

BIRD SONGS

Newsletter of the North Lakeland
Discovery Center Bird Club

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President's Message

Article by Mark Westphal

The last neighborhood hummingbird visited our feeders on September 10th. The feeder has remained in place to serve as a fueling stop for any other hummingbirds that may be passing through. Multiple northern flickers have probed the weed-filled lawn outside our living room window in search of ants. Small flocks of Palm and Yellow-rumped Warblers perch on our fence and nearby trees as they search for flies, small moths, and other hearty insects. These are all signs of a change in the season and bird observations. Most of our summer residents have already left, and a variety of migrants will continue to push through the area. Soon our attention will be focused on those year-round residents who will be happy to take advantage of our sunflower seeds and suet. The great thing about birding is that it is not limited to a particular time or

season. It is true that certain times of the year generate more bird activity than others. Fortunately, there are always some birds to enjoy as well as a sense of anticipation about what new or unusual birds may appear with the change in the seasons or weather. Will this be a big year for Snowy or Great Gray Owls? Will Pine Siskins, Redpolls, or Pine Grosbeaks flock to our feeders? Time will tell.

Although our Bird Club activities slow down for the winter season, October still holds a full schedule. Dr. Thomas Nicholls will be our guest speaker for the October 2nd meeting of the Bird Club. Dr. Nicholls' program is entitled "Northern Habitats Important to Birds During Migration". The program will begin at 7:00 P.M. at the North Lakeland Discovery Center. A brief meeting at 6:30 P.M. will precede the program. Our Thursday morning outings will continue through the month of October. Be sure to check your emails for Donna Roche's destinations and directions for upcoming birding adventures.

It is also time to mark your calendars for the annual Christmas bird counts. The Manitowish Waters count, under the leadership of John Bates, is set to take place on Saturday, December 16th. The Minocqua count, organized by members of our Bird Club, is scheduled for Thursday, December 28th. More details will be provided as those dates draw nearer. To all our southbound club members, enjoy your respite from our Northwoods winter. I know you will be taking advantage of numerous birding opportunities in those sunnier climates. For all those club members who remain in the Northwoods all or most of the winter, please feel free to share any interesting birding opportunities or unusual sightings that may arise. I am sure there are a few hearty Bird Club members who wouldn't mind getting together this winter even if mittens and insulated boots are required.

Happy Birding!

Species Profile: Common Nighthawk

(*Chordeiles minor*)

Article by Debby Wilson

Our August 31 birding outing was in downtown Minocqua for our annual quest to see Chimney Swifts, Common Nighthawks and House Sparrows. We did not see any Chimney Swifts this year but we were rewarded with a flock of Common Nighthawks taking off from an electrical tower and later by several flying overhead while we waited for Chimney Swifts to emerge from the only open chimney in downtown Minocqua. I did not recall ever seeing Common Nighthawks in Minocqua and it was a new bird for me, so I was interested to learn more about them.



Common Nighthawk photo from eBird

Actually, Common Nighthawks (CN) are not hawks and are more likely to fly at dusk and dawn than at night. They belong to the Caprimulgidae family that includes nightjars and their allies. CN most closely resemble the Lesser Nighthawk. Other species in this family include Chuck-will's widow, two Whip-poor-wills, the Common Poorwill and the Common Pauraque,

The Common Nighthawk is a medium-sized (length 8.7-9.4", wt 2.3-3.5oz) nightjar with a slender, tapered body and long, pointed, angled dark wings with a white bar located between the tip and the bend in the wings (span 20.9-27.4"). The tail is notched with a white band and is nearly covered by folded wings. The dark upper parts of the body are speckled with white, the under parts are barred horizontally and the throat has a v-shaped band which is white in males and pale gray in females and juveniles. The legs are very short, the head is small and flat, the eyes are large and the beak is tiny. They are very well camouflaged due to their gray, white and buff coloring. The Eastern populations have more brown coloring and those in the Northern Great Plains are more silvery gray.

The flight of Common Nighthawks is quite characteristic with erratic swoops and dives and rapid wing flapping, similar to bats, with their mouths wide open to catch insects. They are sometimes (colloquially) referred to as "bullbats". They also dive from heights abruptly, usually in response to territorial intruders, females during mating season or people, and as they ascend out of the dive they abruptly flex their wings downward which causes a whooshing or booming sound as air flows rapidly over the wings. With courtship, the male calls repeatedly before his steep dive, he lands next to the female, rocks back and forth and calls. The call is a buzzy, nasal "peent" similar to American woodcocks.

Fossils of CN confirm their presence in many areas of the US dating 400,000 years ago, and they are found throughout most of the US and southern Canada. They are considered common throughout Wisconsin during the summer. They migrate, frequently in large flocks of hundreds or even thousands, to northeastern and central South America, traveling the greatest distance of all migrating North American birds. Their travel from Wisconsin begins in mid-August through mid-September and can still be observed through mid-October, reaching their destination by December. In February they begin their return, arriving in Wisconsin in May and early June.

The habitats of Common Nighthawks are varied, including clearings in forests, pine-oak barrens, sand prairies, recently burned areas, beaches and urban areas. They especially like gravel-topped roofs. During the day and at night they roost motionless on the ground, on tree branches or fence posts. Their diet, which they mostly catch while flying, is primarily flying insects, including beetles, moths, grasshoppers and others.



*Common Nighthawk sitting on eggs.
Photo by Mike Peczynski*

*The Nighthawk's two eggs sitting on
the ground (no nest). Photo by Mike
Peczynski*



Breeding behaviors are difficult to document because they do not build nests and the adults, eggs and young are well camouflaged. They form pairs and are monogamous. Females usually lay 2 eggs on the ground on sand or gravel, on cultivated fields, gravel bars, parking lots and gravel roofs and incubate them for approximately 19 days. Both parents care for young, feeding them regurgitated insects. The nestlings first fledge about 21 days after hatching. Breeding activity

has been reported in many areas of WI including Vilas and Oneida counties. The lifespan averages 4-5 years and the oldest recorded was a 9 year-old female.

Common Nighthawk populations have declined, according to the North American Breeding Bird Survey, by at least 60% since the 1960's. Possible causes of the decline include habitat loss, forest fragmentation and pesticides that reduce insect populations. In some urban areas, crows have affected populations due to eating the eggs laid on gravel roofs. They are endangered in New Hampshire.

References:

Cornell Lab of Ornithology, All About Birds

Wisconsin Audubon

Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Wisconsin

Audubon App

Washington Island Bird Club Trip

Article by John Randolph

Judy and Jon Cassady organized a trip to Door County's Washington Island, with nine Bird Club members enjoying a two-night stay, September 18-19. Various outings on Washington and Rock Island were led by Melody Walsh, whose impressive hearing and spotting skills were complemented by expert picture taking with a camera with a 83 power lens (how does she hold it so still?). Randy Holm, Melody's partner, readily shared knowledge gained from a career as Ranger and then Property Manager of Rock Island, a striking State Natural Area a short ferry ride from Washington Island. Over the years, he has seen a great many clouds of migrating birds.



In the absence of restaurants available for a morning meal that could accommodate our group, Glyns and Dale Bird provided a rich breakfast in their lovely home. For lunch Tuesday on Rock Island, Randy and Melody provided a gourmet feast of smoked salmon, which they had caught, presented in a fashion suitable for a fine dining magazine.



The birding settings were varied, productive, and certainly visually appealing (the blue sky weather was a bonus). We had good looks at numerous species, such as Horned Larks and American Pipits (some showed cute herky-jerky moves). Included in the pleasures of the trip were an array of truly lovely wildflowers, and magnificent trees, some new to many of us, such as handsome Mountain Maples.

Many thanks to Judy and Jon for setting up this excellent birding experience.



Washington Island Trip Checklist:

Canada Goose - 70	Mallard - 2
American Black Duck - 2	Hooded Merganser - 8
Common Merganser - 8	Red-breasted Merganser - 7
Mourning Dove - 5	Sandhill Crane - 20
Semipalmated Plover - 4	Wilson's Snipe - 3
Ring-billed Gull - 22	Herring Gull - 46
Double-crested Cormorant - 27	Turkey Vulture - 14
Sharp-shinned Hawk - 8	Cooper's Hawk - 3
Belted Kingfisher - 2	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker - 2
Downy Woodpecker - 2	Hairy Woodpecker - 2
Pileated Woodpecker - 3	Northern Flicker - 7
American Kestrel - 1	Eastern Phoebe - 1
Red-eyed Vireo - 2	Blue Jay - 487
American Crow - 3	Common Raven - 3
Black-capped Chickadee - 11	Horned Lark - 47
Golden-crowned Kinglet - 1	Red-breasted Nuthatch - 1
White-breasted Nuthatch - 1	European Starling - 13
Gray Catbird - 2	Brown Thrasher - 1
Eastern Bluebird - 28	Swainson's Thrush - 1
American Robin - 11	Cedar Waxwing - 4
American Pipit - 9	Purple Finch - 4
Pine Siskin - 9	American Goldfinch - 10
White-crowned Sparrow - 4	White-throated Sparrow - 2
Savannah Sparrow - 10	Song Sparrow - 4
Lincoln's Sparrow - 2	Swamp Sparrow - 3
Red-winged Blackbird - 8	Rusty Blackbird - 5
Common Grackle - 9	Tennessee Warbler - 2
Palm Warbler - 4	Yellow-rumped Warbler - 15
Northern Cardinal - 6	
Additional Taxa: Blackbird sp. - 4 Passerine sp - 50	

An Unseen Spectacle

By Mark Westphal

One mid-September evening I watched a late movie on TV, ate a little popcorn, and headed off to bed for a normal night's rest. All that while an amazingly spectacular event was taking place above my neighborhood, and I didn't even notice it. When I arose the following morning, I noticed an increase in bird activity around the forest edges near my house. I opened the "BirdCast" app on my iPad and checked out the live bird migration map. An estimated 2,256,000 birds had flown over Vilas County the previous night. Obviously, not all two million birds flew directly over my house, but if only a small percentage had

flown nearby, it would have been an event worthy of my attention. After reviewing the “BirdCast” information, I came to realize there were several reasons that I was missing out on all but the morning aftereffects of the previous night’s burst of migration. First, most of the birds were flying in dark, cloudy skies between 9:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m. Their average altitude was 1,200 feet. The winds out of the north helped push them in a southbound direction at an average of 23 miles per hour. Even the finest binoculars would have been of little use to observe the possibly hundreds of birds that flew over my house that particular night.

I have watched various documentaries about the migration of wildebeests in Africa and caribou near the arctic circle in North America. These films make for great drama as wildebeests and caribou battle the terrain, weather, and predators in their quest to find food and safer seasonal living conditions. Their large body size and terrestrial pathways make their epic journeys easy to observe. The migration of our little feathered friends is equally epic. They, too, travel hundreds to thousands of miles, battling weather, natural and man-made obstacles, predators, and food shortages. Their relatively small size and migration behavior make most of their migration journey go relatively unnoticed.

Only with recent developments, utilizing electronic tracking devices and radar information, such as that provided by “BirdCast”, are we beginning to crack open the mysteries of bird migration. As we learn more about bird migration, we will be able to understand how to make their journey easier or, at the very least, less difficult. Better understanding of migration behavior helps to let utility companies know when to suspend wind turbine operations that can be hazardous to migrating birds. Confusing lights in sky-scrapers can be turned off during critical migration times. Refueling habitats can be developed or protected when migration routes can be determined.

Understanding the mysteries of bird migration is just another piece of the puzzle that helps us protect and appreciate the birds that share our planet. So, next time you glance up at a fall night sky, know that maybe, just maybe, there is an epic natural phenomenon occurring right over your head. This may not be as noticeable as a wildebeest migration filled with thundering hooves and clouds of dust; this migration is made up of the steady wing beats of millions of birds, quietly traveling overhead. Driven by instinct and guided by the sun, moon, stars, and the earth’s magnetic field, birds show remarkable strength and determination. I wish I could actually see more of this amazing fall event. For now, I can only enjoy a sense of wonder and bid the birds “safe travels” on their journey south.

DC Bird Club Thursday Outings **Summer & Early Fall 2023**

Recap of outings with some photos of the birders!

Article by Donna Roche

From the earlier Bird Song Spring Review of outings, Bird Club Thursday outings continued during the summer of 2023 without a hitch (except for the miserable irritation of mosquitos)! Every week there was an outing and every week there were birders who participated. Every week the announcement that I wrote was faithfully sent out to the membership by John Randolph. Thank you so much, John, for keeping us connected! Another connection thank you goes to Sarah B. who collects the eBird information from our outings and keeps the records for our club's annual and life species lists!

My request for members to suggest and to lead outings was accepted by SIX members!! Thank you so much to Sarah B., Debbie and Steve S., David W., Frank S. and Carne A. for creating and/or leading outings!

And as for our great members, whether or not I was there, participants took it upon themselves to lead, to get around, keep species lists, and sometimes take photos! For each and every outing there were volunteers who kept the eBird species lists, brought their scopes and cameras, reminded me to take a group photo, helped carry scopes, helped with the route and participated actively in BIRDING.

All of you are appreciated and here you are:



Examples of mosquito netting garments

Recap of **June 29, 2023 outing Powell Marsh Road, Powell Marsh.** Once again, I am amazed that 7 folks turn up for an outing when the rain just barely ended, it was foggy and the mosquitos and flies were fierce! Well, Ed M. decided that he didn't come prepared well enough for the bugs, so he didn't stay long. He was right that bug protection was needed. So anyone who had netting... used it. But, it was still crazy. However, we were rewarded with our craziness with a kingfisher, a bittern, and a Green Heron right at the start parking area. We drove the Powell Marsh Road to the end parking area. We really didn't stop along the way to bird, but everyone got the ideas that the newly logged areas might develop for future good birding. The walking portion of the outing was very scenic, interesting and provided several sparrow and warble species plus others. The sky started to clear and the bugs diminished on the way back. It was a short and semi-sweet outing. I felt good that we did it and think the others did too. That would include Debbie and Steve S. who are just back in WI! It was also nice to have Mary J. with the group. Thank you for keeping the list of **18 Species!**



Sorry that there isn't an actual photo of the groups...

Recap of **July 6, 2023 outing:** Biking or Walking roads in **Natural Lakes Preserve.** As planned, there were groups to bike and walk with Debbie, leading the 8 bikers, and Steve S., leading the 5 walkers on a beautiful, almost bug-free, Independence Day week, along flower-edged roadways in NLP. There was a terrific variety and quantity of bird species. Debbie set up the back-and-forth route for the walkers to encounter woods, swamp, and lake. So, we did find many of the same bird species as the bikers. However, the bikers covered a lot more territory and picked up more species and more numbers of birds. There's no doubt, this is a birdie area and we had a good time birding! Thanks to Debbie S. and Carne A. (yay, she's back) for keeping the lists. **Species Totals: Bikers - 37 and Walkers - 28!!**



Birders doing their birding thing!

Recap of **July 13, 2023 outing to Lake Nokomis/Bearskin Trail**: It is great to report that our group of 11 DC birders heard and then saw 2 Red-headed Woodpeckers... our target bird! We also found one bird coming out of a nest hole. We found them along the same road that intersects the Bearskin Trail in the general area where we saw them 3 years ago. Everyone got good views. We also found several other woodpecker species along the way, but couldn't quite make a complete Woodpecker Sweep as a yellow-bellied 'sap' was nowhere to be seen. Oh well, we moved on to try for the Eastern Kingbird...got it! And later we found another species that I requested... Great Blue Heron! We had a good time finding 31 species of birds on a lovely, absolutely mosquito-free morning. We also took note of plants, butterflies, dragonflies, toads, etc. to make our time along the Bearskin Trail educational and to work up a good appetite for the delicious Windmill Ice Cream Shoppe treats that followed. Thanks to Carne A. and Debbie S. for keeping our **eBird** lists... **31 for bird species list**.



Jackets and rain gear, but smiles on our birders faces!

Recap of **July 20, 2023 outing to Deerview Lane**: I wondered for a while IF we would have an outing at all with rain overnight and no sign of the precipitation stopping. It would have been very disappointing that an outing lead by Sarah B. would be rained out! However, ever hopeful, DC Bird Club members SHOWED UP! They showed up to find out what birds would do the same! Nine birders found a number of bird species along on this mostly misty day. Although the Grasshopper Sparrow was not seen, five other species of sparrow were! And another five species of warblers were around too. We enjoyed seeing a family of three Sandhills grazing peacefully in the short grass field. As always, with Sarah's lead, this outing produces nice high points, like seeing an Eastern Phoebe and an Eastern Kingbird in the same sighting! Thank you so much, Sarah!! Thanks also to Carne A. and Debbie S. for keeping our eBird lists... **32 Species**



Beautiful photo by Troy Walters from his paddleboard!

Recap of **July 27, 2023 paddle outing at Thunder Lake** in Three Lakes lead by Frank S. We were 2 canoes, 3 single Kayaks, 1 double kayak, 1 paddleboard, and 1 walker for today's adventure at Thunder Lake State Wildlife Area. OK, it drizzled on us a bit and the overcast weather inhibited the birds from doing their best and our ability to find them, but it was great out on the water for 10 of us!! Thunder Lake is really as interesting and enjoyable to paddle on as Frank described it to be. We've seen it from the shore a number of times, a big roundish lake with some small islands, but there are many even shallower bays with reeds that hide a multitude of ducks that kept flying out and that shoreline is wild! As you see from the species list, some of those ducks were not identified. There was a grand eagle's nest with several Bald Eagles around a large, large rock that by its smell told us that there were many stories of who had used it to sit, eat and etc. on...

Meanwhile on the land, Sarah B. was our walker for the morning's outing. I'm sure she would have liked to have had company, but I think she enjoyed the

peacefulness of just her and the many birds she found. Her list will not count for the club's (need 2 to confirm species) but we compared what the two 'groups' found to point out once again what a terrific location Thunder Lake SWA is whether on land or on the water.

I look forward to another outing that Frank S. is leading in October here with some 'celebrities'!!

Thanks Debbie S. and Sarah B. for keeping the lists. Coincidentally, although not the same species, **each group listed 19 Species!!**



End of the Long Bridge trail...Different photo location!

Recap of August 3, 2023 outing to the Ashland area: I usually think of being on lake shores as cooler and breezier than inland. Well it wasn't on this August day in Ashland! I was grateful for the beautiful, sunny day, but as the day went on, it got warmer, warmer, and uncomfortably WARM! We did find birds, we found one of the hoped for Peregrine Falcons, we saw the Common Terns and lots of Double-crested Cormorants. We had a good time... I just hoped for more action with the birds and I'm sure others did too. We took a break at the NGLVC for lunch and to view Mary Burns' latest exhibit 'Women and Water'. We finished our day trip at Ashland hotspots with a walk around Prentice Park where we heard a Virginia Rail! Later on the way towards home, Judy, Jon C. and Linda D. stopped at Giles Flowage and watched a splashing loon and several blue herons resting or flying. Those birds knew how to handle a hot day!! Thanks so much to Carne A. for keeping **5** Ashland area eBird lists and to Judy C. **About 30 Species**



Along the Bog Trail at NLDC

Recap of August 10, 2023 outing to the North Lakeland Discovery Trails: To be fair, our outing on this day had several objectives - yes, to bird on NLDC grounds, but also to spend time at the BC's Bird Feeding area and to connect with the NLDC Buildings and Grounds Committee that would probably discuss the project we were discussing with our membership. All was successful! We did bird and found a our usual limited number of birds, including a hard to sort out flycatcher which we concluded was a handsome Least Flycatcher. We did enjoy the great walk with stops at the beach and Shoreline/Native Plants/Pollination Garden. Before we walked, we saw bird action at the station's feeders and fountain. Thanks to Bruce Bacon, we hope to have squirrel-free feeders on the cable with his new baffles. Check these out... they seem 'bullet-proof'! After our outing, the B&G committee agreed to our fencing plan barring any difficulties with underground utilities.

Thanks to Julie and Jim for keeping the station watered, neat and tidy - it looks great.

FYI: NLDC member, Anita Flantz has regularly filled seed feeders for years in the summer...thank you!

Thanks to our eBird list keepers, Carne A. and Debbie S. for this duty no matter how many or few species! **11 species**



Just before a great lunch break at Mead's Visitors Center!

Recap of August 17, 2023 outing to the George W. Mead SWA: There are reasons why some of our bird outings are so successful and there are always reasons why even the successful ones are challenging to accomplish all their goals. This one, a day trip to Geo. W. Mead State Wildlife area was no exception. A group of 10 DC birders made the drive to the Marathon County area and to one of the premier wildlife areas in Wisconsin. Organized and lead by David Wittrock, who not only is a terrific birder, but has knowledge and background in the area, we all knew we'd have a great day... And WE DID! Not only did we find bird species, we saw a lot of birds!! The challenge was the wind! It was very windy! We know that we missed species of birds because of it. However, we were kept busy watching the vast wetlands, the marshes, the trees and in the air. We were regularly rewarded with surprises of more bitterns, herons, pelicans, terns, swans and more. Because the area is so watery with the Little Eau Pleine River running through it, one has to go around on local roads and re-enter the Areas. Each time we did that we would find different habitats and vistas. After a very pleasant lunch break at the Visitors Center, we made our last stop and walked a bog trail ended with a 180 degree scene of several bayou-like streams meandering away from our view. The beautiful scene would be enough to enjoy, but here we saw herons, kingfisher, sandpiper and ducks. Dave says this is a great place for spring warblers. Who wouldn't want to come back for that!! Thank you so much Dave. Thanks also to Carne A. and Debbie S. for keeping eBird lists. **37 Species**



*Denise and I are trying for artistic photos.
Most of our group has gone ahead, leaving footprints in the dewy grass*

Recap of August 24, 2023 outing to the Rainbow Flowage area: The Wisconsin River was as low as I've ever seen it at the Hwy 'O' bridge and at the end of Oxbow Road for our outing last week! We got a nice showing of ducks, shorebirds and other associated birds. We spent almost a 1/2 hour on the bridge and found activity in the water, along the shore and in the air. After one short stop along the driving route, we drove on directly to the end of Oxbow. Here we found that the water's edge was far out exposing a lot of 'beach' and mudflats. There were 4 scopes among us to look out for birds and we needed all since it was foggy and misty. We walked to the left towards a point and were able to see a large expanse of flat grassland with driftwood where we found geese and several great shorebirds, including yellowlegs and a Pectoral Sandpiper! The bird species lists will show that we also found raptors, cranes, ducks, sparrows, and warblers... a really nice variety of birds! Thanks also to Frank S. and Debbie S. for keeping eBird lists. **33 Species**



Who is that shadowy person??

Recap of August 31, 2023 outing to Downtown Minocqua: It was delightful weather to walk the streets of downtown Minocqua! Ten folks joined our birding group at the Bearskin trailhead park and enjoyed a picnic supper. Thank you Jon and Judy C. for getting the pizza and to others who brought 'extras'. We started our birding, while sitting at the new picnic tables, with hummingbirds in the flowerbed and most of the other species on our list nearby this area! We saw the swallows and gulls from the trestle bridge, but none of our usual waterfowl. It wasn't until we got over to the Campanile Center area that we spotted most of the nighthawks. Connie L. spotted the starling on the library building for our last species of the evening. We were not successful in finding our other target birds. We tried watching for swifts at a likely chimney and thought for a second that the sparrows we watched were house, but alas, we had to do with chippers and Lincoln's!!! Thanks Carne A. for keeping ebird lists. **Bird Species 16!!**

No group photo for September 7.... darn!



*We started our Powell Marsh outing at the Bird Blind.
Thank goodness, it looks better than this clip art example...*



A couple of photos from last year... They still work!

Recap of September 7, 2023 outing to Powell Marsh: Once again 10 hardy DC Birders showed up even though it was misting on and off. We met at the Powell Marsh Vista bird blind to look out over a different scene of the main pool. It was more grass than water close in, without much in the way of mud flats. The only shorebird we saw and heard was the Baird's flying around overhead. But, we saw a good assortment of ducks and birds in the water - 8 species! The young loon was nice to see. Early on, several folks got a terrific look at a perched Merlin. Along our dike trail walk, we enjoyed the display of fall wildflowers and so did the sparrows and the one warbler. The birds flitted in and out of the vegetation, so we just got short looks at them. Thanks Debbie S. for keeping eBird lists. **20 Species of birds**



One of our largest Thursday groups!

Recap of September 14, 2023 outing at Star Lake: Wow! For such a little area and for such a cold start, we had flurries of birds that kept us interested and holding our binoculars high for quite some time. The Old Mill Centennial Park may be a good spot for birding at other times of the year, but it seems that migrating birds know that this pretty little park will take care of them for a good meal on their travels with seeds and fruit. Thank you so much, Sarah B., for suggesting Star Lake area and for leading our group of 14!! We all appreciate your expertise and sharp eyes! The sunshine was great, but it only helped a little for us to sort out fall warblers and migrants especially high up in treetops. We found a number of warblers and waterfowl along the lake side park and as we walked through the campground roads. Thanks Debbie S. for volunteering and keeping eBird lists. **23 Bird Species**



Recap of September 21, 2023 outing at Little Turtle Flowage. Debbie S. led our group of 10 DC birders on a beautiful morning starting with a survey of the mostly very low water level and grassed-over overlook at the parking area. Then we walked through the prairie along the Blue Bird trail and into the woods. Along the way we found 5 species of sparrows, siskins and waxwings. Since all the birds 'skiddered' around on the ground and in the air... we needed to 'tease out' their IDs with binoculars, scope and cameras! We watched a trio of white swans gracefully fly over us for a nice amount of time and were a bit surprised to hear their trumpeting soon after from within the cattails... a quick landing? However, later when we returned to that area, we saw 4 swans and 2 of them were quite gray ...cygnets? Mystery solved! Our trio of flying swans must have roused up the 4 swans on the water who gave them a warning call. How nice! We had a total of 7 swans for our day. With the maturing family swan group and other birds we saw today, one could have a good sense of the changing seasons. The species of birds and the numbers of those birds says 'start of fall' to me. **Total species was 25!**

Thank you, Debbie, for not only volunteering to lead the group today, but also for the bike/hike outing, the great program you presented and for keeping many eBird lists. We will miss you and Steve as you head to Texas! Although I know you come back to WI in the winter...
Ya'll come back to Wisconsin next SPRING!



Sorry for the poor quality of photograph... need to clean the lens occasionally...

Recap of September 28, 2023 outing at Saxon Harbor and area. Carne A. led our group of 13 through some beautiful Iron County fall-colored territories and

to some great birds. We met up in Mercer and, with our caravan of 6 cars, we headed to our first destination area... the Upper Road south of the town of Saxon. Here, we set the pace for the day of slow driving and stops to find and view birds. There are woods here and cornfields in this rural north Iron County area, but perhaps the predominant landscape is open grass fields. These grass fields are picturesque in their setting of rolling hills and outlined by trees, shrubs and fence lines with wild vegetation. I suspect that migrating birds find these areas good for rest stops because we found many sparrows, finches, and warblers here and along the waterways. We moved on to Saxon Harbor and spent a good amount of time looking for birds along the shore of Lake Superior, the marina and a walk over the pedestrian bridge to campsites in the woods. Here we found chickadee, nuthatch, warbler and woodpecker species. We drove on to a number of 'hot spots' and stopped along the way where we found bird activity. I think everyone enjoyed finding Horned Larks and first of the season Dark-eyed Juncos, but without a doubt, the bird of the day was the White-crowned Sparrow with 45 seen along the way! Thanks Carne for leading this interesting, and new territory for many, outing!

Also thanks to Denise H. and Dave W. for keeping eBird lists. We reviewed those lists for our species. But, Denise sent me a 'Trip Report' that condenses the lists that she submitted for our day from the different areas we birded. We saw a total of **33 species**.

That's it for now, but our 2023 Thursday birding outings will continue through the end of October.

The next outings will be:

October 5 - Thunder Lake in Three Lakes area Frank S. leading with guests

October 12 - Wausau Day Trip - hike, visit 'Birds in Art' and lunch!

October 19 - TBA

October 26 - Powell Marsh

December 16 - Manitowish Waters Christmas Bird Count

December 28 - Minocqua Christmas Bird Count

*Editors Note: On behalf of the Bird Club and especially the Thursday morning outing participants I want to give a **huge thanks to Donna** for all that she does to make our Thursday Outings interesting, inviting, easy to locate and enjoyable!! I mentioned it last year but will mention it again this year, she really has a knack for getting the group to the right spot at the right time of the season offering the Club a chance to see a great variety of bird species. Thank you, Donna!!!*

Besides coordinating our Thursday walks, she is also the photographer and documenter of the outings. Since she's the one always taking the photograph of the

group, she's missing from the photos (well, unless you count her shadow). Thanks to Denise H. for capturing Donna in action:



Life List Quarterly – 3rd Quarter 2023

Sarah Besadny, Records Keeper

The Bird Club added 26 species to its annual list during the 3rd quarter of the year. Many of those species were seen on two outings outside of our “usual” haunts. David Wittrock led an outing down to the George Mead SWA on August 17th and Jon and Judy Cassady organized a three-day trip to Washington Island Sept 17-19. Getting out into different habitats and different locations always brings the potential for seeing different species of birds. Many thanks to David W. and the Cassadys for providing these opportunities for the Club.

Our Annual Life List is now up to 167 birds and the year isn't over. We haven't added a species to our Club's overall Life List this year but maybe some of the species spotted this year were new to you? Did you see a favorite species? What are some of your most memorable moments from a Bird Club Outing so far this year? Birding brings the opportunity to see new species, learn something new about a species, and just enjoy the beauty of the avian world.

Below are the 26 species added this quarter and the date the species was first spotted within the quarter:

American Black Duck	8/3/23
Ruddy Duck	9/17 - 9/19/2023
Wild Turkey	9/17 - 9/19/2023
Common Nighthawk	8/31/23
Least Sandpiper	8/17/23
Pectoral Sandpiper	8/24/23
Solitary Sandpiper	8/17/23
Lesser Yellowlegs	8/17/23
American White Pelican	8/17/23
Great Egret	8/17/23
Sharp-shinned Hawk	9/17 - 9/19/2023
Cooper's Hawk	9/17 - 9/19/2023
Red-tailed Hawk	9/28/23
Red-headed Woodpecker	7/13/23
Peregrine Falcon	8/3/23
Olive-sided Flycatcher	8/3/23
Cliff Swallow	7/20/23
Golden-crowned Kinglet	9/17 - 9/19/2023
House Sparrow	9/28/23
American Pipit	9/17 - 9/19/2023
Pine Siskin	9/14/23
Clay-colored Sparrow	7/20/23
White-crowned Sparrow	9/17 - 9/19/2023
Brewer's Blackbird	9/17 - 9/19/2023
Tennessee Warbler	9/14/23
Indigo Bunting	7/20/23

Photo Journal

From Mark Westphal

For the past several years, a pair of ospreys have nested on a pole and nesting platform installed by a local utility company. The intent of the platform is to be more attractive for nesting than the nearby, potentially hazardous utility poles.

This year I watched one of the osprey chicks take one of its first fledging flights. The irony was that the nearest "landing tree" for those first short flights turned out to be the utility pole on the opposite side of the road. As the young bird built up its strength, its wings seemed to come precariously close to the electric wires. I hoped I was not watching a disaster in the making. Fortunately the distance between the wires and the length of the osprey's wingspan managed to keep the bird safe.



At first glance I thought they were sparrows, but a closer look revealed two northern migrating species foraging in the short grass of the field surrounding my house. The Horned Larks and the American Pipit passing through our area Wisconsin are both likely travelers from the tundra to the far north. Their coloring allows them to easily blend into gravel and grass.



Horned Larks



American Pipit

Fall reveals the natural gray color of the feathers of this Sandhill Crane at Powell Marsh.



A White-throated Sparrow and Trumpeter Swans were two species recently spotted on a Bird Club Outing to Little Turtle Flambeau Flowage.



Below is a Lapland Longspur, a migrant from the far north, stopping at Powell Marsh on its journey and an Eastern Bluebird stopping in our yard on its migration path.

