

BIRD SONGS

Newsletter of the North Lakeland
Discovery Center Bird Club

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Officers

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President's Message

Carne Andrews

"Bird Bathing"

In the 1980's, the Japanese developed a stress reduction therapy they refer to as Forest Bathing! This combines a range of guided exercises and tasks carried out in an outdoor environment, sort of an immersion of your senses into the natural world!

To my way of thinking after spending all of last week birding on the Bolivar Peninsula on the eastern gulf coast of Texas, it doesn't seem to be too big of a "hop" to apply the principles of Forest Bathing to what I'm coining "Bird Bathing"!

The reason being, on a typical day I visited several sites within a six mile radius, most notably Rollover Pass in Gilchrest before noon and the Smith Oaks Bird Sanctuary Rookery in High Island at dusk. Extensive tidal flats on the bay side at Rollover Pass, especially at low tide, offered the best viewing of about 20 species most of which there were too many to count: American Avocets; Brown Pelicans; Black Skimmers; Caspian, Foster's, Royale, and Sandwich Terns; Herring, Laughing and Ring-billed Gulls; Dowitchers and Willets. An amazing display!!!

The Smith Oaks Bird Sanctuary Rookery offered even more spectacular sights and sounds! One evening I encountered staff from the Houston Audubon Society conducting their weekly bird counts. Their results were entered into eBird the following day. Close your eyes and imagine within a few hundred feet of viewing some of the recorded species: 1174 Great Egrets and 1400 Neotropical Cormorants on occupied nests and flying in to roost at night; 511 White Ibis flying in large groups to roost at night; 468 Snowy Egrets; 187 Tri-colored Herons; 180 Roseate Spoonbills actively nest building!!!!

While it's not realistic to hope we will observe a similar phenomenal number of birds in the northwoods during the 2018 season, many opportunities are planned for you to engage in our own rendition of "Bird Bathing"!!! Don't worry, you can still wear your favorite birding attire and you can leave your soap at home! Just scroll down this edition of Bird Songs to the announcement of several Discovery Center Bird Club activities to immerse in over the next couple months including a new Spring Warbler Review Workshop prior to the Northwoods Birding Festival!

Come reap the benefits of joining the Discovery Center Bird Club's rendition of "Bird Bathing" during the next three months as we explore our favorite outdoor destinations in search of birds on weekly hikes and field trips, learn about birds and share our knowledge through conversation and educational programs, and promote an awareness of conservation needs that value the environment and supports birds and all wildlife! It's stress reducing and all good clean fun, too!!!

IMPORTANT DATES
MARK YOUR CALENDARS

APRIL 14 - Annual Midwest Crane Count then breakfast at The Granary Restaurant in Boulder Jct. Sign-up for the Crane Count at http://nldc.ivolunteer.com/event_101

APRIL 19 - Thursday morning outings begin. Weekly notices on locations and details will be emailed as has been done in years past.

MAY 3 - Warbler Review Workshop at the NLDC for Discovery Center Bird Club members only. Classroom session from 9-11 AM in Bobcat, warbler walk 11-noon: in lieu of regular Thursday outing.

May 7 - Monthly DCBC meetings and presentations resume: Welcome Back Reception at 5 PM, business meeting at 6 PM; presentation by Dr. Tom Nicholls at 7 PM.

May 10 - Helping Hands Day at NLDC

May 11 & 12 - Northwoods Birding Festival: complete information and registration on the NLDC website, Bird Club link.

May TBD – Up North Hammerheads participate in the Great Wisconsin Birdathon

Meet Our Discovery Center Bird Club Liaison

Annie McDonnell is a Chicagoland native and grew up visiting the Northwoods with her family and spending her summers in central Wisconsin at her uncle's farm. She developed an interest in Biology and Ecology at an early age and a passion for environmental conservation. She attended Montana State University and earned a B.S. in Biology with a concentration in Fish and Wildlife Management. Birds have been of importance to Annie since childhood birding outings with her father. Throughout her education and career Annie has worked with grassland songbirds, Mexican Spotted Owls, and Harlequin Ducks. Annie is particularly interested in waterfowl and their habitat protection. She is excited to take on her new role as Naturalist & Volunteer Coordinator with the North Lakeland Discovery Center and appreciates the work and impact that the Discovery Center and the Bird Club have on the Northwoods community.



Annie skiing with her dog Dora

Editor's note: Many of you know Annie from her previous role at the NLDC. There are several new employees at the NLDC: John Heusinkveld, Executive Director; Julie Remer, Administrative Assistant; Lisa Fossum, Bookkeeper. The next time you're at the Discovery Center I'm sure they would enjoy a quick hello.

Club Trip to Sax-Zim Bog in January

John Randolph

It was quite a trip. Carne suggested the Club outing to Saz-Zim Bog, and skillfully organized the whole affair. She engaged Heather Lumpkin Gerth as our birding guide, and Heather's excellent preparation paid off

very nicely. There were five Club members, and each saw at least one life bird in the 28 species seen; the Black-billed Magpie is a life bird for the Club. Not to miss an opportunity, we searched (unsuccessfully) for a reported Snowy Owl at a Welcome Center parking lot in Duluth, on our way back home, and Sarah Besadny spotted it on a really high light pole as we drove onto the approach to Hwy 2, to cross the bridge into Wisconsin. Despite challenges of after 5 p.m. darkness and rush hour traffic, Mark snapped a neat picture of the bird as we pulled off on the edge of the road. The bird list is in the order seen. We saw some from the car (e.g., swans), stopped at several places in Ashland, and the transfer station near Wisconsin Point, but most seen were in Sax-Zim Bog. I think Mark's pictures are striking.

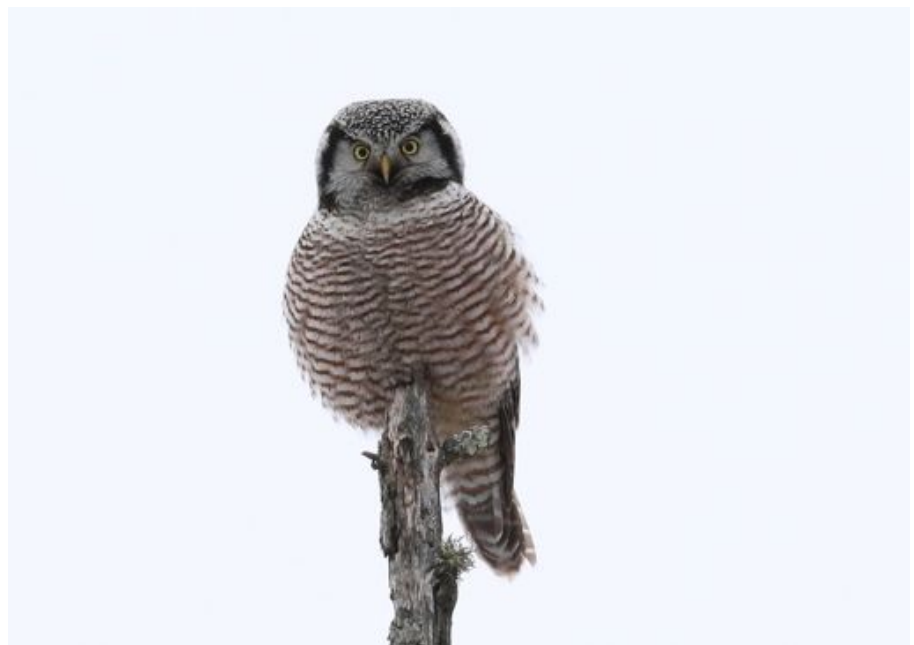
4	Trumpeter Swan	25	Rock Pigeon
4	Blue Jay	59	American Crow
23	Common Raven	7	Mallard
8	Common Goldeneye	58	Black-capped Chickadee
29	European Starling	6	Pine Grosbeak
7	Bald Eagle	50	Gulls
6	Pileated Woodpecker	1	Northern Hawk Owl
3	Great Gray Owl	6	Downy Woodpecker
6	Gray Jay	106	Common Redpoll
1	Rough-legged Hawk	2	Hairy Woodpecker
1	Northern Shrike	1	Red-breasted Nuthatch
5	White-breasted-Nuthatch	2	Evening Grosbeak
1	Black-backed Woodpecker	1	Black-billed Magpie
2	House Sparrow	1	Snowy Owl



Great Gray Owl

All photos by Mark Westphal

Northern Hawk Owl





Gray Jay

Black-backed Woodpecker



Snowy Owl

How to Prevent Diseases at Your Bird Feeders

Carne Andrews

The United States Geological Survey organization reports four diseases that commonly affect species of birds attracted to feeders. Salmonellosis caused by Salmonella bacteria spreads through a bird's body causing infection and abscesses on the lining of the esophagus. Trichomoniasis caused by microscopic parasites typically develop sores in the mouth and throat widely found in Mourning Doves. Aspergillosis, an inhaled fungus whose spores enter the lungs causing bronchitis and pneumonia. And, Avian Pox, a virus causing wart-like growths on featherless surfaces of a bird's face, feet and legs. Whether caused by a bacteria, parasite, fungus or virus, healthy birds using your feeders are susceptible to becoming sick and have the potential to spread disease to other birds and wild animals, domestic pets and, yes, even humans!

The Northwoods Wildlife Center in Minocqua receives many reports of sick or dead songbirds around feeders in early spring most likely due to Salmonella bacteria naturally found in soil that is resistant to both cold and warm temperatures. Throughout the winter, seeds dropping from feeders accumulate on the ground along with bird droppings. As the snow melts, these seeds become soaked with water along with the droppings. Once the snow is gone seeds may pick up additional salmonella from the soil. The disease is transmitted to healthy birds when feeding on seeds that have absorbed Salmonella either from the soil or from feces of already infected birds.

Birds in the seed-eating finch family are most susceptible to Salmonellosis because they feed both from feeders and the ground. Locally, these include Common and Hoary Redpolls, Pine Siskins, American Goldfinches, and ground foraging Red Crossbills. Some symptoms might include unkempt feathers, droopy or closed eyes, growths on the beak, lethargy, and the inability to fly.

The best way to prevent or minimize diseases from becoming epidemic at your feeders is to:

- Act early, don't wait until you see a sick or dead bird.
- Rotate and space feeders apart to avoid crowding, a key factor in spreading disease.
- Provide safe feeders without sharp points to avoid cuts that allow germs to enter.
- Store food in secure containers to keep food dry and to keep disease carrying rodents out.
- Fill feeders based on consumption, don't overfill, empty feeders before adding more.

- To clean and disinfect feeders and scoops, immerse for 2-3 minutes in 10% bleach solution once or twice a month. NOTE: clean Hummingbird feeders with 1/4 cup white vinegar to 1 gallon warm water.
- During winter and spring, keep the ground under feeders clean of wasted food and droppings especially as snow melts. Rake and shovel debris into a garbage bag for disposal. DO NOT spread in your garden or compost. Shovel clean snow under feeder area to provide a clean base.
- ALWAYS wear gloves and wash hands after handling feeders or sick birds.

If you find a sick or dead bird and suspect disease, call the Northwoods Wildlife Center (715-356-7400) for instructions. Then transport the bird to the NWC as soon as possible. Remove feeders for at least 2 weeks. Clean feeders and the ground under feeders before resuming feeding.

The staff at the Northwoods Wildlife Center can provide you with a full brochure on how to prevent and treat Salmonella and are available 24 hours a day to assist you with sick or injured wild animal care.

Life List Quarterly

Guy David

Welcome to the 2018 edition of the Discover Center Bird Club's pursuit of as many bird species as we can find this year! During 2017 our club located and identified 161 species of birds and added one new species to the club's life list which sported 268 species in all.

Due to the leadership of Carne Andrews and the participation of some of our club members, the club already has one winter outing on the books for 2018. Due to their efforts in January to go birding in the Sax-Zim Bog in northern Minnesota, our annual list already has 27 species to begin our birding year.

During 2017 the club only managed to add one new species to our life list, which wasn't surprising since our list has already become well populated with "lifers". As each year ends, I surmise that there may be a year coming soon when there won't be any new additions, and so it was for me as 2017 came to a close. Well, not to worry for 2018 because the January outing to Minnesota yielded species 269, a Black-billed Magpie! Amazing! The first outing of the year and a new "lifer"! WooooHeeeee!

The fact that the Sax-Zim Bog group was so successful with their impressive results from the trip gives me some hope that the club will find more species than last year. My reason for this optimism is that the group encountered a good number of species

that the club is very unlikely to observe any other time this year, so we might consider them as “extra”. I’ll expand on this point just a little.

Reviewing the club’s eBird records for the following species that were reported by the Sax-Zim Bog adventurers I discovered the following facts.

Northern Hawk-Owl – Our first record for this species appeared on February 26, 2005 and our 2018 observation is only the second record for our club and it took 13 years to find the second one. The 2005 record was a bird found in Wisconsin and the 2018 record is from Minnesota.

Great Gray Owl – Our first two records for this species appeared on January 17, 2005 and again on February 26, 2005. Some of our charter members may recall that the winter of 2005 was an “invasion” year for the Great Gray Owl and club leadership at the time lead outings to look for them. Due to the generosity of Bruce Bacon, some club members got to accompany his as he successfully captured and tagged Great Gray Owls. Thus, we acquired 2 records for observing this species in Wisconsin and our 2018 record is the third and was located in Minnesota.

Black-backed Woodpecker – The first record for this species was recorded during a local club outing which was a canoe / kayak trip to Rice Creek out of Big Lake. The outing was hosted by Darwin Wile on July 13, 2007 and remains our only Wisconsin record for this species. The January report from Sax-Zim Bog was our second record and first Minnesota record for this species.

Gray Jay – The club has 12 records of observing this species so it hasn’t been as uncommon as others. The first 6 of those records were recorded in 2005 and 2006 in the Manitowish Waters area. Another 4 of those records were from the Duluth area and two of those were during the 2018 field trip. This species has been absent from our records since February 16, 2012 which is when another winter trip to Minnesota occurred.

Northern Shrike – The club has 10 records of this species on our life list. Prior to the 2018 field trip, the last time it was recorded was during a February 16, 2016 field trip to the Ashland, WI area. Most of our records are winter observations but 1 was recorded in Wausau on October 27, 2011 during our final Thursday outing of the year at Blue Gill Bay County Park. The other 2 were recorded in Powell Marsh having been observed during the spring Sandhill Crane Counts of 2007 and 2013.

Pine Grosbeak – The Sax-Zim Group recorded this species in Ashland, WI during their trip and this was the tenth record for our life list! It was the first record since February 25, 2013 when the club had a winter field trip in the Winchester, WI area.

The rest of the 27 species that the Sax-Zim group recorded were species that I expect that the club will encounter at times during our regular outings during the

year. I think it is so special that this group recorded these 6 species that may not be found again until future winter birding excursions are organized by future leaders.

As far as I know, the next birding event that the bird club will be participating in will be the Midwest Crane Count. I am hoping that there will be one or more eBird lists submitted by club members during this event! The prime purpose for this annual 2-hour outing is to complete the crane count protocols and to submit relevant data to the count coordinator. But, I know that counters also encounter waterfowl, shorebirds, and other northern bird migrants while out in the field for this event. How about it? Remember, this is considered a bird club sponsored event and when 2 or more members observe any birds, including cranes, they can be recorded on the club's eBird record!

Ah Signs of Spring

Photos by Mark Westphal





