

The Lake Flyer

Newsletter of Winnebago Audubon

Jan-Feb 2023

All programs and activities are open to the public.

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



Owl Prowl at Shady Lane Saturday, January 14, 2023

4:00-6:00 pm

Come enjoy the Rat River Wildlife Area on this evening owl prowl. We will begin just before dusk along Shady Lane in search of Short-eared Owls. We will then listen nearby for possible Great Horned, Barred, and Screech Owls. We may drive a short distance in search of calling owls. Success will depend greatly on weather conditions, so hope for a calm evening. This outing will require minimal to no hiking. Dress warmly and bring binoculars.

Directions: Shady Lane is a county road north of Hwy 10 that crosses Hwy 76. From the intersection of Hwy 76 and Hwy 10 go north on Hwy 76 for about 0.7 mile. Turn left/west on Shady Lane. Go straight at the stop sign at Center Road. Look for parked vehicles along the marshy area of Shady Lane. 🦉

Above: Short-eared Owl. Photo by Matt Saunders.

Toward Harmony with Nature Conference

Wild Ones Fox Valley Area Chapter is hosting its 26th annual conference at UW Oshkosh Culver Family Welcome Center on Sat., Jan. 28 from 8:00 am - 4:15 pm. Join them in person or virtually for an exciting all-day program of expert speakers, exhibitors and vendors, and networking with like-minded natural landscaping enthusiasts. The keynote speaker is Stanley A. Temple, Phd who will talk about Aldo Leopold, land health and the resilience of nature. Other topics include Native Shrubs and Trees for Birds and Bees, Making Your Yard Wildlife Friendly, and much more.

To register visit TowardHarmonyWithNature.org. 🦉

Great Backyard Bird Count at Kimberly Point & Wilderness Park

Saturday, February 18, 2023

9:00-11:00 am

Interested in participating in the Great Backyard Bird Count but not sure where to start? Join us at two new locations this year – Kimberly Point and Wilderness Park in Neenah – as we search for birds, count species totals, and report our sightings to eBird. We will start at Kimberly Point at 9:00 a.m. to look for Common Goldeneye, mergansers, and other waterfowl species. Then we will head over to Wilderness Park to search for finches, woodpeckers, and other winter birds. Be sure to dress warm. See you there!

Directions to Kimberly Point: from Highway 41, take exit 132 east for Main Street Neenah. Go over the bridge and continue straight to stay on Main St. Main St turns right and becomes Wisconsin Ave. Follow Wisconsin Ave all the way to Lakeshore Ave. Turn left on Lakeshore Ave and proceed to park near the lighthouse. Address for GPS lookup: 290 Lakeshore Ave, Neenah, WI 54956.

Directions to Wilderness Park from Kimberly Point: Lakeshore Ave turns into Park Ave when you go around the bend past the lighthouse. At the stop sign, turn left on Wisconsin Ave and then turn right onto S Park Ave. Follow S Park Ave for half a mile. Wilderness Park will be on your left. Please park along the east side of the road parallel to the park. To get turned around, take a right on Chatham Ct just south of the park, follow Chatham Ct around, return to Park Ave, and finally park along the road at the destination. Address for GPS lookup: 940 S Park Ave, Neenah, WI 54956. 🦉

Below: Long-tailed Duck surrounded by Goldeneyes. Photo by Kelli Bahls.



Remembering Carla Hansen



It has been almost a year since our Chapter lost a friend and long-time board member and it is still difficult to accept. But her smiling face brings back some really great memories. Carla was presented the Meritorious Service Award in 2014 for her years of dedication to our chapter as Treasurer, Vice President, President and Director. She served as chairperson of Membership, Audubon Adventures, Birdathon, and School Programs, plus volunteered at Sullivan's Woods. She attended as many field trips and programs that she could and always brought along friends, neighbors and grandchildren. One of Carla's children shared with me that it was important to her to involve her children and grandchildren in outdoor activities. And she was always willing to take a friend of hers or the kids on these adventures.

In the spirit of her sharing attitude, and with many thanks to her generous family and friends who sent us memorial gifts totaling nearly \$10,000, Winnebago Audubon added \$10,000+ to that to establish a Field of Interest Fund at the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation called Winnebago Audubon Education Fund. The purpose of the fund is to support environmental, science-based programs such as K-12 field trips and in-classroom presentations. Scholarships and research projects, including university level, will also be considered. We are most grateful for having Carla be part of our Audubon family and for her family and friends who helped create a legacy that will carry us into the future and serve the entire community.

Donations to the Fund may be made on-line at the [Oshkosh Area Community Foundation](#) or through our Chapter [website](#) or via mail with a notation in the comments or check memo line. Thank you! 🐦

Save the Date for the Crane Count on April 15

Did you know that sandhill cranes are one of the oldest known bird species? A crane fossil structurally identical to the modern sandhill crane was found in Nebraska from the Pliocene period (5.3-2.6 million years ago). It is older by half than the earliest remains of most living species of birds.

You can support crane conservation efforts by participating in the Annual Midwest Crane Count from 5:30 to 7:30 am on Saturday, April 15, 2023.

Signing up is easy! There are 45 designated sites to count in Winnebago County. You can pick a site on-line and check with Evelyn on availability to secure the site. The sites of those who counted in 2022 will be saved until the end of March. If you are not able to count this year, please contact Evelyn so she knows your site is available.

You will find the Winnebago County site maps, data sheet and more at the International Crane Foundation website: <https://savingcranes.org/learn/annual-midwest-crane-count/>

Please contact Evelyn directly to learn more or volunteer: 920-573-7828 or evelynmeuret57@att.net. 🐦



Meet our Board Member: MaryBeth Petesch

A Wisconsinite through and through from Luxembourg/German stock I was raised with my two sisters in the town of Belgium, Wisconsin, on a small dairy farm my great grandfather John Baptist Petesch purchased in the late 1800's. My best memories were biking with my red "Schwinnie" around the farm and down to our woods where I became fascinated with little yellow birds with an interesting call. (Common yellowthroat warblers!) Active in 4-H, athletics and most every other school opportunity, I flourished in school and realized I loved biology best. (Thank you Ozaukee High School teacher Mr. Montaba!)

I pursued a BS degree from my beloved UW Stevens Point in biology, environmental/outdoor education and resource management. After two years of teaching in Boscobel, Wisconsin, I left for an eight-year adventure to teach science at the Frankfurt International School in (West) Germany. Naturally, I took advantage of the many opportunities to travel on the continent and beyond. What a tremendous way to learn about and appreciate the

amazing natural history and diverse cultures of so many places!

After my return from Germany, I pursued a master's degree at UW Madison in Curriculum and Instruction - Science Education. I met my husband in graduate school and when he took a professor position at UW Oshkosh, I explored a higher education career. Part time gigs for the biology and education departments and UW Fox Valley had me busy for a few years until I was hired as the Director of the Office of Field Experiences in 1999. After 20 years of seeking classroom placements for student teachers and certifying teaching licenses I retired – in the thick of Covid. Good timing for me and an opportunity to get more involved in causes and organizations that are important to me. I now work part-time remotely for *Educators Abroad Student Teaching* and am currently Co-President of AAUW Oshkosh and active in the Emmaus Catholic Community.

My most exciting recent experience to add is acquiring my Luxembourg passport this summer in Luxembourg City! My affection and connection to my Petesch family's homeland has now been realized. Dual citizenship might come in handy some day?!

I was honored to have been asked to serve on the board of Winnebago Audubon and hope that some of my skills and interests will help to advance the work and mission of this wonderful and important civic group. 🐦



COLORS OF WINTER

In the midst of our snowy winters, bursts of color break the monotony of a white landscape. White pines, cedars and spruce green up the northern countryside. Brownish-tan leaves of beech trees and some oaks cling to branches throughout winter. Burgundy-red stems of red-osier dogwood brighten wetlands.

Our feathered friends provide fleeting flashes of color. A solitary red head spot decorates downy and hairy woodpeckers. A red head and nape identify red-bellied woodpeckers while pileated woodpeckers display jaunty red crests.

Cardinals and red-crossbills are all-over red. Flocks of redpolls, each with a bright red breast and red cap are a delight to see. Evening grosbeaks wear yellow feathers and blues fly by as blue jays and red and white-breasted nuthatches appear.

Less obvious colors lie under the snow quilt. If you're in the northwoods, brush aside the insulating snow cover and you may discover ground-hugging evergreen perennials such as wintergreen, bearberry and trailing arbutus. Some may still bear their red or white fruits. Their adaptation to a cold climate and a short growing season is to retain their leathery leaves year round.

One of my favorite winter reds and always a delight to find is a shrub with small, flaming-red berries appropriately called winterberry, *Ilex verticillata*. Winterberry is found in the wet soils of bogs, swampy deciduous forests and along lakes of northern Wisconsin. It is a unique member of Wisconsin's native flora as it is the only holly species found in the state. (Twenty other holly species grace various habitats throughout the United States.)

Although winterberry is a holly, it does not resemble the

holly associated with Christmas. That holly, *Ilex opaca*, or American holly, has stiff, thorny, indented leaves. Winterberry's leaves look like small, oval-shaped American elm leaves about 2 inches long with teeth along its edges (serrated edges).



The many-stemmed, 8 to 10 foot tall winterberry shrubs are non-descript and may be difficult to distinguish from other shrubs when not in fruit. Winterberry flowers in early summer. Even in bloom, they may be overlooked because the greenish to yellow-white flowers are so tiny.

Another interesting feature of winterberry is that the plant is dioecious which means male and female reproductive structures are on separate plants. Male or staminate flowers grow in small bunches along the stems whereas female or pistillate flowers grow singly or few in a cluster near the stem ends. Insects pollinate the blossoms.

The fruit-laden shrubs found in winter are female plants. Similar looking, although fruitless, male plants should be close by. The bright-red fruits, botanically called drupes, mature in late autumn. Only after the leaves drop do the fruits become noticeable which are then very obvious on a white landscape.

Dissect a drupe and you'll find a fleshy outer layer enclosing up to 6 smooth seeds called nutlets. Fruits remain on the plant until midwinter unless hungry birds find this hearty berry meal. Winterberry's fruits are inedible for humans.

Winter isn't complete until I've seen winterberry. On a stark white landscape, the bright red fruit-laden plants just "scream" to be noticed. They really can't and shouldn't be overlooked. 🐾

Great Backyard Bird Count

When the world comes together for the love of birds.

Fri., Feb. 17 - Mon., Feb. 20, 2023

Watch birds in your backyard or anywhere else, be part of this 20+ year tradition, and help provide scientists with a snapshot of bird populations. Participate from anywhere in the world. Click to learn [more about the GBBC](https://www.birdcount.org/about/).

Spend time in your favorite places watching birds - then tell us about them! In as little as 15 minutes notice the birds around you. Identify them, count them, and submit them to help scientists better understand and protect birds around the world at <https://www.birdcount.org/about/>

The Great Backyard Bird Count is an inter-organizational effort between the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, National Audubon, and Birds Canada. 🐾

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.*

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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

Citizens' Climate Lobby Program: Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance's Dr. Katie Reed will speak about how the Alliance works to be a total basin resource to protect, restore, and sustain the Fox-Wolf Basin by working with individuals, communities, and beyond. **Wed., Jan. 25, 4:30 pm. Location to be confirmed, so please ask to be put on their email list for this event by emailing Pat at phallquist2@gmail.com.**

*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.

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|---------------------|-------------------|
| Katherine Adelmeyer | James Mather |
| Andrea Bricco | Patricia Niemczyk |
| Dawn Cotter | Jill Putzer |
| Norbert Gray | Linda Schrottky |
| Susan Lilly | Bruce Woodland |

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