

# BIRD SONGS

Newsletter of the North Lakeland  
Discovery Center Bird Club

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## **Officers**

*Open*, President

Debby Wilson, Secretary

David Foster, Treasurer

Sarah Besadny, Membership Director

Duanne Swift, Program Director

## **Message from the Board**

Carne Andrews completed her term as President of the Discovery Center Bird Club on August 6th. Carne became Treasurer in August of 2011 and then became President in August of 2015. Our Club Regulations require board members to step down after they have completed two terms, and Carne graciously fulfilled two terms as well as coverage for several board positions until they were filled. The Bird Club Board, on behalf of the Bird Club Members, would like to thank Carne for her excellent leadership and service over these last number of years.

If anyone would like to nominate themselves or another Club Member for the position of President, please contact one of the Board Members. In the mean time, the existing Board will collectively provide leadership for the Club, should you have any reason to contact us.

Sincerely, Debby Wilson, Secretary; David Foster, Treasurer; Duanne Swift, Program Director; Sarah Besadny, Membership Director

# **2018 Discovery Center Bird Club Thursday Outings & Special Birding Events**

## **Overview of Where We've Gone and What We've Done**

*Donna Roche*

### **Thursdays -**

April 26 - Minocqua area open water areas

May 3 - Warbler Review Indoor Workshop with Carne Andrews and Sarah Besadny at NLDC

May 10 - Helping Hands preparation for Northwoods Birding Festival at NLDC

May 17 - Powell Marsh Vista

May 24 - Little Turtle Flowage (cancelled at meeting place due to thunder storms)

May 31 - Willow Flowage dam area and Trail

June 7 - Presque Isle Ponds

June 14 - Lake Tomahawk Dove Road with Anna Buckhardt and Vanessa Haese-Lehman

June 21 - Conover area (Ashland trip postponed due to area flooding)

June 28 - Marshal Conservation Wildlife Area in Lac du Flambeau with Ed Marshal

July 5 - Little Turtle Flowage walking Blue Bird and Osprey trails

July 12 - Ashland area day trip stopping at Saxon Harbor, boat landings, lake shore parks & NGL Vis Ctr

July 19 - Day Lake Paddle with Carne OR Hike with Liz Stone and Dick Thiele hosted by Jean Hanson

July 26 - Bearskin Trail Lake Nokomis area and The Windmill Ice Cream Shoppe

August 2 - Thunder Lake in the Three Lakes area driving tour and trail walk

August 9 - Powell Marsh Vista with Guy David

August 16 - NLDC Northern Cruise Trail viewing logging affects

August 23 - Evening Birding in Minocqua looking for 'city' birds and migrants

August 30 - "Bugles and Boreal Birds" Clam Lake area with Jim & Cynthia Krakowski with Elk info talk

September 6 - Presque Isle Ponds

September 13 - Rainbow Flowage area driving tour with stops at Cty 'O' bridge area & along Oxbow Rd

September 20 - Powell Marsh 'Three parking areas and one Hiking Trail' walked Vista dike

September 27 - Tomahawk River Walk with Jon Cassady

\*October 4 - Ashland and Washburn area day trip

\*October 11 - Woodruff Fish Hatchery area

\*October 18 - Willow Flowage

\*October 25 - Wausau day trip - hike, 'Birds in Art' exhibit at L. Yawkey Woodson Museum and lunch

### **Special Events -**

Wednesday & Thursday, January 17-18 - Field Trip to Sax-Zim Bog, Carne Andrews organizing the trip and Heather Gerth leading in the field

Saturday, April 14 - participation in the Annual Midwest Crane Count with Friday training session

Friday, May 11 & Saturday, May 12 - participation as guests, contributors and leaders in the NLDC's 'Northwoods Birding Festival'

Wednesday, May 30 - Birdathon - group participation in an all-day birding event  
Sarah Besadny organizing and Carne Andrews leading

\*Date to be determined - Minocqua Christmas Bird Count - Donna Roche organizing the teams and Guy David compiling and reporting results

\* denotes future planned events

*Editor's Note: Many thanks to Donna for her great organizing skills. Donna always seems to have the Club at the right place at the right time of the season for maximized bird viewing and enjoyment.*

## **Checklists and eBird**

*Guy David*

Boy, the mucky-mucks out there in bird taxonomy land have been hard at work! This year they certainly have had a lot of fun rearranging the bird taxonomy in the standard Checklist of Birds of North America. They also have been hard at work lumping and splitting species.

The good news for us who use eBird is that the eBird checklists are automatically updated by the good folks at Cornell Lab. As we do our eBird entries it all appears to be seamless and trouble free. Just enter our birds as we find them and be merrily along our way. To a life lister, such as me, the changes become a little more involved.

For example, for years I have been seeing Mexican Mallards during my winter birding in AZ. They were always regarded to be a Mallard but eBird allowed for recording them separately and I have been doing so. Viola! This year the Mexican Mallard was split from Mallard and now is a separate species! Whee! A new lifer for me!

When I was preparing to compose the Life List Quarterly column for this newsletter though, the changes in taxonomy became more of a headache! The changes in the species were simple enough to account for. For example, the club has Gray Jay on our Life List but now the name has been changed to Canada Jay! That made sense to me since the Canada Jay's name in scientific nomenclature is *Perisoreus canadensis*! Easy peasy!

Another change that I noticed on the club's eBird life list was that Thayer's Gull is no longer there! Whaaaaat? I know that we recorded and photographed that species in February, 2012 in the Duluth Harbor! So I checked into this phenomenon and discovered that the Thayer's Gull species has been lumped with Iceland Gull! Since our club has never recorded the Iceland Gull, the net result is that we lost one species on our list while gaining a new one. This leaves the club life list at 270 species. Well, not so bad, so far!

The real challenge this year lies in an extensive rearrangement of the taxonomy of birds. I can't explain this, except that experts argue over this every year and some changes are made every year. This year was an exception in terms of the number of changes!

Most of you know that, in addition to the club's eBird checklist record, I also keep a club record in an Excel Spreadsheet. When the Excel checklist order of birds matches the eBird checklist, it is relatively simple to add the data from our eBird record. When the order in the two lists differ, it becomes much more of a chore. When I repeatedly enter records into the familiar spreadsheet, over time I learn where to look for any species in their specific taxonomic group. This saves time and becomes relatively easy. It has become even easier the past couple of years, thanks to the fact that I usually receive an eBird checklist from a participant now. Before the spread of the habit of using eBird, handwritten lists of birds in the order seen was often what I received.

I'm happy to report that today, thanks to a rainy day, I spent the necessary time to rearrange the bird club's Excel record into the new 2018 taxonomic order! Both of the club's life lists are up to date and match.

Another impact of the taxonomic changes will be on paper checklists. We often get those when visiting wildlife refuges and parks. All of them are out of order and outdated now! Fortunately, I can only think of one instance when the bird club uses paper checklists and that is during Birding Festival field trips. After recording all of the birding festival birding data last May, I recommended that the checklist taxonomic order be updated, which will help keep that record keeping simpler for me. Hmmm! Who's going to get to do that? By the way, we wouldn't have to bother with paper checklists IF there was an eBirder in every birding festival field trip group from now on! Yaaaah! Let's go there! That would save one person hours of birding festival bird data transcription!

By the way, do you eBird? It's easy! Many birders are doing it! For proof, in an article I found in the Summer, 2018 issue of The Passenger Pigeon, I found that in the nine county north-central Wisconsin area there were 2,505 checklists submitted by 240 observers totaling 199 species during the 3 month 2017 summer season. For the same period, for the entire state of Wisconsin, there were 25,539 eBird checklists submitted by 1,482 observers!

I know that several bird club members are among that group. I sure would like to see even more of us participating in that aspect of bird watching! Doing this is so rewarding and it significantly contributes to a valuable data-base of birdlife in Wisconsin. When Nick Anich gave a wonderful presentation for our September 2018 club meeting, he made a statement for us to think about. I don't remember the quote but, paraphrasing, he said that ***the difference between fooling around and science is writing it down.*** If you haven't done so already, please join the other 1,482 birders in Wisconsin and start eBirding as you find birds.

Your own back yard would be a great place to start! My yard list for our home in Lac du Flambeau includes 129 species. Wouldn't it be nice for you to know what you have seen and heard at home over the years? Or how about your favorite hotspot or an exciting place that you birded during your travels?

## **Life List Quarterly**

*Guy David*

The last time I composed this column for BIRD SONGS it was during the second week of June and I observed then that the bird club had completed 8 outings and 2 events including the Birding Festival and Bird-a-Thon. Much has happened since then. By early June the club had acquired 269 species for our Life List and 124 species for our 2018 collection.

Now, through the first week of September, the club has conducted 24 outings, we have 270 species for our Life List and 146 species for our 2018 list of bird species. I am excited to know that, once again, we managed to add a species to our Life List when we recorded our first ever Willet in Saxon Harbor during our recent trip to the Ashland, WI area. This year, 2018, will not be the first year of not finding a new species!

Since my June column the club has increased our 2018 list from 124 species to 146 species. We upped our total of species for the year by 22 species since early June. As we anticipated, the majority of the species on our annual list were already found by the middle of June and additions have been harder to come up with since then. This is not surprising since almost all of our outings have been in our normal home range for weekly birding. One trip out of the area was to Ashland and during that

trip we added 7 of the 20 new species including Green Heron, Great-crested Flycatcher, Northern Waterthrush, Peregrine Falcon, Northern Cardinal, Common Tern, and Willet. Another, more extended trip, was to the Cable, WI area that features some Boreal Forest type habitat. We were hopeful to find species such as Spruce Grouse, Canada Jay, Black-backed Woodpecker and Boreal Chickadee but we didn't find any of those species this time. Thanks to Jim and Cynthia Krakowski who lead that trip, at least we had a decent chance at success!

The club's 2017 annual list added up to 161 species so if we are to equal that number in 2018 we need to find 15 more species yet this year. I view this as entirely possible but rather unlikely this year.

In 2017 we managed to add 25 species to our annual list beginning in September and continuing to the end of the year. Two of them were added during the Christmas Bird Count, 2 more were added during a trip toward Park Falls to the Gates Lake Road area, 5 were added during a fall trip to the Ashland area, and 16 were added during a multiple day outing to the Green Bay, WI area!

We will pick up some new species during fall migration and winter birds found during the Christmas Bird Counts may yield some goodies. I hope so! However, unless another outing is organized to a different hotspot outside of our home range like we did in Green Bay last year, we probably have only a few new species in our home area that we may happen upon yet this year.

During any normal year of bird outings, our club usually conducts 30 or more outings. It looks like we are well on track to achieve that again in 2018, thanks mostly to the great effort of Donna Roche who gets us going somewhere every week! So, let's make the best of it and get out there and haul in those fall migrants and winter birds visiting from the north! I sure would like to see us come up with over 150 species for 2018. I believe this is entirely doable without engaging in a trip to a unique habitat away from our home range in another part of the state. Who knows? Maybe one of our members will be inspired to lead us to a different great birding area yet this fall or early winter?

*Editor's note: Thank you, Guy, we can always count on you to provide us with informative articles for our newsletter each quarter. We'd also like to hear from any other Club Members! Please consider submitting an article for an upcoming newsletter. Newsletters are published in December, March, June and September. Thank you.*

## Photo Journal



A Thursday morning outing to the Presque Isle Ponds  
*Photo by Guy David*



Yes, sometimes we look at other winged creatures.  
A Viceroy butterfly spotted on the Oxbow Road  
trip.  
*Photo by Mike Peczynski*



Enjoying a Thursday morning outing to Oxbow Road/Rainbow Flowage  
*Photo by Guy David*