

The Lake Flyer

Newsletter of Winnebago Audubon

April-May 2022

All programs and activities are open to the public.

Vol. 43, No. 5

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Editor: Janet Wissink • 920-216-1172 • winnebagoaudubon@gmail.com

Check our website for up-to-date information: www.winnebagoaudubon.org

BIRD COUNTS

See page 4 for details.

Sat., April 9: **Crane Count:**
Sign up now!

Sat., May 14: **May Bird Count**

BIRD WALKS

See page 2 for details.

Sat., April 23: **Bird Walk on the Wiouwash**

Wed., May 4: **Woodcock Walk at Coughlin Natural Area**

Wed., May 18: **Warbler Walk at Sawyer Creek Nature Trail**

Sat., May 21: **Big Birding Bash at Uihlein WPA**

OSHKOSH BIRD FEST

Oshkosh Bird Fest



Friday, May 6

5:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Oshkosh Masonic Center
204 Washington Ave.
Downtown Oshkosh First Friday

Student Bird Art Exhibit

plus
licensed bird rehabilitator,
Ann Rosenberg with

Fran, a Great Horned Owl

Come on downtown to see the amazing
bird art created by students of the
Oshkosh Area School District.

For up-to-date information on Oshkosh Bird Fest,
check our website: oshkoshbirdfest.com
and like us on Facebook. [Click here.](#)

Saturday, May 7

6:00 am - Noon

Menominee Park, Shelter 1

A morning of birdy activities for the whole family
to celebrate International Migratory Bird Day
and the fact that Oshkosh is a BIRD CITY!

6 am - Noon: **Big Sit**, a unique way to bird watch
with Anita Carpenter

6:30 am: **Bird Walk** with Kelli Bahls/Tom Ziebell

7:00 am - 10:30am: **Bird Banding Demonstration**
with Dick Nikolai

8:00 am: **Bird Walk** with Kelli Bahls/Tom Ziebell

10:00 am - Noon: **Kid's Activities**

10:00 am - Noon: **Live Birds of Prey**
by Aves Wildlife Alliance

NEW THIS YEAR:

Elektra Cruise has generously offered to provide free,
20-minute boat rides along the shoreline on their
emission-free, silent-running electric boat!
Weather permitting. Time to be determined.

BIRD WALKS



Chipping Sparrow. Photo by Kelli Bahls.

Bird Walk on the Wiouwash Trail (Marine Drive Section)

**Saturday, April 23, 2022
7:00 am**

The southern section of the Wiouwash Trail consists of 21.8 miles of crushed stone trail between Oshkosh and Hortonville. The Oshkosh section begins at Carl E. Steiger Park adjacent to the UW-Oshkosh campus, runs northwest along the Fox River, and crosses over Hwy 41 at the north end of the Butte Des Morts Bridge. The trail is widely utilized by bikers, joggers, horseback riders, and other outdoor enthusiasts – including birders!

On this field trip outing, we will search for spring migrants along the Marine Drive and Riverside Cemetery section of the Wiouwash Trail. Expected sightings include 5-6 species of waterfowl, 3-4 sparrow species, and the potential for early yellow-rumped warbler sightings.

Directions to 2700-2832 Marine Dr, Oshkosh: from Hwy 41, take exit 120 for US-45 South/Algoma Blvd. Continue on Algoma Blvd for 0.1 miles. At the roundabout, take the 1st exit onto Lake Butte Des Morts Drive. Turn left onto Marine Drive. You can park perpendicular to the road on the righthand side or parallel to the road on the lefthand side. 🐦

Woodcock Walk at Coughlin Community Natural Area

**Wednesday, May 4, 2022
7:15 pm**

James P. Coughlin Center
625 E. County Road Y, Oshkosh

Join us in search of the American Woodcock as it performs its spectacular sky dance at dusk. We will also look for other spring migrants and resident birds. The Coughlin Community Natural Area has walking paths through 35 acres of restored habitat.

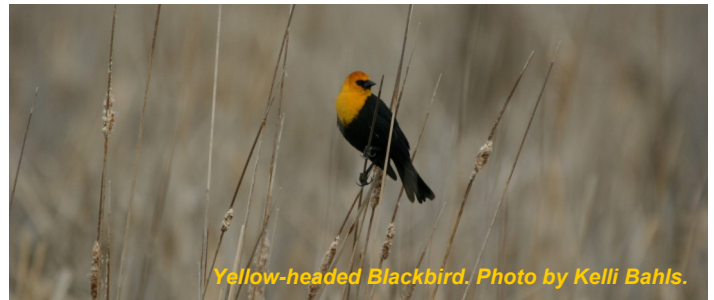
We will meet in the east parking area of the James P. Coughlin Center near the Trail Head. 🐦

Warbler Walk at Sawyer Creek Nature Trail

**Wednesday, May 18, 2022
7:30 am**

Join us to look for spring migrants, including colorful warblers, vireos, thrushes, flycatchers, orioles, tanagers, and resident birds from the Sawyer Creek Nature Trail. The well-maintained trail will take us along Sawyer Creek and through an oak savannah woodland.

Directions: From the intersection of Hwy 41 and Hwy 21, go east on Oshkosh Ave. (Hwy 21) to the first stop light. Turn right on N. Westfield St. and continue until you cross a bridge. Immediately after you cross the bridge turn left into the parking area. We will meet at the north end of this parking area. 🐦



Yellow-headed Blackbird. Photo by Kelli Bahls.

Big Birding Bash Field Trip Uihlein Marsh WPA

**Saturday, May 21, 2022
7:30 am - 10:30 am**

The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology's mission is to promote the enjoyment, study, and conservation of Wisconsin's birds. While their 2022 convention has unfortunately been cancelled, WSO is in the process of coordinating a new statewide event – the Big Birding Bash.

The Big Birding Bash will take place on Saturday, May 21. The event will feature field trips, bird hikes, and big days hosted by local individuals, bird clubs, Audubon chapters, and other bird-minded organizations. The goal is to collectively see how many species of birds can be found across the state.

To further the WSO's Big Birding Bash goal, Winnebago Audubon will be leading a field trip at Uihlein Marsh WPA on May 21 from 7:30-10:30 a.m. More than 40 species are expected at this location in the spring, including Yellow-headed Blackbird, Least Bittern, and Common Gallinule.

Participants are welcome to walk the first section of the trail or hike the full 3-mile loop. Note that the ground may be uneven beyond the midway point while traversing the dikes. Sturdy hiking shoes or rubber knee boots are recommended.

Directions to Uihlein WPA: From Oshkosh, take Hwy 44 South. Turn right on Hwy 91 West. Continue for approximately 8 miles and turn left on County Road M (Deer Drive). Continue for about 1 ½ miles. The parking area will be on your left adjacent to Osborne Road. 🐦



Gull Able's Travels

One of the pleasures of birdwatching is the unexpected sighting. It could be an early-arriving, red-winged blackbird or a flyover by a large flock of cooing tundra swans. Perhaps it's a dozen white-winged crossbills dining on cones of a white spruce.

At this year's vernal equinox, designated as the first day of spring, Lake Winnebago was still frozen in winter. Miller's Bay was about 95% ice-covered with a narrow strip of open water along a portion of the settling basin's shoreline. Mostly common goldeneyes and common mergansers crowded in this small spot of open water.

In the middle of Miller's Bay was another small open area where three tundra swans and a few Canada geese floated. It was the bird standing statuesque on the edge of the ice that immediately caught my attention. This gull was huge with an obvious solid black back and wings. Its white head featured a heavy yellow bill. Could it be?! Yes, it had to be a great black-backed gull, a species rarely seen here.

This bird was a long way from home. Great black-backed gulls are coastal residents of the North Atlantic Ocean. They are found and nest from the mid-Atlantic states north to the Canadian maritime provinces and on to Greenland. They are slowly expanding their range down the Atlantic coast and into the eastern Great Lakes. In winter, they may move south along the coast as far as Florida.

However, individuals don't always know their boundaries or directions with single birds appearing sporadically (mostly in winter) along the Lake Michigan shoreline. It's not too long a flight for a great black-backed gull to make a surprise visit to another big lake—Lake Winnebago.

As the largest gull in the United States, great black-backed gulls, *Larus Marinus*, measure 30-inches long with a wingspan of 5.5 feet. Compare its size to that of our two common gull residents—herring and ring-billed gulls. With a gray back and wings, white head and solid yellow bill, herring gulls measure 25-inches long with a wingspan just under five feet. The still smaller and more numerous ring-billed gulls, also with gray backs and wings and white head, sport a black ring around their bills. Ring-bills




Great Black-backed Gull.
Photo: Mark Eden/Great Backyard Bird Count

measure 17.5-inches long with a wingspan of four feet. These two gulls could be confused with each other, especially in flight.

Another gull to watch for is a somewhat regular visitor. In May, Bonaparte's gulls may pause along Lake Winnebago as they migrate from overwintering sites along the gulf coast to nesting grounds in Canada. These gulls are small, measuring 13.5-inches long with a wingspan under three feet. They have black heads in breeding plumage but some individuals may still be in winter or non-breeding plumage showing white heads and a black spot behind each eye. When fishing, these gulls fly and dive like terns. When flying, they display a characteristic white flash on the leading edge of each wing tip.

To further an interest in gull-watching, be on the lookout for other stray gulls that may pay us a visit. Although identification may be challenging, it can be rewarding. Species to look for include: little gull, Franklin's gull, Iceland gull, glaucous gull and lesser black-backed gull. Iceland, glaucous, and great and lesser-backed gulls are more likely seen in winter. So look at gulls year-round.

I returned to Miller's Bay the following day. More open water appeared. I could not relocate the gull. I wasn't disappointed because this one-day wanderer was a thrill to see. Happy gull-watching to all! 

From the Quiz Master:

I'm a ground-hugging spring wildflower with 2 heart-shaped hairy leaves. My red to brownish flower hugs the ground and is often hidden. I make an excellent ground cover. Whoooo am I?

(Look closely to find the answer in this newsletter.)



BIRD COUNTS

Sign Up Now to Participate!

Annual Midwest Crane Count

Saturday, April 9, 2022 - 5:30-7:30 am

If you haven't already volunteered, now is the time. We are still looking for counters to cover the 45 designated sites in Winnebago County. Please tell your family and friends about this count.

Over 1,000 volunteers participate in this spring survey which supports the International Crane Foundation's mission to conserve the world's 15 species of cranes and the natural communities on which they depend. There are about 80 whooping cranes in the reintroduced population in Wisconsin and counters have a chance of sighting one!

Best reasons to be a crane counter:

- Doing something a little crazy is fun • You can do something good for the environment once a year without becoming a bird-nut.
- If you are a student, it counts as volunteer hours. You can put it on your resume.
- Crane Counting 101 is easy and it is all explained on the data sheet that you use on Saturday morning.
- You'll learn to speak crane-ese. • It's a good excuse to watch a sunrise once per year. Don't be late – the early bird gets to count more cranes.
- Bring your binoculars, camera, and other gadgets. You'll be surprised what other wildlife you see that early.
- If the weather is nasty, you can count from inside the car with the heater on.
- Winnebago County is a great place to survey because we rank high in the number crane sightings.
- When finished you have a great excuse to get a hearty breakfast and then have your whole Saturday ahead of you.

Signing up is easy! **Contact Winnebago County Coordinator Shannon Davis-Foust, 920-420-7426 or winnebagobirds@gmail.com to secure your site.**

You can find the data sheet and more information at the International Crane Foundation website: <https://savingcranes.org/education/annual-midwest-crane-count/>
For additional details: <https://www.winnebagoaudubon.org/bird-counts> 🐦



Here's an excuse to bird all day long.

May Bird Count

Saturday, May 14, 2022

On the annual May bird count, observers record all birds seen or heard in Winnebago County on one day (24 hour period). The Winnebago County May bird count has been conducted every year since 1966. The final results are submitted to the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology and eBird.

Anyone can participate in the bird count. The amount of time that you wish to commit is up to you. You can watch your feeders/yard for an hour or all day. You can walk, bike, or boat an area. For the more dedicated birder, surveying one of the 30 county areas is also an option.

WHAT IS REQUIRED?

- Record the number of each species seen or heard (including Starlings, House Sparrows, etc.)
- Record time spent watching
- Record distance traveled
- Record names of all observers

If you do plan on participating PLEASE contact Tom Ziebell at ctiebell@new.rr.com or [920-312-1976](tel:920-312-1976) and inform him of the location that you intend to cover. This is to reduce duplication of birds counted.

For more information visit our website winnebagoaudubon.org and look under Birds/Bird Counts or contact Tom Ziebell. 🐦

Field Trip Report:

GBBC Outing at Jefferson Park & Heckrodt

On Saturday February 19, weather conditions were best described with three adjectives: clear, cold, and windy. The temperature hovered around 4 degrees, and the WNW winds persisted at 10-15 miles per hour throughout the morning. A layer of fog covered much of the open water at Jefferson Park, greatly reducing our field of view to the east while allowing moderate views to the south and west.

COMMON GOLDENEYES and REDHEADS were the primary waterfowl species spread out across the visible portion of the river channel. A few COMMON MERGANSERS swam along the edge of the ice on the opposite shore, and at least two SCAUP rested among the REDHEADS. A DOWNY WOODPECKER and GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET were briefly seen when our group of six converged a little further to the west.

After about half an hour in the frigid wind, we made our way to Heckrodt. Here the feeder stations were hopping with activity – COMMON REDPOLLS, PINE SISKINS, DARK-EYED JUNCOS, and AMERICAN GOLDFINCHES were observed in good numbers with other typical backyard visitors. We followed one of the trails and observed two RED-TAILED HAWKS by Lopas Pond. The second set of feeder stations was relatively quiet, with the primary visitors being BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEES and WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCHES. As we headed around the last few bends in the trail to the parking area, another half a dozen COMMON REDPOLLS were sighted in a stand of river birch trees.

The group spent about 2 hours in the field and sighted approximately 24 species of birds. While the weather was less than ideal, it was a great morning for a short hike and collecting observation data to contribute to the annual Great Backyard Bird Count initiative. Hope to see you on the next outing! - Kelli Bahls 🐦

Winnebago Audubon Society

extends a sincere **thank you** for your support which allows us to continue to provide positive experiences in nature for our community.

Jennifer Baerwald	John & Pat Nichols
Leigh Billings-Hale	Thomas Perzentka
David Gay	Laura Ramseier
<i>In Memory of Carroll Gay</i>	Jeff Rill & Terry Kennedy
Boyd & Karen Gibbs	<i>In Memory of Russ & Kay Rill</i>
Robert Gluth	Rommelfanger Family
James Harmon	Fund of the Oshkosh Area
<i>In Memory of Mary Harmon</i>	Community Foundation
Sharon Janty	Audrey Ruedinger
Gene Jeske	Dexter Schaub
<i>In Memory of Bob Deputy</i>	Richard & Mary Slavik
Kristin Kauth	Dennis Smith
Cynthia Kohles	Jeff Smoot
Kurt Kronberg	Karen Syverson
Carole Meton	Doris Thomas
<i>In Memory of Don Meton</i>	John & Donna VanBuecken
Margaret Meyer	<i>In Memory of Katherine Rill</i>
David Moon	Valerie Williams

Meet Our Board

Member: Carmen Meuret



Hi there! You may recognize me as the former and inaugural author of our previous column, A Kid's Eye View. I've had the joyous opportunity to be involved in activities and connected with Winnebago Audubon for the past 15 years— and now I have the privilege of joining your Board!

My love for birds, plant life, and nature in general began at a young age. I've always found the art of birdwatching, gardening, and simply enjoying the beauty in our natural world a very mindful, grounding, and humbling experience. Through Audubon's many events/programs over the years, from monarch tagging to frog night hikes to Bird Fest, I have come to appreciate the many valuable lessons and whimsy the great outdoors has to offer us. As our world becomes increasingly hectic and complex, I find great hope and comfort in turning to our feathered friends. Winnebago Audubon has played a significant role in my life over the past several years and I am grateful for the chance to educate and cultivate our next generation of nature appreciators – much like Winnebago Audubon did for me so many years ago. 🐦

Wildginger, Asarum canadense

Unplug, Untie and Unwind...

Elektra Cruise offers a unique boating experience aboard their new, 2021 Duffy 22' Sun Cruiser. It's the perfect way to enjoy a lazy summer afternoon or sunset, cruising the beautiful local waters of Oshkosh.

Their boat is **100% electric** and eco-friendly. Entertain in style and privacy while enjoying refreshments, fresh air, and the great outdoors, with zero engine noise and zero emissions! No need to fill up the gas tank because there is none!

They offer a variety of cruise options: Be your own captain and skipper the boat yourself or hire one of their friendly USCG licensed captains. They offer guided river tours and custom charters based on your itinerary. Choose a 45-minute Happy Hour, a 90-minute guided tour; or hourly, half-day, or full-day charter.

The owners of Elektra Cruise are Susan and Bob Everhard, avid boaters and nature lovers. They want to provide support for environmental non-profits, educators, researchers, and volunteers. Susan and Bob share a keen interest in protecting the unique marine environment of the Winnebago waterways.

Elektra Cruise will be offering public boat rides, starting with Oshkosh Bird Fest at Menominee Park in Oshkosh on May 7th. They will take kids and adults out for free 20-minute birdwatching trips with a USCG licensed captain. Other new events will be posted soon, such as Farmer's Market Saturday tours, starting in June.

For more information, contact Susan by email: info@elektracruise.com or on her cell phone: (305)951-3486. More information to come on their new website, www.elektracruise.com. 🐦



Elektra Cruise will provide free 20-minute birdwatching trips at Oshkosh Bird Fest on May 7, weather permitting.

Calendar of additional activities:

Details in future Newsletters, [website](#) and [Facebook](#).

Jun 4	Bohn Farms Site, tentative
Jun 23	Annual Meeting & Picnic
Summer ?	Prairie Walks
Summer ?	Clean-up at Miller's Bay Sites
Sept ?	Monarch Tagging
Sep 17	September Bird Count
Oct 8	eBird Big Day
Nov 17	Program: Benefits of Restoring the Bohn Family Farmstead
Dec 17	Christmas Bird Count



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Winnebago Audubon Society, Inc.
PO Box 184, Oshkosh, WI 54903

OFFICERS

President: Janet Wissink, 920-216-1172
winnebagoaudubon@gmail.com
Vice President: Bettie Harriman
920-233-1973 / bettievh40@gmail.com
Secretary: Zaiga Freivalds
920-233-5914 / zaigam@charter.net
Treasurer: Mike Brandel
920-233-5914 / mbrandel49@gmail.com

DIRECTORS

Kelli Bahls
920-573-2121 / kabahls@outlook.com
Anita Carpenter, 920-233-6677
Dana Hartel
920-410-7659 / raptorssp2016@gmail.com
Carmen Meuret
920-573-7832 / cjmeuret@gmail.com
Evelyn Meuret
920-573-7828 / evelynmeuret57@att.net
Dave Moon
920-235-4429 / djmoon@northnet.net

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Important Note: TEMPORARILY AWAY? Please notify us if you will be temporarily away. The post office will not forward your newsletter. If you want to receive your newsletter while at your temporary address, please notify us at winnebagoaudubon@gmail.com.

RENEWALS: Your mailing label includes your membership expiration date above your name. If you are a "Chapter Only" member the word CHAPTER will appear with the expiration date. Please renew your Chapter membership by filling out the application form below. Thank you for helping us save on the cost of renewal reminders.
If you are a member of National Audubon which automatically makes you a member of our local Chapter, NATL will appear with the expiration date. You will receive renewal notices from National or you may renew by using the form below.
If you are receiving a complimentary newsletter, COMP will appear with an expiration date. Please consider joining our Chapter or National (Dual) by using the application below.

Our Mission:

Winnebago Audubon encourages people to enjoy and protect birds, other wildlife, and their habitats through recreation, education, conservation, and restoration of the natural environment.

AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please choose one:

- \$20.00 — Local Winnebago Audubon Chapter Membership.** You receive the Winnebago Audubon Chapter newsletter.
- \$35.00 — Dual Membership (Local Winnebago Audubon Chapter AND National Audubon Membership)** You receive Winnebago Audubon Chapter newsletter and National Audubon magazine.

Make check payable to Winnebago Audubon or online at winnebagoaudubon.org.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

E-mail: _____

Chapter Code: **Z12**

Mail this form with payment to:
Audubon Membership
PO Box 184, Oshkosh, WI 54903

Word of the Day: mantle

— ornithological term for the plumage of a bird's back and wings especially on gulls. Herring gull's mantle is gray.

Welcome to Winnebago Audubon

You are invited to participate in activities of your local Winnebago Audubon chapter. It's a great way to meet like-minded people and to enjoy what nature has to offer.

A special thank you to all those who are renewing again this year as well.

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| Cristinel Ababei | Laurie Hanson |
| Mary Barbieur | Christine Hein |
| Corinne Conrad | Leann Meinen |
| Patsy Gavin | Jill Niederberger |
| Rose Goyke | Betty Redemann |
| Betty Growth | Charles Sazama |
| Thomas Haber | Wendy Suzuki |

Membership questions?
Please contact **Membership Chair** at
winnebagoaudubon@gmail.com or 920-216-1172