

BIRD SONG

Newsletter of the North Lakeland
Discovery Center Bird Club

September, 2015 Volume 11, Issue 3

Ingrid Stephan, Editor
12panda47@gmail.com



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

This is the first edition of the newsletter as the NLDC Bird Club transitions leadership to a new Board of Directors. The entire club membership is indebted to John Randolph and Jim Krakowski, our out-going board members, for their outstanding years of service to the club. John, for his 6 years of leadership, the past 4 years as president; and Jim, for consistently providing interesting and educational programs for our year-round monthly meetings for the past three years. Your newly elected board is committed to maintaining the high standards of service they have set as we collectively move forward to new goals and implement the program changes approved by the membership at the annual meeting. These changes are due to many members migrating to warmer climates during the winter resulting in minimal attendance at meetings and the club's loss of income in recent years:

1. Change from a year-round monthly meeting and program schedule to May through October with provisions for special meetings upon request. Meeting times will remain the same: business meeting at 6 PM; program presentation at 7 PM.
2. The Annual Meeting and Social will continue to be in August while the January Winter Social will be discontinued. Ann Swift's suggestion to have informal get-togethers of winter was well received.
3. Due to the lack of candidates for all board positions, the newly elected board members will assume responsibilities for Program Director and Treasurer until the

positions are filled. Cynthia Krakowski will serve as Secretary, Linda Dunn as Membership Chairman and Program Director, and I as President and Treasurer. Please speak with one of us if you have an interest in filling one of these positions.

Several meetings have taken place over the past month to set the course for the remainder of the 2015 program year and to develop a framework to implement a strategy for the setting of goals and to address the challenges facing the club. While we are obviously early in our new term, we are excited to begin working on the following priorities set forth by the board:

1. Maintain and build club membership by increasing our visibility in surrounding communities
2. Develop new streams of income to engage the local public in learning about birds and to promote support for avian research and conservation
3. Strengthen the Bird Club's affiliation with the North Lakeland Discovery Center in ways that are mutually beneficial for the club and the center

On a personal note, please know the encouragements extended by many of you as this new term gets underway are appreciated. A renewed commitment of time, talent, ideas and energy by all of us will be necessary for the ongoing success of the club. Soon you will be hearing about more about upcoming opportunities to enhance your own birding experience and the vitality of the club. I invite you to engage in a variety of these activities to nurture your passion for birds while having a great time!

P.S. Check out the new trivia question and quiz features in this newsletter!

New Discovery Center Bird Banding Station Takes Off

by Heather Lumpkin

There's nothing quite like the experience of releasing a bird back into the wild! The North Lakeland Discovery Center's new bird banding station makes experiences like these possible while conducting important avian research through bird banding. Bird banding is a research tool that provides a wealth of information about birds. It is one of the best tools for studying bird dispersal and migration, behavior and social structure, life span, survival, and productivity. Birds are captured in fine, nearly invisible nets called mist nets or in traps. Next, they are fitted with a lightweight, aluminum leg band inscribed with a unique, nine-digit number. They are identified to species, age, and sex, and then released unharmed.

Bird banding in the United States requires a federal banding permit issued by the U.S. Geological Survey. In July 2015, North Lakeland Discovery Center's Research and Monitoring Coordinator, Heather Lumpkin, received a Subpermit for banding birds. This Subpermit, sponsored by Master Bird Bander Thomas Nicholls of Fifield, WI, allowed the

North Lakeland Discovery Center to launch a new bird banding station August 2015 that will contribute to long-term avian research and provide opportunities for students and the public to connect with birds and learn more about bird conservation.

The North Lakeland Discovery Center is partnering with the Northwoods Wildlife Center, an animal rehabilitation center in Minocqua, WI, that admits an average of 130 passerine and near-passerine birds annually. Little is known about the survival of passerine and near-passerine birds after their release from a rehabilitation program. By banding birds that are released from the Northwoods Wildlife Center's rehabilitation program, the North Lakeland Discovery Center hopes to learn more about the survival of post rehabilitation birds.

The North Lakeland Discovery Center also plans to contribute to long-term avian research through the MAPS (Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship) Program. This continent-wide program, operated by the Institute for Bird Populations (IBP), seeks to identify key demographic parameters that drive avian population trends. Operating a MAPS banding station requires the assistance of a team of trained volunteers. The Discovery Center is working with volunteers and Discovery Center Bird Club members to develop a team of trained, dedicated individuals who can assist with this project in the future.

Public outreach and bird conservation education is also an important goal for the new banding station. New equipment was purchased for the banding station with funds from the 2015 Fund-a-Wish Campaign. One of these purchases was a document camera that projects and magnifies real time video of bird banding to a large screen TV that can be viewed by the public. Kids and adults alike can stop by during any of the banding station's public demonstration hours. Demonstration hours are posted on the Discovery Center's Calendar of Events website. At the banding station there are activities for kids including a banding station scavenger hunt, band-a-kid activity, migration game, and more. Visitors can support the banding station through donations and the "adopt-a-bird" program. For \$10 individuals can adopt a bird and help release their adopted bird once it is banded. They will also receive a special adoption certificate in the mail.

Most of the birds in the rehabilitation program at the Northwoods Wildlife Center are diagnosed with problems related to human-induced hazards such as pet attacks, removal of young birds from their nesting environment, and window strikes. Many of these hazards can be reduced through public education. Bird Banding offers an opportunity to educate about the hazards that birds face in a meaningful way. We naturally protect what we know and love. Bird banding lets us study birds while also providing individuals with opportunities to discover a new love for them.



Photos by Allie Lumpkin

WHAT BIRD IS THIS?

Submitted by Carne Andrews

Hey, Birders! I thought it would be fun to add an interactive feature to each issue of our newsletter in the form of a quiz. Since we are all interested in improving our birding skills, the quizzes will focus on key points of species characteristics and identification, habitats, and bird behavior as dictated by range and environment. Answers are provided elsewhere in the same issue. Hoping you find this easy first quiz a pleasant exercise to enhance your Bird Song Newsletter reading experience!!!

Participation in the first of the five year Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II project found me out the door early one morning to explore the priority central eastern (CE) priority block in Boulder Junction. Fill in the blank of 20 common northwood's birds below. All bird species answers are used and each only once. Answers are referenced in either the Sibley or Peterson eastern North American field guides.

A SPRING BIRD HIKE – Fill in the blank from the list of 20 common birds below. All species are used only once. [Answers at the end of the newsletter]

A Dark-eyed__ (1) __ flew up as I started down a path in a small open field. Nearby on the ground, a short –tailed black __ (2) __ waddled about close to where an __ (3) __ was standing, head cocked listening for worms.

At the woods edge, a crested __ (4) __ shrieked in an oak tree up which a Downy __ (5) __ was hitching its way. In contrast, a __ (6) __ spiraled up a neighboring tree where a __ (7) __ was looking out its tree nest cavity. Overhead a __ (8) __ caawed as a __ (9) __ flew from a treetop rookery. From a thicket stepped out came an __ (10) __ vigorously scratching the ground for seeds and insects. From a branch above was heard the bubbling gurgle of a __ (11) __. Nearby a Black-capped __ (12) __, a White-breasted __ (13) __ and a Red-winged __ (14) __ were busy eating.

Between two trees a black and yellow __ (15) __ bounced in characteristic flight. An orange and black __ (16) __ piped its melodious welcome in loud whistles. In the distance came the rattle of a __ (17) __ flying from its lookout perch over the lake. Near at hand from a maple tree was heard the dry mechanical trill of a __ (18) __. Overhead above a fresh water marsh, the flying swoops of iridescent green-blue backed insect eating __ (19) __ were observed and the winnowing sounds of a __ (20) __ were heard.

That first spring hike in the field reminded me just how easy it is to see and tally 20 species of our most common summer bird species!!!

20 Common Birds

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| a. American Goldfinch | k. Barred Owl |
| b. Tree Swallow | l. European Starling |
| c. Blackbird | m. Eastern Towhee |
| d. Belted Kingfisher | n. Woodpecker |
| e. Brown Creeper | o. Brown-headed Cowbird |
| f. Common Crow | p. Great Blue Heron |
| g. Baltimore Oriole | q. Junco |
| h. American Robin | r. Blue Jay |
| i. Chickadee | s. Nuthatch |
| j. Wilson's Snipe | t. Chipping Sparrow |

Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II

By Guy David

In 2006 the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology published the Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Wisconsin. Here is the Project Summary from that book.

“Field work in Wisconsin was conducted during the breeding seasons from 1995 through 2000 by 1,602 individuals. The observers spent 68,898 hours in the field, traveled 16,428 hours to and from atlasing sites, and added 557,587 miles on to their motor vehicles. All of that effort resulted in 172,096 breeding records submitted on 3,540 Field Cards and 2,067 Casual Observation Forms. Some evidence of breeding was found for 237 species, with evidence of confirmed breeding for 226 species.”

Beginning in 2014, birders in Wisconsin began to hear that the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II (WBBA II) effort was about to be launched. Excitement over that prospect began to build until invitations were extended to Wisconsin birders to attend the first training session. Several Discovery Center Bird Club members registered and attended the training and came away fired up to volunteer to participate in this 5 year project.

Everything that one would want to know about WBBA II is found at this Web site: <http://wsobirds.org/atlas>.



Figure 1 Jon Cassady, Heather Lumpkin and Judy Cassady
study the WBBA II Web Site

Photo by Guy David

What is the Atlas?

Quoting from this Web Site,

“The Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II is a comprehensive field survey that documents the distribution and abundance of birds breeding in an area. The information will allow us to see changes in bird populations since the last survey and to measure future changes. These insights help us identify the conservation needs of breeding birds and try to meet those needs.”

Such a massive effort requires great organization throughout the state and for us it begins with our County Coordinators who are working hard to organize birders in the effort at our local level. We are fortunate to have local birding leaders such as Heather Lumpkin (Vilas County), Jim Krakowski (Iron County), Vanessa Haese-Lehman (Oneida County), and Bruce Bacon (Iron County) serve as our area County Coordinators. Thank you so much to the four of them for their commitment! I am sure that each one of them would like to hear from you that you would like to volunteer to help!

Every acre of land in Wisconsin is divided into 3 square mile WBBA Blocks. The WBBA Blocks constitute the basic geographic areas for finding and recording breeding birds. The County Coordinators recruit local birders to take responsibility for surveying WBBA Blocks and reporting the data via eBird for inclusion in the WBBA II data. So how are we doing? You can find out by going to this Web Site: <http://ebird.org/content/atlaswi/>

While the club hasn't been wandering much out of our local region, so far this year we have added a new dimension to our efforts. Donna Roche, the club's long time coordinator for our weekly outings, has cooperated by dedicating several outings, especially in June, to visiting WBBA II Blocks that bird club members have volunteered to survey. Thus the club has helped with this project by birding in a block in Powell Marsh that Guy David has volunteered to survey, a block in Presque Isle that Duanne and Ann Swift are surveying, and a block in Boulder Junction that is being surveyed by Carne Andrews. All of these outings were during the month of June, peak bird breeding time in northern Wisconsin.

As a matter of fact, every bird club outing during which breeding bird activity is observed has resulted in contributions to WBBA II data. The reason for this is that during every outing we record the number of birds of each species that we observe and Guy David records the data in our eBird records. When breeding activity is observed a special notation is made and the record is recorded via the WBBA II Wisconsin Portal. The records at a minimum note that the species may be breeding in the area where it was observed but the ultimate goal is to confirm breeding activity. The degree of likelihood that a species is actually breeding in the area is determined by the code that is entered.

Here is my pitch to you. Are you an eBirder? If not, you should be! If yes, then you should be a WBBA II eBirder too! Anyone with a computer and the Internet can participate. If you have

a home or cabin anywhere in Wisconsin, you are in a WBBA II Block. You don't have to be a County Coordinator or a volunteer to survey one or more WBBA II Blocks. Even if you only watch birds in your yard, you can help. Just record your observations in the WBBA II eBird Website and you will be making an important contribution.

The breeding bird season is nearly finished for this year. Therefore, year one of the WBBA II project is about done but there are four more years to go. Heather Lumpkin ran a couple of great WBBA II workshops at the Discovery Center this summer. I wouldn't be surprised if she will do likewise during 2016 too, so watch for the programs and sign up!

As for my participation, I have just been having FUN being an Atlaser. Rather than chasing around to find as many species as I can, while atlasing I have had to slow down and take the time to observe the behavior of the birds that I find. That is rewarding, as depicted in the following photos that I took while watching adult Barn Swallows feed their young in tribal Powell Marsh. Now, who among our bird club members wouldn't enjoy watching this?



Food Incoming! Photo by Guy David



Barn Swallow Feeding Chicks. Photo by Guy David

Trivia Corner

By Cynthia Krakowski

Why do you suppose the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was named for such an obscure field mark?

There may be more than one answer for this but I am looking for an explanation I heard on WPR. That is your hint!!

[Answer at end of newsletter]

Life List Quarterly

by Guy David

Life list Report

On May 22, 2004 a group of birders embarked on an outing on the North Lakeland Discovery Center trails. That was the first day that I began to record our observations on eBird, which also was the beginning of the Discovery Center Bird Club's Life List. Thus our Life List began on that day with 34 species observed. During the rest of 2004 the club had 13 outings and we recorded 111 species that year.

Since 2004 the club has added another 153 species, so at the end of 2014 the club had 264 species listed on our Life List.

As I have written many times before, I expect that it will become increasingly hard to add to our Life List since, with each addition, there are fewer candidates to find for the first time. There may come a year when no new species are found, but not this year. For 2015 we had added 2 species so far and our current Life List includes 266 species of birds.

The first addition to our Life List in 2015 was the Short-billed Dowitcher that was observed at the Little Turtle Flowage on May 21, 2015. As luck would have it, a group of birders, including myself, also observed the Dowitcher there the day before when we participated in the Great Wisconsin Birdathon. The water in the flowage was a little low then and there was a mudflat that was observable from the trail that held some shorebirds. It seems strange that, during this high water year, we were able to find a good mud flat in the spring and add a new shorebird species to the club Life List!

The second 2015 addition to our Life List was the observation of a Lark Sparrow at the Thunder Lake SWA near Three Lakes, WI on July 16, 2015. That bird turned out to also be a Wisconsin rarity, especially in the northern half of Wisconsin! This report was the first ever for this species in the Thunder Lake SWA.

Our birding group had just emerged from a hike on a trail through the marsh. Some of the group went back to retrieve some vehicles while some of us waited on the road by the trailhead. While waiting we scoped some birds that were feeding on the road near us and most of those birds turned out to be a family of Song Sparrows. While watching those sparrows a

larger sparrow suddenly appeared that had a highly colored face. Luckily I was able to get some photos of that bird which became valuable when I had to prove what we had observed to the eBird Review Team!



Figure 1 Lark Sparrow. Photo by Guy David

2015 Annual List Report

The bird club's 2015 birding year started out in grand style with recording a Snowy Owl on February 28. A group of club members attended a training event in the Wausau area for participating in the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II. We had heard that a Snowy Owl had been observed by others along Hwy I-39 by the Central Wisconsin Airport in Mosinee. Since we got an early start and arrived in Wausau early, we decided to travel a few miles further to see if we could find the owl. We did! It was perched on a billboard post, just as it had been reported. The next day after the training concluded at noon, a few of us decided to go to the Buena Vista Grasslands to look for birds. That day we were blessed with observing 3 Snowy Owls along with 13 species total. This included species that we may not record again this year, including Rough-legged Hawk and Horned Lark.

That was a great start to our birding year. Since then we had 18 other outings and we have recorded 141 species so far for 2015. The latest species, as of this writing, was a Magnolia Warbler that we recorded by the Woodruff DNR Service Center. Almost all of our birding this year has been in our usual northern Wisconsin territory.

Now, southward migration already is well under way so who knows what species are still to be observed until we conclude our weekly outings around the end of October? In addition to that, hopefully there will be a couple of Christmas Bird Counts during which the club will have its final chance of the year to find and record our winter species.

Which Way is the Bird?

Elizabeth Stone



Duanne Swift and Cynthia Krakowski at the Rainbow Flowage.
Photo by Dick Theile

Answers to “What Bird is This?”

- | | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. q | 4. r | 7. k | 10. m | 13. s | 16. g | 19. b |
| 2. l | 5. n | 8. f | 11. o | 14. c | 17. d | 20. j |
| 3. h | 6. e | 9. p | 12. i | 15. a | 18. t | |

Answer to “Trivia Corner”

This bird was named before people had good optics. The ornithologists in olden times killed the birds and used study skins to identify and classify birds. The study skins are usually placed with the breast up. The yellow wash on this species belly is much more visible on a study skin than when we view a live bird against a tree trunk!