

The Lake Flyer

Newsletter of Winnebago Audubon

Nov-Dec 2021

All programs and activities are open to the public.

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

Birdwatching at Miller's Bay Restoration Site & Ames Point

Saturday, November 6
1:00 pm

Join us on Saturday, November 6 at the Miller's Bay Restoration Site in Oshkosh. We will meet along the prairie and walk one of the nearby trails. Sightings will be dependent on the wind direction and may include waterfowl, gulls, and sparrow species such as Dark-eyed Junco and American Tree Sparrow.

Please dress for the weather and bring your binoculars. Spotting scopes may be helpful but are not required. This event is free and open to the public.

Directions to Miller's Bay Restoration Site: From Hwy 41, take the Hwy 21 exit east into Oshkosh. Turn left on Algoma Blvd. Turn right on Murdock. Continue on Murdock for approximately 2 miles. Turn right on Hickory Street. At the stop sign, continue straight onto Oaks Trail. Site address is 1925 Oaks Trail, Oshkosh. 🐦

Ruddy Duck. Photo by Kelli Bahls.

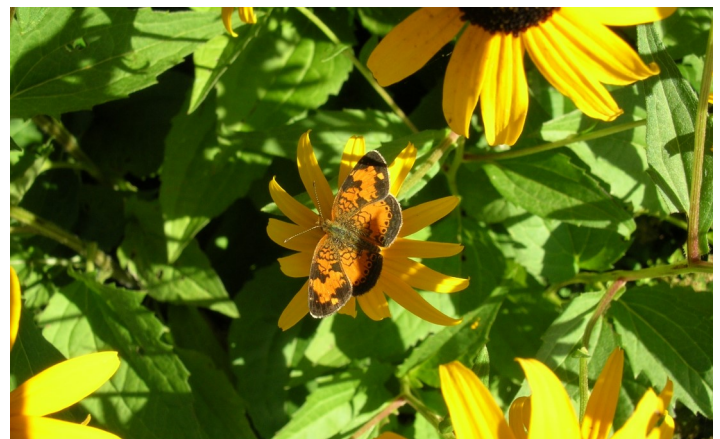
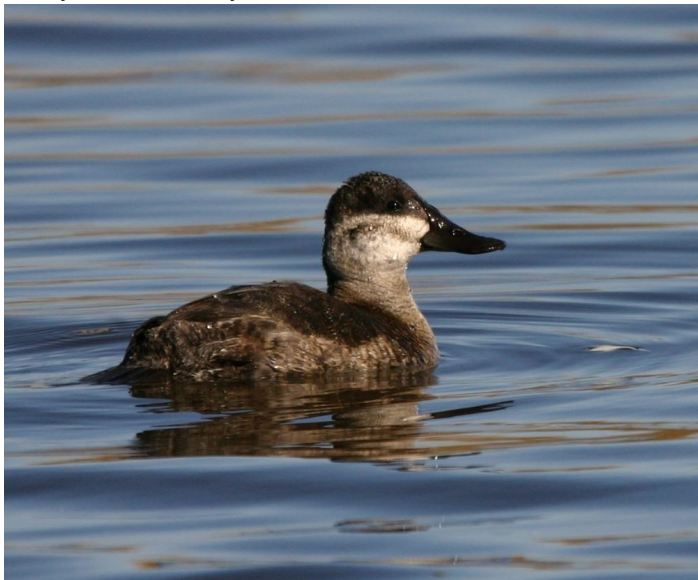


Photo by Janet Wissink.

From birds to bur oaks. Butterflies to blazing star. Prairies to natural gardens.

Thursday, November 18
6:30 pm Social; 7:00 pm Program

Evergreen Retirement Community
(Lower Level)
1130 N. Westfield St., Oshkosh

We look forward to our joint meeting with Wild Ones Fox Valley Chapter every November and this program should be especially interesting. Learn what is happening at UW Oshkosh to enhance its sustainable and environmentally friendly goals and practices. They are planting many native plants - prairies and wetlands - and putting up bird houses, bat houses and more. UWO Grounds Supervisor, Lisa Mick; UWO Lecturer/Biology Dept., Shannon Davis-Foust; and UWO Sustainability Director, Brad Spanbauer, will be our guides.

PLEASE NOTE: Evergreen requires that residents and visitors wear masks inside the buildings. Visitors are required to screen for Covid. This can be done inside Door 1 (main entrance) on meeting night. We will have someone stationed at Door 1 a half hour before the meeting to expedite the screening process and direct you to the meeting room. 🐦

Christmas Bird Count

Saturday, December 18, 2021

On the annual Oshkosh Christmas Bird Count (CBC), observers record all birds seen or heard within a fifteen mile diameter circle around Oshkosh on one day (24 hour period) in mid- to late-December. In addition to the count day, species seen during the count week (3 days before and 3 days after the count day) but not recorded on the count day are also included in the results. The Oshkosh Christmas Bird Count has been conducted every year since 1964. The final results are submitted to the National Audubon Society and 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. For the more dedicated birder, surveying one of the 13 county areas in the count circle is also an option.

As a volunteer you will be required to record the number of each species seen or heard; time spent watching; distance travelled and document unusual species and numbers.

If you are interested in participating PLEASE contact Tom Ziebell for more information and to discuss the area you intend to cover to reduce duplication of birds counted: ctiebell@new.rr.com or 920-312-1976. 🐦



Photo by Teri Shors

Results of the September Bird Count

Thank you to the 20 observers for the September Bird Count in Winnebago County. Here are some of the statistics. For a list of the birds counted, please visit our website: www.winnebagoaudubon.org/bird-counts

Observers: Brad Bahls, Kelli Bahls, Paul Bruce, Hajira Buser*, Rosie Buser*, Anita Carpenter, Dave Clabault, Dolly Clabault, Bettie Harriman*, Cathy Kaspar*, James Kinderman*, Steve Mullen, John Nichols, Pat Nichols, Connie Phelps, James Rudolph, Joy Schwarz*, Darwin Tiede, Char Ziebell*, Tom Ziebell (*Feeder/yard watchers).

Field Parties: 9

Hours: 05:30 to 19:30

Total Party Hours: 77.25 (14.5 car, 26.25 foot, 36.5 feeder/yard)

Total Party Miles: 320.0 (299.0 car, 21.0 foot)

Total Individuals: 13,566

Total Species: 128

*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.*

Ann Korb
Mary Langenfeld
John Sullivan
Tom Sullivan
Elaine & Severin Swanson
Tom Ziebell

Banded garden spider, *Argiope trifasciata*

Have fun and contribute to science! Participate in Project FeederWatch Nov. 13 – April 30

Whether you're new to the hobby or have been watching birds for decades, Project FeederWatch will keep you going through the winter months. It turns your love of feeding birds into scientific discoveries. FeederWatch is a November-April survey of birds that visit backyards, nature centers, community areas, and other locales in North America. **You don't even need a feeder!** All you need is an area with plantings, habitat, water or food that attracts birds. **The schedule is completely flexible.** Count your birds for as long as you like on days of your choosing, then enter your counts online. Your counts allow you to track what is happening to birds around your home and contribute to a continental data-set of bird distribution and abundance.

The annual participation fee is \$18 for U.S. residents (\$15 for Cornell Lab members). Without the support of our participants, this project wouldn't be possible.

FeederWatch is conducted by people of all skill levels and backgrounds, including children, families, individuals, classrooms, retired persons, youth groups, nature centers, and bird clubs.

When thousands of FeederWatchers in communities across North America count birds and send their tallies to the FeederWatch database, the result is a treasure trove of numbers, which FeederWatch scientists analyze to draw a picture of winter bird abundance and distribution.

FeederWatch data show which bird species visit feeders at thousands of locations across the continent every winter. The data also indicate how many individuals of each species are seen. This information can be used to measure changes in the winter ranges and abundances of bird species over time.

With each season, FeederWatch increases in importance as a unique monitoring tool for more than 100 bird species that winter in North America.

What sets FeederWatch apart from other monitoring programs is the detailed picture that FeederWatch data provide about weekly changes in bird distribution and abundance. Importantly, FeederWatch data tell us where birds **are** as well as where they **are not**. This crucial information enables scientists to piece together the most accurate population maps.

Go online to learn more and sign up participate at: <https://feederwatch.org/>. Enjoy winter bird watching from the comfort of your home. 🐦



Discovering Autumn

In early October, I led several UW Oshkosh biology students who desired to see the natural side of campus. We would look at anything of interest that presented itself whether it be birds, plants or insects.

Our first stop is at an Ohio buckeye tree for a closer look at the hanging clusters of ripening fruit. Covered with short, blunt prickles, each beige-colored, three-part, thick-husked fruit encloses one seed. When the seed is mature, the husk begins to dry. One of the three suture lines starts to split open, revealing a shiny, mahogany-colored 1 to 1-1/2 inch seed. As the husk continues to dry, the gap widens and eventually the round seed falls to the ground. An Ohio buckeye seed could easily be mistaken for the look-alike but non-native horse chestnut seed. Both seeds are poisonous for humans to eat but not for squirrels or deer.

Our stroll continues to the Fox River shoreline where we find orange jewelweed or touch-me-not growing. Several of jewelweed's delicate, dangling, tubular orange flowers are attracting bumblebees which disappear inside for a nectar meal. Also on the plants are ripening seed pods—each about 3/4 to 1 inch long and 1/8 inch wide. Many pods are swollen and ready to open. I ask for a volunteer to gently pinch the pod. Under gentle pressure, the pod instantly explodes sending 3 to 5 small seeds scattering in all directions. The volunteer's startled response, who now holds 3 tightly coiled parts of the pod, is always wonderful to witness. Soon everyone is popping pods. In the real world, a gently falling raindrop is enough pressure to cause the pod to explode.

A student asks what is the white fluff in the prairie? Let's go look! Closer inspection reveals that common milkweed pods are opening and releasing seeds. Inside a closed pod, brown, flat milkweed seeds are tightly packed in rows with each seed attached to several long, soft, silky filaments. When the pod dries and splits open, the filaments open like tiny parachutes. With the assistance from wind, each parachute lifts a seed which drifts to places unknown.

It's a ritual each autumn: I must gently scoop out milkweed seeds from an open pod, place them on my open, out-stretched hand and let the breezes take them



Common milkweed. Photo by Janet Wissink.

one-by-one. It always makes me wish I could float and drift away as easily and freely as these seeds do. With squeals of wonder and delight, it is obvious the students have never enjoyed this experience before.

We saw monarch butterflies and a silver-spotted skipper (a butterfly), numerous bees and wasps, hugged a 300-year old bur oak tree, heard a rattling belted kingfisher and smelled New England asters. It was a good autumn morning of discovery.

When I returned home, I discover sticktights on my shoelaces. Many plants produce seeds covered with tiny hooks and barbs which get caught and carried off by passing furry animals and my shoelaces.

Later, I realize this enjoyable field trip had been an unexpected but perfect introductory lesson about different strategies plants use to send their seeds out into the world. From plants that drop their seeds, to those that forcibly explode, to seeds that drift on winds and to those that hitchhike.

So venture outside. While enjoying your autumn surroundings, take a closer look at plants and seeds. Try to determine their strategy for seed dispersal. There are more ways to spread seeds than the four mentioned.

Happy sleuthing! 🐾

Word of the Day: Bryology

The study of mosses.



From the Quiz Master:

I'm a beautiful, grape-sized female spider that sits upside-down in the center of my large orb web spun in autumn fields, gardens and prairies. I wear alternating bands of silver, yellow and black. Please appreciate me. Whooo am I?

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



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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.

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
Ava Gramse
Jeannie Greer
Deb Kohlbeck
James Kreston
Carole Lepine
Catherine Luther
Joseph Mattern

David Rumachic
Charles Sazama
Gerard Schubert
Patricia Shimmens
Diane Toth
Sally Tusken
Mike Wicinsky

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