-quiet wing beats | b. Buteos |
| _____ 3. Hawks with short rounded wings and long tails | c. Cranes |
| _____ 4. Long-legged, long-necked birds that fly with necks and
legs fully extended | d. Diving Ducks |
| _____ 5. Dive vertically into water for bait fish | e. Flycatchers |
| _____ 6. Flocks often fly compactly and wheel in unison | f. Herons |
| _____ 7. Most have gently undulating or wavy flight | h. Owls |
| _____ 8. Perch on dead limbs, fly out to catch insects | i. Rails |
| _____ 9. Take off from water by jumping directly into the air | j. Shorebirds |
| _____ 10. Usually dangle their legs on weak flights | k. Dabbling Ducks |
| _____ 11. Noted for their swooping graceful flight | l. Swallows |
| _____ 12. Take off by first pattering along the surface of the water | m. Swifts |
| _____ 13. Long-legged, long-necked birds that fly with legs extended
and necks drawn in | n. Terns
o. Woodpeckers |

_____14. Hawks with broad fingered wings and fan-shaped tails

_____15. Spend the entire day flying with stiff wing beats in search of
insects, resting only at night

Life List Quarterly

Guy David

Annual List

In the bird club's June newsletter I reported that the club's annual list for 2015 included 151 species which was below our annual average as far as listing goes. By the end of May, 2016 the annual list included 130 species. Since spring migration still was underway and the bird breeding season was just getting underway, and the club's outing season was just getting underway, things looked good for exceeding our 2015 outcome.

The good news is that as of the end of August the club's 2016 annual list currently includes 161 species and we still have fall migration and Christmas Bird Counts coming up!

My report for the June Birdsongs was written on June 17, 2016. Since then the club has conducted 10 outings and one of those was rained out. The average number of species recorded during each outing was 38 species ranging from a low of 26 species for one day up to 76 species in one day. So that means that with varying conditions for birding and varying productivity of habitats that we have visited we always have found birds and had a good time, picking up a new species for the year here and there.

However, it was the August 18-19 birding trip to Lost Creek Wetland, Lake Maria County Park, Necedah N.W.R. and Horicon N.W.R. that really filled the quota. That trip yielded 49 species on August 18 and 76 species on August 19 for a total of 91 species for the outing. That trip alone netted 16 new species for the club's annual list. That was not a surprise given that it was August and further south than where we normally roam and enhanced by the uniqueness of the habitats that we visited.

So, fellow birders, for our 2016 Annual List we are at 161 species and counting! Our club has about 10 Thursday morning outings still to come this year, 2 Christmas Bird Counts, and maybe another extended outing sometime this fall. I always have dreamed that one year the Discovery Center Bird Club's Annual List would achieve 200 species. This year probably won't be that year but, so far, it has been a very good year!

Life List

As I have oft predicted, the year probably will come when the club does not make any additions to our Life List. Happily, I can report that this year will NOT be that year!

Thanks to our trip to Horicon Marsh N.W.R we have been able to add life species number 267, the Red-necked Phalarope.

Prior to the trip some of us have been watching the bird reports for Horicon Marsh and have been seeing the Red-necked Phalarope on the reports on a regular basis, so our hopes were high when we got there. After scanning the mud flats for a long time, Jim Krakowski found one with his spotting scope and he quickly shared the view with a few other club members before the bird flew away. As for the rest of us, we may have missed seeing that bird but all of us were thrilled to see 2 Peregrine Falcons darting about, which were the reason for all of the shorebirds flushing. One thrill after another!

Denise Herzberg, Cynthia and Jim Krakowski, Carne Andrews, Donna Roche, and John Randolph searching for the Red-necked Phalarope among hundreds of shorebirds in Horicon Marsh; Photo by Guy David



The Red-necked Phalarope is a species for Wisconsin birders to be excited about since it is a rare migrant for anywhere east of the Dakotas. According to Sibley the species breeds on tundra ponds and “migrates and winters in small flocks on open ocean along lines of floating weeds and debris.” Sibley also reports that it “generally (is) uncommon to rare inland, but very large numbers gather at certain alkaline lakes in the west in fall.”

So we are fortunate to be able to claim the Red-necked Phalarope for the club’s life list. It may be a good long while before this species is seen again on a future bird club annual list!

*Red necked
Phalarope
courtesy of
BirdWeb.org*



Cynthia’s Tricky Trivia Trifle

Cynthia Krakowski

What plump, medium size shorebird which we see occasionally in Northern WI has black axillaries (armpits) when seen in flight?? [answer at end of newsletter]



Barn Swallow feeding time in Powell Marsh; *photos by Guy David*

THE GREAT WISCONSIN BIRDATHON WRAP-UP

Carne Andrews

In mid-July, the Natural Resources Foundation (NRF) issued an online summary of the results of the Great Wisconsin Birdathon for 2016. This statewide effort raised a total of \$77,143 for the Bird Protection Fund smashing the goal of \$77,000.

Our NLDC Bird Club "UP North Hammerheads" had an amazing time exceeding both our financial and species goals by observing 107 species (goal of 100) and raising \$2,700 (goal of \$2,500). Recently, a refund check for 50% of the funds we raised in the organizational division was returned to the club and \$1,350 was deposited into the club's account. Thanks, again, to everyone who participated in this outstanding effort.

It is exciting to also report the "Up North Hammerheads" ranked 2nd overall in fund raising of the 11 teams in our division behind the Madison Audubon Society team and only \$8 ahead of the Friends of Glacial Heritage. Our total species count also reflected an amazing effort ranking above 3 of the signature teams.

The committee is already looking forward to next year, setting goals and developing new strategies! We can hardly wait!

Cynthia's Trivia Answer: Black-bellied Plover. When in nonbreeding plumage, the black axillaries is one way to distinguish the BBPL from the less common American Golden- Plover.:

Carne's Quarterly Quiz answers:

1) g, 2) h, 3) a, 4) c, 5) n, 6) j, 7) o, 8) e, 9) k, 10) i, 11) l, 12) d, 13) f, 14) b, 15) m

*Great Egrets;
Photographed in
Horicon Marsh
by Guy David*



*Black Stilt;
foraging in
Horicon Marsh
by Guy David*

