

The Lake Flyer

Winnebago Audubon Society, Inc.

May-June 2018

All programs and activities are open to the public

Vol. 40, No. 1

P.O. Box 184, Oshkosh, WI 54903 • Published six times a year
Editor: Janet Wissink • 920-216-1172 • winnebagoaudubon@gmail.com

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

Spring Wildflowers and Birds at South Woods

Saturday, May 19, 9:00 am

Spring is the perfect time for a walk in the woods. Join Winnebago Audubon on Saturday, May 19 at 9:00 am at South Woods in Ripon. This field trip is free and open to the public.

We will explore South Woods which is a mature maple woods with a creek running through it. This is a wonderful area to see colorful spring wildflowers carpeting the forest floor while overhead avian spring migrants may be flitting in the trees. We should be here during the peak of spring migration with hopes of seeing warblers, vireos, flycatchers, tanagers and many more. Wear footwear suitable for possible muddy conditions. After the field trip, please join us at Knuth Brewing Co. for lunch in Ripon.

Directions: We will meet at South Woods in Ripon. From Oshkosh, take Hwy. 44 to Ripon. At the 4-way stop sign at Eureka St. continue straight on Oshkosh St. At the stoplights at Hwy 23 continue straight south on Union St. Go about 1 mile past Ripon College athletic fields. Then watch for sign as you go up the hill. South Woods will be on the right. There is a very small parking lot, but there is room to park on the side of the road. Please pull off the road as far as possible. Actual address: N7974 Union St., Ripon.



Let's "Bird for Fun" in May! Join us for fun watching birds!

Spring migration is upon us, and we look forward to the wonderful birding that it brings. During the month of May we will "Bird for Fun", which brings us together to bird together, learn from each other about great birding spots and birds, and enjoy all that spring has to offer us.

Join up with an existing "team" or create your own. Ask some friends to go out for a day of birding. Let's have fun, count birds, and win a prize for most species counted. We're working out the details yet, but the most important thing is to participate with friends. No need to find sponsors and raise money. You may want to report the birds you found on eBird, but that's up to you. Send your list of birds and participant names to Janet.

Want to really give us a helping hand? Volunteer to coordinate Bird for Fun next year. If you have any questions, contact Janet at: 920-216-1172 or winnebagoaudubon@gmail.com

Explore Uihlein Marsh: Wetland Birds and Its Inhabitants

Saturday, June 16, 7:00 am

Uihlein Marsh is a gem of a wetland managed by US Fish and Wildlife Service. American and least bitterns, yellow-headed blackbirds, black terns, marsh wrens and secretive rails are a few of the wetland birds we hope to see and/or hear. Birds aren't the only attraction. We'll search for frogs, butterflies and dragonflies and anything else that may cross our path.

Directions: Uihlein Marsh is located on County Road M in Winnebago County near Rush Lake. From Oshkosh, take Hwy 44 to Hwy 91. Turn right and continue on Hwy 91 until Waukau. Turn South (left) on County Rd M. Proceed about 2 miles. The parking lot will be on your left. Actual address: 1902 County Road M, Pickett.

Please join us on this field trip. It is free and open to the public.

When You Should—And Should Not—Rescue a Baby Bird

In the third grade, my teacher found what she thought was an abandoned baby bird on the school grounds. She asked if someone in the class would care for it, and days later, the European Starling I named Bluego (for a reason I wish I remembered) was living in a cardboard box in my bedroom, padded with fake spider web left over from Halloween. As a child, I was thrilled to be on my way toward becoming a wildlife rescuer, but years later I wondered if it was the right thing to do.

As I've learned, it probably wasn't. Like the vast majority of baby birds that people encounter, Bluego was a weeks-old fledgling—not a newly born nestling. And this distinction is critical, wildlife rehabbers say, because most fledglings don't need to be rescued. "Eighty percent of baby birds that come in have basically just been kidnapped," says Melanie Furr, education director at the Atlanta Audubon Society and a licensed volunteer at Atlanta Wild Animal Rescue Effort. "They need to be taken back."



Wandering from the nest is exactly what fledglings—which are just learning to fly—are supposed to do, she says. It's a normal part of a bird's development, and though these chicks might appear abandoned, they're likely under surveillance by their parents nearby. Of course, there is a chance that they could be injured, sick, or in danger, so there are some cases where a fledgling might require assistance.

Nestlings, on the other hand, are almost always in need of rescue. Whether they fell or got pushed from their nest, they're "not ready to go off into the world," says Rita McMahon, Co-Founder and Director of the Wild Bird Fund, a nonprofit animal rehab center in New York. How to help them, though, can vary.

To know when you should intervene—and how you can help if needed—ask yourself the questions below.

Is the bird a nestling or fledgling? When you come across a rogue baby, first determine its age, McMahon says. And there's one obvious sign: feathers. While fledglings are larger and covered almost completely in down and feathers, nestlings are small and typically naked—or with just a few fluffs. In other words, one looks like an awkward young bird, and the other kind of looks like a pink little alien. You can also distinguish age by movement: fledglings can hop, whereas nestlings might simply drag themselves on the ground by their bare wings.

If you've found a *healthy* fledgling: "Walk away from the bird," McMahon says. Rescuing healthy fledglings is not

only unnecessary, but it can be detrimental to their development. When raised by hand, she says, babies might confuse humans as their parents (not unlike the geese in the movie *Fly Away Home*). If that happens, "they don't know how to be a bird," McMahon says.

If you've found a nestling: Help. First, look for the baby's nest in the nearby bushes or trees; if you find it, simply put the chick back and the parents will resume care. And don't worry about touching the bird: The idea that once you've touched a baby bird it will be rejected is not true, says Susan Elbin, director of conservation and science at New York City Audubon. "Birds have a sense of smell, but it's not very well developed," Elbin says. "They're not going to abandon their chick."

If the nest is nowhere to be found or simply out of reach, just craft one yourself, Furr says. Find a small container, like a strawberry basket, and load it with a scrap of T-shirt or some straw—anything dry will do. Gently place the youngling inside, and affix the artificial nest in a tree close to where the bird was found. "You want to get it as high up as possible," Furr says.

Once you've returned the bird to a nest—whether real or homemade—keep an eye out for the parents. If they don't return within an hour, call a wildlife rehabilitation center.

Is the bird sick, wounded, or at risk? Whether you come across a fledgling or nestling, it's important to assess whether the bird needs medical help or is in danger.

Often, it's clear when the bird is in need of urgent care—if the cat dragged it in, that's a sure sign. Other times the signals are more subtle: Though it's a fledgling, it can't stand or hop normally. The feathers might be wet though it's not raining, indicating discharge or an illness that inhibits the production of preening oils. Or maybe it's surrounded by flies, which might signal an open wound. During hot summer months, dehydration is also common, McMahon says. "Their belly is like a prune, wrinkled, shriveled and suck in," she says.

If you think you've found a sick or wounded fledgling or nestling, call a rehabber, state wildlife agency, or veterinarian immediately. If it's after hours, take the baby to a safe and warm location, Furr says, such as a closed box with air holes and a heating pad beneath it. And even if your parental instincts kick in, don't feed the baby, she says.

"People have good intentions and think the baby bird is going to starve," Furr says. "But a lot of times it ends up doing more harm than good."

At Atlanta Wild Animal Rescue Effort, she's seen babies with food in their lungs from improper feeding. But if the chick is just kept in a dark place, its metabolism will slow down, she says, leaving plenty of time for professional rehabbers to swoop in for a rescue.

You might also come across a fledgling or nestling that's not injured, but at risk—such as from a prowling cat or human feet. Here's an easy fix: "Put it in a bush," Elbin says. In other words, hide the chick or put it in a place that's out of reach or out of the way.

And after all this, if you're still not sure if the bird needs help or what to do, before doing anything, call your local **wildlife rehabilitation center**. Helping animals—and preventing fledgling kidnappings—is what they do.

Reprinted from National Audubon.



Snowstorm Magnificence

The historic three-day mid-April ice and snowstorm was one for the record books. On Sunday, in the height of blizzard winds and blowing snow, I NEEDED to go for my daily early morning walk. After all, a “little bit of snow and wind” wasn’t going to deter this winter lover. Besides, I absolutely love these wild days when Mother Nature exerts her rule. I call these special days “weather days” and I would be disappointed in myself if I missed this golden opportunity to experience a wild winter weather day.

It’s 7:00 am. After a night when several more inches of snow fell, the main streets are just now being plowed. I walk on a side street in the lone track left by an automobile. Walking on uncleared sidewalks would be a tiring challenge. Strong northeast winds push me along. Trees are swaying. I listen for the sound of breaking branches while giving wide clearance to the trees. The ground is already littered with broken twigs, limbs and needle clusters.

I continue through the UWO campus on my way to the Fox River. I have the whole place to myself. I reach the river and immediately see two common loons bobbing in the choppy water. What a thrill to see! Two double-crested cormorants that had perched on arching, river-dipping limbs of a huge cottonwood take flight upon my arrival. I apologize for disturbing them.

A pair of ruddy ducks, bufflehead and hooded mergansers plus several lesser scaup and mallards huddle close to shore, out of the wind. They all should survive this adverse weather. Wind and horizontal blowing snow didn’t stop gulls from circling and calling overhead. Stinging ice hits me in the face.

A northern flicker (first of the year for me) is hammering at a small patch of bare ground at the base of a tree. I hope he survives. Song sparrows, house finches, downy woodpeckers, chickadees and juncos which I usually see or hear along this stretch of the river, are all undercover somewhere. It’s quiet except for the howling winds which are increasing. Falling snow intensifies.

White-out conditions come and go. I’m walking over forming snowdrifts. I’m loving this. I notice icicles hanging from the peeling bark of a river birch. What a beautiful photogenic image. Kentucky coffee tree seed pods are being ripped from the trees. I retrace my footsteps which have already disappeared. It’s snowing harder. Winds are sustained.

I discover robins in the midst of the storm’s ferocity. A few are feeding on crab apples which are usually shunned by the birds, but in desperate times are now acceptable. The most indelible image of the morning is of 18 robins huddled in the main entrance to Kolf Sports Center out of the wind and snow. The fluffed-up birds look alert and healthy.



I trudge on home into the teeth of the oncoming winds to find 13 red-winged blackbirds at my feeders—a first for my yard, and a yellow-bellied sapsucker (also the first of the year) plastered against the trunk of a large spruce, out of the wind. He spent several motionless hours there.

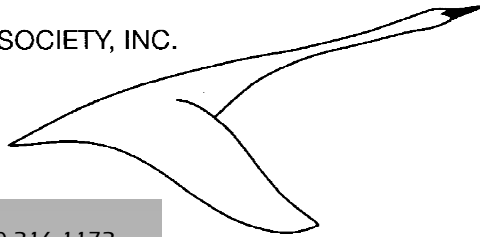
After breakfast, I tackled shoveling for the third or fourth or fifth time. I lost count. This time, however, I am serenaded by a trilling red-winged blackbird—a true sign of coming spring! Who would have thought that would happen in a snowstorm!

I love “weather days” and this was one of the “better” ones. Weather days are exhilarating. They make me feel alive. A total of 12 inches of snow fell creating a winter wonderland. However, as much as I love winter (up until this storm, I frequently commented on the disappointment of our winter season referring to it as a “wimpy winter”), it IS finally time for spring. Birds need food. We need a greening landscape, the beauty of colorful spring flowers, the uplifting spirit of bird and frog song, and the warmth that spring delivers. This winter lover is ready for spring. I’ve now had my wonderful winter weather day.

* *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. *
* **Doug Cooper** *
* **Judy Jolin** *
* **Terrie Kragenbrink** *

From the Quiz Master:
I’m a big-beaked, chunky, 8” May migrant with a black head and a red rose chevron highlighting my white chest. I nest in woodlands and love to sing. Whooo am I?
(Look closely to find the answer in this newsletter.)

WINNEBAGO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.
P.O. BOX 184
OSHKOSH, WI 54903



NON-PROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
OSHKOSH WI
PERMIT NO 90

OFFICERS

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

DIRECTORS

Kelli Bahls
920-537-2121 / kabahls@outlook.com
Emily Berger, bergeree1989@gmail.com
Anita Carpenter, 920-233-6677
Daniel Fiser
920-216-1876 / dsfiser@hotmail.com
Evelyn Meuret
920-573-7828 / evelynmeuret57@att.net
Dave Moon
920-235-4429 / djmoon@northnet.net
Pat Nichols
920-426-0261 / patnichols@earthlink.net

Important Note: TEMPORARILY AWAY? Please notify us if you will be temporarily away. The post office will not forward your newsletter. If your newsletter is returned to us, we remove you from our mailing list. Please contact Pat Nichols at patnichols@earthlink.net or 920-426-0261 with any questions.

RENEWALS: Your mailing label includes your membership expiration date above your name. If you are a "Chapter Only" member the word CHAPTER will appear after 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, NATL will appear after 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 by using the application below.

GO GREEN by opting to receive your newsletter via e-mail. Contact Pat Nichols at patnichols@earthlink.net

Winnebago Audubon Society Mission Statement: Advance the mission of the National Audubon Society to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity through grassroots efforts of community outreach and advocacy.

**AUDUBON SOCIETY
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Chapter Only Membership: Your \$20.00 stays in our chapter and you receive the Winnebago Audubon chapter newsletter and all chapter benefits. Make \$20.00 check payable to **Winnebago Audubon**.

OR

National Audubon Membership: Your \$20.00 includes chapter membership and all chapter benefits, PLUS *Audubon* magazine and all national benefits. Make \$20.00 check payable to **National Audubon Society**.

I do not wish to receive solicitations from National Audubon Society.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

E-mail: _____

Chapter Code: **C8ZZ120Z**

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

Word of the Day: Ornithology

The scientific study of birds as a branch of zoology. ornī—Greek for bird; ology—Greek for the study of

Quiz Answer: Rose-breasted Grosbeak, *Phenictus ludovicianus*

Welcome to Winnebago Audubon

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

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| Bruce Abraham | Margaret Meyer |
| Emily Berger | Evelyn Milosch |
| Virginia Bruch | Stephanie & Glenn Pelletier |
| Mark Christian | Emil C Reichow |
| Scott Cross | Ellen Robertson |
| Randy Grimes | Ken & Audrey Ruedinger |
| Sherri Haskins | Fr Augustine Serafini |
| Paul McHugh | Melodie Sturm |

If you are a new member of National or the Chapter and haven't seen your name here in the last couple of issues, please contact

Membership Chair at winnebagoaudubon@gmail.com