

The Lake Flyer

Newsletter of Winnebago Audubon

Jan-Feb-Mar 2022

All programs and activities are open to the public.

Vol. 43, No. 4

P.O. Box 184, Oshkosh, WI 54903 • Published five times a year
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Check our website for up-to-date information: www.winnebagoaudubon.org

Birding for Hawks and Owls at Shady Lane



Saturday, January 15, 2022

3:30-4:45 pm

Shady Lane is a country road west of Hwy 76 just north of Oshkosh. The west end of this road provides access to a segment of the Rat River Wildlife Area, which consists of nearly 4,000 acres of publicly accessible woods, wet meadows, and cattail marsh. Wintertime birding success here is dependent on weather conditions and snow cover. Target species include Rough-legged Hawk, Northern Harrier, Northern Shrike, and Short-eared Owl.

Please dress warmly and bring binoculars. There is a small parking area on the west end of the road that may or may not be accessible, so please anticipate parking along the roadside facing east where it is safe to do so. This outing will require minimal to no hiking.

Directions from Hwy 41: Take exit 124 and turn north on Hwy 76 (Jackson Street). Continue on Hwy 76 for about 10 miles. When you reach the Hwy 10 overpass, continue north and watch for a road marker for Shady Lane. Turn left on Shady Lane. Go straight at the stop sign at Center Road. Watch for parked vehicles along the roadside just before Pioneer Road. 🐦

Above: Northern Harrier.
Right: Red-breasted Nuthatch.
Photos by Kelli Bahls.

Great Backyard Bird Count Outing at Jefferson Park & Heckrodt

Saturday, February 19, 2022

9:00 am

Join us as we return to two popular Menasha area hotspots to search for winter birds. We will start at Jefferson Park at 9:00 a.m. to look for Bald Eagles, Common Goldeneye, and other waterfowl species. Then we will head over to Heckrodt Wetland Reserve to check the feeder stations and take a short hike around the property. This year's outing coincides with Cornell University and National Audubon's Great Backyard Bird Count. All sightings will be uploaded to eBird accordingly. Hope to see you there!



Directions to Jefferson Park: From Highway 41, take Highway 10 East/Highway 441. Take the Racine Street exit to the right and follow Racine Street south for approximately 1 mile. Turn left on Broad Street. Take a slight right onto Kargus Drive. We will gather along the riverwalk south of the park shelter. Additional parking can be found east of Jefferson Elementary School near the south end of Konemac Street.

Directions to Heckrodt Wetland Reserve from Jefferson Park: From Kargus Blvd, turn left onto 3rd Street. Turn right onto Konemac Street. Cross the railroad tracks and turn right on Hwy 114 (Plank Road). Continue approximately half a mile. The reserve will be on the right side. 🐦

More birding opportunities



March Waterfowl Madness

Saturday, March 26, 2022

8:30 am

Join us in search of early spring migrants in the fields and wetlands around Zittau. Sightings will depend on the status of migration and the amount of water in the area. Large numbers and a variety of waterfowl are possible, including two species of swans, five species of geese, dabbling ducks, many diving ducks and mergansers, and other spring migrants. We can also stop at Union Star Cheese Factory for the best fresh cheese curds in the state.

Please dress for the weather and bring your binoculars. Spotting scopes are helpful, but not required.

Directions: From Oshkosh take Hwy 45 northwest towards Winchester. Take exit II (double ii). Turn left on County II (double ii) and continue past the Kwik Trip. Continue on County II for about three miles to the intersection of County MM, County II, and Brecklin Loop. We will meet along Brecklin Loop. 🐦



Toward Harmony with Nature Conference

Wild Ones Fox Valley Area Chapter presents the 25th Anniversary of Toward Harmony with Nature Conference on Saturday, January 29, 2022 at the Oshkosh Convention Center. They are offering the option to attend 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 Douglas W. Tallamy, *Professor, Dept. of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology, University of Delaware*. Tallamy's books, *Bringing Nature Home* and *Nature's Best Hope*, remind us that wildlife depends on native plants and suggest we can turn our yards into conservation corridors that provide wildlife habitat.

To learn more about the conference and to register, please visit: <https://www.towardharmonywithnature.org/>. Pre-registration is required. No walk-ins this year. 🐦

More field trips & activities . . .

Our next newsletter will include a list of more field trips and activities that are currently being planned for 2022. You may also check our website for up-to-date information. www.winnebagoaudubon.org

Great Backyard Bird Count February 18-21

Everyone can participate in this bird count! From your backyard, your car, or walking at your favorite park or trail. Learn more at <https://www.birdcount.org/participate/> 🐦

Save the Date - April 9 Annual Sandhill Crane Count

Those who counted in previous years will be contacted by email in March. If you are new to the count, look for more details on our website (winnebagoaudubon.org) under Birds/Bird Counts. 🐦

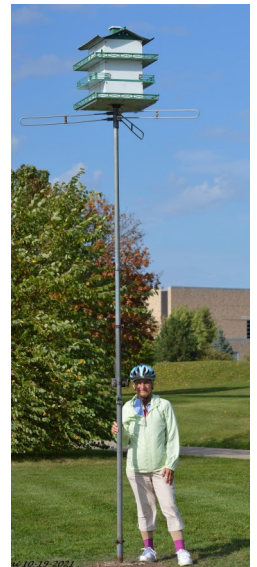
Word of the Day: Scapulara

A group of prominent feathers arising from a bird's shoulders

Purple Martin House on UWO Campus

After a five year process, a purple martin house was erected at UW Oshkosh on Oct. 19 under the guidance of Dick Nikolai, retired biologist with WDNR. Dick has dedicated his life to saving the purple martin and is Wisconsin's leading authority on this vulnerable species. Thank you, Dick, for donating the house, pole and your time. We hope for the arrival of purple martins this spring. Look for the house near the Wisconsin Ave. bridge.

Left: Anita Carpenter, who set the idea in motion, was there to see the purple martin house put up. 🐦



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.*

Kim & Joe Bednarowski

Doris Pierzchalski

Charles & Marion Beyer

Linda Somer

Anita & Jerry Carpenter

Deirdre Watts

Jean Kellermann

Janet & Steve Wissink

Evelyn Meuret

Tom Ziebell

Bob & Carol Niendorf

Bill Zimar & Sue Neitzel



A Dapper Winter Duck

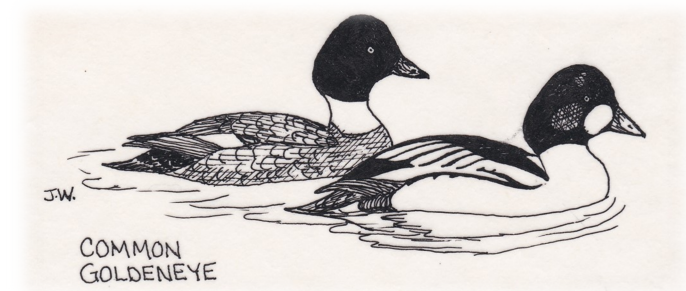
Cold northwest winds and frigid nighttime temperatures are signs that winter's deep freeze is fast approaching. Lakes and rivers begin to freeze. Most of our resident ducks have already left for open water and warmer weather. If you're missing the ducks, now is the time to watch for the arrival of the cold-hardy waterfowl.

Among the winter ducks are common goldeneyes, *Bucephala clangula*. Their arrival depends on the advancing ice line or freeze-up of lakes farther north. The ice line slides south as cold arctic air advances ever southward. The ducks leave their Canadian breeding grounds just ahead of lakes freezing up. They could be called a harbinger of winter.

I often hear these fast fliers before I see them. Their rapid wingbeats produce a whistling sound which can be heard at quite a distance. I always look up to welcome the ducks on their return. A colloquial name is whistler duck.

If our lakes and rivers freeze, common goldeneyes continue south in search of open water. Big rafts overwinter on Lake Michigan. If some water does remain open here, we may observe these cold-loving ducks throughout winter.

Common goldeneyes are beautiful and easy-to-identify ducks. About 19" long, the stocky male sports a white body, black back and a glossy green head which may appear black at a distance. Prominent white feathers, called scapulars, grace each upper flank. A characteristic



feature is a large round white spot on each side of his face positioned between his bright yellow eyes and black bill. The round spot is visible at a distance, even when the ducks bob in choppy water.

Compared to the male's bold, crisp colors and markings, the female is gray with a white neck collar and a rich brown head. She lacks the big facial spots.

When lakes begin to thaw in March, common goldeneyes return and bob along the edge of the retreating ice lines. They somehow seem to know when it's time to head north. Last year, during Lake Winnebago's prolonged spring breakup, an impressive gathering of thousands of common goldeneyes lingered just waiting for the right signal to continue north.

Study a flock of resting common goldeneyes in spring and you may witness amorous males in what appears to be a neck-wrenching courtship display. One or more males gather around an unattached female. A displaying male stretches his head forward along the water, then throws it rapidly upward over his back with bill pointed skyward. In this position he utters a loud raspy note or short whistle. He swings his orange feet forward, sending up a spray of water in front of him. Then his head returns to its normal resting position. He may repeat these head-throw displays several times. Sometimes, several males are displaying simultaneously to one female. The males are focused on what they are doing while often the female seems unimpressed.



While studying the flocks, always be on the lookout for the rare Barrow's goldeneye, *Bucephala islandica*, a duck which normally shouldn't be here, but ducks can fly. The major difference between the two species is that Barrow's goldeneyes display a white crescent instead of a round white spot on each side of the face. Most Wisconsin reports of visiting Barrow's goldeneyes are from Lake Michigan.

Brave northwest winds, look for open water deep enough for common goldeneyes to dive for fish and you'll most likely be rewarded with finding these winter visitors. I never tire of watching these dapperly-dressed ducks which thrive with apparent ease in these cold harsh conditions. 🦆

Audubon Magazine Back Issues

Anyone interested in free back issues of Audubon magazine for classroom use, youth organization activities, or to read and share? Other magazines also available: Living Bird, Nature, National Wildlife, etc. They are full of great information and beautiful photos. Just email or call: winnebagoaudubon@gmail.com or 920-216-1172. 🦆

From the Quiz Master:

I'm a 10" winter visitor that perches on the top of tall trees. I'm gray with black wings and tail and narrow black mask. I eat rodents which I may impale on thorns. Whooo am I?

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



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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.

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PO Box 184, Oshkosh, WI 54903

*Northern Shrike, *Lanius excubitor**

*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.

Karen Bisser	John Mueller
Kirsten Buckstaff	Barbara Noffke
Daniel Coburn	Diane Piette
Kathleen Gerz	Molly Smiltneek
Cynthia Kohles	

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