

# BIRD SONG

Newsletter of the North Lakeland  
Discovery Center Bird Club

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## Officers

Carne Andrews, President  
Cynthia Krakowski, Secretary  
Carne Andrews, Acting Treasurer  
Linda Dunn, Membership Director  
Linda Dunn, Acting Program Director



## **President's Message** **Carne Andrews**

Today is one of the rare days of the year many of us have likely chosen to remain in the comfort of our homes while rain and snow swirls around outdoors. The perfect day to enjoy a cup of coffee with the fireplace aglow and to reflect on the happenings of the past year. Without a doubt, 2015 held a wealth of opportunities for Bird Club members to engage in: to observe our feathered friends in a variety of habitats; to improve our birding identification skills; to expand our knowledge of avian behavior; to increase our awareness of conservation challenges affecting our natural environment; and enjoy each other's companionship. Thanks to your involvement and commitments, 2015 was an outstanding year for the Bird Club.

The year also brought some significant changes for the club that your Board of Director's hope will prove to be good decisions. Next spring we will be asking for your feedback regarding the suspension the monthly meetings over the winter months. In the meantime many activities are available for you to participate in over the next several months through the NLDC's Citizen Science programs: assisting with the volunteer bird bander training and public demonstrations; the Great Backyard Bird Count February 12 - 15; the Annual Midwest Crane Count April 16; placing and monitoring Loon Nesting Platforms; Project Loon Watch Training; and enrolling in or continuing participation in the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II project. See the NLDC Winter & Spring Program for registration details.

Hopefully, you are keeping informed on the ongoing Bird Club projects with the monthly updates. Please share any interesting and unusual bird sightings with the Club and go birding when can!

With the holidays fast approaching, may the peace and beauty of the Christmas Season remain with you and your families now and throughout the New Year!!!

## **Ornithological Term Quiz**

Becoming familiar with words frequently used in the study of birds can help improve our skills in identifying bird species in the field. Match the words in the left column with the meanings on the right. You may find some terms easy and some more of a challenge but hopefully this will be a pleasant exercise to expand what you know about birds! [answers at end]

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| 1. Albinism       | a. Wingpit feathers                                   |
| 2. Altricial      | b. Abnormal absence of color                          |
| 3. Auriculars     | c. Upper mandible                                     |
| 4. Crepuscular    | d. Tail feathers                                      |
| 5. Lores          | e. Two toes forward, two toes back                    |
| 6. Maxilla        | f. Feathers around the ear                            |
| 7. Nape           | g. Over the eye                                       |
| 8. Precocial      | h. Active during twilight                             |
| 9. Retrices       | i. Spaces between the eyes and bill                   |
| 10. Supercilliary | j. Back of the neck                                   |
| 11. Zygodactyl    | k. Capable of a high degree of independence at birth  |
| 12. Axillars      | l. Very immature and helpless at birth requiring care |

# Life List Quarterly

Guy David

Except for the upcoming results for 2 Christmas Bird Counts, the Discovery Center Bird Club's 2015 birding year is completed.

Thanks to all of the people who helped organize so many birding events during 2015, this year goes down as one of the best yet! If having a successful club year means going places, doing things, having wonderful participation, doing great things for birds, and having a lot of fun together, this certainly was a year to treasure.

Starting in February, several club members traveled to Wausau to participate in the kickoff event for Wisconsin's second Breeding Bird Atlas effort. That event included a little winter birding and participants were treated to some winter species, most notably Snowy Owls. Then spring happened and in partnership with the North Lakeland Discovery Center we hosted the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual North Woods Birding Festival in May, 2015. That turned out to be an overcast, cool (38°) and misty day but despite the challenges the birders came up with 94 species of birds! A fundraising event at Savemore even included birding and recording several species.

Throughout the months of April – October Donna Roche capably shouldered the responsibility to make sure that there was a weekly club outing. Donna Roche tirelessly organized at least 25 club birding outings throughout the spring, summer, and fall. These were well received by club members and average participation was about a dozen people each week. Donna has been doing this for the club for several years and certainly deserves a lot of appreciation by all.



Bird club members enjoying Corrigan's Overlook in the Penokee Hills

Now for the status of the bird club's Life List which now stands at 266 species of birds! As I reported in our September Bird Songs we added 2 species to our life list, the Short-billed Dowitcher that was recorded at the Little Turtle Flowage near Mercer, WI and the Lark Sparrow that was recorded at Thunder Marsh State Wildlife Area near Three Lakes, WI. There were no other additions since my September report. I guess that some year in the future the club will not record any new species to our Life List, but NOT YET!

As far as the club's Annual List is concerned, 2015 was a good year but not a banner year. With the exception of an extended trip to the Mead Wildlife Area and to the Ashland area, almost all of our club outings were throughout what I would consider the club's "home range" in Vilas, Oneida, and Iron Counties. Thus we did a great job of finding a lot of the bird species found in nearby ecosystems but missed out on recording species that tend to be found in other parts of Wisconsin or nearby states.



Two bird club members who trained through the NLDC Master Naturalist Program in 2015



Our official eBird tally of bird species as of this writing stands at 147 species. A few new species still could be added as a result of the 2015 Christmas Bird Counts, particularly birds that migrate south to our region in the winter. Thus it still is possible to clear 150 species yet for 2015. I hope so!

The bird club's first full year for birding records was 2005 and 144 species were recorded that year. In terms of number of species records in one year, 2010 was our best year with 185 species. Averaging 2005 thru 2015 shows that our eleven-year average is 163 species per year, so it looks like 2015 will be a below average year for our annual list. However, when ranking the species output each year, 2015 shows up right in the middle.

Even though the club's species record for 2015 was not record breaking, it was a great year none-the-less. Even though we didn't have the number of longer field trips in 2015 compared to recent years, club member contributions to Wisconsin's bird species records this year, in my opinion, was a best ever! The reason is the wonderful number of club members who participated in the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II (WBBA II) project for the first time this year. All of those birding records compiled by club members were recorded via eBird. Thus our collective contribution to Wisconsin birding records for 2015 took a quantum leap over previous years. I am SO proud of us for that! And, the great news is, the WBBA II project continues for 4 more years and I am hopeful that even more club members will participate going forward.



Looking for Spruce Grouse and Boreal Chickadees in the Conover area.

# **Sneak Preview 2016 Programs**

**Linda Dunn**

Fellow Birders! We have an exciting list of speakers and programs for 2016. Here's a sneak preview:

Monday May 2 at 7:00 p.m. , Ron Eckstein (retired DNR) will talk to us about Osprey. This program will be at the Discovery Center.

Monday June 6 Michele Woodford (DNR) will meet us at the Powell Marsh Vista to answer questions about Powell Marsh. I'm thinking we will invite the public to come from 5:00-8:00 p.m. to go birding with our Club. (rain location is Manitowish Waters Community Center)

Monday July 11 at 7:00 p.m. is a program with Live Raptors presented by Wild Instincts Raptor Rehabilitation Center (Rhinelanders). This is our big program to attract the public. It will be held at the Boulder Junction Community Center.

Monday August 1 at 5:00 p.m. is our Annual Meeting and Social. I have again reserved the Manitowish Waters Lion's Pavilion. But, your Board is discussing doing something a little different. We thought maybe an outdoor picnic at Rest Lake? suggestions appreciated.

Monday September 12 at 7:00 p.m. Our own Club member, John Bates will give a program about Winter Birds at the Minocqua Library. We should attract a good crowd for this one!

Monday October 3 at 7:00 p.m. Our own Club member, Jim Krakowski will discuss the second year of Breeding Bird Atlas II and his work in Price County. This program will be at the Discovery Center.

As usual, all programs will be preceded by a business meeting. We are hoping to do a lot of membership recruiting at these events.

## **Book Sale**

At each of our programs, we will have a poster display about our Club. I want to have birding books, magazines, etc. to sell or give away. I would appreciate it if you would start collecting used books, magazines, newsletters from other clubs (Badger Birder) anything bird-related I can have for this purpose.

## **Trivia Corner**

By Cynthia Krakowski

During spring and fall migrations, Bird Club members often come across this diving duck and delight in trying to figure out if they are “Greater” or “Lesser” Scaup. The name “Scaup” is not only hard to pronounce, but its origin (etymology) is tricky. How did these species get this name? [Answer at end]



Greater Scaup

## **Birding Southeast Arizona**

Guy David



Mexican Jay, Madera Canyon, AZ





Anna's Hummingbird, Madera Canyon, AZ

Not being home in Wisconsin during the Christmas Bird Count CBC doesn't mean that I have been goofing off on the birding scene. Being in Southeastern, AZ for a while I decided to look into doing a CBC in the Green Valley / Madera Canyon area. I found the count coordinator for that area and, after being asked a few questions, I was assigned an area around the base of the Santa Rita Mountains, just outside of Green Valley.

My instructions from the count coordinator are to go Proctor Road and that my count area begins "just after the Cattle Guard"! Cattle Guards are what keeps the free range cattle from wandering out of their designated areas. Then my instructions are to bird along the road for about 2 miles and then to continue "on the Elephant Head Bike Trail" for a couple of miles. Not being familiar with the area, I decided that a little scouting is called for, so I did that a few days ago.



Guy David's AZ CBC area for 2015



I found that the area is not mountainous but it is rugged. Unlike doing the northern Wisconsin CBCs, there are no houses or bird feeders. It is open range and desert-scrub predominately featuring Mesquite. Unlike northern Wisconsin where I am pretty good at identifying Black-capped Chickadees and nuthatches, there are harder to locate and identify species like Brewer's Sparrows, Rufous-winged Sparrows, California Towhees, and Crissal Thrashers. Proctor Road is a rock strewn, winding, and hilly road that ends where the Bike Trail begins. Bike Trail? Ha! In my vision no sane person would ride on that trail that begins by going uphill and consists of 6"-8" rocks! Well, a friend says that mountain bikers thrive on such trails around here. I'm not so sure about walking it, but I'll give it a try. Fortunately, I have a birding friend who will join me who is more familiar with local desert-scrub birds and does a lot of hiking over rugged trails.

The Minocqua CBC area is divided into four quadrants and is covered each year with maybe a dozen or so birders each year. The Green Valley / Madera Canyon CBC is divided into 13 areas and it is covered by about 50-60 local birders each year. Being the local CBC rookie I don't think I got the easy duty with easy to find birds! A good year for the Minocqua CBC would be to find 30 species. Down here the usual output is 150-160 species.

So, while you guys are riding around in your warm vehicles looking for active bird feeders with cooperative Chickadees for your CBC, think of me wandering around the unfamiliar desert looking for unfamiliar and skittish birds! Any sympathy coming my way?



Magnificent Hummingbird, Madera Canyon, AZ



Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Agua Caliente Park, Tucson, AZ (Terry Minks, Photographer)

## **Great Backyard Bird Count: Participate, Educate, Have Fun!**

**Sarah Besadny**

The Bird Club will be hosting a **Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) Open House** at the Discovery Center on **February 6, 2016 from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.** During this time we will introduce visitors to the methods used in the count, teach them how to identify common winter birds in the area, help them use binoculars, if needed, and assist them with understanding the process for entering their data online. We will have resources available outlining the processes, slide shows of common winter birds and laptops for accessing the GBBC website. Your assistance at this Open House would be greatly appreciated! Please contact Sarah Besadny at [sbesadny@gmail.com](mailto:sbesadny@gmail.com) if you'd like to help. This will be a good time to introduce people to the Bird Club as well. FYI, Heather Lumpkin will be hosting a bird banding session concurrently with this Open House. <http://gbbc.birdcount.org>



Common Redpoll

### Answers to “Trivia Corner”

The origin of the name “scaup” may stem from the bird's preference for feeding on scalp—the Scottish word for clams, oysters, and mussels; however, some credit it to the female's discordant scaup call as the name's source.

### Answers to Ornithological Term Quiz

- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. b | 7. j  |
| 2. l | 8. k  |
| 3. f | 9. d  |
| 4. h | 10. g |
| 5. i | 11. e |
| 6. c | 12. a |

*[Editor's Note: A big round of applause for all the contributors for their wonderful photos, quizzes and articles! ]*