

BIRD SONGS

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Discovery Center Bird Club

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President's Message

by Mark Westphal

How are your neighbors doing? Your bird neighbors, that is. Do you have certain species that regularly inhabit your yard or neighborhood? Did they return once again this year? Are there certain species missing? Have any new species appeared? Each year I eagerly anticipate the arrival of dozens of bird species that return to the Northwoods to raise their young. I check out usual nesting spots and hope to follow the success or challenges of several bird families as the seasons progress.

The eastern phoebes have returned to nest under my back deck. Tree Swallows are darting through the air to gather insects to feed their young growing safely in nesting boxes. I watch a pair of bluebirds as they fly from one perch to another

searching for insects in the grass to feed their growing babies. This year two hen turkeys in my neighborhood have joined forces to watch over their combined brood of 21 poults. Although it is unlikely that nature will allow every one of these youngsters to survive, it is certainly a fun sight to see all these little turkeys skittering across the lawn, trying to keep up with their mothers. Fish are routinely being delivered to a nearby osprey nesting platform, but the high walls of the nest still obscure exactly how many young are being fed. Last but not least, the Trumpeter Swans at Powell Marsh were able to hatch 4 signets. While one signet has apparently perished, the swan pair is doing better than last year, during which no young were seen. The one new bird in my neighborhood is a Black-billed Cuckoo. At least that is what the Merlin sound id app on my phone indicates. I have yet to actually see the bird itself. Overall, my bird neighbors seem to be doing well. While some birds have already fledged, as indicated by a now empty chickadee nest and the presence of a speckle breasted immature robin foraging on my lawn, other birds are still in the process of building their nests. Cedar Waxwings have been tugging on twine tied to some dead branches in hopes of adding some stands of fiber to well hidden nests.

Even though a blanket of green vegetation tends to hide many of our birds, it is still a great time to go birding. It is especially fun to watch the adults feeding their young or taking them out to explore nearby forests, fields, and wetlands.

Through our Thursday morning outings, our Bird Club continues to offer many opportunities to search out new and different species beyond those found in our own back yards. By participating in our Bird Club activities, you not only get to see more birds, but you also have the opportunity to learn from other experienced birders. I know that my personal birding knowledge and skills continue to grow each year with the help of other Bird Club members.

Looking ahead, we have another great program coming up on July 8th. Margie Menzies, Education Director of Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory, Duluth, MN, will be giving a program entitled "Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory, Fifty Years and Counting". Whether you are familiar with Hawk Ridge or if you have never been there, Margie's presentation may inspire you to take a trip to Duluth to take in some of the amazing sites that Hawk Ridge offers during fall migration.

Our annual meeting this year will be a potluck dinner to be held on Monday, August 5th at the Boulder Junction Community Building. Details will be provided as the date draws nearer.

If you have any ideas or suggestions for future outings or programs, please feel free to contact me. Enjoy those summer birds!

Species Profile: Dark-eyed Junco **The Original Snowbird**

Article and Photos by David Wittrock



Dark-eyed Junco – Slate Colored

The Dark-eyed Junco is a much-loved feeder bird of snowy climates. One recent survey ranked them 10th on a list of favorite feeder birds (Backyard Chirper). People of a certain age may recall Anne Murray's popular song (everyone sing along "Spread your wings and fly away, and take the snow back with you"). Dark-eyed juncos serve as harbingers of the coming winter, an active bird that graces the yard and roadside to welcome the coming snow.

Juncos are a type of sparrow. The dark-eyed junco (*Junco hyemalis*) is widely distributed across the United States and Canada, where they are present for at least a part of the year in nearly all states and provinces. In Vilas County, they are a year-round resident, although there are huge variations in numbers. The major field guides show our area is at the southern end of the bird's year-round habitat. According to eBird, dark-eyed juncos are most commonly reported in Vilas County during the weeks of April 15 and October 15, as large numbers of the birds are migrating from their summer and winter ranges. The frequency distribution shows a spring peak between March 15 and May 15 and a fall peak between September 15 and November 15. There are eBird reports of juncos in Vilas County for every week of the year, but in the months between the peaks the reported frequency often average only a single bird per week every year. This might suggest that the climate range maps might need to be updated as the breeding range is likely shifting northward.

Perhaps the most interesting question regarding the Dark-eyed Junco is whether it is single species or multiple species. A look at the Sibley Guide to Birds will tell you that there are two recognized species of Junco found in the United States and Canada – the Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*) and the Yellow-eyed Junco (*Junco phaeonotus*). Yellow-eyed Juncos are only found in southern Arizona and New Mexico at this time. But Sibley also tells us that there SIX (Oregon, Pink-sided, White-winged, Slate-colored, Gray-headed, and Red-backed) subspecies of the Dark-eyed Junco, and this might be an underestimate of the number of the variants of the species (e.g., *Junco, Hyemalis cismontanus*, not in Sibley).



Dark-eyed Junco – Pink-sided



Dark-eyed Junco – Gray-headed



Dark-eyed Junco – Yellow-eyed

Three of these variants are found in Wisconsin (all have been reported in Vilas County), the Slate-colored is the dominant variety found throughout the central and eastern United States, including Wisconsin. There are also reports of Oregon and *cismontanus* in Wisconsin. The Slate-colored has a uniformly dark head and back, the Oregon has a dark head and a reddish back, and *cismontanus* has a dark head and grayish back. The other four variants are primarily found in western, mountain areas of the United States and Canada. In general, these birds have lighter, more silvery, colored heads and bodies and black masks around

their eyes, with some variants having reddish shading. This has led to suggestions that the dark-eyed junco might be two (or possibly more) distinct species groups – a dark-headed variety and a silver-headed variety. Stayed for updates as research continues to explore this question.



Dark-eyed Junco – Oregon



Dark-eyed Junco – *cismontanus*

What should you do if you want to find juncos? Juncos often travel in flocks and, like many sparrow species, are typically ground feeders. This is true even near feeders where it is common to find juncos on the ground beneath the feeder. In Vilas County, your best bet to find a junco is during spring or fall migration (as mentioned earlier, peak times here are in April and October). I most commonly see them on my morning walks feeding along the roadside in flocks varying in size from a few birds to a couple dozen. Watch for a mostly dark bird with a white belly, but perhaps the best field mark is the white edges of the tail that are readily visible when the birds flush and fly off into the bushes. The bird's song is a soft trill that Sibley describes as "slower and more musical" than that of a chipping sparrow. The birds also make a one note "chip" sound and can make a short buzzing sound. The National Geographic Guide to Birds describes their flight song as a "rapid twittering." If you are lucky enough to find one of these over the summer or winter months, report it on eBird. But be sure to get out and look for them in the fall before they spread their wings and fly away.

Mississippi River Flyway Field Trip

April 16-18, 2024

Article by Carne Andrews



Front Row: Jon Cassady, Judy Cassady, Mary Jenks, Carne Andrews.
Back Row: Duanne Swift, Connie LeFebvre, Katie Foley, Mark Westphal, John Randolph. Not pictured: Tina Westphal, photographer (thanks, Tina)! Sorry other pictures are limited due to wet conditions.

Day 1: Nine optimistic DCBC members rendezvoused at the Minocqua Post Office, departing for La Crosse at 7a.m. despite an uncertain 3-day forecast. With leisurely stops in Merrill and Coloma, we arrived at the Goose Island County Park about 12:30p.m. Here we met former club member and past president of the NLDC, Duanne Swift, our guide for the next 3 days. Unfortunately, Ann was not able to join us having recently undergone knee replacement surgery.

There was immediate excitement noting a large mixed flock of Northern Rough-winged, Tree and Barn Swallows suddenly perching within close range.



Over lunch at this Mississippi backwater location, a Great Blue Heron, nesting Bald Eagles, Blue and Green-Winged Teal, Mallards, Buffleheads, a Sandhill Crane, Canada Geese, and up to 100 American White Pelicans were observed along with familiar Red-winged Blackbirds, American Robins, Woodpeckers and a couple Brown-headed Cowbirds. After recording 16 species, we drove a short distance to the Maple Interpretive Trail in the park. Over the next couple hours in light drizzle, our species list added Wood Duck, Black-capped Chickadee and full family compliment of numerous woodpeckers: Yellow-bellied, Red-bellied, Downy, Hairy, Pileated and Northern Flicker.

By 3:30p.m. we checked into the GrandStay Hotel & Suites in historic downtown La Crosse. With its many amenities, our suites proved to be both comfortable and convenient at a very reasonable price. Later we met Duanne and Ann at Piggy's Restaurant & Lounge. It was a memorable dining experience in a congenial atmosphere around a large round table in a private dining room. Following dinner, we returned to the GrandStay where several of us enjoyed a walk through the adjacent park and prepared for the next day.

Day 2: Duanne arrived at the GrandStay to lead us to the Norskedalen (the Norwegian valley) Nature and Heritage Center near Coon Valley about 15 miles from La Crosse. This was a beautiful drive through part of the Driftless (unglaciated) Area of Wisconsin with its rolling farm fields and steep narrow valleys known as the Coulee Region of Wisconsin. Norskedalen, tucked between two towering bluffs, was given to the community by the physician founder of the Gunderson Clinic Medical System and his wife. It is dedicated to preserving,

interpreting and sharing the natural environment and cultural heritage of Norwegian immigration families who settled in this region after the Civil War.

Following a video orientation by our staff guide, we recorded 30 species on the Opus Farm Trail adding a Great Horned and Barred Owls, Red-tailed Hawk, Turkey Vulture, Blue Jay, Tufted Titmouse, Eastern Phoebe and Mourning Dove to our trip list. After a lunch break in the picnic shelter, we browsed the gift shop before center volunteers led us on an informative tour of several historic Norwegian homestead buildings. Before returning to La Crosse, we crossed the mighty Mississippi River traveling south along the scenic Minnesota Mississippi River Trail to the Brownsville Overlook. Unfortunately, high winds and light drizzle continued to hinder our search for new waterfowl.

Back in La Crosse, our birding adventure continued over another unique relaxing dinner at Huck Finn's on the Water Restaurant overlooking a backwater near the main Mississippi River channel. The sun finally broke through the overcast skies providing a colorful sunset drawing out Pied-billed Grebes, Mallard and Wood Ducks, Great Blue Herons, Ring-billed Gulls, American Robins and House Finches.

Day 3: After checking out of the GrandStay by 8:30a.m., we drove a short distance to tour the Nature Place nature center at Myrick Park where we met up with Scott Lee president of the Friends of Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge. Again, in light rain we embarked on the 1.5 mile Marsh Trail recording 34 species. This diverse habitat revealed a variety of waterfowl adding Trumpeter Swan, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, American Widgeon, Ring-necked Duck, Hooded Merganser, American Coot and Common Merganser to our trip list. Songbirds included a Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Chipping, House and Song Sparrow, Common Grackle, Northern Cardinal, Dark-eyed Junco and finally a lone warbler, Yellow-rumped!

The field trip concluded driving north to the Trempealeau National Wildlife Reserve. Amazingly, this was the only leg of the trip our caravan got separated. We had a good laugh over the "lost group" as they arrived at the rendezvous site thanks to Google Maps before the leaders! As luck would have it, again, the drizzle continued into the afternoon. Only Bufflehead, White-breasted Nuthatch and Brown Thrasher rounded out our trip to 58 species. While some of the group decided to head home, several of us enjoyed conversations with the nature center staff and found items to purchase.

Kudos to everyone in the group for staying positive despite the persistent drizzle, for being well prepared, and for providing their own bag lunches so we could stay on schedule. A special thanks to Duanne and Ann Swift for researching accommodations and birding sites, proposing the schedule, making dinner reservations and guiding us smoothly through the trip. Thanks, too, to Scott Lee for joining and leading us on Day 3. Overall, we all enjoyed this kick-off to the DCBC 2024 birding season!

Recap of the Up North Hammerheads Participation in the Great Wisconsin Birdathon

By Sarah Besadny, Team Captain

Our Bird Club participates in the Great Wisconsin Birdathon as the Up North Hammerheads (a nod to our Club's logo of the Pileated Woodpecker). The Great Wisconsin Birdathon is an event sponsored by the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin to raise money to support various bird protection initiatives. Teams pick a day to bird between April 15th and June 15th. The main goal is to raise money but it's also a fun challenge to spot as many species of birds as possible during the birdathon day.

We had originally scheduled our birdathon day for Monday, May 20th. Well, May 20th was forecast to be quite rainy so the birdathon was postponed to May 28th our rain date. Someone please remind me not to call our back-up date a "rain date" when we schedule our birdathon day next year. I think calling it a "rain date" might jinx the day and actually bring on the rain! Rescheduling our day unfortunately that meant that several people could no longer bird with us. As May 28th approached, the forecasts had a slight chance of rain between the hour of 5:00 and 6:00 a.m. That didn't seem to be an issue since the chance of rain was small and we weren't starting our day together until 6:00 a.m. The team gathered in the parking lot of Powell Tribal, our starting location, and quickly realized it was EXTREMELY buggy so we put on bug spray, bug shirts and hightailed it to a more open area hoping for a breeze. We birded down to Chewelah Lake and were happy to pick up quite a few species. Just as we returned to the parking lot, the skies opened and it started raining. Rats! That wasn't in the forecast! This team didn't seem too phased by the rain so we all got out of our cars at Sherman Lake but between the rain and the mosquitoes, it was pretty miserable. On to Powell Vista. There was still a steady rain when we got to the parking area so some folks decided to hunker down in their cars but others grabbed rain gear and umbrellas (not an easy thing to use when you're birding!) and headed out the dike roads. We picked up quite a few species there so it was definitely worth slogging through the rain.



From left to right: Judy Cassady, Linda Dunn,
Jon Cassady and Mark Westphal

The rain stopped on our way to the Manitowish Waters Airport area and held off while we birded around the Presque Isle Ponds ... and even held off while we ate a picnic lunch at the North Trout Lake boat landing. It rained/threatened rain the rest of the afternoon as we hit our remaining birding spots: Cathedral Point, Allequash Lake, Vandercook Road, the fish hatchery on Hwy J and then wrapping up our day in Minocqua at about 6:00p.m.. We were somewhat soggy, very bug bitten but also elated to have tallied 94 species of birds and having enjoyed a day together. Thank you to our dauntless team of birders: Donna Roche, Mark Westphal, Linda Dunn, Jon and Judy Cassady, Mike Peczynski and to Debby Wilson who was able to join the group for the afternoon.



From left to right: Mike Peczynski, Donna Roche, Linda Dunn,
Debby Wilson, Judy and Jon Cassady

Our team raised \$2,110! Many thanks to all who supported our team with donations and encouragement. FYI, as of the date I wrote this article the Great Wisconsin Birdathon has raised \$113,700. A big win for birds!!

Up North Hammerheads: 2024 Birdathon Species List – 94 Species

Canada Goose	Bald Eagle	Brown Thrasher	Northern Parula
Trumpeter Swan	Broad-winged Hawk	European Starling	Magnolia Warbler
Wood Duck	Belted Kingfisher	Eastern Bluebird	Blackburnian Warbler
Blue-winged Teal	Red-bellied Woodpecker	Veery	Yellow Warbler
Mallard	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	Hermit Thrush	Chestnut-sided Warbler
Ring-necked Duck	Hairy Woodpecker	American Robin	Black-throated Blue
Hooded Merganser	Northern Flicker	House Finch	Pine Warbler
Wild Turkey	Pileated Woodpecker	Purple Finch	Yellow-rumped Warbler
Pied-billed Grebe	Eastern Kingbird	American Goldfinch	Black-throated Green Warbler
Rock Pigeon	Eastern Wood-Pewee	Chipping Sparrow	Scarlet Tanager
Mourning Dove	Alder Flycatcher	White-throated Sparrow	Nothern Cardinal
Chimney Swift	Least Flycatcher	Savannah Sparrow	Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	Eastern Phoebe	Song Sparrow	Indigo Bunting
Virginia Rail	Blue-headed Vireo	Lincoln's Sparrow	
Sora	Red-eyed Vireo	Swamp Sparrow	
Sandhill Crane	Blue Jay	Red-winged Blackbird	
Killdeer	American Crow	Brown-headed Cowbird	
Spotted Sandpiper	Common Raven	Common Grackle	
Ring-billed Gull	Black-capped Chickadee	Ovenbird	
Black Tern	Tree Swallow	Northern Waterthrush	
Common Loon	Barn Swallow	Golden-winged Warbler	
American Bittern	Cedar Waxwing	Black-and-white Warbler	
Great Blue Heron	Red-breasted Nuthatch	Nashville Warbler	
Green Heron	White-breasted Nuthatch	Mourning Warbler	
Turkey Vulture	Winter Wren	Common Yellowthroat	
Osprey	Sedge Wren	American Redstart	
Northern Harrier	Gray Catbird	Cape May Warbler	

DC Bird Club Thursday Outings - Fall 2023 and Early Summer 2024

Recap of Outings with Some Photos of the Birders!

Article and Photos by Donna Roche

I missed getting the last outings of 2023 into an earlier issue of BIRD SONGS, so I am including the last Thursday outings from 2023 and the first part of 2024 Outing RECAPS and PHOTOS in this article!!

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 I was there or not, 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 in the photos!



The Recap of October 5, 2023 outing to Thunder Lake in Three Lakes with our group that included 10 club members and 2 guests. It was a great outing! Our guests and our leader, Frank S. were at the parking area and ready to kick off the morning with a lot of information about Thunder Lake Wildlife Area including the special designation of Rice Lake as a State Natural Area. Ron Eckstein, retired

WDNR wildlife biologist had lots of facts and stories about the natural history of the Area. Curt Rollman, the current manager of Thunder Lake and other Oneida County areas brought us up to date on the challenges of management today. It was so interesting. They joined us for the 1 mile trail walk and continued the talk while we found a few birds including jays and blackbirds flying over, a few sparrows and a bittern giving us brief shows.

Later, we drove our cars towards the end of Rice Lake Road for a walk. Here, we continued to find sparrows and got distant looks at the ducks on Rice. We had been pleased to see eagles and a harrier fly over, but were surprised and grateful for the long look we got of a Peregrine Falcon! It was the best look I've ever had... what a bird. It did take off from its high perch in a dead snag and our last look was of the bird in diving wing position. We'll never know if she got her target this time, but there were lots more possible ducks for lunch.

*Our visits to Thunder Lake have always been accompanied with some sort of rain event and this one was no exception, but it was just some brief light showers and a partial rainbow. Thanks so much to Frank for arranging the 'event' and for keeping the eBird list of **19 species**.*



The Recap of October 12, 2023 outing to Wausau. *We've had some very cold, windy, rainy visits to Wausau, but this one was dry, partly sunny, and got comfortable! Our group of 7 drove to Bluegill Park with no expectations of many birds. Maybe the fact that there were literally no hunters and camouflaged boats were clues that although there were Mallards in the park pond... there weren't ducks to hunt! Our walk around the pond and park was very nice and we did find a*

few bird species. Our high point was a nice view of a Cooper's Hawk. From here, we went on to the Rookery. We were very pleased to find another bonanza of American Coots as we had last year... a real COVERT or COVER of them. We also found several Pied-billed Grebes and some geese. Then... on to the museum where there were lots more birds for sure!! The exhibit was great with a major display of new, antique, large and tiny wood-carved bird decoys. At lunch later, we commented that although the birds on the hike were few and our group was small, the day was very enjoyable and a total success!! We hope to keep it on our scheduled outings.

*Carne A. kept our eBird lists with **15 species...** thank you.*



Recap of October 19, 2023 - Ashland day trip. *Tim O. our leader, member Colleen M. and her friend Tom joined us, Jon and Judy C., Linda D. (back to Madison now) for my photo. David W. missed the photo taking, birded with us and had met up with us early in the day to locate the RARE bird. Thank you for your 'perfect' photo of the Tropical Kingbird which is in a separate email! It's a LIFER for the club! Just so you understand, Jon, Judy, Linda and I did not know anything about a RARE BIRD in Ashland until we arrived to meet Tim at Bayview Park. As soon as he announced the news, we were back in our car and drove to the Ore Dock area. Here we found David and a few other folks. I actually heard the bird sing before I saw it and I knew what it was. What a terrific find!! The Tropical Kingbird has been seen rarely in WI, but is considered 'accidental' to the Great Lakes. The bird continued to sing as it flew from tree top to tree top. It also moved to the shrub border of the path we've walked in the past from the fish shanties.*

Colleen and Tom joined us and a little later we started to concentrate on our planned objectives -- migrating waterfowl. We were not disappointed. Although the weather wasn't great for us, it surely was for the birds in the bay. I believe that the other species we found that are new ones for our yearly tally are Black Scoter,

*Bonaparte's Gull, Snow Bunting and maybe American Tree Sparrow. It was great to see so many ducks relatively close for good scoping! Donna R. kept the eBird lists... not one of our club's great eBirders but, we were 7 participants and **30 species***



Recap of October 26, 2023 - Powell Marsh Vista

I have seen photos and heard tales about birders, REAL birders, who no matter how difficult the situation, get out there and bird!! Never did I think that I would experience so many 'situations' as our club has this year with cold and rainy weather and insects. But we have and our last outing of 2023 was probably the most challenging! It rained, it poured, it was foggy and hard to see through binoculars and scope. Who would get out of their cars and walk the dike??

*You guessed it! There was a group of birders who showed up and walked through sometimes 2" of water on the dike trail to see what birds were as hardy and persistent as they were! **The attached photo will identify the ones who did it.*

We didn't find a lot of birds, but we enjoyed seeing every one of them! We did find 3 species of duck and a couple of shorebirds. We hope that the lone Horned Lark was able to fly better when it got drier. The largest number of birds was the American Tree Sparrows taking advantage of late fall seeds and the cover that the vegetation offered. Thank you, Carne A. for keeping our eBird list.

Now, we'll jump to spring 2024! This year there will be many volunteer leaders for our Thursday Outings. Let's get started!



Thank you, Lori R, for leading the first outing of the 2024 season at Powell Marsh on Thursday, May 2. Lori did a great job! We all had a good birding morning starting with a pair of loons and many ducks on the still water of the first pool, a swan on a nest, a number of cranes calling from the grasses and, of course, snipe, hawks and eagles flying overhead. Lori took us along the Vista dike and then we backtracked for a look along the east side of the Main Flowage where we found a number of sparrows and warblers. Ed M. walked to the bird blind and reported his birds from there! Fun!

Thanks to Carne for keeping eBird lists and to the group for the nice 'wrap up' at the end of the outing.

NO Photo at Willow Flowage.... Boo, hoo ☹️

Recap May 9th, 2024 at Willow Flowage: Once again, Lori R. took charge of the birding group. I really think she enjoyed these two leading experiences by offering to lead again next year! Thank you, Lori. The group enjoyed good birding walking around the edges of the large parking lot. We found several species of migrating warblers, evidence of breeding behaviors, and general local birds here and along the Nature Trail. Highlights were Golden-winged Warbler, Eastern Towhee, and nesting of American Robin and Black-capped Chickadee. Thank you, Liz S. for keeping the species list. ***We were 11 participants and 32 species.***



Recap of May 18th, 2024 outing to Marshall Wildlife Conservation Area, Lac du Flambeau. Good rain gear and even an umbrella are important birding equipment because if you think that the DCBC doesn't go birding when it's raining.... You'd be missing out!! Six DC birders met our leader, Frank Schroyer, and Ed Marshall at the trailhead. Ed gave the group a brief talk about his history with the property and Frank talked about the value of the property to the land trust, posterity and to the public. Just like a bunch of kids, we walked in the rain shower through the woods of birch, maple and hemlock to the overlook from a nice pier. We heard a few birds, mostly Ovenbirds and saw a number of species from the pier. The very pleasant walk and views were well worth the hour we spent here. This spot is open to the public – come out and take an hour or more time to enjoy Marshall WCA! Thank you, Frank for leading the group here, finding birds and doing a little 'botantizing'!
Thank you to David W. for keeping eBird lists.
7 participants and 14 species





Recap of May 23rd - Hwys 47 and 51 Intersection and Little Turtle Flowage. Wow! What a great day for birding. Carne A. led a large group (15 including John Bates who joined us to check out 'his' birds) along 47. We also had 2 new club members, Stephany and Gene, with us for the morning. We spent 45 minutes here and identified 27 species of birds before heading to Little Turtle Flowage. We really enjoyed an even better number of bird species with a list of 45, including Black Terns, Eastern Bluebirds and 9 species of warblers.

Thank you to Carne, Dave, and Mary for keeping eBird lists.

Fifteen participants with 27 species at Manitowish and 45 species at Little Turtle Flowage



Recap of May 30th outing - Once again, it was a great 'birdie' day for the club outing at the Vandercook area in Arbor Vitae. We spent most of the 3+ hours of

birding at a trail off of a gravel road that has a thick stand of aspen, a walk into the deciduous woods and at the open-air intersection to these areas. The Birdathon group had a wet time here on Tuesday, but both days provided many species of birds. It was a challenge to get views of the target birds, but with persistence many of the 16 birders saw Golden-winged Warbler, American Redstart and Mourning Warbler. Thanks to Sarah B.'s great ear and super knowledge of bird songs and calls, we also heard tiny bits of Black-throated Blue and Eastern Towhee. Our newer members also helped to spot an American Woodcock. On the drive back to the meet-up parking area, we stopped to view a lovely open scene of a large overflow channel with large pines in the background. We spotted an eagle's nest with 2 young in the distance, heard a Northern Waterthrush in the nearby shrubby areas and Baltimore Orioles and nest in a willow on the lakeside of the road. Nice ending to a great outing.

Sarah B. reported a list of 44 species on eBird!! Sarah also led the 16 happy participants...many thanks!



Recap of June 6, 2024 outing to the Ashland area. *The drive north on 51 and west on Hwy 2 through Ashland to Prentice Park was beautifully green with large displays of Lupine flowers along the roadsides. The sky was blue with white puffy clouds. It was great to meet up with our leaders, Colleen M. and Tim O. and talk about the plan for the day. Colleen brought goodies to start the day right! It was all good for about 1/2 hour of birding, but then, the day got overcast and we had a light rain on and off. That did not stop a good assortment of bird species from songs and calls and flitting from one side of the path to the other. The Baltimore Oriole, however, was the different guy. We followed his lovely song for quite a while before finding him in all his glory where he continued to sit and sing.... a nice treat! After a couple of hours of birding here, we moved to the Long Bridge area and took a walk along the nicely maintained pathway for redstarts, yellow and chestnut-sided warblers, plus ducks and geese. We did not bird along the beach as the wind was keeping birds away. Carne writes: "From Ashland 5 members optimistically followed Tim to the site near Marengo where the Crested Caracara had been*

consistently observed for almost 2 weeks. Unfortunately, intermittent rain showers continued and the CRCA was not seen. It had been last seen the previous day before violent storms moved into that area. It has not been seen since. A couple of the group patiently waited 2 hours before heading home. It was disappointing to miss this rarity to add to the club life list by one day."

Thank you, Colleen and Tim, for a great day of birding... it is always educational and fun to bird with you! We learned that at this time of year, large groups of Canada Geese gather and fly north to 'molting grounds' where they are safer as they can't fly while molting their feathers!

There were 10 birders. Carne A. reported 39 Species of birds at Prentice Park, 18 species at the Long Bridge trail area, and 9 species at Marengo, WI area.



Recap of Dove Road, Lake Tomahawk outing on June 13, 2024: *Carne A. led the group last Thursday on a perfect June morning... no rain! It is always interesting to see how this area has changed and grown into a thick web of aspen and other trees. It's very hard to see into the growth. We were greeted with the song of the Rose-breasted Grosbeak. As we got to the first intersection, it looked like the opening to the left, which last year had been impassable, had been cleared to provide a walkable path. We heard White-throated Sparrows and Yellow Warblers. When we got back to the main path, a Brown Thrasher could be heard and we saw him quite high in a tree. From here to the end of the trail, we heard a number of Chestnut-sided Warblers and Red-eyed Vireos. It was about here that we realized for sure that we were not being bothered by mosquitos at all! Astounding! There were dragonflies, but no mosquitos. Bird activity was not robust, but we totaled 6 warblers and a variety of other species. From the Dove Road area, Carne took us the short distance to the Newbold Memorial Park along the Wisconsin River.*

During the next 1/2 hour, the group found 13 species, some new ones for the day including a Northern Cardinal!

*Thanks so much for a terrific birding morning, Carne! **Eight Participants with 23 species along Dove trail and 13 species at Newbold Park.***



Recap of June 20, 2024 outing Powell Marsh Vista parking area. *Seven club members enjoyed a cool, dry and nicely overcast morning walking the Vista dike and doing a little out and back on 2 trails, one ending along the prairie restoration area. Birds seemed to be enjoying the weather, particularly some yellow-colored warblers who perched in good view and sang and sang! We got good views of a bittern landing in tall grasses and then doing its 'statuary' pose. The Vista pool was empty of birds in the water, but several species were flying above. We were surprised to hear so many snipe at this time and had good views of one flying above us. We were delighted to see Black Terns flying over the short reeds dipping down into them to collect some insects, I'm sure. One kingbird flew low to the water in this same area and displayed 'kiting' (the word we decided best described its actions). We walked the area that Mark W. reported a Yellow-headed Blackbird a few days ago but didn't find it. There were 2 families of swans and 2 of geese. We weren't able to see if the cranes had any family... A walk on the last day of spring in 2024 at Powell Marsh was perfect to enjoy the VISTAS of lush greens and abundant flowers in addition to some great birds!*

Donna R. led the 7 members (Ed and M.E. are not in photo) and reported 23 species of birds.



Recap of June 27, 2024 Biking or Hiking Outing in Natural Lakes with Debbie and Steve leading. *The only disappointment for this day was that several of the Club's hikers and bikers were not able to join us for a variety of good reasons. Those of us that did were treated to a perfect day and very active and abundant birding plus the hospitality of the Simeks. There were 3 bikers and 4 hikers who started out at Bald Eagle Park after a look around at the wild flower prairie planting in the park. Many of the birds seen were repeated with both groups. But, as last year, **the biking group had a slightly larger species list with 34 species to 26.** There were 12 species of warblers which was, I'm pretty sure, the largest number of any outing this year. We gathered on the Simek's deck and had ice cream cones with various flavors to enjoy and the biking group were able to pick up a few more bird species!! Thanks so much to Debbie and Steve... it was great and lots of fun.*

That's ALL for now....

There are four more months of 2024 Thursday outings.

Hope to see YOU out there.... BIRDING!!

A Message from Judy Cassady to her "Bird Club Family"

Jon and I appreciate all the good wishes and prayers, the e-cards, the cards that arrived in the mailbox over the past few months since my two weeks at Marshfield Medical Center in December and the removal of the aneurysm from my carotid artery 4 weeks ago (just an overnight). I am well now. The talented surgeons who saved my life don't need to see me again for 6 months which will be just a check-up. Your encouragement and concern means so much. Thank you!

Life List Quarterly: 2nd Quarter 2024

By Sarah Besadny

As we all know, different habitats support different species of birds. Therefore, if you want to see many different kinds of birds, it's important to go to places with different habitats. The Discovery Center Bird Club has travelled to many different habitats and different places in the state already this year and the Club's Annual List reflects that with a total of 134 species seen so far this year and 109 of those added in the second quarter of 2024. Carne Andrews led a group of birders to the LaCrosse area in mid-April and on that trip alone 46 additional species were added since the Ashland trip in February. Some of the species reported on the LaCrosse trip are species we don't see every year such as the Tufted Titmouse, American White Pelican, Field Sparrow and House Sparrow.

The Club has seen an amazing diversity of warblers already this year, only missing a few from a list of likely possibilities, such as a Canada Warbler. The Club has never reported a Connecticut Warbler. This species is in steep decline but has been reported in Vilas County in the past. Might we stumble upon a Connecticut Warbler or more likely a Canada Warbler on one of our Thursday outings? Only time will tell.

Photo Journal

Photos and Captions by Mark Westphal



An Osprey delivers a choice branch to spruce up a nesting platform



An American Goldfinch gives its best "tough guy" impression.

This Cedar Waxwing feasts on early spring blossoms



A Killdeer as spotted at the Little Turtle Flowage.



A Red-tailed Hawk rests on a fence as it watches for prey.