

BIRD SONGS

Newsletter of the
Discovery Center Bird Club

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President's Message

By John Randolph

The Bird Club has just completed the last wonderful weekly birding outing of the 2012 calendar year, though I look forward to the Christmas Bird Count and other winter events. As for overnight trips, fourteen of us traveled to Horicon Marsh on Friday, October 12, and, led by Guy David, saw 48 bird species. One of our really sharp-eyed birders saw a Northern Goshawk on the drive down (not included in the Horicon count). Seeing several Snow Geese was a first for me, and I particularly enjoyed the excellent looks we had at Pectoral Sandpipers, a goodly number of Wilson's Snipes, and Short-billed/Long-billed Dowitchers (I don't know whether this has been resolved by examining photographic evidence).

After a full afternoon of this rather rich stimulation, we drove to Port Washington, and enjoyed a pleasant meal at a place near the Lake Michigan waterfront. A few highly motivated members arranged to go to the lake before darkness and early the next morning, hoping to see some waterfowl such as Long-tailed Ducks,

but rain and poor visibility prevented any hoped-for sightings.

The main reason for the trip, proposed this past summer by Guy, was to attend "Grosbeaks Galore: A Birds On Your Landscape Workshop", sponsored by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The morning consisted of educational presentations which promoted managing property to provide safe and nutritious rest stops for migrating birds. The impact of pesticides, herbicides, and invasive species, and the use of native plantings for food and cover, were discussed by knowledgeable experts. In the afternoon, attendees drove to the nearby Forest Beach Migratory Preserve, to go on one of several field trips offered.

The Preserve was incredible, a former golf course amazingly restored to a combination of prairie with tall grasses and numerous wildflowers, oak savanna, and more wooded areas, with a number of ponds. Despite periodic rain, one of our Club groups saw 27 species, including Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets. In communication with the Discovery Center, the Club will be exploring ways to make useful contributions to bird habitat.

I am particularly pleased and grateful for the work being done by the 2013 Birding Festival Committee, made up of North Lakeland Discovery Center staff and Bird Club members. It is my understanding that Friday night reception and Saturday keynote speakers have been engaged – the Festival will take place the weekend of May 11.



Umbrella birding at Port Washington
Photo by Judy Cassady

Life List Quarterly By Guy David

Life List

Since the last Life List Quarterly for the bird club newsletter the club has embarked on 23 field trips and outings. While the club added 12 new species to our club life list from January through May, only 1 has been added since then.

Members who participated in the Grosbeaks Galore workshop in Port Washington also enjoyed a great afternoon of birding at Horicon Marsh, where we were got decent views of species number 252-- 3 Snow Geese!

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Minocqua BC, Dec. 15, 2012. Contact
Guy David at bgdavid@wildblue.net

Manitowish Waters BC, Dec. 22, 2012
Contact John Bates at
manitowish@centurytel.net

This shows us once again how adding species to the club life list is more likely when we visit areas outside our local birding sites. In fact, all 13 of the new species added this year were found while traveling to more distant locations.

I anticipate that future additions to the club's life list will slow down, just as additions to my own life list have slowed down. The prospects for additions are diminishing, while many still-available prospects are less common species. In other words, we have observed many of the 'easy' species to find.

Since most of our bird outings occur in Vilas, Oneida, and Iron counties, the club should consider developing our species in those counties. This information is retrievable from the club's eBird record. Following is a table showing the club's record of the number of bird species reported to eBird so far for those counties.

COUNTY	LIFE	YEAR	MONTH
Vilas, Wisconsin	176	89	0
Iron, Wisconsin	151	82	18
Oneida, Wisconsin	147	90	9

Looking further into the club's eBird data, I see that 249 of the club's 252 life list species were found in Wisconsin and 63 in Minnesota (Duluth, Hawk Ridge, Sax-Zim Bog). By deduction, 3 of the club's life list species were observed out-of-state.

There's plenty of opportunity to grow these County Life Lists! Checking eBird records for the top 100 eBirders in Vilas County, I found that 264 species of birds have been reported. Jim Baughman has reported 255 of those species, which comes to 96.67% of the reported species for Vilas County. That number shows that with good luck and effort, the bird club--at 176 Vilas County species—might still identify 70 more species of birds in Vilas County. The club has reported 66.67% of the total species of birds reported on eBird for Vilas County!

The club does have some eBird bragging rights though! The Top 100 eBirders in Vilas County

list has James Baughman at 255 species, Guy David at 189 species, and NLDC Birders at 176 species. Oh, what fun! The club is ranked number 3 in Vilas County! Three cheers for us!

Annual List

The club's 2012 annual list currently stands at 189 species. We are having a very good year! At the end of May we had reported 167 species, with 22 species since then.

I had hoped to have even more species for our annual list by now but, funny how that goes. For example, I hoped to net some big water and coastal species while the club was in the Port Washington area. However, our field trip time was severely affected by rainy weather.

While the club was birding at Sax-Zim Bog the Great Gray Owl, Boreal Owl and other species were on our wish list, but no show that day.

I also had hoped to net more species while visiting Wisconsin Point for Jaegerfest but while we were there it was unbelievably sunny and calm. Thousands of Ring-billed and Herring Gulls were lazily floating around on Lake Superior not being harassed by any Jaegers. We did not sight Sabine's Gulls and Lesser Black-backed Gulls reported in the area.

MARK SPRING 2013 DATES!

NLDC Birdfest—May 11, 2013.
Keynote speaker: John Bates. Watch for details at www.discoverycenter.net.

Chequamegon Bay Birding Festival,
Ashland, WI—May 16-18, 2013.
<http://www.birdandnaturefest.com/>

WSO Convention, Ashland, WI—May
23-26, 2013. www.wsobirds.org

Back to our 2012 eBird record, 179 of our 189 species observed for this year were found in Wisconsin and 37 of them were observed in Minnesota. On top of that, species of scoters had

been reported on Lake Wausau about the time the club was planning to go birding in the area on the way to Birds in Art. Again, a rainy day! That means that in addition to our great planning efforts to get out and find birds, good luck helps too.

I predict that our annual list will exceed 190 species this year, due to the two Christmas Bird Counts coming up in December. I also expect we'll be adding winter species we haven't observed yet this year during our outings. Unfortunately, I had hoped the club could hit the 200 level for species observed in one year, but I fear we are going fall short of that mark again. We'll see...here's hoping!



Club members at the Woodson Museum

Photo by Guy David

Bird Art: The Last Bird Club Outing of 2012

By Donna Roche

Another great Bird Club Thursday outings season has ended. The last outing on October 25 was our annual day trip to visit the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum in Wausau. Although due to inclement weather our outing did not include outdoor birding, we did have an additional treat to our viewing of the 2012 exhibit of 'Birds in Art'.

The museum now has a new gallery to house its acquisition of a collection of Owen Gromme's paintings plus a re-creation of his Briggsville,

Wisconsin studio. The collection of forty-three painting of Wisconsin birds and wildlife set in beautifully rendered Wisconsin habitats is called "Owen J. Gromme; An Enduring Legacy". The paintings were commissioned in 1965 by Marshall & Ilsley Bank, painted over a period of years and displayed at their main offices in Milwaukee.

There is important significance for the Woodson acquiring the Gromme collection because it was Gromme who organized the first exhibition of what is today known as 'Birds in Art' in 1976!



“Glide,” by Don Rambadt
Leigh Yawkey Art Museum, Wausau
Photo by Guy David

Our record of years visiting 'Birds in Art' isn't as long as the 36 years of its existence, but our Bird Club members have enjoyed more than a few! This year's collection inspired and refreshed our bird loving spirits as it does each year. One hundred and twenty-five paintings, prints, watercolors, sculptures in wood and metal, and other forms dazzle the senses. The talent and love of birds shows in each artist's work which captures a moment in time and reflects emotion and empathy. I don't have a favorite, really I don't, but I'd go back again just to see 'My name is Hubert and I am not an owl'. If you would like more information about Hubert, the exhibits, or Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, check out their website.

Thank you to all who participated in Bird Club outings. You are the ones that make the events

successful and worthwhile. Our Thursday morning, full day trips, and over-night trips have been well attended this year. Special thanks to those who organized and lead outings and those great trips. We really went a lot of places and saw a lot of birds. I hope to see you at the Christmas counts and next year's outings.

*From Linda Dunn, Membership
Chair:*

January is renewal month. Renew your Bird Club membership when you renew your NLDC membership in January. We are 58 members strong. Your dues fund many things, such as brochures for the NLDC birding trail, NLDC bluebird houses, guides on birding trips, and subscriptions to birding magazines and journals.

Seen any Red-necked Grebes?

By David Foster

I had never seen one until I moved to the Wisconsin northwoods. According to the *Sibley Field Guide* it's the biggest grebe in North America. As Jim Ferguson's photo of two fall-plumage birds shows, the top of the head is black, cheeks white, and bill yellow at the base. In summer the neck is dark red. And although it's barely visible on the bird on the right in the photo, there's a distinctive tuft of feathers at the back of the head. The bird on the left is probably a first-winter juvenile. There are various estimates of their range. Sibley's map shows a breeding range from Canada into northern Wisconsin and Minnesota. According to ebird.org, there is a 2-10% chance of seeing one in the Northern Highland State Forest area. However, according to DNR counts, there is a large population "in Rush Lake, Winnebago County . . . with 35-65 pairs," and smaller groups in other southern Wisconsin counties.



Red-necked Grebes, Lake Minocqua

Photo by Jim Ferguson

The Red-necked Grebe is listed as “endangered” in Wisconsin. The DNR explanation for this listing is that “wetland habitat loss is the major factor contributing to population declines in the state. The alteration or destruction of wetlands eliminates nesting habitat.” As a result, concludes the DNR, “conservation of large inland wetland complexes is critical to the stability of red-necked grebe populations.

The DNR information about Red-necked Grebes may be found at

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/endangeredresources/animations.asp?mode=detail&speccode=abnca03020>).

As the situation of the Red-necked Grebe shows, Wisconsin’s wetlands are a key feature of wildlife habitat. Though the restrictions set by the DNR on wetland encroachments are the source of frequent complaints, protecting wetlands is essential to our northwoods environment.

Who’s Who Listing

By Guy David

Here is some exciting news! As of August 24, 2012 the Discovery Center Bird Club has achieved being listed for “Who’s Who of Citizen-based Monitoring in Wisconsin”! The bird club’s listing can be found on the Internet at

<http://wiatri.net/cbm/WhosWho/results.cfm?OrgID=261>

The "Who's Who of Citizen-based Monitoring in Wisconsin" is a directory of citizen programs and organizations in Wisconsin focusing on monitoring natural resources. The website is sponsored by the Wisconsin DNR, the Citizen-based Monitoring Network of Wisconsin, and the UW-Extension.

The Wisconsin DNR and the UW-Extension received funding through Wisconsin’s Wildlife Action Planning Grant to gather information concerning citizen-based monitoring programs in order to:

- provide citizens the opportunity to learn about volunteer opportunities in their communities
- promote cooperation among citizen-based monitoring programs
- recognize the valuable contribution citizen-based monitoring programs make to the conservation of Wisconsin’s natural resources.

The bird club qualified for inclusion as a Who’s Who organization for several reasons, including:

- Our affiliations with other organizations that are involved in citizen-based monitoring such as the North Lakeland Discovery Center, Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, National Audubon Society, American Birding Association, International Crane Foundation, and Loon Watch.
- The number of volunteers and volunteer hours provided to support the National Audubon Society and Wisconsin Society for Ornithology by conducting 2 annual Christmas Bird Counts, one in Manitowish Waters, WI and one in Minocqua, WI.
- Our annual support of the International Crane Foundation by conducting the

Annual Midwest International Crane Counts for Vilas and Iron Counties.

- Our contributions to the national bird population eBird database by regularly entering bird observation data into Wisconsin eBird.
- Our contributions to the north central Wisconsin breeding bird data by providing volunteers for 3 area breeding bird survey projects.

The Discovery Center Bird Club can be proud of achieving this status. According to Article II in the Discovery Center Bird Club Regulations, one bird club purpose is to participate in or lead *“...Research activities designed to contribute to mankind’s body of knowledge regarding birds. Examples of activities include recording life list data both locally and nationally (eBird), bird banding, bird counts, and breeding bird surveys.”*

Being listed in *Who’s Who of Citizen-based Monitoring in Wisconsin* is wonderful evidence that this purpose of the Discovery Center Bird Club is being fulfilled. I want to thank the bird club Board of Directors for their support as I prepared the listing application.

KEEP THE FEEDERS FULL!



Photo by David Foster