

The Lake Flyer



Newsletter of Winnebago Audubon

March-April-May 2023

All programs and activities are open to the public.

Vol. 44, No. 4

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

Bird Conservation Conference in Oshkosh *Bringing Birds Back* March 24-25 Register Now

Professionals, citizens, and bird lovers of all kinds are welcome in helping take steps to reverse bird declines at individual and community levels. A statewide conference to be held in Oshkosh!

Topics include Important Bird Areas, Bird Cities, home landscaping with native plants, reducing bird-window collisions, and much more!

Featuring presenters from the American Bird Conservancy, Audubon Great Lakes, Wisconsin DNR, Madison Audubon, and Western Great Lakes Bird & Bat Observatory. Sponsored by Wisconsin Bird Conservation Partnership, Bird City Wisconsin, and Wisconsin Society for Ornithology.

Registration is \$50 (\$35 for students), which covers both days and includes two lunches and break items. Deadline is Monday, March 6, but register soon as space is limited.

See the full agenda and register at <http://www.wisconsinbirds.org/2023-statewide-conference-bringing-birds-back/>

BIRD WALKS

See page 2 for details.

Sat., Mar. 18: **Waterfowl at Menominee Park**

Sat., Apr. 29: **Woodcock Walk**

Wednesday Evening Birding in May:

May 3: **Asylum Pt. Park/Picnic Pt.**

May 10: **Wilderness Park**

May 17: **Sawyer Creek Nature Preserve**

May 24: **Norbert Rich School Forest**

May 31: **Mascoutin Valley State Trail**

OSHKOSH BIRD FEST

Oshkosh Bird Fest



Saturday, May 6

6:00 am - Noon

Rainbow Park, Shelter 2

Rain or Shine!

FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

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

6 am - 11 am: **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

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

BIRD COUNTS

See page 4 for details.

Sat., April 15: **Crane Count: Sign up now!**

Sat., May 13: **May Bird Count**

BIRD WALKS



Waterfowl at Menominee Park Oshkosh

Saturday, March 18, 2023

9:00 am—11:00 am

We will be searching Menominee Park for birds, especially waterfowl. Waterfowl migration should be at its peak with a nice variety of divers, dabblers, mergansers, geese, and hopefully swans. Number and variety of species will be dependent on the progress of migration, wind direction, and weather conditions.

Directions: We will meet at the north end of the Miller's Bay boat launch parking area. This is northeast of the softball diamonds and just across the street from Webster Stanley Middle School. Use 1240-1212 Siewert Trail, Oshkosh, for GPS lookup. 🐦

Swans. Courtesy of Matt Saunders.



Woodcock Walk

Saturday, April 29, 2023

7:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Join us in search of the American Woodcock as it performs its spectacular sky dance at dusk. We will also listen for Wilson's Snipe, Sandhill Cranes, and choruses of frogs. **Location will be determined** about a week in advance, so please check on our website and Facebook page for more details and directions. Terrain may be uneven, wet, and muddy depending on spring weather conditions. Rain boots or rubber knee boots might be a good idea. 🐦

*American Woodcock, Wisconsin.
Teri Shors/Audubon Photography Awards*

Wednesday Evening Birding

Every Week in May 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

We will visit a different birding hotspot every Wednesday evening in May. We hope to see a variety of birds as the spring migration progresses, including thrushes, vireos, warblers, and sparrows. Join us each week to see what birds are migrating through our area.

May 3

Asylum Pt. Park/Picnic Pt. Wildlife Refuge

Directions: From Oshkosh take Bowen Street (County A) north to East Snell Road. Turn right/east on East Snell Road to the T intersection with Sherman Road. We will meet in the parking area at this intersection.

May 10 **Wilderness Park**

Directions: From the intersection of Hwy 41 and Breezewood Lane in Neenah, drive east on Bell St. for 1.6 miles to the four way stop at S. Park Ave. Turn left/north on S. Park Ave. Drive for .9 miles to Wilderness Park, which is on the right/east side of the road.

May 17

Sawyer Creek Nature Preserve (Rusch Park)

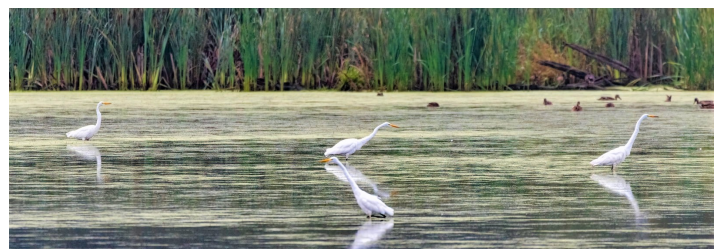
Directions: From the intersection of Hwy 41 and Hwy 44 in Oshkosh, go southwest on Hwy 44 for a very short distance to the stoplight at the west frontage road. At the stoplight turn right/north onto S. Washburn St. Drive to stoplight at W. 20th Ave. and turn left/west on W. 20th Ave. Drive 1.1 miles to Traeger Middle School (3000 W 20th Ave.) which is on the right/north side of the road. Take second school driveway on west side of the school. We will meet at the north end of the parking area.

May 24 **Norbert Rich School Forest**

Directions: From Oshkosh take Hwy 45 North for approximately 5 miles. Take Hwy 116/ County GG exit and turn left/west toward Winneconne. Go through Winneconne and follow Hwy 116 South for about 7 miles. Turn right/west onto Oak Hill Rd. Drive 1 mile and turn left/south on Ginnow Rd. Park safely on shoulder at 5007 Ginnow Rd.

May 31 **Mascoutin Valley State Trail**

Directions: From Oshkosh, head southwest on Hwy 44. Turn right/west onto Hwy 91. Drive west for 13 miles and turn left/south onto County E. Drive 1.8 miles and turn right/west onto Meadow Brook Road. In .6 miles you will come to the trail crossing. Please park safely on the shoulder.



Great Egrets. Courtesy of Matt Saunders.



The Umbrella Plant

Spring is coming. I'm looking forward to reacquainting myself with the colorful woodland flowers collectively called the spring ephemerals. The word, ephemeral, means fleeting. This adjective perfectly describes these early flowers whose window of opportunity to blossom is very limited. From April into May, these perennials must sprout, grow, and bloom before the tree canopy sprouts its leaves, thus blocking incoming sunlight and shading the ground.

Snow has barely disappeared when mayapples, one of my favorite plants, poke their thick shoots through the earth's surface. Its leaves are tightly wrapped around the stem. As the plant grows, the leaves slowly unfurl and enlarge. At maturity, each drooping mayapple leaf is dinner-plate-size, circular, about 1 foot in diameter and deeply lobed.

A young infertile plant sprouts just one leaf that averages 6 to 9 deeply-cut lobes whereas a mature plant displays 2 leaves with each averaging 5 to 6 deeply-cut lobes. Each of the 2 leaves grows on its own 6-inch petiole (leaf stalk). The 2 petioles branch from a spot on top of the stem thus forming a "V". One flower measuring 1-1/2 inches in diameter forms at the petiole branch site. With 6 to 9 white petals and a yellow center, the fragrant, nodding flower is hidden from view under the still enlarging leaves. Each flower is short-lived and not every mature mayapple produces a flower.

After being insect-pollinated, especially by bumblebees, each flower produces one fleshy,

ovoid fruit containing several seeds. When ripe, this so-called "apple" is about 1-1/2 inches long and yellow. CAUTION: The leaves, seeds and fruit are poisonous to eat and should be avoided.

The flower quickly fades, but the leaves continue to grow and remain on the landscape well into summer before they wither. The unique leaves resemble green umbrellas, consequently the plant has been called the umbrella plant.

Mayapples are a woodland plant preferring moist to slightly dry soils and dappled sunlight to light shade. They may form large colonies which continue to enlarge by sending out underground rhizomes and producing new shoots. I think a large mayapple colony is a beautiful, decorative element of the ground cover. If planted in a garden, it can be an aggressive colonizer, often overshadowing other plants and becoming a monoculture.

Sometimes called mandrake or wild mandrake, mayapple, *Podophyllum peltatum*, is a native member of the barberry plant family, Berberidaceae. Surprisingly, mayapple is in the same plant family (but not genus) as the non-native shrub, Japanese barberry which has often been planted in gardens. This shrub has escaped and now invades forests, oak savannas, and fields. It is considered a terrestrial invasive plant in Wisconsin.

Enjoy the renewal and beauty of our spring ephemerals. With its uniqueness, mayapple will surely catch your eye. Look closely to find and smell the flowers. Happy hunting! 🐾



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

Grace Beam
Anita & Gerald Carpenter
Linda DeNell
David Gay
In Memory of Carroll Gay
Robert Gluth
Richard Hansen

Bettie Harriman
Cathy Lehdorf
In Memory of Jim Lehdorf
Jerald MacKenzie
David Moon
Jeanna Owens
Patricia Pensis

Emmy Reichenberger
Jeff Rill & Terry Rill Kennedy
In Loving Memory of
Katherine D. Rill & Russell A. Rill
John & Donna VanBuecken
Tom & Char Ziebell
In Memory of Jim Ziebell

BIRD COUNTS

Sign Up Now to Participate! **Annual Midwest Crane Count**

Saturday, April 15, 2023 - 5:30-7:30 am

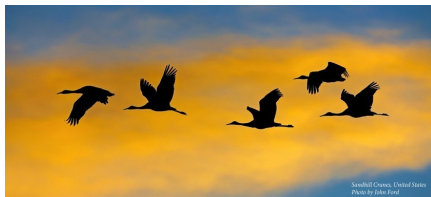
If you haven't already volunteered, now is the time. Winnebago Audubon is still looking for counters to cover the 45 designated sites in Winnebago County for the 47th Annual Midwest Crane Count. More than 1,800 volunteer participants from throughout Wisconsin and portions of Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Ohio and Minnesota participate in the spring survey, which gathers information on the abundance and distribution of cranes in the upper Midwest.

The International Crane Foundation sponsors the Annual Midwest Crane Count as a part of its mission to conserve the world's 15 species of cranes and the natural communities on which they depend. Sandhill Cranes once nearly disappeared from Wisconsin, but the species has successfully recovered and is slowly expanding into neighboring states.

Observations of Sandhill Cranes can lend insight into threatened crane species, including the endangered Whooping Crane. There are now approximately 75 Whooping Cranes in the reintroduced population in central Wisconsin, and Crane Counters may have a chance of sighting a Whooping Crane during the survey.

Best reasons to be a crane counter:

1. Doing something a little crazy is fun.
2. You can do something good for the environment once a year without becoming a bird-nut.
3. If you are a student, it counts as volunteer hours.
4. You'll learn to speak crane-ese.
5. It's a good excuse to watch a sunrise once per year.
6. Bring your binoculars and camera. You'll be surprised by what other wildlife you see that early in the morning.
7. If the weather is nasty, you can count from inside the car with the heater on.
8. Winnebago County is a great place to survey because we rank high in the number of crane sightings.
9. When finished you still have the whole day ahead of you.



Signing up is easy! Go to the International Crane Foundation website: savingcranes.org where you will find the site maps for Winnebago County. Select a site that you would like to survey, then contact our Winnebago County Coordinator, Evelyn Meuret, to check availability and secure your site. You may contact Evelyn for assistance. **She will save sites for folks who counted in 2022 until the end of March. If you are not able to count this year, please let her know that your site is available.**

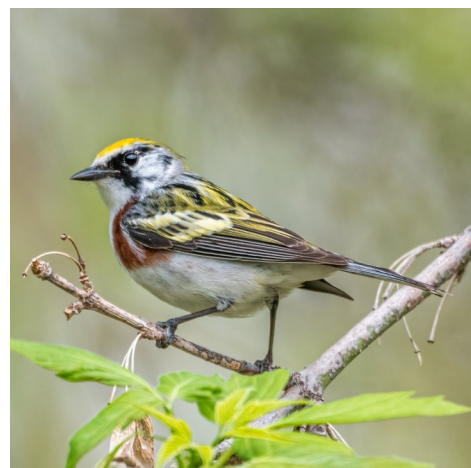
You will also find the data sheet and more information at the savingcranes.org website.

We are hosting an in-person meeting before the crane count on Thursday, April 6 from 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm at the Oshkosh Food Co-op, 155 Jackson St., Suite 1. You may choose a site that night, meet other counters, and ask questions. We will review crane call identification and data entry. This meeting is optional but you may find it helpful if you are a new counter. Please share with friends and family who might be interested in volunteering.

Please let us know if you are interested in meeting for breakfast immediately after the count. We are looking for suggestions on a restaurant. Or a warm place to gather and bring your own.

Please contact Evelyn directly about your interest in participating in this year's Annual Midwest Crane Count.

Evelyn Meuret
Winnebago County Crane Count Coordinator
evelynmeuret57@att.net
920-573-7828



*Here's an excuse
to bird all day long.*

May Bird Count

Saturday, May 13, 2023

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.

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 contact Tom.

Above: Chestnut-sided Warbler © Matt Saunders.



Meet Our Board Member: Mike Brandel

Growing up, my friends and I wiled away much of our summer vacation exploring the Manitowoc River Valley and catching anything from crayfish to carp. In the early 60's my parents purchased a cottage on Long Lake near Brillion. That's when I got hooked.

We had a 12' foot long aluminum boat affectionately named "Tin Lizzie". That boat with me in it covered every square inch of that 120 acre lake multiple times during my early teens. One great summer evening I was fishing near shore when I heard what sounded like a wave washing into a hollow log. Oddly the lake was perfectly calm. NO WAVES! I rowed in, parted the reeds and there I was eye to eye with an American Bittern. That bird had no use for me and I high tailed it out of there. A memorable encounter for sure.

After two years in the US Army Military Police Corps, I returned home and pursued a degree in Natural Resources. In May 1974, I was hired to start development of the Gordon Bubolz Nature Preserve. I stayed for 34 years, the last couple of decades as Executive Director. Needless to say, the opportunities to learn about our natural world were endless on almost a daily basis.

Audubon's mission statement mentions science and education. If serving on the Board in some way helps



someone experience and learn, then I'm giving back. Individuals get hooked on nature on a daily basis and I'm happy for all of them. Wealth is always measured in dollars, but I measure it in a life long attachment to the outdoors. I'm a multi-billionaire. 🐦

SUMMER FIELD TRIPS

Details to come.

Nature's Potpourri Field Trips

One field trip per month in June, July, and August will be led by Anita Carpenter to discover whatever presents itself including birds, flowers, trees, insects, and more!

Look for details to come on date, time and location in our summer newsletter, on Facebook, and on our website.

Bird Count Results for September 2022

A big thank you to our observers with special thanks to **Tom Ziebell for coordinating the count:** Brad Bahls, Kelli Bahls, Rosie Buser*, Anita Carpenter, Jerry Carpenter*, Morgan Churchill, Dave Clabault*, Dolly Clabault*, Carson Evich, Bettie Harriman*, Cathy Kaspar*, James Kinderman*, Oskar Konda*, Tom Miller*, John Nichols, Pat Nichols, MaryBeth Petesch, Jan Rohloff*, James Rudolph, Joy Schwarz*, Ka Starks*, Luke Starks*, Joshua Vincent, Char Ziebell*, Tom Ziebell (*Feeder/yard watchers).

Total Individual Birds: 10,784

Total Bird Species: 113

You will find the species list and all details on our website:

winnebagoaudubon.org

The next opportunity to volunteer is the May Count on Saturday, May 13. See article on page 4.

Bluebird Nest Box Trail at Utica Golf Club 2022 Summary

The summer of 2022 was the second year of low production at this bluebird trail monitored by my wife Christine and I. I think part of the problem was a continuation of the relatively low bluebird population caused by severe winter storms in southern states in 2021. The population is slowly increasing and should continue to do so this spring. In addition, last spring I noticed that tree swallows appeared to arrive at Utica Golf Club from southern states a little earlier than the bluebirds. This allowed them to occupy available bluebird houses first and prevent bluebirds from nesting at this location. As a result, out of a total of 43 bluebird houses on this trail only 12 of them were occupied by bluebirds. The total bluebirds fledged from these houses was 43 compared with 126 tree swallows fledged. This result is actually a good success since in addition to bluebirds, tree swallows are a very important native songbird in Wisconsin and are very much appreciated by me and my wife. In addition, based on site selection of nest boxes, and frequent monitoring, we were able to prevent nest box occupation by non-native house sparrows that are a significant enemy of nesting bluebirds and tree swallows. So, as a whole, we are pleased with the success of our joint bluebird/tree swallow trail at Utica Golf Club and are pleased that the golf club owner and staff are very supportive of our trail. We look forward to another spring coming soon with the arrival of these wonderful native song birds. — *Dave Misterek* 🐦



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

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Secretary: Zaiga Freivalds
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Treasurer: Mike Brandel
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GO GREEN by opting to receive your newsletter via e-mail. E-mail request to winnebagoaudubon@gmail.com

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

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.

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Grace Beam | Jane Kelly |
| Michael Beeth | Barb Kersztyn |
| Mike Benjamin | Constance Kowalske |
| Michael Birr | Alice Kuehn |
| Marianne Busse | Jerald MacKenzie |
| Matthew Cysiewski | Diane Marx |
| Susan Eichman | Paul McHugh |
| Brian Galster | W T Peterson |
| Patsy Gavin | Delpha Pfaffenroth |
| Michael Gumtow | Victoria Schasny |
| Shirley Geoffroy | Jerry Szulczewski |
| Kathleen Gerz | Louisa Turner |
| Pat Hallquist | Ann Wiederrecht |
| Cheryl Hoffman | Patricia Zook |
| Catherine Huybers | |

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