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# The *Passenger* **PIGEON**



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*Front Cover: A Bohemian Waxwing was found at lunch in Tomahawk, Wisconsin over the weekend of 8–9 January 2011 by Tom Prestby.*

## **WSO Field Trips**

**I**t shouldn't seem like too much of a reach for me to write about our WSO field trips, since—as many of you know—I have been pleased to serve as co-chair of the Field Trips Committee since January of 1987, along with my co-chair, Jeff Baughman. Over the years, these regular events have provided us with a wonderful way to meet many of our members, not to mention an introduction to many participants who were later to become members.

Our individual field trips are often annual events, repeated at the same site for a number of years, since we tend to select dates and locations that correspond to various highlight events or hotspots over the course of a birding year. We also believe that people tend to appreciate some familiarity with a given area, partly because it helps to facilitate easy navigation, and especially if the site helps them to find particular birds that they may not easily find in their own local area. These events are sometimes modified if it becomes necessary, as we try to remain flexible to accommodate new or recent information. Our scheduled dates are assembled long before the actual field trip comes to pass, and sometimes we need to adapt to new circumstances—or perhaps to seek exciting birds that happen to be present in the area.

We have observed that one of the more popular aspects of field trips is that they provide convenient opportunities for social interactions and renewed friendships, as well as for meeting new people with similar interests. I have often said that birders are some of the best people you will ever encounter! Finding new and exciting birds or experiencing a strong migratory movement are the ultimate goals for birders, but if the birding gets slow for a while, participants can easily take up the slack through conversations about widely varied topics—often with a fair amount of good humor thrown in.

Although large gatherings of birders may occasionally present challenges, one of the great advantages of birding in a group is that many sets of eyes and ears will increase the odds of good birds being found. This has often proved to be the case, as our outings often produce a nice list of uncommon to rare species. These experiences frequently provide great opportunities for sharing useful ID information or important fieldmarks during an observation, which can often result in a great learning experience. Our outings typically attract a wide variety of abilities and experience, and birders are often more than happy to offer helpful advice to others, or perhaps a good view through their spotting scope. They also make it easy to compare or contrast the features of various models of optics.

One of the most important and beneficial field trip improvements we have seen has been the use of portable family-band radios. Initially we obtained about a dozen or so units to loan out to trip participants, and periodically added new models, but as the years have gone by more and more birders have



purchased their own radios. These units provide a good means of mass communication among individuals or vehicles—sometimes to alert others to interesting birds that have been spotted, but often to relay information about the travel route or maybe news about a delay in part of the caravan. We have consistently used channel 11 and sub-code 22 for our trips, and have found that Motorola units provide the best compatibility for users.

So, as Jeff and I approach our 25th anniversary as field trip committee co-chairs, we celebrate the many great experiences we have had. When you combine good birds with good people, the result is often fun times and great memories. If you have never participated in one of our WSO field trips, I would encourage you to give it a try. You may find yourself wondering why you never did so before!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Thomas R. Schult". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the left of the first letter.

President

# The Birds of Portage County, Wisconsin

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The birds of Portage County have not been previously detailed in any published work, and central Wisconsin as a whole has been neglected in terms of a comprehensive overview of its avifauna. Portage County has, however, received attention from several prominent researchers, concentrating efforts on individual bird species, primarily raptors and Greater Prairie-Chicken (*Tympanuchus cupido*), or on the habitats on which they depend. Foremost among these were Frederick and Francis Hamerstrom, who monitored the birds of Buena Vista Grassland for several decades beginning in the 1940s. From the 1980s to the present, Gene Jacobs has engaged in research and education at the Linwood Springs Research Station, notable for a long term Northern Saw-whet Owl (*Aegolius acadicus*) banding operation and raptor study in general. The research of Ray Anderson often focused on birds and the environment we have created for them; his guidance of UWSP students is legend. As a result of decades of local field work, Robert Rosenfield is an authority on the biology of Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*). Frederick and Marguerite Baumgartner, perhaps best known as the authors of Okla-

homa Birdlife, lived in Stevens Point 1965–1975, teaching at UWSP and gathering a number of unique records both by band and by sight. These biologists have mentored hundreds of UW students, many of whom birded the county extensively while in college, adding information during periods of which we would otherwise know very little.

The purpose of this paper differs little from that outlined in Faanes (2008), to disseminate what is known of the birds of Portage County (Fig. 1) and to serve as a basis to assess future avifaunal changes. Let it also serve to illustrate the value contained in record keeping and the reporting by amateurs of their observations. In essence, this paper is based entirely on such records and reporting. During research for this project, I repeatedly encountered the names of several birders active in the 1950s and 1960s. All attempts to locate their field notes failed. Portage County and Wisconsin ornithology are the poorer for this loss.

## DESCRIPTION OF PORTAGE COUNTY

Around the time of European settlement, the Menominee tribe inhab-

ited what became Portage County. Under the influence of the French, they had abandoned their traditional permanent settlements, establishing seasonal villages west to the Wisconsin River. In the Menominee story of the spirit Manabush, it is told that he gave the grebe red eyes and a short tail. Around 1818, Jean Baptiste DuBay established a trading post of the American Fur Company on the east bank of the Wisconsin River. By 1850, the county gained its present boundaries.

Portage County lies in both the Northern Highland and Central Plain physiogeographic regions (Martin 1965). The west is part of the unglaciated Driftless Area while the Green Bay lobe of the Laurentide Ice Sheet formed the east. The recessional moraine shapes the varied topography along the eastern border; west of the moraine, the Wisconsin River and associated lowlands dominate the landscape. The county covers 2088 km<sup>2</sup>. The 136 natural lakes are relatively small. River impoundments form the largest bodies of water. The Wisconsin and Plover Rivers are the principal western streams and the Tomorrow River drains much of the upland east. Stevens Point averages 81 cm rain and 107 cm snow annually.

The county divides into distinct areas of vegetation: grassland in the southwest, mixed hardwood forest in the north and east, and agricultural land concentrated in the Central Sands region between the Wisconsin River and the moraine. The major stream drainages support a variety of forest types, perhaps most distinctively the pine barrens of the Plover River watershed. Each forest community has been extensively altered, including the conversion of much of the southwest from

conifer bog to grassland. An 1857 United States government publication described the north and northwestern parts of the county as timbered in "inexhaustible" quantities. The Tension Zone (Curtis 1959) encompasses most of the county and its influence on regional birdlife is significant. The intertwined effects of climate, geography, and habitat diversity bring our bird list to 303 (292 of natural occurrence), of which 166 have bred. The cumulative Stevens Point Christmas Bird Count total is 118 species.

Large areas of Portage County are preserved under public ownership, representing important forest, wetland, and grassland communities. The 5140 ha Buena Vista Grassland is managed to support the Greater Prairie-Chicken and associated species. The 2430 ha Dewey Marsh State Wildlife Area contains one of the largest conifer bog and sedge marsh basins in the region. The 555 ha Richard J. Hemp State Fishery Area includes the confluence of Poncho Creek and the Tomorrow River. Smaller parcels scattered throughout the county protect similar habitats. One of these, Lost Creek Wildlife Area, was reclaimed from agricultural land during the compilation of this paper. Recent observations show that the creation of Lost Creek quickly transformed the seasonal status of a number of transient and breeding species, primarily ducks, but also rails, sparrows, and blackbirds.

## METHODS

This annotated list is based in part on my observations from August 1988 through October 2005. Unless otherwise cited, extreme arrival and depar-

ture dates are from my records. Average arrival and departure dates are in parentheses following the extremes and were calculated from my records alone. All observations lacking a citation are mine. The contributions of birders past and present were initially gathered from the *Passenger Pigeon* (1939–2008) online archive. Two search terms were used in this endeavor, “Stevens Point” and “Portage County.” More recently, eBird has become an important repository of county records, and I was given access to the data. All unusual eBird reports were investigated for accuracy; if the observer failed to respond or provide adequate documentation, the record is not included in this summary. The Stevens Point Christmas Bird Count (hereafter CBC) 1961–2010 was searched via the National Audubon Society website. Several Wisconsin DNR employees gave generously of relevant research. Local birders Gerry Janz, Joe Schaufenbuel, and Ted Keyel provided their own observations and invaluable assistance in learning the details regarding a variety of obscure, undocumented, or unpublished records. A tantalizing resource in the internet age is museum collections available online. Unfortunately, the UW-Madison collection lacks detail of specimen origin. In future, it is hoped that it will.

Because this list is based upon the observations of local residents, their behavior influences the ornithological record. This is especially true regarding the migration of aquatic species on the Wisconsin River and its impoundments. Before 1997, I lived in Park Ridge adjacent to Iverson Park and McDill Pond, and followed the migrations on those waters. In fall 1997, I moved near the Wisconsin River Flowage and encoun-

tered the abundance there. At the same time, birders rediscovered Lake DuBay. This new focus transformed our understanding of the movements of dozens of species. The resultant discoveries are detailed below.

The terms used to describe each species’ status are adapted from Faanes (1981). The taxonomy follows American Ornithologists’ Union (1998) and supplements. Plant taxonomy follows Wisflora: Wisconsin Vascular Plant Species (<http://www.botany.wisc.edu/wisflora>); however, the common names of several species that differ significantly from traditional usage are not followed. All references to Tomorrow River and Poncho Creek represent observations from the parts of those streams that lie within or near the Richard J. Hemp Fishery Area. All observations from Jordan Swamp are from the part of the swamp south of STH 66. The “W” Ponds is a pair of farm ponds located in Section 4 Pine Grove Township. Bear Creek and Bear Creek Marsh are located in Linwood Township. The information contained in this compilation is current through 1 August 2011. Abbreviations: BVG – Buena Vista Grassland, SNA – State Natural Area, SWA – State Wildlife Area, UWSP – University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, WA – Wildlife Area, WBBA – Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas, WDNR – Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, WRF – Wisconsin River Flowage.

#### ANNOTATED CHECKLIST OF THE BIRDS OF PORTAGE COUNTY

##### *Family Anatidae*

**Greater White-fronted Goose**  
(*Anser albifrons*)—Four records: 75 at

BVG 2 March 2000 (*Passenger Pigeon* 62: 289, 2000); one at Dewey Marsh 10 April 2001 (M. Berner); Amherst 31 March 2004 (Gerry Janz); up to nine at Lost Creek WA 6–8 April 2011 (eBird 2011d).

**Snow Goose** (*Chen caerulescens*)—Despite its continental abundance, a rare migrant. Flocks or individuals do not linger. Any body of water will do. Daniel Berger recorded 46 on 5 April 1959 (*Passenger Pigeon* 21: 156, 1959). Carl Schroeder found 400 at the confluence of Plover and Wisconsin Rivers 13 October 1976, and 40 in “Stevens Point” 3 April 1977 (eBird 2011a). CBC: 21 December 1985 (two birds); 20 December 1986 (two); 17 December 1988 (one blue morph); 16 December 1989 (one blue morph). Other records since 1989: one at BVG 14 October 1989; 35 at McDill Pond 23 October 1991; ten over Poncho Creek 12 October 1993; two with Canada Geese over Stevens Point 11 April 1997; one at Somers Pond (E1/2 Section 30N Stockton Township) 3 October 1998; one along Hay Meadow Road 1 November 1998; one at W Ponds March 2001; “migrants” 14 September 2001 (*Passenger Pigeon* 64: 94, 2002); 17 dark morph birds passing Dewey Marsh 17 April 2002; dark morph juvenile, I-39 at CTH W 1 November 2003; two (one dark morph) at BVG 3 November 2010 (Joe Schaufenbuel).

**Ross’s Goose** (*Chen rossii*)—One record. Adult found by David Borchardt at the Amherst mill pond 27 March–3 April 2001 (*Passenger Pigeon* 63: 192, 2001).

**Cackling Goose** (*Branta hutchinsii*)—Uncommon fall migrant. This species was split in October 2004. Since then, a few local observers describe it as regular in small numbers at BVG, where several individuals were captured for rehabilitation in fall 2004 (Joe Schaufenbuel, pers. comm.). eBird (2011a) records describe an interval of 30 September–13 October. I found single birds in Stevens Point 1–12 November 1998 and 5 December 2004.

**Canada Goose** (*Branta canadensis*)—Abundant migrant and common resident March–November; rare winter resident December–February. Breeds. Spring migration annually shows a sharp peak in mid-April; e.g., 11400 over Tomorrow River 18 April 1991 and 5300 over Jordan Swamp 18 April 1999. Such numbers in the 1990s seemed to coincide with the departure of large flocks staging in southern Wisconsin—in every flight event, birds began to appear over the county about 90 minutes after sunrise—the approximate flight time for birds leaving the south at dawn. No such large flights noted in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The molt migration of the population *B. c. maxima* occurs at the end of May (Batt et al. 1992) and observations increased significantly beginning in the late 1990s. Fall migration is lengthy and irregular with smaller peaks: 5400 over Tomorrow River 15 September 1993; 1050 at McDill Pond 2 November 1990, and 1100 there 2 December 1999. The breeding population is small, a few pairs on a given wetland. At Dewey Marsh, records of fledglings span 19 April–28 June. After freeze-up, the winter presence is insignificant. Due

in part to extensive reintroductions in the Midwest of *B. c. maxima* and human-influenced changes to migratory behaviors of all geese, the migrant, breeding, and wintering geese in central Wisconsin are of somewhat uncertain taxonomic affinities, but are dominated by *B. c. maxima*, *B. c. interior*, and probably intergrades between them (Mobray, et al 2002).

**Mute Swan** (*Cygnus olor*)—Resident and breeding species on urban impoundments 1983–1996. Last known nesting attempt was in 1992. Local population reduced to one bird by 1994; it died on 13 November 1996. Three transient adults were on McDill Pond 17 July 1998. The first nest was probably one discovered on 12 May 1984 (*Passenger Pigeon* 47: 30, 1985). The breeding population peaked at three pairs in 1989: females were on eggs at both Iverson Park and Whiting Park on 2 May, and a pair was building a nest at the mouth of the Plover River that day. Dates of occupied nests span 9 April–9 May. Recorded on the CBC 1984–1993, a maximum of eight.

**Trumpeter Swan** (*Cygnus buccinator*)—Irregular migrant and uncommon winter resident. Extremes: early fall 22 September 2001; late spring 23 April 2003 (G. Janz). The WDNR (2008) initiated a reintroduction program in 1987 that included releases in about 1992 at Mead SWA adjacent to Portage Co. The first county record was four neck-collared adults at the mouth of the Plover River 1–8 December 1996, banded as two-year olds in May 1996 at Ashland, Wisconsin (*vide* USF&WS). Winters at the confluence of the Wisconsin and Plover Rivers, a maximum of eight, a known interval

of 26 November–5 March (pers. obs., eBird 2011a). The largest transient flock is 12 over L. DuBay 22 October 2005. A potentially breeding pair was at Four Oaks Marsh 1 April–7 May 2002 (G. Janz).

**Tundra Swan** (*Cygnus columbianus*)—Common migrant; much more common in the spring. Extremes: spring 18 March 1995 (28 March) and 9 May 2001; fall 23 October 1991 (4 November) and 12–22 December 2001. Two summer records: healthy adult at BVG 24 June 1990 (pers. obs.); one on 14 July 2000 (*Passenger Pigeon* 62: 342, 2000). There is no information available about how the latter summer record was separated from the then-becoming-common Trumpeter Swan. In spring, Tundra Swans are usually detected flying west early in the morning. Large numbers stage at Shiocton, about 70 km east of Stevens Point. Spring migration is typically compressed within an interval of about two weeks. Large flights include: 1500 at WRF (*Passenger Pigeon* 33: 139, 1971); 3600 at Tomorrow River 25 March 1991; 1940 at Stevens Point 29 March 1997; and 1500 on 30 March 2004 (*Passenger Pigeon* 66: 396, 2004). Average date of spring peak 1989–2005 is 31 March. Fall migration is protracted, numbers rarely exceed 150, and in some years swans may bypass the county or are rare; the average peak is about 7 November. Recorded once on the CBC: 27 on 15 December 2001. Migrants rarely linger for more than a couple of hours at any site.

**Wood Duck** (*Aix sponsa*)—Common resident March–November. Breeds. Early spring 10 March 1998

(21 March); late fall 28 November 1992 (5 November). The Plover River and impoundments are the center of abundance in the county; numbers on the Plover far exceed the Wisconsin River. A flock of 15–20 is typical throughout the spring. It nests almost exclusively on streams. Records of dependent fledglings span 23 May–30 July. July brood counts combined from Iverson Park and McDill Pond include 85 ducklings, 15 adults on 11 July 1992; 65 ducklings, 13 adults on 8 July 1994; and 17 ducklings, 45 adults on 30 July 2005. Fall concentrations on the lower Plover River commonly 40–60 birds. Evening twilight observations of Wood Ducks flying up the Plover River into Iverson Park roost include 97 on 23 October 1993 and 128 on 20 October 1994. An unnamed lake adjacent to the Tomorrow River in Section 19 New Hope Township frequently hosts fall flocks: 52 on 27 September 1994, and 45 on 30 September 2003. One on the 19 December 1976 CBC. Six winter records since 1993: female at Whiting Park 25 February–11 March 1993; male at Stevens Point wastewater treatment facility outflow 1 January 1994; a female, perhaps one individual, at Whiting Park 15 December 1995–2 March 1996, 23 January 1998, and 28 December 2000–14 March 2001; female at Iverson Park 15–20 December 2001.

**Gadwall** (*Anas strepera*)—Fairly common migrant. Extremes: spring 24 March 2003 (5 March) and 24 May 2011 (eBird 2011d); early fall 1 October 1988 (25 October). Almost all Gadwall observations are from impoundments of the Wisconsin and Plover Rivers. Single digit numbers are the norm, spring and fall, with ex-

ceptional counts on the WRF of 75 on 18 April 1999, and 220 on 8 November 2000. “Winter” records: 1–4 at McDill Pond 2–17 December 1994; through 20 December 1998, with unusual numbers that month, e.g., 40 at Wisconsin River Flowage 7 December, and 15 at McDill Pond 17 December.

**American Wigeon** (*Anas americana*)—Uncommon migrant. Extremes: spring 25 March 2002 & 2003 (1 April) and 5 May 2011 (eBird 2011d); early fall 7 September 1989 (25 September). Spring and fall flocks rarely exceed 15 individuals; exceptions at WRF include 50 on 20 April 1997, and 70 on 8 November 2000. Winter records: one on the 25 December 1970 CBC; male at Whiting Park 15 December 1993–20 March 1994 and 5 December 1994–27 January 1995; four at Iverson Park 2–17 December 1998; male at Pfiffner Park 4 December 2004, and then at Whiting Park 17 December 2004. Two anomalous spring 2002 records: male at Dewey sedge marsh 30 May, and male at McDill Pond 5 June; one at Lost Creek WA 26 June 2011 (eBird 2011d).

**American Black Duck** (*Anas rubripes*)—Uncommon resident September–May. Early fall 6 September 1994; late spring 31 May 2011 (eBird 2011d). The majority of observations come from the Plover River, Iverson Park to Whiting Park, and on the Wisconsin River at the outflow of the Stevens Point wastewater treatment facility. Maximum of 10–15 at Whiting Park in winter. Rarely found among rafts of migrant waterfowl. The only such observation in my notebooks is 12 with 840 Mallards at Lake DuBay

during ice-out on 7 April 2002. Summer records: one at Iverson Park 24 July & 7 August 1993; one at Iverson 8 July 1994; nine at Poncho Creek 2 August 1995.

**Mallard** (*Anas platyrhynchos*)—Abundant permanent resident. Breeds. Urban birds on the Wisconsin and Plover Rivers dominate the local population. In winter, Whiting Park typically hosts 500–800 birds, with smaller flocks at other open water locations. After spring thaw Mallards disperse to nest throughout the county. Observations of dependent young span 30 April–15 August. I found a nest with eggs at Hemp fishery area 4 April 1994. At McDill Pond on 11 July 1994, 100 adults accompanied 115 young. Observations of truly wild continental Mallards are difficult to identify. Two hundred at Lake Emily on 12 November 1991 and 900 on McDill Pond 13 November 1999 may have included a number of wild birds. Eight hundred-forty Mallards among a mixed species flock totaling 1700 ducks were at Lake DuBay during ice-out on 7 April 2002. Recent large flocks at Lost Creek WA contain a large number of “town” Mallards. The report of 5000 in Portage Co. (*Passenger Pigeon* 41: 163, 1979) is inaccurate. The birds were in Marathon Co. (Stan Skutek, pers. comm.). During winter at Witting Park, one or two hybrids between American Black Duck and Mallard are a daily presence.

**Blue-winged Teal** (*Anas discors*)—Fairly common migrant and very local summer resident March–October. Breeds. Early spring 22 March 2003 (6 April); late fall 16 October 2005 (29 September). Spring migration spans 1

April–15 May when flocks of 5–15 are widespread on wetlands, farm ponds and the Plover River. Seventy were at the W Ponds 18 April 2001, and 30 at Iverson Park 15 April 2003; flocks of 70-plus at Lost Creek WA in late April 2011 (eBird 2011d). Fall migration generally encompasses September; observations diminish after early October. Fall concentrations include 25 at McDill Pond 22 September 1991, and 62 at Lost Creek WA on 27 September 2010 (eBird 2011a). It may be uncommon in summer at Four Oaks Marsh, Lost Creek WA, and at the W Ponds. One breeding record: female with five young at Somers Pond 8 July 2005.

**Northern Shoveler** (*Anas clypeata*)—Uncommon migrant. Extremes: spring 24 March 1990 & 2000 (3 April) and 25 May 1998; fall 13 August 2001 and 19 November 2000. Flocks of fewer than ten are widespread late March–mid May. Eighty at Lake DuBay 11 April 2002 and 28 at WRF 30 March 2005 are exceptional. Rare in fall; my first fall record in the county was 25 August 1998, and then found annually through 2005. Fifteen shovelers were among an unusual mixed raft of 400 *Anas* species at WRF 8 November 2000. Up to four males frequented Lost Creek WA during June 2011.

**Northern Pintail** (*Anas acuta*)—Uncommon migrant. Extremes: spring 24 March 2003 (1 April) and 22 May 2011 (eBird 2011d); fall 7 September 1991 (12 October) and 25 November 1999. Usually found in single digit flocks, spring and fall; 24 at Lake DuBay on 7 April 2002, and 11 at McDill Pond 13 October 1997 are the



lone exceptions 1988–2005; more recently, 18 at Lake DuBay 28 March 2010 (G. Janz), and 89 at Lost Creek WA 8 April 2011 (eBird 2011d). A pair was at Lost Creek WA late May–12 June 2011 (eBird 2011d). Winter records: count week of the 19 December 1981 CBC; female at Whiting Park 3 December 1988–2 February 1989; male at Whiting Park 5–7 December 1994 and a female there 17 December 1994–11 March 1995; female at McDill Pond 17 December 1998.

**Green-winged Teal** (*Anas crecca*)—Uncommon migrant and local summer resident March–December. Breeds. Early spring 26 March 1998 & 2000; late fall 4 December 1998. At all seasons favor small pond or pothole and dense marsh habitat. Summer residents are found at Dewey sedge marsh, Four Oaks Marsh and the W ponds. It may nest annually at the former two sites; however, the only confirmed breeding is at Dewey: 7–28 June 1998 (three broods); 23 June 2002; 26 June–10 July 2003 (three broods). The lone winter record is one on the 25 December 1966 CBC.

**Canvasback** (*Aythya valisineria*)—Fairly common migrant. Extremes: spring 8 March 1992 (31 March) and 30 April 2005; fall 17 October 1997 (25 October) and 20 November 2001. Exclusive of fallout events 20–40 frequently found among rafts of diving ducks on WRF and Lake DuBay. High counts at WRF include 285 on 3 April 1999 and 200 on 11 April 2002. At Lake DuBay 180 were seen on 22 October 2005. Tiny numbers are found at smaller lakes and ponds. A reliable presence throughout the spring migration; however, erratic in fall, absent

in some years, common in others. One recorded on the 16 December 1978 CBC.

**Redhead** (*Aythya americana*)—Fairly common migrant. Extremes: spring 24 March 2000 (7 April) and 13 May 2011 (eBird 2011d); fall 26 September 2005 (26 October) and 20 November 1999. Closely follows Canvasback in distribution and movements, 25–50 birds in the company of other diving ducks. Common in spring, somewhat less so in fall; fallout conditions have dropped large numbers on Lake DuBay and WRF in both seasons. A combined 270 on these waters 11 April 2002; 600 total on 22 October 2005.

**Ring-necked Duck** (*Aythya collaris*)—Common migrant and rare summer resident March–November. Breeds. Extremes: spring 13 March 1990 (23 March) and 13 May 2011 (eBird 2011d); fall 25 September 1990 (16 October) and 4 December 1998. Spring migrants are commonly most abundant at McDill Pond, and large flocks linger at length if Portage Co. is near the northern limit of ice-free conditions in spring; e.g., 350 from 9–14 April 2001, and 500 between 28 March–11 April 2003. Seventy-five is a typical migrant flock at McDill Pond. Relatively uncommon at Lake DuBay and WRF; a combined 750 on 11 April 2002 is exceptional. An additional 280 were at McDill that day. Fall flocks are tiny in comparison: 60 at WRF on 8 November 2000 is the largest in my notebooks. Winter records exclusive of CBC: one on 29 December 1964 (*Passenger Pigeon* 27: 163, 1965), male at Whiting Park 7 February–8 March 1991 and 9 February–11 March 1993;

two males at Black Bridge 4 December 1993–6 March 1994; male at Whiting Park 17 December 1994–9 March 1995. CBC records of single birds: 25 December 1964; 18 December 1982; 21 December 1985; count week December 1992. One breeding record: female with six young just north of Philippine Islands, Dewey Marsh 30 May 1996. Seven juvenal or eclipse female-plumaged birds at that site 12 August 2001 may be a second breeding record. Additional summer reports: one at Dewey Marsh 3 June 2002 and two at McDill Pond 13 June 2002.

**Greater Scaup** (*Aythya marila*)—Uncommon migrant. Extremes: spring 24 March 1991 (8 April) and 16 May 1976 (*Passenger Pigeon* 39: 190, 1977); fall 15 October 2005 (3 November) and 27 November 1997. December records: one on the 25 December 1967 CBC; immature male at Whiting Park 17–23 December 1994; adult female at various sites in Stevens Point 27 November–14 December 2000. The Audubon Society CBC webpage (<http://audubon2.org/cbchist/count.table.html>) describes 61 Greater Scaup on the 16 December 1972 CBC, while Hilsenhoff (1973) lists 61 Lesser Scaup (*A. affinis*). Typical migrant encounters involve fewer than five birds; however, larger flocks occur: 35 at McDill Pond 16 April 1989, 13 there on 11 November 1994, and 20 at Lake DuBay 22 October 2005.

**Lesser Scaup** (*Aythya affinis*)—Common migrant. Extremes: spring 13 March 1995 (26 March) and 21 May 1995; fall 14 September 2003 (20 October) and 27 November 1990. Lesser Scaup is our most common mi-

grant duck. General abundance is greater in spring, but large fallouts occur both spring and fall. McDill Pond frequently hosts 100 birds. Combined totals at Lake DuBay and WRF include 2200 on both 11 April 2002 and 22 October 2005. A total of 540 were at WRF 20 April 1997, and 1000 at Lake DuBay 1 November 2003. An exceptional late spring flock of 320 was at WRF 6 May 2002. December records: 1–2 at McDill Pond 2–7 December 1994; 1–2 at Black Bridge 7–20 December 1997; two at Black Bridge 2 December 1999; one on CBC 18 December 1999; one at McDill Pond 13–22 December 2001. One “throughout the [winter seasonal reporting] period” 1985–86 (*Passenger Pigeon* 48: 167, 1986). The winter period is 1 December–28 February. See Greater Scaup for details of scaup recorded on the 1972 CBC.

**Surf Scoter** (*Melanitta perspicillata*)—At least fifteen fall records 9 October–10 November. One spring record: adult male at McDill Pond 7 May 1994. First recorded (adult female) on the Wisconsin River at Black Bridge railroad trestle on 10 November 1993. Subsequent fall observations are from WRF (six records) and Lake DuBay (eight records). All records are of 1–4 individuals, with the exception of 24 birds at Lake DuBay 14 October 2007 (G. Janz).

**White-winged Scoter** (*Melanitta fusca*)—About eighteen fall records since 2002; four 28 September–13 October, and 14 between 22 October–11 November. The lone spring record was also the first in the county: two males found by Gerry Janz at Lake DuBay 8 May 2002. Fourteen fall

records are from Lake DuBay, two from WRF. Ten birds at Lake DuBay 1 November 2003 (M. Berner, J. Schaufenbuel) and eight there 22 October 2009 (G. Janz) are the largest flights recorded. While observations of all sea ducks increased dramatically after 1997 (see introduction), inexplicably, White-winged Scoter did not appear until 2002. It has been seen each year since.

**Black Scoter** (*Melanitta americana*)—About fourteen fall records 1 October–19 November. First recorded (adult female) 27 October 1990 at McDill Pond (M. Berner). Since 1998, seven WRF records and five Lake DuBay records. A female was on the Wisconsin River at Black Bridge 18–19 November 2000. Overall, a maximum of four birds, Lake DuBay 30 October 2010 (Alyssa DeRubeis, Rob Pendergast).

**Long-tailed Duck** (*Clangula hyemalis*)—A total of fifteen records. Since 2000 there are 13 fall records 21 October–25 November. Three at WRF on 7 April 2003 is the lone spring record. First recorded (adult female) 15–25 November 1992 at McDill Pond (M. Berner). There are 11 Lake DuBay records and two at WRF. Lake DuBay reports include 37 birds on 31 October 2004 (G. Janz, M. Berner), and 12 on 22 October 2009 (G. Janz).

**Bufflehead** (*Bucephala albeola*)—Common migrant. Extremes: spring 10 March 1998 (21 March) and 19 May 1995; fall 13 October 1992 (19 October) and 17 December 1988 (CBC). Spring and fall passage protracted; daily counts of 40–60 are the norm on any river impoundment;

numbers vary little year to year. Throughout spring and fall 1999, fall 2001, and spring 2005 occurred in exceptional numbers on WRF, e.g., 280 on 8 April 1999; 340 on 20 November 1999; 180 on 26 April 2001; 200-plus 11–16 April 2005. Along with Common Goldeneye (*B. clangula*), Bufflehead is often found on the free flowing Wisconsin River. Two CBC records of single birds: 19 December 1976 and 17 December 1988. One summer record, an eclipse male at Section 15, Hull Township 9 July 2001 (*Passenger Pigeon* 63: 207, 2001).

**Common Goldeneye** (*Bucephala clangula*)—Common resident October–May. Early fall 16 October 2002 (26 October); late spring 6 May 2002 (24 April). During November a local population quickly builds to about 300 birds, taking up residency during the daylight hours on the Wisconsin River between Black Bridge and the mouth of the Plover River. The majority of these birds roost on WRF until freeze up. Up to 200 typically winter on the open Wisconsin River. CBC maxima include 469 on 19 December 1976 and 450 on 16 December 1995. Rapid increase in goldeneyes during ice-out in spring diminishes quickly after 5 April. Spring flocks typically more widespread than in fall. One–three males off “Big Island” in WRF May–5 June 2003 is exceptional.

**Hooded Merganser** (*Lophodytes cucullatus*)—Fairly common migrant and uncommon summer resident March–November. Early spring 13 March 1990, 1994, 1995, 1998; those arrival dates are complicated by the presence of wintering individuals, but refer to the first observation of the

species of the sex opposite the wintering individual. Late fall complicated by lingering birds, generally late November departure. Migrants found on lakes and river impoundments. Spring peak is usually first week of April (300 at WRF 4 April 2005), rarely later, e.g., 90 at McDill Pond 16 April 1996. A typical fall flock numbers 30. In late October–early November mergansers roosts among gulls on Lake DuBay, e.g., 200 there 17 October 2003 (*Passenger Pigeon* 66:136, 2004). My 15 records of dependent fledglings on the Plover and Wisconsin Rivers span 13 May–8 July. Two broods at Iverson Park totaled 21 young 3 June 2000. First winter record was CBC 15 December 1973. One to two individuals wintered at Whiting Park and/or Black Bridge during nine years 1988–2006. Exclusively CBC, all single birds: 15 December 1973; 19 December 1976; 16 December 1978; 18 December 1999; 16 December 2006.

**Common Merganser** (*Mergus merganser*)—Common migrant and uncommon winter resident. Extremes: spring 5 March 1992 (18 March) and 25 May 2003; fall arrival 18 October 1990 & 1997 (7 November). Spring peak abundance of up to 200 birds typically first week of April. Fall peak comparable and occurs later than any other duck species, often in early December. Winter population on the Wisconsin River is small and varies within and between seasons. It is often missed on the CBC: one record 1960–1993; found on seven counts 1994–2007. Breeding is suspected on the upper Plover River. Summer records: two juveniles on the Plover River at the site of old Van Order (aka Christensen) Pond 22 August 1997;

adult female at McDill Pond 23 July 1998.

**Red-breasted Merganser** (*Mergus serrator*)—Uncommon migrant. Extremes: spring 25 March 1998 and 23 May 1974 (*Passenger Pigeon* 37: 72, 1975); fall 16 October 2001 and 7 December 2001. Peak of spring and fall migration is mid-April and late October, respectively. Highest seasonal counts are 66 at WRF 14 April 2002 (pers. obs.) and 65 at Lake DuBay 21 October 2009 (Gerry Janz).

**Ruddy Duck** (*Oxyura jamaicensis*)—Fairly common migrant. Extremes: spring 28 March 1997 and 18 May 2000; fall 14 September 2003 and 4 December 1999. Migration is protracted spring and fall with a typical flock of 30 birds. Exceptional spring flights include 235 at McDill Pond 15 April 2002. Counts of 1800 at WRF and 1500 at Lake DuBay early on 22 October 2005 was part of one of the most spectacular waterfowl fallouts ever recorded in the county.

### *Family Odontophoridae*

**Northern Bobwhite** (*Colinus virginianus*)—Rare resident. Breeds. In recent years, reliably found at one site, near the intersection of Lake Road and Townline Road, BVG, and recorded nesting there during the WBBA (pers. obs.). It is almost certain that this population, and all subsequent reports, derive from escaped or released game farm birds. The provenance of 20 bobwhite reported by Hughes at Plover 21 November 1948 (*Passenger Pigeon* 11: 84, 1949) is unknown. It was an infrequent presence during the first 15 CBCs and the 59

found in 1961 exceed all subsequent years combined; no records 1975–2009. Two listed on the 2010 CBC. Currently, a natural or self-sustaining population remains unknown in the county. Escapes are occasionally observed in Stevens Point (pers. obs.), and, by 2010, known pen-raised quail frequent BVG. A long term survey suggests that Wisconsin's native population is approaching extirpation (Dhuey 2009).

### **Family Phasianidae**

**Gray Partridge** (*Perdix perdix*)—Formerly a rare and local introduced resident. “Wisconsin Conservation Dept. personnel noted them in Portage County” in spring 1950 (*Passenger Pigeon* 12: 138, 1950). Numbers “were reported to be up” in summer 1978 (*Passenger Pigeon* 41: 84, 1979). Recorded on four CBCs 1976–1983, a maximum of 12 birds. Three were at BVG 23 April 1977 (eBird 2011a). I saw a small covey on several occasions 1989–1990 at Section 20N Stockton Township, lastly three birds 30 November 1990. Reported on 9 May 1992 (Frank 1992).

**Ring-necked Pheasant** (*Phasianus colchicus*)—A rare and local introduced resident. A tiny population in Carson and Eau Pleine Townships may be self-sustaining. Birds found east of the Wisconsin River are assumed game farm escapees. Birds found in BVG are actively discouraged by the state in order to limit competition with Greater Prairie-Chicken. A WBBA breeding record at New Hope Township is within 5 km of a large pheasant farm.

**Ruffed Grouse** (*Bonasa umbellus*)—Common resident. Breeds. Wide-spread primarily in upland forests of the north and east. Distribution is limited in the fragmented forests south of Stevens Point. Largely absent from the major river corridors. Cyclical abundance is often apparent even to casual listener as the number of drumming males varies each year. The early egg record is at Poncho Creek, 20 April 1999. Thirty-eight records of broods 1989–2005 span 29 May–3 August. During the first 25 years of the CBC average about ten grouse; since 1994 the average is five.

**Sharp-tailed Grouse** (*Tympanuchus phasianellus*)—Extirpated. As illustrated by maps in Gregg and Neimuth (2000), grouse inhabited most of the county in 1850, with the range contracting throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Kumlien et al. (1949) describe “A few found around Stevens Point in 1898.” Hamerstrom and Hamerstrom (1973) saw grouse at BVG 1950–1956; in addition, they observed hybrids with Greater Prairie-Chicken 1950–1962. Reported on May Day counts 10 May 1975 (*Passenger Pigeon* 38: 53, 1976) and 12 May 1979 (Anonymous 1980); these birds were at the Dewey sedge marsh, where a few remained in the late 1970s (S. H. Krings, pers. comm.). The marsh burned in 1976; however, the fire apparently did not sufficiently reinvigorate the habitat, to allow that precarious population to increase or even persist. Robbins (1991) included Portage Co. in the range of this species. The (*Passenger Pigeon* 53: 267, 1991) report is erroneous. Current declines in nearby Wood Co. strongholds (Hull and Fandel 2010) do not

foretell the reappearance of this grouse in Portage Co.

**Greater Prairie-Chicken** (*Tympanuchus cupido*)—Locally fairly common resident. Breeds. Found at BVG, Paul J. Olson SWA, Dewey Marsh SWA, and at the southeastern edges of Mead SWA. With a population of several hundred, the BVG population is the largest in Wisconsin, and a significant percentage of these birds may be seen during a winter day. Most populations depend on intensive management; i.e., maintaining grassland habitat, and, more recently, the introduction of birds from the prairie states in order to increase genetic diversity. The Dewey Marsh flock of about ten birds persists in sedge meadow and bog birch (*Betula pumila*). In about 1940, Harold Shine observed 50 at BVG, and reported that “locals” observed 200 at the same location (*Passenger Pigeon* 3: 30. 1941). Presumably at BVG, 200 were reported by Palek 30 January 1947 (*Passenger Pigeon* 10: 81. 1948). During a 22 year study at BVG, the Hamerstroms (1973) reported that the number of males present on booming grounds was 550 in 1950 and 198 in 1971, with the number of booming grounds falling from 48 to 21. Such fluctuations continue, and may be dramatic and swift. Kardash (2009) reported decreases between 2007 and 2009 from 305 to 178, and 31 to 22 in booming males and booming grounds, respectively. At Olson SWA, the population has approached that of BVG, e.g., 162 males present in 2007 (Kardash 2009). “A strong increase in both Buena Vista and Leola marshes” (*Passenger Pigeon* 32: 22. 1971). Prairie-Chickens were found

on four of the first ten CBCs (95 in 1968), and a couple of times in the 1970s and 1980s. There is no CBC record since 1993.

**Wild Turkey** (*Meleagris gallopavo*)—Common introduced resident throughout the county. Breeds. Reported on 14 April 1966 (*Passenger Pigeon* 29: 41. 1967). “Observed” on 19 May 1970 (*Passenger Pigeon* 32: 22. 1971). The annual November gun deer hunting season reveals the turkey’s true abundance when flocks of 100+, driven from woodlots, congregate in crop stubble and similar open locations. It was first recorded on the CBC in 1995.

#### **Family Gaviidae**

**Red-throated Loon** (*Gavia stellata*)—Rare migrant. All records: 15 October 1970 on Wisconsin River north of Stevens Point, reported by Mrs. F. S. Eastwood (*Passenger Pigeon* 33: 139. 1971); 7 April 1974 (*Passenger Pigeon* 37: 70. 1975); one at Lake DuBay 25 April 1990 (M. Berner); one at Lake DuBay 20 October 2002 (G. Janz); two (incorrectly reported as six birds in *Passenger Pigeon* 69: 370. 2006) at Lake DuBay 11 November 2006 (G. Janz).

**Pacific Loon** (*Gavia pacifica*)—One record. Adult at WRF 10–11 November 2000 (*Passenger Pigeon* 63: 66. 2001).

**Common Loon** (*Gavia immer*)—Fairly common migrant. Extremes: spring 24 March 2000 (3 April) and 14 May 1997; fall 16 September 1993 (9 October) and 29 November 2001. Spring passage is primarily the first one-half of April and daily counts gen-

erally 5–10 birds with higher fallout numbers, especially at WRF where Zimmer (1982) found 60-plus loons 9–11 April 1977 and 10–12 April 1978. The timing of migration is apparently unchanged since then with 58 present at WRF on 9 April 2001 and 59 on 12 April 2002. In addition to WRF, fall migrants also favor Lake DuBay: 67 on 23 October 2005. As in spring, small numbers of loons are the fall norm 15 October–10 November. Rare summer visitor and breeding species. Present in the county 11 June 1975 (*Passenger Pigeon* 38: 73, 1976). Pair with two young on Sunset Lake 7 and 17 July 1994; a local resident reported breeding in 1995 as well. An adult was on Jordan Pond 4 July 1999 and a basic-plumaged bird at WRF 29 June 2002.

### **Family Podicipedidae**

**Pied-billed Grebe** (*Podilymbus podiceps*)—Fairly common migrant. Early spring 16 March 2003 (31 March); late fall 29 November 2001 (29 October). Migrants are widespread in small numbers April–May and October–early November. Thirteen birds on the Wisconsin River 20 April 1997 and 30 at Lake DuBay 11 April 2002 are the only double digit counts in my notebooks. Rare and local in summer. Suspected nesting locations include Four Oaks Marsh, Lake Emily, McDill Pond, and Reton Lake. About four breeding confirmations: two fledglings on a beaver (*Castor canadensis*) pond at Section 29 Dewey Township 5 July 1998; three fledglings at Lost Creek WA 27 June 2011, and two broods there 7 July 2011 (eBird 2011d). One winter record: one on Wisconsin River at Stevens Point wastewater treatment plant outflow 11

January–13 March 2002 (*Passenger Pigeon* 64: 174, 2002).

**Horned Grebe** (*Podiceps auritus*)—Fairly common migrant. Extremes: spring 31 March 2003 (9 April) and 8 May 1997; fall 5 September 1997 and 8 December 1998. Spring passage infrequently extends into May: 70 at WRF 6 May 2002; typical peak is mid-April. Somewhat erratic fall passage, often arriving early and in numbers; e.g., 21 at WRF 14 September 2003. Most reliably found at Lake DuBay and WRF; a combined 102 grebes on those waters 23 October 2009 (eBird 2011a). Migrants often linger into late November.

**Red-necked Grebe** (*Podiceps grisegena*)—Uncommon spring migrant; rare fall migrant. Spring extremes: 3 April 2005 (12 April) and 6 May 2002. Three fall records at WRF: 3 November 1997, 20 September and 4 November 2003; single birds at Lake DuBay on 1 and 31 October 2010 (eBird 2011a). Two records away from WRF and Lake DuBay: one at McDill Pond 16 April 1996 (M. Berner); three at Lost Creek WA 10 April 2011 (eBird 2011d). The daily maximum is seven birds.

**Eared Grebe** (*Podiceps nigricollis*)—Seven or eight records of single birds. Pallen Lake date unknown (*vide* Kent Hall); WRF 7 April 2000; WRF 26–30 October 2002 and 4–7 November 2002 (since coverage of the flowage was on a daily basis, these intervals probably represent two individuals). Gerry Janz has found birds at Lake DuBay three times: 23 April 2003, 17 October 2003, 9 April 2006. One at

Lake DuBay 25 April 2011 (J. Schaufenbuel).

**Western Grebe** (*Aechmophorus occidentalis*)—Four records of single birds. Lake DuBay: 8–9 May 2002 (J. Schaufenbuel), 11–12 November 2004 (M. Berner), and 29–31 October 2005 (G. Janz). WRF: 25 April 2005 (M. Berner).

#### **Family Phalacrocoracidae**

**Double-crested Cormorant** (*Phalacrocorax auritus*)—Common migrant and summer visitor. Early spring 26 March 1998; late fall 23 November 1999. Exclusive of fairly regular mid-April and early October migratory periods, one or a few dozen cormorants may turn up almost anywhere, May–September. At present, a large managed rookery lies within one mile of Portage Co. at Mead SWA. Anderson and Hamerstrom (1967) describe in detail the large rookery in and near the Narrows part of Lake DuBay (Big Eau Pleine River) in Marathon Co. Discovered in 1939, it was active into the late 1960s when the Wisconsin population was believed only 30 breeding pairs. Offshoot rookeries included one at the mouth of the Little Eau Pleine River in Portage Co. that existed for a short period before 1966. It is the lone Portage Co. breeding record. Cutright et al. (2006) mistakenly describe confirmed breeding, placing in Portage Co. a nest in the Marathon Co. portion of a quadrangle that straddles the county line.

#### **Family Pelecanidae**

**American White Pelican** (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*)—All records: Lake DuBay, two unknown 1990s dates

(Nancy Stevenson, pers. comm.); WRF 14 April 2002 (1 bird); Lake DuBay 16 April 2002 (2) (G. Janz); WRF 17–18 April 2003 (4); McDill Pond July 2003 (observer unknown); WRF 19 July 2003 (3); Lake DuBay 8 April 2004 (2) (G. Janz); McDill Pond November 2008 (1) (J. Schaufenbuel).

#### **Family Ardeidae**

**American Bittern** (*Botaurus lentiginosus*)—Uncommon and local resident April–September. Early spring: an undocumented 4 April 2004 record (*Passenger Pigeon* 66: 400, 2004) or 18 April 1999 (Kay Kavanagh) and 2011 (eBird 2011d); late fall 15 September 2003 (*Passenger Pigeon* 66: 137, 2004). Found in summer at the marshes of Four Oaks, Bear Creek and Dewey. Probably nests at each of these locations, but breeding not confirmed. One–two calling birds were at Collins Lake 5–13 May 1993. There are several 21<sup>st</sup> century eBird (2011a) records from “Buena Vista Grasslands/Marsh.” One of those reports was of birds seen in Adams Co. (Maureen Brocken, pers. comm.). Bitterns are extremely rare in the Portage Co. portion of BVG; all such eBird reports are likely from an adjacent Adams Co. marsh.

**Least Bittern** (*Ixobrychus exilis*)—Rare and local summer resident, it is known from the marshes of Four Oaks, Bear Creek, Dewey, and Lost Creek. The first published report is by Brown on 25 April 1962 (*Passenger Pigeon* 24: 136, 1962). One breeding record: a pair observed carrying food for young at Four Oaks 21 June 2003. Apparently not present at Dewey Marsh every year.



**Great Blue Heron** (*Ardea herodias*)—Common resident March–November. Early spring 5 March 1992 (19 March); late fall 21 November 1996 (2 November). Kumlien and Hollister (1903) mention a rookery at Stevens Point. In recent decades, a rookery is located on the Wisconsin River below the mouth of the Plover River. Has also nested at an unnamed lake in Section 19 New Hope Township. Reported in mid-January 1961 (*Passenger Pigeon* 23: 99. 1961) and at BVG 14 January 2007 (*Passenger Pigeon* 69: 502. 2007). CBC: 15 December 1979 (5 birds); 20 December 1986 (1); 14 December 2002 (1).

**Great Egret** (*Ardea alba*)—Rare visitor April–September. Early spring 17 April 1996; late fall 28 September 1991. The first published report was 27 August 1939 “four miles north of Stevens Point” by Mein (*Passenger Pigeon* 1: 136. 1939). Two other early records: F. R. Zimmerman found two on 1 August 1942 (*Passenger Pigeon* 4: 86. 1942), and F. A. Hamerstrom, one on 14 May 1950 (*Passenger Pigeon* 12: 172. 1950). I found this species eight times 1988–2005; a maximum of two birds and a maximum stay of eight days.

**Cattle Egret** (*Bubulcus ibis*)—At least four records. Robbins (1991) states that the first was in 1972. The record is otherwise unpublished. Steven Krings found one on 12 May 1979 (*Passenger Pigeon* 40: 32. 1980). Michael Zurawski photographed one at BVG present 2–3 May 2002 (*Passenger Pigeon* 64: 286. 2002). One at Section 31W Eau Pleine Township “late October–early November” 2008 (J. Schaufenbuel).

**Green Heron** (*Butorides virescens*)—Fairly common resident April–September. Breeds. Early spring 19 April 2000 (*Passenger Pigeon* 62: 288. 2000); late fall 27 September 1994 and 2010 (eBird 2011a). Apparent migrants common in early May. Fall migration is unpredictable, sometimes not found after mid-August. Appears to favor small lakes for breeding. Nests are commonly placed in dense conifer plantations, especially if the plantation is small and isolated. The red pine (*Pinus resinosa*)-covered island in Lake Joanis at Schmeekle Reserve in Stevens Point annually hosts a nesting pair.

**Black-crowned Night-Heron** (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)—Rare in spring and early summer, its status is unclear. BVG 24 June 1990; and Dewey Marsh 25–30 May 2002. There are several May reports from Bear Creek Marsh. Two at a marsh adjacent to Wisconsin River in Stevens Point 10 May 2004 and two at Iverson Park 13 May 2006 (G. Janz). One in Lanark Township 21 May 2009 (eBird 2011a).

**Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** (*Nyctanassa violacea*)—Two records. F. M. Baumgartner found one on the 29 December 1971 CBC (Robbins 1991); the undated record of an immature at “Kennedy Bridge” at the Little Plover River (*Passenger Pigeon* 34: 41. 1972) is apparently the CBC individual. Joe Schaufenbuel found a juvenile at Iverson Park 24 August–5 September 2003 (*Passenger Pigeon* 66: 137. 2004).

### *Family Cathartidae*

**Turkey Vulture** (*Cathartes aura*)—Fairly common resident March–

October. Breeds. Early spring 25 March 1989 (6 April); late fall 15 October 1995, 1997 and 2005 (30 September). Concentrations of spring migrants are rare; in fall, my records indicate a peak interval 10 September–1 October. Rockne Knuth found 28 on 17 August 1974 (*Passenger Pigeon* 37: 123. 1975). Two breeding records: nest with two young “in building” at T23N, R7E, 1988 (Mossman & Hartman 1992); one fledgling at abandoned farm Section 9 Dewey Township 8 August 1998 (M. Berner). A pair frequented a derelict house trailer at T25N, R7E, Section 29 throughout June 2001 and 2002. Breeding is certainly more frequent and widespread than records indicate.

#### **Family Pandionidae**

**Osprey** (*Pandion haliaetus*)—Common resident March–November. Breeds. Early spring 29 March 1998 and 2003 (7 April); late fall 4 November 1992 (21 September). Breeding birds often depart, and migrants have passed by early September. Unknown as a breeding species by Sindelar (1971), and WDNR surveys failed to find a nest 1973–75. One nest was discovered in 1976, increasing to four by 1981 (Greg Dahl, pers. comm.). Breeding population has continued to increase since 1983 when the first nesting platforms were erected at Wisconsin River north of Stevens Point (Eckstein and Johnson 1983). In 2008, ten nests were active within one mile of the Wisconsin River, all on artificial structures, including utility poles and communication towers (Greg Dahl, pers. comm.). Of 52 territories in central Wisconsin,

Marathon to Juneau Co., 49 nest on artificial structures (Eckstein et al. 2008). The Plover River supports at least two nests (pers. obs.). Nest building recorded as early as 7 April; incubating adults by 28 April; and fully-feathered nestlings by 3 July. In recent years, “floater” pairs often observed attempting to construct nests on unsuitable structures. The local habitat may be at capacity.

#### **Family Accipitridae**

**Mississippi Kite** (*Ictinia mississippiensis*)—Two records. Richard A. Hunt saw an adult on 26 April 1990 at the “Damon Booming Grounds,” located at Section 28W Buena Vista Township (*Passenger Pigeon* 52: 397. 1990). One at Jordan Pond 6 October 2010 was accepted by the records committee (*Passenger Pigeon* 73: 276. 2011).

**Bald Eagle** (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)—Fairly common resident. Breeds. The recent historical record is as follows: Reported in the county in 1983; the first nest was near the Lake DuBay dam in 1984. The county’s second nesting pair took up residence at Bentley Pond in 1987; a third at WRF in 1988. By 2008, eight known nests included four in the Wisconsin River corridor, and one each at Skunk Lake, Spring Lake, Jordan Pond, and Bentley Pond; five of the eight nests were successful in 2008, producing nine young (Greg Dahl, pers. comm.). The Central Wisconsin regional figures in 2008 were 86 per cent nest success and 1.69 young fledged per nest (Eckstein et al. 2008). A nest built on the Philippine Islands in Dewey Marsh during 2004 and occupied by eagles through January 2005 fledged Great

Horned Owls (*Bubo virginianus*) that spring. An eagle nest opposite the Stevens Point wastewater treatment facility held nesting owls in 2005. Small concentrations of eagles may be found on the WRF during ice-out (17 on 11 April 2003) and freeze up. The highest CBC total is 12 on 20 December 1997. Eighteen below the Lake DuBay dam 27 December 2010 (eBird 2011a) were probably late migrants, but may reflect an increasing winter presence.

**Northern Harrier** (*Circus cyaneus*)—Common resident March–November; rare resident, December–February. Breeds. For nesting, the two areas of abundance are BVG and Dewey Marsh. The population has benefited from Greater Prairie-Chicken management at BVG. Harrier was confirmed in just two Atlas quadrangles south of Stevens Point (Cutright et al. 2006); both encompass BVG. At Dewey it nests in native sedge marsh as well as surrounding grass hay fields that avoid mowing in wet years, or are cut late in any year. Fallow hay lands in the northwestern and eastern parts of the county support a few nesting pairs. Fledglings usually appear in late July, countywide. Thirteen CBC records, maximum of six on 15 December 2001.

**Sharp-shinned Hawk** (*Accipiter striatus*)—Uncommon resident March–October; rare winter resident, November–February. Breeds. For nesting, found exclusively in dense conifers. Locations include the Tomorrow River area, Dewey conifer bog, and Plover River between I-39 and SR 66. In some years, each of those sites may support two breeding pairs. Renn de-

scribes a nest “near Plainfield” in summer 1967 that is attributed to Portage Co. (*Passenger Pigeon* 30: 94. 1968). County nests have been found in stands of every native and introduced conifer. My earliest observation of a territorial male is 18 April 1999 at Plover River; earliest fledgling observation is 12 July 1997 at Poncho Creek. It is not an abundant migrant; one-two seen per day afield in April or September is the norm. During 17 years of field work in Central Wisconsin, I saw three in a day on two occasions. Twenty-eight count day or count week CBC records.

**Cooper’s Hawk** (*Accipiter cooperii*)—Common resident March–November; uncommon resident December–February. Breeds. Cutright et al. (2006) starkly show a somewhat limited county breeding distribution: the length of the eastern moraine, and the three quadrangles encompassing Plover, Stevens Point, and Whiting. Nests in both native and urban forested landscapes, including mixed uplands at the Tomorrow River, dry-mesic oak (*Quercus* spp.) forest at the Whiting well fields, and planted conifers at Guardian Angel Cemetery in Stevens Point. Territorial pairs are evident the first week of April; fledglings are widespread at the end of July. Rosenfield found 25 nests “at Stevens Point” in 1981 (*Passenger Pigeon* 44: 77. 1982). The boundaries of these detections certainly extended beyond Stevens Point; however, Rosenfield, et al (1995) describe a 1993 density within an urban Stevens Point study area of one nest/272 ha (a total of 13 nests). Migrants follow the relative scarcity of Sharp-shinned Hawk (see

above). Twenty-two CBC records; 2–5 individuals per count.

**Northern Goshawk** (*Accipiter gentilis*)—Rare migrant and winter resident September–April. Fall flight years since 1988: observed on six dates 18 September–24 November 1992; and on three dates 27 October–11 November 2001; possible spring flight in 2003. Non-flight year records in my notebooks include April observations in six different years. A specimen collected, probably near Plover, in 1955 by the Hamerstoms (ORNIS 2011). Found during the May Count on 15 May 1976 and described as nesting (*Passenger Pigeon* 39: 191. 1977). May Count 7 May 1977 (*Passenger Pigeon* 40: 383. 1978) and 12 May 1979 (Anonymous 1980). Three birds 15 May 1980 (*Passenger Pigeon* 43: 21. 1981). The published statement, “another new site was in Portage Co.” is open to interpretation (*Passenger Pigeon* 44: 77. 1982). One on May Count 15 May 1982 (*Passenger Pigeon* 45: 38. 1983). The uncredited published report (*Passenger Pigeon* 64: 95. 2002) of its presence 1 August and 30 November 2002 (throughout the fall reporting season?) is difficult to categorize. There are 17 CBC records, but only one since 1997. This apparent discrepancy may indicate fewer goshawks at this latitude in December in later years, or many misidentified big female Cooper’s Hawks on the early CBCs.

**Red-shouldered Hawk** (*Buteo lineatus*)—Uncommon resident March–November; early spring 12 March 1995 (20 March); late fall 9 December 1999 (16 October); rare resident December–February. Breeds. The nest-

ing population is small; pairs require relatively large, mature, contiguous tracts of forest. Cutright et al. (2006) report confirmed nesting in five quadrangles in the Wisconsin River corridor and at New Hope Township. There are at least two territories within the Stevens Point city limits, and two pairs nest annually at Tomorrow River-Poncho Creek. Winter records: 7–28 February 1987 (*Passenger Pigeon* 49: 189. 1988); Tomorrow River 3 February 1990; Linwood Township 18 February 1992. One CBC record: 19 December 1976.

**Broad-winged Hawk** (*Buteo platypterus*)—Fairly common resident March–September. Breeds. Early spring 1 April 1999 (18 April); late fall 26 October 1975 (*Passenger Pigeon* 38: 117. 1976) (18 September). During the nesting season, found primarily in large tracts of forest, including Tomorrow River, Dewey Marsh, Jordan Swamp, and within the city limits of Stevens Point; however, breeding confirmations are few. I confirmed nesting three times in 17 years. Cutright et al. (2006) describe a single confirmation and the Atlas map shows Portage Co. at the southeastern periphery of the core statewide range. Migrant kettles occasional in April and September: 157 at Tomorrow River 26 April 1994; 106 at Dewey Marsh 23 April 2000; 161 at Stevens Point Airport 21 April 2001; 116 on 25 September 1965 (*Passenger Pigeon* 28: 117. 1966); 300 at Stevens Point 18 September 1992; 360 at Tomorrow River 15 September 1993.

**Red-tailed Hawk** (*Buteo jamaicensis*)—Common resident. Breeds. Found primarily in forest and cropland mosaics.

The WBBA (Cutright et al. 2006) describe breeding as confirmed in just five blocks, possible in four, with a presence in four blocks straddling the county line. While widespread, it is present in low densities. My notes contain a total of three nests, all near Polonia. I recorded more than ten individuals as spring migrants three times 13 March–2 April. Nothing stands out in terms of fall passage. On the CBC through 1992, found exclusively in the low single digits. The most recent 17 year average (with effort about equal) is 15 birds. A “white” Red-tailed Hawk was near Junction City 16 May 1986–27 October 1987 (Follen 1987).

**Rough-legged Hawk** (*Buteo lagopus*)—Common resident September–May. Early fall 21 Aug 2000 (24 October); late spring 2 June 1978 (*Passenger Pigeon* 41: 84. 1979) (18 April). It is common in winter in open agricultural and grassland habitat. Several winter at the Dewey sedge marsh. BVG, in addition to being the center of winter abundance, is a staging area in spring: 30 on 5 March 1991, 13 on 20 April 1991 (eBird 2011a); 40 on 5 March 1995 (*Passenger Pigeon* 57: 271. 1995); 51 on 20 March 2001; 86 on 9 March 2009 (Ted Keyel). An adult female was at Section 2 Grant Township 18 June 2000 (*Passenger Pigeon* 62: 343. 2000). The early fall record is represented by a juvenile at Dewey sedge marsh (pers. obs.). An additional very early fall report is 7 September 1999 (*Passenger Pigeon* 62: 57. 2000). Found on most of the recent CBCs, including 24 on 16 December 1989. About 20 per cent of the hawks seen in the county are dark morphs (pers. obs.).

**Golden Eagle** (*Aquila chrysaetos*)—Rare transient and winter visitor October–April. Early fall 13 October 2003; late spring 11 April 2002. Known records: 18 February 1987 (*Passenger Pigeon* 50: 253. 1988); 21 November 1998 (*Passenger Pigeon* 61: 180. 1999); 3 March 2000 at BVG (eBird 2011a); 21 March 2000 (*Passenger Pigeon* 62: 292. 2000); 11 November 2001 (*Passenger Pigeon* 64: 96. 2002); two on 27 March 2002 and one on 11 April 2002 (*Passenger Pigeon* 64: 289. 2002); “January and February 2003 reports” included Portage Co. (*Passenger Pigeon* 65: 154. 2003); 19 January 2003 at Poncho Creek and 13 October 2003 at Dewey Marsh (M. Berner); “spring” 2004 (*Passenger Pigeon* 66: 403. 2004); 25 February 2005 at Dewey Marsh, and 6 March 2005 at Long Road Bog (G. Janz); 5 March and “early April” 2005 (*Passenger Pigeon* 69: 94. 2007).

### **Family Falconidae**

**American Kestrel** (*Falco sparverius*)—Common resident March–November, rare winter resident December–February. Breeds. Widely distributed in low densities during the nesting season; however, at BVG it may be termed “abundant” due to a successful nest box program begun in 1967 (Hamerstrom et al. 1967). The project expanded in 2000 and includes about 58 kestrel boxes (Eschenbauch et al. 2009). Present in one-half of WBBA quadrangles (Cutright et al. 2006). Low density breeding population in relatively high quality habitat away from BVG is illustrated by the long-term presence of a single nesting pair at both the Stevens Point airport and at Sections 30 and 31, Dewey Township. Reported 30

December 1945 (*Passenger Pigeon* 8: 62. 1946). In this county, it winters primarily at BVG. On recent CBCs, one to three kestrels is the usual complement.

**Merlin** (*Falco columbarius*)—Uncommon migrant and rare winter resident. Extremes: spring 11 April 1994 and 17 May 2003 (*Passenger Pigeon* 65: 305. 2003); fall 16 August 2005 and 5 December 2002. Spring migrants pass throughout April, straggling into May. Fall migrants scatter from mid-August into early October. My notebooks show six August records and two November records. At Stevens Point in 2008 a pair built a nest in an eastern white pine (*Pinus strobus*) in a residential area near UWSP and were present 22 April through at least 10 May. The nest failed. The male was banded (Ted Keyel, pers. comm.). Joe Schaufenbuel suspected nesting on the east side of Stevens Point in June 2011 (eBird 2011d). Individual adult males at Dewey Marsh on 5 December 2002 and 17 November 2003 identified as *F. c. richardsonii*. An adult female *richardsonii* at Dewey Marsh on 20 July 2003 (G. Janz, M. Berner) is exceptional. *Richardsonii* has nested in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area (Wheeler 2003). Representative winter records: 27 January 1978 (*Passenger Pigeon* 41: 165. 1979); count week during the 1981 CBC; a maximum of two at Stevens Point 3–17 February 1990 (*Passenger Pigeon* 52: 278. 1990); 21 February 2003 (*Passenger Pigeon* 65: 155. 2003); one at Stevens Point 1 January 2006 and 1 January 2009, and at BVG 25 January 2009 (G. Janz). Frequently in winter 2008–09 near a pigeon-infested barn outside of Stevens Point (T. Keyel).

**Gyr Falcon** (*Falco rusticolus*)—At least five records. Unknown date(s) and location(s) before 1988 (Robbins 1991). Dark morph over a prairie-chicken lek at BVG 3 March 1990 (eBird 2011a, Richard Payne, pers. comm.). Gray morph juvenile male and female, BVG 26 February 1991 (*Passenger Pigeon* 53: 277–278. 1991). One or the other of those two observed occasionally through 14 April 1991 (*Passenger Pigeon* 53: 341. 1991). A wild gray morph (age unknown), captured by a falconer at BVG November 2001. Gray morph juvenile, BVG 4 December 2001–30 January 2002 (*Passenger Pigeon* 64: 178. 2002).

**Peregrine Falcon** (*Falco peregrinus*)—Rare migrant. Extremes: spring 22 March 1966 (*Passenger Pigeon* 29: 41, 1967) and 28 May 1999; fall 5 September 1996 and 1999 and 27 September 1995. One summer record: eastern Stevens Point 28 June 2000. One winter record: Section 25, Hull Township 12 December 2002. Exclusive of those two outliers my notebooks contain nine spring records and six fall records. Reports to eBird (2011d) totaled about three individuals 29 April–26 May 2011. Prior to North American recovery efforts these records: 21 April 1973 (*Passenger Pigeon* 36: 23. 1974); 15 May 1976 (*Passenger Pigeon* 38: 206. 1977); 7 May 1977 (*Passenger Pigeon* 40: 374. 1978); 7 September 1978 (*Passenger Pigeon* 41: 165. 1979).

**Prairie Falcon** (*Falco mexicanus*)—Hypothetical. One found at BVG on 30 November 1989 by Thomas Hoppa and Larry Semo (*Passenger Pigeon* 52: 200–202. 1990). According to the documentation, the bird was pho-

tographed. The published location (2/3 mi south of CTH W on Townline Road at Tower Road) does not exist. Two sight records of a possible wintering individual at BVG 9 February 1991 by Erik Munson (*Passenger Pigeon* 53: 279, 1991) and 15 March 1991 by Dan Spuhler (*Passenger Pigeon* 53: 354–55, 1991). The records committee accepted these three reports based on identification. The committee is concerned with the origin of any bird. Falcons fly this species at BVG (pers. obs.). Prairie Falcon was considered of hypothetical occurrence in Wisconsin (Frank 2004) until 2010 when added to the state list by the WSO Records Committee (Frank 2011).

### **Family Rallidae**

**King Rail** (*Rallus elegans*)—Status unknown. Record(s) between “late May–early August” in Robbins (1991). No other information available.

**Virginia Rail** (*Rallus limicola*)—Uncommon resident April–October. Breeds. The secretive nature of this species precludes meaningful arrival and departure information. The earliest spring arrival is two calling birds near Torun on 9 April 2010 (eBird 2011a). Except at known and suspected breeding locations it is rarely detected, and because several of those locations lack observer coverage after June, fall records do not exist and it is only assumed to be present into October based on movements statewide. At the broad-leaved cattail (*Typha latifolia*) marshes of Four Oaks and Bear Creek it is commonly heard May–early June. I found birds infrequently at Hay Meadow Creek and the Dewey sedge marsh where several June

records followed major precipitation events resulting in high water. Cutright et al. (2006) report rails in two quadrangles; these include the lone breeding record, an adult with chicks at Section 15, Hull Township 16 June 1995 (pers. obs.). Sedge marsh adjacent to conifer bog is the preferred habitat at locations east of the Wisconsin River.

**Sora** (*Porzana carolina*)—Uncommon resident April–September in cattail marshes at Bear Creek, Four Oaks, Lost Creek and the Plover River. Also found at beaver ponds and other small cattail-dominated wetlands. Migrants are found throughout May and September. Widespread during the breeding season; however, nesting is not confirmed in the county. It is common in September at Mead SWA in Marathon Co. (pers. obs.). Joe Schaufenbuel found Sora at Lost Creek WA on five dates 15–27 September 2010 (eBird 2011a).

**Common Gallinule** (*Gallinula galeata*)—One record. Rob Pendergast found the first at Lost Creek WA 18 May 2011; it was joined by a second gallinule on 24 May. On 22 July 2011, Joe Schaufenbuel observed an adult attending three downy young.

**American Coot** (*Fulica americana*)—Fairly common migrant. Casual resident June–August. Breeds. Extremes: spring 11 March 1995 (6 April) and 14 May 2003; fall 4 September 1991 (3 October) and 30 November 1999. Migrants are found on the Wisconsin and Plover River impoundments. Small numbers in spring; however, occasionally large rafts: 170 on WRF 27 April 1997; 400 on Lake DuBay 12

April 2002. In fall a flock gathers annually October–early November in the densely vegetated shallows of the northeastern corner of McDill Pond: 200 birds 7–20 October 1990 and 900 on 13 November 1999. Small fall flocks elsewhere. Summer records include an adult at Iverson Park 26 June 1993; a pair with six young, McDill Pond 24 June 2000; fledglings at Lost Creek WA 27 June 2011 (eBird 2011d). Coots are believed regular in summer at Four Oaks Marsh.

### **Family Gruidae**

**Sandhill Crane** (*Grus canadensis*)—Common; locally abundant resident March–December. Breeds. Early spring 1 March 2004 (*Passenger Pigeon* 66: 404. 2004) (19 March); late fall 14 December 2001. The research of Hunt et al (1973) describe a statewide population of 25 pairs in 1936, none in Portage Co. By 1973, E. A. Gluesing estimated a state population of 250 pairs, including a substantial number here. The presence of 40 was considered noteworthy on 29 September 1972 (*Passenger Pigeon* 35: 139. 1973). During the WBBA, birds were absent from just two quadrangles (Cutright et al. 2006). They nest in every type of wetland, including silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*) floodplain, sedge marsh, decadent kettle lakes, cattail marsh, and wet grass hay fields. Summering flocks of 50–100 are found at BVG and Dewey Marsh. Migrants stage at these locations as well: 115 at Dewey 26 September 1995, with hundreds annually at BVG September–November. A flock of 300 at BVG 5 December 2001 is an unusual late concentration. CBC: one each on 20 December 1986 and 19 December 1987.

I was unable to see Gluesing (1974), which probably contains a wealth of local information. It is available at the UWSP library.

**Whooping Crane** (*Grus americana*)—Introduced. Three records at BVG. Two along Griffith Avenue 22 April 2009 (Maureen Brocken); one CTH W 10 November 2010 (Rob Pendergast, pers. comm.); three at W Ponds 1–20 June 2011 (eBird 2011d). Two flew past Lost Creek WA 8 May 2011 (eBird 2011d). All originate from the reintroduction program at Necedah NWR.

### **Family Charadriidae**

**Black-bellied Plover** (*Pluvialis squatarola*)—Rare migrant. Extremes: spring 1 May 2003 and 7 June 1998; fall 16 August 2002 and 8 November 1997. My notebooks describe five records in spring and nine in fall. The fall records occurred in only five different years. In 2010, three records (eBird 2011a): one 19 September and three on 9 October (both BVG); and one at Rainbow Drive sod farm 12 September. Observations are primarily from Plover River impoundments during draw downs, the Rainbow Drive sod farm, and BVG.

**American Golden-Plover** (*Pluvialis dominica*)—Casual spring migrant; locally common fall migrant. Three spring records: “early May” 2003 and 2005 at and near BVG (J. Schaufenbuel, pers. comm.); two at Lost Creek WA 5–6 May 2011 (eBird 2011d). Fall extremes: 13 August 2002 and 28 October 1989. In fall, this species is usually encountered in flocks of 5–15 at Rainbow Drive sod farm, or in stubble



fields in the vicinity of Sections 7 and 8, Plover Township, the northern fringe of BVG. With patient searching of its agricultural fields flocks are occasionally found elsewhere in BVG. Peak numbers include 55 on 14 September 1975 (*Passenger Pigeon* 38: 118. 1976); 42 at Rainbow Drive 28 September 1990; 225 at BVG 19 October 2003 (*Passenger Pigeon* 66: 137. 2004); 204 at BVG 25 October 2009 (J. Schaufenbuel). During a draw down of McDill Pond in 1991, 67 were present on 9 October.

**Semipalmated Plover** (*Charadrius semipalmatus*)—Uncommon migrant. Extremes: spring 5 May 1997 and 2 June 1999; fall 27 July 2003 and 22 September 1991. Found annually during fall migration at the W Ponds. Often unrecorded in spring. Daily count of 1–5 birds is typical; however, up to 35 present at drawn down McDill Pond 17–27 May 1999.

**Killdeer** (*Charadrius vociferus*)—Common resident March–November. Breeds. Early spring 9 March 1992 (20 March); late fall 4 November 1989 (21 October). Arrives at the onset of ice-out in spring. Nests throughout the county; fledglings recorded 12 May–10 July. Congregates in large numbers at Rainbow Drive sod farm July–September, where peaks include 209 on 20 September 1990 and 270 on 15 August 2000.

#### **Family Recurvirostridae**

**American Avocet** (*Recurvirostra americana*)—Three records. Kent Hall found one at the W Ponds on 2 August 2001 (*Passenger Pigeon* 64: 97. 2002). Gerry Janz watched two fly over

Lake DuBay 30 October 2010. Sue and David Haug found one in a flooded field northeast of Rosholt 29 April 2011 (*vide* Dan Belter).

#### **Family Scolopacidae**

**Spotted Sandpiper** (*Actitis macularia*)—Common migrant. Rare and local summer resident. Breeds. Early spring 18 April 2002 (2 May); late fall 17 October 1997 (26 September). In general, area streams lack suitable nest sites such as sandbars. During drought years, large sandbars frequently form in the northern part of WRF, and birds are present during the breeding season; however, summer flocks of gulls there may inhibit nesting. Successful territories are probably limited to excavations associated with active and abandoned cranberry (*Vaccinium macrocarpon*) production at BVG and Stockton Township, or to extensive earth disturbance anywhere resulting in the formation of gravelly ponds. Migrants are widespread in small numbers except at draw downs where concentrations occur, e.g.; 21 at Jordan Pond 14 September 1995 and 39 at McDill Pond 19 May 1999.

**Solitary Sandpiper** (*Tringa solitaria*)—Common migrant. Extremes: spring 14 April 1972 (*Passenger Pigeon* 35: 23, 1973) (2 May) and 29 May 1999; fall 2 July 2001 (12 July) and 4 October 1999. Spring migration is often limited to 1–15 May. Fall migration is protracted July–September; it is rare after early September except when draw down of a river impoundment is in progress. Found individually or in small flocks at lake shores, streams and shallow wetlands. Exceptional numbers include 26 at Jordan

Pond 28 July 1993 and 44 at Washburn Lake (Section 31, Almond Township) 5 August 2000.

**Greater Yellowlegs** (*Tringa melano-leuca*)—Common migrant. Extremes: spring 24 March 2000 and 22 May 1998; fall 19 July 1995 and 11 November 1989. Migrant flocks typically in single digits; there is a peak in late April. During fall, frequency and daily totals vary widely within and between seasons and the migration period is lengthy. In their respective seasons, 23 at Dewey Marsh 29 April 2003, and 24 at W Ponds 23 October 2001 are the largest flocks.

**Willet** (*Tringa semipalmata*)—Four records. Craig Faanes found two on 29 April 1974 (*Passenger Pigeon* 37: 74, 1975) during a statewide “invasion” (Robbins 1991); 11 May 1991 (Frank 1991); 25 at Lake DuBay on 1 May 2008 (G. Janz); two at Lost Creek WA 28–29 April 2011 (eBird 2011d).

**Lesser Yellowlegs** (*Tringa flavipes*)—Common migrant. Extremes: spring 30 March 1959 (*Passenger Pigeon* 21: 160, 1959) (27 April) and 7 June 1998; fall 27 June 2001 and 9 November 2000. With the usual exception of June, this species is present in the county April–September. There are records in four years after 20 October. Sixty-six at Dewey Marsh on 28 April 1994; 30 at W Ponds 19 August 2003; and 72 at Lost Creek WA (eBird 2011d) are the largest flocks recorded. The three regular *Tringa* species use a diversity of stopover habitats and are found more consistently than most other migrant waders in our habitat-poor region.

**Upland Sandpiper** (*Bartramia longicauda*)—Uncommon resident April–August at BVG. Breeds. Early spring 18 April 1997; late fall 23 August 2009 (eBird 2011a). Eighteen were at, presumably, BVG on 17 July 1975 (*Passenger Pigeon* 38: 35, 1976). Ailes (1980) found nests almost exclusively in hayfields or ungrazed grasslands and a peak hatching date of 11 June; grazed pastures are important fall feeding areas. Due to a historic lack of observer coverage of BVG after July, the sole recoverable August records are Joe Schaufenbuel’s eBird reports on six dates 7–23 August 2009, and Ailes (1980) late date of 14 August.

**Hudsonian Godwit** (*Limosa haemastica*)—Rare spring transient. Four known records: four on 19 May 1965 (*Passenger Pigeon* 28: 31, 1966); five at McDill Pond 21–22 May 1999; one at the Rainbow Drive sod farm 22–23 May 2000; one at W Ponds 16–17 May 2002. There are an unknown number of additional pre-1999 records for which details of time and place were either not recorded or are unretrievable.

**Marbled Godwit** (*Limosa fedoa*)—Two spring records. Nineteen were at WRF 21 May 1998 (*Passenger Pigeon* 60: 332, 1998). Four at Second Lake 4 May 2004 (Gerry Janz).

**Ruddy Turnstone** (*Arenaria interpres*)—Two records at McDill Pond: single birds 5–6 June 1998 and 23 May 1999.

**Sanderling** (*Calidris alba*)—Five records: one at McDill Pond 1 September 1991; two at McDill Pond 30 May 1997; two at Black Bridge 20–21

August 1997; three at McDill Pond 23 May 1999; one at Washburn Lake 5 August 2000.

**Semipalmated Sandpiper** (*Calidris pusilla*)—Fairly common migrant. Extremes: spring 5 May 1999 and 17 June 2000; fall 2 July 1999 and 17 September 2002. Because there is more habitat available, primarily as a result Plover River impoundment draw downs, fall passage is reasonably well understood: single-digit flocks July through early September. Habitat in spring is ephemeral, in some years it is lacking. The 1999 draw down of McDill Pond probably reflects a true picture of spring migration. Five to ten birds were present on 18 dates during almost daily coverage 5 May–13 June; both the extreme spring and fall arrivals were recorded that year. June records are not unusual, and the mudflats at Dewey Marsh commonly support birds then, including 45 on 7 June 1998. The Rainbow Drive sod farm hosted the 17 June 2000 migrant, an adult.

**Least Sandpiper** (*Calidris minutilla*)—Common migrant. Extremes: spring 6 April 2005 (G. Janz) and 29 May 1999; fall 26 June 2003 and 11 October 2009 (eBird 2011a). It is common only at W Ponds throughout fall migration July–September, where 25–40 is a typical flock; 70 were there on 27 July 2003. Elsewhere it appears in tiny numbers at draw downs and farm ponds. Relatively uncommon in spring, except at McDill Pond in 1999 when recorded on 13 dates 8–29 May, including 55 on 19 May. The early spring record is from Lake DuBay. This species and the other small waders are rare at agricultural fields in

the county. This is due to the permeable nature of soils in the region, few of which hold surface water at length except during extreme rainfall events.

**White-rumped Sandpiper** (*Calidris fuscicollis*)—Rare migrant. Extremes: spring 20 May 1999 and 15 June 2002. My notebooks describe seven spring records; five at Dewey Marsh, and two at McDill Pond in 1999. The 46 birds at Dewey on 7 June 1998 exceed the sum of all other records. A fall record: one at W Ponds 17 September 2002.

**Baird's Sandpiper** (*Calidris bairdii*)—Fairly common fall migrant. Extremes: 26 July 2003 and 24 September 1991. All records are from the W Ponds, the Rainbow Drive sod farm, and impoundments. Found throughout September 1991 at the empty McDill Pond; and on 12 dates 27 August–21 September 1996 at Jordan Pond during low water where 20 individuals present 27–29 August 1996. Exclusive of draw downs, seven at Rainbow Drive 1 September 1995 is the largest flock.

**Pectoral Sandpiper** (*Calidris melanotos*)—Rare spring migrant. Common fall migrant. Extremes: spring 18 April 2001 and 22 May 1999; fall 12 July 2003 and 8 November 1997. I recorded it on ten spring dates, including five dates at McDill Pond during May 1999. Forty were at Dewey Marsh 30 April 2001. When suitable habitat exists in fall it is the most common calidrid. Dozens were present daily in October 1991 at McDill Pond, peaking at 115 on 25 October.

**Dunlin** (*Calidris alpina*)—Uncommon migrant. Extremes: spring 22

April 2000 and 7 June 1998; fall 26 September 1989 and 8 November 1997. All of my records are from McDill Pond, W Ponds, and Dewey Marsh. Observed in about one spring out of three; passage is during the latter one-half of May; a dozen constitutes a large flock. It is a little more regular in fall, especially at the W Ponds. Found daily 15–30 October 1991 at McDill Pond; 30 birds present 26–28 October.

**Stilt Sandpiper** (*Calidris himantopus*)—Uncommon fall migrant. Extremes: 10 July 2003 and 17 September 2002. Primarily found at the W Ponds in flocks of one–five birds. It has been observed once at Dewey Marsh, and on three dates in September 1996 at the empty Jordan Pond.

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper** (*Tryngites subruficollis*)—Rare fall migrant. Extremes: 1 August 1997 (*Passenger Pigeon* 60: 176, 1998) and 22 September 2001. I found this species at the Rainbow Drive sod farm in nine years 1991–2003. Two were at McDill Pond 13–16 September 1991. There are a few records at BVG. Seven at Rainbow Drive on 1 September 1995 is the largest group recorded.

**Short-billed Dowitcher** (*Limnodromus griseus*)—Uncommon migrant. Extremes: spring 8 May 2010 (eBird 2011a) and 2011 (eBird 2011d), and 26 May 2003; fall 8 July 2003 and 7 September 2003. Ten is the largest flock in my notebooks. Annual at the W Ponds during fall migration, it is rare elsewhere. Occurrence is equally common spring and fall; a few more individuals found in fall.

**Long-billed Dowitcher** (*Limnodromus scolopaceus*)—About four fall records: four at Section 26E Eau Pleine Township 20 October 1989; two at W Ponds 15 September 2002 (G. Janz); one at W Ponds 6-plus October 2002; an individual at BVG 11, 14, 18 October 2009 (Joe Schaufenbuel, pers. comm.). The 21 November 2000 report (*Passenger Pigeon* 63: 50, 2001) is believed to be erroneous.

**Wilson's Snipe** (*Gallinago delicata*)—Locally common resident March–November. Casual winter resident. Breeds. Early spring 26 March 2001 (8 April); late fall 6 November 2002 (27 October). Snipe nest at the marshes of Dewey, Bear Creek, and Four Oaks; and locally in BVG. Winnowing birds have been found at Collins Lake in May but no follow up visits were ever made. Spring observations are usually limited to breeding sites; fall migrants are more widely distributed in groups of 5–10. A report of 200 on 3 October 1972 (*Passenger Pigeon* 35: 140, 1973) may well be accurate; I once found 323 at a drawn down flowage at Mead SWA, a few kilometers from Portage Co. Two winter records: two at a Poncho Creek spring pond (Section 18, New Hope Township), 5 February 2004; one-two present there 30 November 2004–16 March 2005. No CBC records.

**American Woodcock** (*Scolopax minor*)—Locally common resident March–November. Breeds. Early spring 17 March 1991, 1998, and 2003 (28 March); late fall 8 November 1994 (14 October). Woodcock is relatively easy to find in March–April on display grounds: open meadow adjacent to aspen (*Populus* sp.) forest. Dewey

Marsh and Jordan Swamp are typical locales. Also found at forested patches within the urban environment such as at Schmeekle Reserve, part of the UWSP campus. The single breeding confirmation in the extreme southwest (Cutright et al. 2006) does not accurately represent the breeding success of the local population of this cryptic species. Over 17 summers I did not secure a confirmation. A 1971 CBC record lacks supporting documentation, suggesting confusion with Wilson's Snipe. No details are available regarding the unattributed 30 November 2000 record (*Passenger Pigeon* 63: 51. 2001).

**Wilson's Phalarope** (*Phalaropus tricolor*)—Uncommon migrant and very local breeding species. At present known to nest at the Dewey sedge marsh, where about five pairs are present each summer. Fourteen adults were there 30 May 2002. Observations of adults engaged in distraction display span 14–27 June. Fledglings were seen on 8 July 2003. In about 1972 or 1973 (the paper fails to provide the year), four pairs were present 16 May–27 July at Section 26N Grant Township, BVG, where a young bird was captured and photographed (McKee 1974). Probably nested at Lost Creek WA in 2011 (eBird 2011d). The timing of spring migration is unknown. Breeding phalaropes have been found at Dewey 9 May–27 July. Away from Dewey Marsh fall migrants occur most frequently at W Ponds, with observations 9 July–13 August.

**Red-necked Phalarope** (*Phalaropus lobatus*)—Two records at the W Ponds. One 4–8 September 2003 (*Passenger*

*Pigeon* 66: 140. 2004); two on 19 August 2004 (G. Janz).

### **Family Laridae**

**Sabine's Gull** (*Xema sabini*)—One record. Gerry Janz found and photographed a juvenile at Lake DuBay 30 September–3 October 2006 (*Passenger Pigeon* 69: 374. 2007).

**Bonaparte's Gull** (*Chroicocephalus philadelphia*)—Fairly common migrant. Extremes: spring 23 March 2009 (eBird 2011b) (16 April) and 16 May 1999; fall 12 August 2001 and 20 November 1999 (12 November). Spring passage is protracted with no discernible peak, flocks typically 10–20; 52 were at WRF 6 May 2001. Fall migrant peak is the end of October when 40–60 birds at WRF or Lake DuBay is not unusual. Exceptionally found “inland” such as 45 over Poncho Creek 18 October 1995. Two to three at McDill Pond 8–11 June 1995 is the lone summer record.

**Little Gull** (*Hydrocoloeus minutus*)—One record. Adult at McDill Pond 15 May 2005 (*Passenger Pigeon* 67: 486. 2005).

**Laughing Gull** (*Leucophaeus atricilla*)—One record. Adult at McDill Pond 27 June 1995 (*Passenger Pigeon* 58: 65–66. 1996). The bird was discovered at sunset among an unseasonal large flock of mostly Ring-billed Gulls (*Larus delawarensis*) that lingered at the pond 8–27 June. The flock was never seen again. This was the first Laughing Gull in Wisconsin recorded away from either Lake Michigan or Lake Superior.

**Franklin's Gull** (*Leucophaeus pipixcan*)—Rare fall migrant. I found five at WRF on 4 November 2001. Gerry Janz found this gull at Lake DuBay on 5 November 2001 (two birds); 9 October 2004 (four); 1 October 2005 (one); 29 September 2007 (one). The 2001 records followed the westerly gale of 2 November. The sudden abundance of records in the 21<sup>st</sup> century does not reflect a continental increase in the numbers of Franklin's Gull or an easterly shift in their migratory pattern; it reflects greater observer coverage of the Wisconsin River.

**Ring-billed Gull** (*Larus delawarensis*)—Common resident March–December. Does not breed. Early spring 8 March 1992 (24 March); late fall 22 December 2001 (22 November). Following the annual population increase during the period of ice out on local impoundments it is widespread in small numbers through the summer. During early June 1993–1999, 150–300 adults gathered at northeastern McDill Pond. These appeared to be attracted to the *Hexagenia* mayfly hatch. After 1999 the flock dwindled to a few each year. During both spring and fall 1500–2000 roost on Lake DuBay within Portage Co. The gulls arrive at the lake almost exclusively from the southwest. It is not known where they spend the daylight hours.

**Herring Gull** (*Larus argentatus*)—Uncommon migrant. Extremes: spring 16 March 1995 (25 March) and 23 May 1998; fall 5 September 1991 (16 October) and 22 December 2001. Spring numbers usually peak at ice out on Plover and Wisconsin Rivers.

An evening roost of 70 at WRF 18 April 2000 is an exception. Gulls straggle through in fall; seven at WRF on 9 December in both 1998 and 2001 is the high count. One summer record: two adults at McDill Pond 10 June 1995.

**Thayer's Gull** (*Larus thayeri*)—One record. Two (second cycle and first cycle) at WRF 19 April 2008 (T. Keyel, J. Schaufenbuel).

**Iceland Gull** (*Larus glaucoideus*)—One record. First cycle bird at WRF ?–19 April 2008 (J. Schaufenbuel). This individual was believed to be the subspecies *L. g. kumleini*. It was present for an unknown number of days prior to 19 April.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull** (*Larus fuscus*)—One record. Second cycle bird at WRF 6 April 2005, the final day where ice was present on the flowage (*Passenger Pigeon* 61: 486, 2005). This record continued a statewide pattern of increased frequency of spring observations in numbers and geographic range, south to north.

**Glaucous Gull** (*Larus hyperboreus*)—Two records: second cycle bird at McDill Pond 17 April 1992 (J. Schaufenbuel); adult at Lake DuBay 31 October 2003 (*Passenger Pigeon* 66: 140, 2004).

**Caspian Tern** (*Hydroprogne caspia*)—Uncommon migrant. Extremes: spring 5 May 1999 and 10 June 1994; fall 18 August 2002 and 24 September 2003 (G. Janz). There are a couple of observations every spring and fall. Beske stated that "more than usual were reported in Portage Co. 1

June 1978" (*Passenger Pigeon* 41: 85. 1979).

**Black Tern** (*Chlidonias niger*)—Rare migrant and local resident May–August. Spring migrants recorded 9 May–10 June. Common breeding species at Berkhahn and Townline Flowages in Marathon Co. adjacent to Four Oaks Marsh. Exclusive of summer residency at Four Oaks and a pair at Dewey Marsh 2–22 June 1994, I recorded terns on three occasions only 14 July–9 August. Ten were at McDill Pond 23 August 2010 (eBird 2011b).

**Common Tern** (*Sterna hirundo*)—Rare migrant. I recorded this species during three spring seasons (maximum of 15 at McDill Pond 16 May 2002) 9–25 May, and found single birds in three fall seasons 30 August–23 September. There is a 29 June 2000 report (*Passenger Pigeon* 62: 345. 2000).

**Forster's Tern** (*Sterna forsteri*)—Uncommon spring migrant. I first found this species in 1996. It was then recorded annually in spring through 2004. Ten of the 12 records during that period span 4–17 May. There is an 11 April 2002 report (*Passenger Pigeon* 64: 294. 2002). Seven were at an unspecified location 30 April 2009 (eBird 2011b). One fall record: one at WRF 26 October 2002 (Kay Kavanagh). An unidentified small *Sterna* was at Lake DuBay on 1 November 2003 (pers. obs.). Historically, November records statewide of *S. hirundo* and *S. forsteri* are about equal (Robert Domagalski, pers. comm.).

## Family Columbidae

**Rock Pigeon** (*Columbia livia*)—A common resident throughout the county in towns, villages, and at farms.

**Eurasian Collared-Dove** (*Streptopelia decaocto*)—One record. The second Wisconsin state record was found by Joe Schaufenbuel in Section 11S, Grant Township at BVG 26 July–22 September 1998 (*Passenger Pigeon* 61: 121–122. 1999 and 61: 184. 1999). It is unrecorded since.

**White-winged Dove** (*Zenaida asiatica*)—One record. One in Plover 11–16 June 2000. Following two hypothetical reports, this was Wisconsin's first unequivocal record (*Passenger Pigeon* 62: 352–354. 2000). This bird came to a feeder for several days before the homeowner, Kathy Plaisance, contacted the birding community. It was photographed on 15 June. Three birders saw it on 16 June when it appeared sluggish (pers. obs.).

**Mourning Dove** (*Zenaida macroura*)—Common resident. Breeds. Nest building observations span 29 March–29 July; egg dates 29 March–15 June. Nest sites range from urban dooryards to remote conifer bog. Large flocks may gather July–November: 314 at sand dunes near Iverson Park 3 August 1992 (pers. obs.) and 355 at the Rainbow Drive sod farm 6 September 1998 (*Passenger Pigeon* 61: 184. 1999). Individuals (and birds per party hour) have increased significantly to average 310 throughout the most recent ten-year CBC period.

**Passenger Pigeon** (*Ectopistes migratorius*) Extinct. Schorger (1951) lists a

migration record from Plover 11 September 1856, and three from Stevens Point: 25 March 1859; 13 April 1864 “Great numbers for several days;” and 2 September 1878. The map in Schorger (1939a) shows that extreme southwestern Portage Co. was included in the “great nesting of 1871,” an estimated 136 million pairs across 850 square miles. The text describes the nesting and roosting area extending north to Grand Rapids in adjacent Wood Co. and that by 27 May 1871 “all had disappeared” (Schorger 1939c). Schorger (1939a) quotes the 13 May 1871 Plover Times: “Several loads of young pigeons passed through our village this week.”

### **Family Cuculidae**

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo** (*Coccyzus americanus*)—Uncommon resident May–October. Breeds. Early spring 20 May 1991 (9 June); late fall 11 October 2005 (15 September). The annual presence of this species is erratic. During the period 1989–2005 I found it in June only in five years; June–July only in four years; throughout the summer in four years; and it was essentially absent in four years. It was found in a single Atlas quadrangle (Cutright et al. 2006) and the only breeding confirmation is a nest with young at an abandoned farm at Dewey Marsh 24 July 2002 (Section 21 Dewey Township). The most reliable summer locations are the aspen forests of Dewey Marsh and at lowland Poncho Creek.

**Black-billed Cuckoo** (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*) Uncommon resident May–September. Breeds. Early spring 12 May 2009 (eBird 2011b) (2 June); late fall 26 September 1992 (26 Au-

gust). Records are concentrated June–July in breeding habitat ranging from lowland streams in contiguous mature forest to the brushy edges of pine plantations. Found in about ten Atlas quadrangles, confirmed breeding in two (Cutright et al. 2006); two additional confirmations in those same quads in 2001 and 2003.

### **Family Strigidae**

**Eastern Screech-Owl** (*Megascops asio*)—Rare resident. Known records: “reported during the [fall 1988] period” (*Passenger Pigeon* 51: 218. 1989); “reported during the [spring 1989] period” (*Passenger Pigeon* 51: 388. 1989); 11 May 1991 (Frank 1991); “reported from Portage Co.” summer 1991 (*Passenger Pigeon* 54: 90. 1992); near Amherst 13 March 1992 (M. Berner); Stevens Point 27 November (J. Schaufenbuel)—14 December 2002 (CBC); BVG 10 March 2006 (G. Janz); Junction City (road kill) 1 October 2007 (J. Schaufenbuel); northwestern Stevens Point 22 June 2008 (J. Schaufenbuel); Little Plover River 23 June 2011 (R. Pendergast). Individuals of both red and gray morphs banded at Linwood Springs Research Station on 15 March 1995 and 25 October 1998 (Gene Jacobs, pers. comm.)

**Great Horned Owl** (*Bubo virginianus*)—Common resident. Breeds. Abundance is greatest in the three primary river corridors, Wisconsin, Plover, and Tomorrow. Nests are commonly occupied in early February. I have observed nestlings through 2 June. In 2005, it usurped the nests of two of the county’s Bald Eagle pairs.



**Snowy Owl** (*Bubo scandiacus*)—Irruptive resident November–April. The latest spring record is 10 April 1968 (*Passenger Pigeon* 31: 214. 1969). Overall, it is found somewhere in the county in about two years in three. Sindelar (1966) mapped a countywide range during four winters 1960–1965: 1960–61 (six owls); 1961–62 (three); 1963–1964 (four); 1964–1965 (four). Nichols (1968) reported no owls in the county during the significant statewide 1966–67 irruption. Snowy Owls winter primarily at BVG, most recently 2000–01 and 2008–09. I documented the presence of at least four individuals at BVG January–February 2001. Other precisely known locations include two late 1990s records at Section 30 Stockton Township (K. Hall); Dewey sedge marsh 24 January 2005 (M. Berner); and the K-Mart parking lot in Stevens Point in late 1991 (observer unknown).

**Northern Hawk Owl** (*Surnia ulula*)—One record: “late January–early March 1972” (Frederick M. Baumgartner; Robbins 1991). This record is unpublished elsewhere and there is no additional information available.

**Burrowing Owl** (*Athene cunicularia*)—Two records. One in Section 23 Pine Grove Township 19 May 1967 (Frank B. Renn; *Passenger Pigeon* 30: 27. 1967); one in section 26 Grant Township 5 September 1981 (Wilde and Oar 1981). The caption on a photograph of the Burrowing Owl (*Passenger Pigeon* 50: 365. 1988) by mistake describes the bird’s location as Portage County. As the accompanying article makes clear, the photo was taken two

miles north of the city of Portage, Columbia County.

**Barred Owl** (*Strix varia*)—Common resident. Breeds. Found primarily in mature mixed or hardwood forest, both upland and lowland the length of the eastern moraine, and throughout the northern one-half of the county.

**Great Gray Owl** (*Strix nebulosa*)—One record. Section 35N Stockton Township 23–24 January 2005. Found and photographed by Roy Dunlap.

**Long-eared Owl** (*Asio otus*)—Rare resident. Breeds. Known records: singles captured and banded at Linwood Springs Research Station 14 October 1990, 24 October 1995 and 6 November 2003 (Gene Jacobs, pers. comm.); one at Tomorrow River 8 August and 6 October 1995; one at southwestern edge of Jordan Swamp 27 March 2002; a roost of four in mountain alder (*Alnus incana*) and scattered tamarack (*Larix laricina*) at interior Jordan Swamp 14–26 December 2002; 17 May 2003 (*Passenger Pigeon* 65: 310. 2003). Two breeding records in 1990 when nesting pairs found in red pine and jack pine (*Pinus banksiana*) forest (Gene Jacobs, pers. comm.). The (*Passenger Pigeon* 26: 100. 1964) report of a “flock” in Portage Co. at French Creek public hunting grounds is in error. French Creek is located near Portage in Columbia Co.

**Short-eared Owl** (*Asio flammeus*)—Locally common resident. Breeds. Winter and nesting concentrations at BVG can be impressive. Abundance corresponds to the *Microtus* population. Breeding confirmed only at

BVG, but found each summer 1999–2001 in the Dewey sedge marsh. There are occasional transients elsewhere. The first state egg record may have been at BVG when F. Hamerstrom, having offered locals \$1 per prairie-chicken nest discovered, paid Mr. Tom Sawyer for three nests, one of which was turned out to be that of Short-eared Owl (Hamerstrom et al. 1961). In 1970 at BVG, Beske and Champion (1971) mapped 17 nesting pairs by mid-August and described a 28 April nest with 7 eggs. H. Halvorsen and A. Beske reported “about 20 were present in Portage Co. summer 1978” (*Passenger Pigeon* 41: 86. 1979). During extensive surveys at BVG, Swengel and Swengel (2002) recorded large numbers of owls between January 2000 and May 2001, and noted that “Buena Vista is an extraordinary site for Short-eared Owls, and we have yet to survey another site anywhere that approaches the level of owl detection recorded there.”

**Boreal Owl** (*Aegolius funereus*)—Irruptive migrant. Larry Semo recovered a specimen from Boston School Forest, Plover on 8 March 1989 (*Passenger Pigeon* 51: 413. 1989). During winter irruptions banded at Linwood Springs Research Station, four miles southwest of Stevens Point: six between 10–19 November 1996, five 18–26 February 1997 and one 31 October 2004 (Gene Jacobs, pers. comm.).

**Northern Saw-whet Owl** (*Aegolius acadicus*)—Uncommon resident. Breeds. Beginning in 1988 and continuing to the present, high numbers are banded in the fall at Linwood Springs Research Station. Migration extends

from about 23 September–10 November, it peaks in mid-October [71 on 24 October 1993 (*Passenger Pigeon* 56: 166. 1994) and 77 on 14 October 2006]; migration probably extends into early December. An average of 475 owls is banded each fall. Spring migration was monitored at Linwood Springs 15 February–15 April 1989–1999; the peak is mid-March and 25 were banded on 23 March 1989 (all Linwood Springs information, Gene Jacobs, pers. comm.). Three breeding records: six eggs in a kestrel box on 28 April 1991 resulting in four fledglings; two other reports of nest box occupancy at Boston School Forest, Plover (Gene Jacobs, pers. comm.). It is widespread in winter; I usually found a calling bird or two on occasional mid-February owling efforts 1989–2005.

### *Family Caprimulgidae*

**Common Nighthawk** (*Chordeiles minor*)—Common resident May–September. Breeds. Early spring 10 May 1993 (18 May); late fall 16 October 1972 (*Passenger Pigeon* 35: 142. 1973) (8 September). During the breeding season, often found in cities and towns, especially at commercial corridors, such as the northern part of Business I-39 and at UWSP where gravelled flat roofs abound. Two nesting records: nest with young on roof of the old Park Ridge Motel 15 July 1995, and distraction display in cut over jack pine at Plover River east of I-39 14 June 2001. Fall migration is concentrated 20 August–5 September each year. Flights at Stevens Point include 1100 on 22 August 1992; 650 on 19 August 1994; and 650 on 6 September 2003. A flight of uncountable for-

aging nighthawks swarmed over the north-central part of Stevens Point throughout the evening of 30 August 1996. The birds were capturing flying insects emerging from athletic fields and similar short-grass sites. Concentrations of spring migrants are unusual; exceptions include 40 at Tomorrow River 26 May 1993, and 35 at McDill Pond 16 May 1995.

**Eastern Whip-poor-will** (*Caprimulgus vociferus*)—Common resident May–September. Breeds. Early spring 28 April 1970 (*Passenger Pigeon* 32: 24, 1971) and 2010 (eBird 2011b); late fall 5 September 1997. It is rarely encountered as a migrant. Summer residency is established by the second week of May. Found in several forest types; perhaps most common in jack pine in Hull Township north of Hwy 66, or in the peculiar shrubless quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) forests of Dewey Township. Densities are low in upland mixed hardwoods of the eastern moraine. I never encountered a bird in August, but found it twice in early September singing in Section 3, Hull Township.

#### **Family Apodidae**

**Chimney Swift** (*Chaetura pelagica*)—Common resident April–September. Breeds. Early spring 19 April 1996 and 2002 (28 April); late fall 21 September 2001 (12 September). In late April, swifts suddenly appear over towns and cities and are a constant presence until September. Found in seven Atlas blocks (Cutright et al. 2006); it is unconfirmed as a breeder, although we may confidently assume that it does. It is rare in rural or forested landscapes. Roosts collectively in Stevens Point

church or school chimneys throughout the summer: 100 on 5 June 1999 and 250 on 17 July 1999 at St. Stanislaus School. Fall roosts include 330 on 11 September 1994 and 260 on 10 September 2001 at St. Stephen's School. In September, early morning foraging flocks of 100-plus over McDill Pond disperse with the warmth of the day.

#### **Family Trochilidae**

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird** (*Archilochus colubris*)—Common resident May–September. Breeds. Early spring 30 April 2004 (*Passenger Pigeon* 66: 410, 2004) (17 May); late fall 22 September 2002 (7 September). Observations peak in late May and again throughout August. Probably nests throughout the county in forest and forest edge, but widespread confirming evidence is generally lacking. I found birds either nest building or occupying nests on six occasions 24 May–3 June, all near water. After mid-summer, hummingbirds appear most commonly in openings along streams and spring ponds in deciduous forest, often where orange jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis*) is blossoming.

#### **Family Alcedinidae**

**Belted Kingfisher** (*Megasceryle alcyon*)—Common resident March–November. Uncommon resident December–February. Breeds. May winter annually, but this is not certain. I found individuals after mid-January in only five years 1989–2005. CBC records are not a reliable indicator of overwintering. In general, departs at freeze-up, returns at ice-out. Nests throughout county, primarily along streams; to my knowledge, no lake

shore nesting records. Confirmed breeding activity between 29 April and 22 July.

### **Family Picidae**

**Red-headed Woodpecker** (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*)—Uncommon resident April–October. Rare resident November–March. Breeds. Documented statewide decline includes Portage Co. Described by G. Becker as abundant in summer 1941 when 16 were found dead along a two-mile section of road (*Passenger Pigeon* 10: 101. 1948). Kent Hall recorded 22 live birds on 24 November 2002 (*Passenger Pigeon* 65: 85. 2003). At present, known breeding locations are limited, and include lowland forest at mouth of Plover River, and upland forest Section 28E Eau Pleine Townshp. The former site, a couple hectares of large eastern hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*), green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*), and eastern white pine, was flooded in about 1994, killing most of the trees and attracting woodpeckers. As the trees fall, woodpeckers will abandon the site. Cutright et al. (2006), show that the three county quadrangles with confirmations is in essence the northern range limit in central Wisconsin and along the Wisconsin River. I encountered a few presumed migrants, mostly in September. Winters annually at the mouth of the Plover River.

**Red-bellied Woodpecker** (*Melanerpes carolinus*)—Common resident. Breeds. First record was in 1960 (Robbins 1991), and since then has colonized most of the county, found during the breeding season in ten Atlas quadrangles (Cutright et al.

2006). Nesting activity spans 18 May–21 July-plus (pers. obs.). At Poncho Creek in 1994, a green ash held nests with young in two different cavities 7 June and 21 July. For breeding, seems to prefer forests with large trees, both upland and lowland. Densities are low; my notebooks abundantly describe field trip counts of 1–2, rarely 4–5. Through 1997, recorded on the CBC exclusively in single-digits, recent counts number 20-plus, including 30 on 20 December 2003.

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** (*Sphyrapicus varius*)—Fairly common resident March–October. Breeds. Early spring 28 March 1995 (6 April); late fall 20 October 2001 (7 October). The northern part of the county is at the limit of the state's core breeding range (Cutright et al. 2006). Records of nests with young span 11 June–1 July (pers. obs.). Sapsuckers frequent the interior of lowland forests of maple (*Acer* sp.) and birch (*Betula* sp.). Away from the northern townships, probably nests annually at Poncho Creek or Tomorrow River. It is a common migrant throughout April, e.g., ten at Dewey Marsh 8 April 1997, and seven at Tomorrow River 25 April 1995. Detections are probably greater in spring than in fall due to open, leafless forests and calling birds. Relatively few migrants encountered in fall; eight at Stevens Ptoint 26 September 1990 is exceptional. One discovered on the 15 December 1973 CBC. Published arrivals on 3 March 2000 (*Passenger Pigeon* 62: 298. 2000) and 1 March 2001 (*Passenger Pigeon* 65: 310. 2003) are questionable.

**Downy Woodpecker** (*Picoides pubescens*)—Common resident. Breeds. Found at forests of almost any sort, at both edge and interior, and open meadows in fall where it forages at goldenrod (*Solidago* sp) galls and common mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*) seed heads. Records of nests with young span 16 May–2 July; fledglings are widespread by the end of June. Downies are urban feeder visitors the year round.

**Hairy Woodpecker** (*Picoides villosus*)—Common resident. Breeds. Nests a little earlier than Downy Woodpecker, as evidenced an exceptional 22 April 1991 nest with young at Whiting Park; an additional 28 nestling records span 16 May–25 June. In winter at the Dewey conifer bog, Jordan Swamp, and Poncho Creek, it commonly flakes bark from dying conifers, especially tamarack.

**Black-backed Woodpecker** (*Picoides arcticus*)—Two records. A female at the confluence of Poncho Creek and Tomorrow River 28 March 1995 (*Passenger Pigeon* 57: 276. 1995); one at Dewey Marsh 17 November 2008 (G. Janz).

**Northern Flicker** (*Colaptes auratus*)—Common resident March–November. Early spring 5 March 1989 (29 March); late fall 6 November 2001 (14 October). Rare winter resident December–February. Nests primarily in hardwood forests, often associated with edge or open habitats. Weak breeding evidence in the northern tier of Portage Co. quadrangles, and over much of adjacent Wood Co. (Cutright et al. 2006) indicate that flickers avoid forest with a large conif-

erous component, or contiguous forest with limited openings necessary for foraging. Migration peaks in the middle third of April, e.g., 25 on 19 April 1990 and 39 on 14 April 2002; and during mid-September: 19 on 16 September 1994. Such peaks are invariably birds detected in open country. Discovered wintering in Jordan Swamp in 1997, it has been found there each year since. Also has wintered in Long Road Bog. Unknown location 20 February 1987 (*Passenger Pigeon* 49: 189. 1987). Traditional wintering locales are lowland bogs where poison sumac (*Toxicodendron vernix*) grows.

**Pileated Woodpecker** (*Dryocopus pileatus*)—Common resident. Breeds. Breeding density is low, and distribution is limited to relatively large areas of contiguous forest in the north and along the eastern moraine. While absent from the broad southwestern part of the county (Cutright et al. 2006), it is common along the Wisconsin and Plover Rivers adjacent to the urban center. It may be more widespread in winter, and multiple birds have appeared at feeders on the edges of Stevens Point. I found seven together on a ridge above Tomorrow River 25 March 1993. Becker (1941) described the range as Grant Township and the northern tier of townships. There is a significant increase in CBC totals since about 1999; there was a tally of 22 on the 15 December 2007 count.

### *Family Tyrannidae*

**Olive-sided Flycatcher** (*Contopus cooperi*)—Uncommon migrant. Extremes: spring 27 April 1990 (*Passenger Pigeon* 52: 368. 1990) (17 May) and 9

June 1992; fall 2 August 2001 (17 August) and 18 September 2003. One or two birds is the usual spring field count. I found migrants in June during four years. A singing male was at the Tomorrow River 17–24 June 1991. Fall migrants are a little more common in late August than in September, and records at Tomorrow River include 3 on 18 August 1997 and 4 on 21 August 2001. Migrants favor forested wetlands. Erik Munson's spring arrival extreme represents the earliest statewide (Domagalski 1999).

**Eastern Wood-Pewee** (*Contopus virens*)—Common resident May–October. Breeds. Early spring 30 April 2009 (eBird 2011b) (15 May); late fall 5 October 1997 (22 September). A common migrant after mid-May, with nesting territories established during that period, blurring the status of many individuals. Frequently a very common migrant August through mid-September. Nests in deciduous forests countywide; abundance is greatest in the more contiguous northeastern forests. Occupied nests span 2 June–11 August and there are seven records of adults feeding fledglings 4–13 September.

**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** (*Empidonax flaviventris*)—Uncommon migrant. Local summer resident. Extremes: spring 12 May 1989 (21 May) and 10 June 1999; fall 8 August 2002 (22 August) and 16 September 2002. The spring passage peaks in late May and individuals are regular in June, such as four in Dewey Township 4 June 1995. After a period of unseasonable cold, six were at Erickson Natural Area 25 May 2002. One or two individuals in a day is the usual com-

pliment August–September. During nine years, I failed to find a migrant in September. Up to six (16 June 2002) singing males have been found during June and July in the Dewey conifer bog where flycatchers maintain territories in structurally diverse open black spruce (*Picea mariana*) adjacent to closed canopy forest. Breeding is not confirmed.

**Acadian Flycatcher** (*Empidonax virens*)—Rare resident May–August. Breeds. Early spring 21 May 2005; late fall 21 August 1995 (Rosenfield and Bielefeldt 1995). The first county record was near Amherst 28 May–21 August 1995 where a nest fledged young (Rosenfield and Bielefeldt 1995). In June 1995, I discovered a breeding population in upland oak-maple forest between Tomorrow River and Poncho Creek. Up to two nests found annually 1996–2005. Except for one in a maple, all nests placed in American witch-hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*). Singing males were at Section 7 Pine Grove Township on 16 June 2001 and 17 June 2002, and Section 11 Dewey Township on 2 June 2005. A singing male in Wood Co. on 2 August 2003 could be heard from Marsh Road in Portage Co. Breeding was also confirmed in 1995 along Birch Drive 100 m across the county line in Marathon Co., and birds were present at that site through at least 1998. A presumed migrant was at the Wisconsin River west of Casimir 24 May 2002. A singing male identified as a hybrid Least Flycatcher X Acadian Flycatcher was present at the Poncho Creek site 26 June–24 July 2001 and 6 June–30 July 2002. It mated with an Acadian Flycatcher in 2002 (Berner & Kroodsma 2005).

**Alder Flycatcher** (*Empidonax alnorum*)—Common resident May–September. Breeds. Early spring 9 May 1991 (20 May); late fall 14 September 2003 (14 August). Breeding territories established quickly upon the average spring arrival date. Sixteen singing males at Dewey Marsh on 1 June 2005, and 18 at Jordan Swamp on 3 June 2005 represent densities in favored shrub carr habitat. Breeds in the northern one-third of the county (Cutright et al. 2006). Silent individuals unidentifiable; therefore, the relatively early average departure. The extreme arrival and departure dates of “Traill’s Flycatcher” are 13 May and 3 September.

**Willow Flycatcher** (*Empidonax traillii*)—Uncommon resident May–September. Breeds. Early spring 13 May 1999; late fall 8 September 2001. Breeding locales are widely scattered in the county, often isolated patches of willow (*Salix* sp.) habitat in an agricultural setting, and may not be occupied every year. The several numbered, channelized ditches at BVG are the most reliable breeding area. Small habitat patches at Section 30N Stockton Township, Section 28E Eau Pleine Township and Section 7 Linwood Township (Bear Creek) support a pair or two. There are summer records from Four Oaks Marsh and Dewey Marsh. Since the conclusion of the WBBA, confirmed nesting at BVG and Bear Creek. Observed feeding fledglings at the Stockton Township site on 31 August 2003. Managed removal of willow at the BVG ditches threatens that population.

**Least Flycatcher** (*Empidonax minimus*)—Common resident April–Sep-

tember. Breeds. Early spring 27 April 1990 (4 May); late fall 28 September 2003 (16 September). Representative annual migrant peaks at Tomorrow River include 15 birds on 15 May 1995 and 11 on 31 August 1992. It breeds in deciduous forest, ranging from successional quaking aspen scrub at BVG to a variety of oak, maple, and birch associations in both upland and lowland landscapes. I consider this species somewhat colonial, with several pairs occupying a few hectares of habitat undifferentiated from contiguous unoccupied forest. Their abundance peaks in cut over forest, especially selectively logged parcels within larger intact forest. The creation of such habitat will recruit birds from surrounding forest to the extent that flycatchers abandon uncut areas. Eleven nest building records span 17 May–8 July and fledglings are widespread after 10 July.

**Eastern Phoebe** (*Sayornis phoebe*)—Common resident March–November. Breeds. Early spring 17 March 2009 (eBird 2011b) (28 March); late fall 17 November 1971 (*Passenger Pigeon* 34: 116, 1972) (18 October). Widespread as a migrant throughout April and August–early October. Nests wherever human structures occur in any forested or edge habitat; absent only from core urban or residential areas and open grassland. Nest building observed as early as 11 April; 13 egg records span 2 May–3 July and nests with young include 18 between 2 June and 22 July.

**Great Crested Flycatcher** (*Myiarchus crinitus*)—Common resident May–September. Breeds. Early spring 1 May 2001 (6 May); late fall 30

September 1993 (11 September). Nests throughout the county, with greatest densities in lowland forests such as Poncho Creek, Jordan Swamp and Plover River where maple (*Acer*) species often provide nesting cavities. It is more common as a spring migrant. A widespread post-breeding dispersant, by September it is rare.

**Western Kingbird** (*Tyrannus verticalis*)—One record. One north of Boston School Forest, Plover 22 May–12 June 1992 (*Passenger Pigeon* 54: 319. 1992 and 55: 87–88. 1993).

**Eastern Kingbird** (*Tyrannus tyrannus*)—Common resident April–September. Breeds. Early spring 26 April 1990 (7 May); late fall 27 September 1991 (6 September). I failed to note any spring period of abundance; instead, pairs establish territories upon arrival and the identification of migrants is problematic. Conversely, staging migrants are conspicuous at roadsides late July–August, e.g.; 30 on 23 July 2000, 21 on 16 August 2001. Kingbirds nest in scrubby upland grassland or hedgerows, and at sparsely forested lowland sites such as beaver ponds. Sixteen nest building records span 20 May–30 June. A nest with eggs at Poncho Creek 15 July 1993, and fledglings at Iverson Park 31 August 2003 post-date and equal, respectively, latest such records in Cutright et al. (2006).

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher** (*Tyrannus forficatus*)—One record. An apparent hatch-year bird 24–25 July 1999, documented by Julie Wilking, was accepted by the records committee (*Passenger Pigeon* 61: 482. 1999). It was probably located in New Hope Township; how-

ever, the location described in the *Passenger Pigeon*, the intersection of “Grayson Rd. at US 10,” does not exist.

### Family Laniidae

**Loggerhead Shrike** (*Lanius ludovicianus*)—All known records: 15 May 1976 (*Passenger Pigeon* 37: 196. 1977); nest with five young banded by Gene Jacobs 8 June 1978 one mile north of STH 66 on CTH K.; 5 July 1978 (*Passenger Pigeon* 41: 87. 1979); 12 May 1979 May count (Anonymous 1980); 20 May 1983 (*Passenger Pigeon* 46: 32. 1984); one at section 33N Stockton Township 8 April 1989; one northwest of Bancroft 3 August 2003 (*Passenger Pigeon* 66: 143. 2004); one at Section 4S Plover Township 9 April 2005 (Kay Kavanagh); one at Section 30N, Stockton Township 14 August 2005 (*Passenger Pigeon* 68: 174. 2006). Records before the 1970s exist, but are not retrievable. The observer of the 18 December 1982 CBC record considers it a misidentification (Kent Hall, pers. comm.).

**Northern Shrike** (*Lanius excubitor*)—Uncommon resident October–April. Early fall 12 October 1993 (27 October); late spring 15 April 2001 (26 March). In addition to more frequent observations of putative migrants in November and March, typically it is widespread during winter months. There are, however, periodic seasons of scarcity. My notebooks describe nine April records during seven years. Five were at the Tomorrow River 20 December 1994; three at BVG 20 March 2001; and four along a few miles of north county roadside 29 January 2005. Found in open habitats



with exposed perches, occasionally in forests. Double digit tallies on the CBC are 13 on 16 December 1978 and ten on 20 December 2003.

### **Family Vireonidae**

**White-eyed Vireo** (*Vireo griseus*)—One record. I found a singing male at the present-day southern anchorage of the Green Circle Trail footbridge over the Plover River, Whiting 29 April 1990. This vireo was considered “much more widespread than normal” during that spring (*Passenger Pigeon* 52: 370. 1990).

**Yellow-throated Vireo** (*Vireo flavifrons*)—Fairly common resident May–October. Breeds. Early spring 1 May 2001 (8 May); late fall 9 October 1990 (23 September). During migration, peak abundance is mid-May and very early September when a typical daily count is in the low single digits. The breeding population is concentrated along the eastern moraine, the Wisconsin and Plover River corridors, and is perhaps largest in mixed forest within and along the northeastern margin of the Dewey Marsh basin. The late (21 August 1995) record of adults feeding young described in Cutright et al. (2006) is from Poncho Creek. Fledglings attended by adults also were observed there on 20 August 2001.

**Blue-headed Vireo** (*Vireo solitarius*)—Fairly common migrant. Rare resident June–August. Breeds. Extremes: spring 26 April 2001 (5 May) and 30 May 1995; fall 26 August 1999 (8 September) and 18 October 1995. Ten summer records: one at east end Barbara’s Lane, Stevens Point 9 July

1994; singing male just southeast of Shantytown 5 June 1996; singing male at Philippine Islands 15 June 2000; singing male at Tomorrow River 24 July–3 August 2000; singing male near SPPD shooting range 11 August 2000; singing male at Dewey Marsh conifer bog 15 June 2001; two singing males Section 28, Dewey Township 11 June 2005; one banded in southeastern Larnark Township 19 July 2009 (Dale Matheson, pers. comm.). Two breeding records in Dewey Township: male and female attending nest with two young, SW 1/4 Section 27 on 12 August 2000, the latest such record in Cutright et al. (2006); adult feeding fledgling NW 1/4 Section 22 on 15 July 2005. The habitat of six of the summer records included a significant jack pine component. Upland deciduous forests in Sharon Township and adjacent northern county line areas may host a small number of summer residents annually.

**Warbling Vireo** (*Vireo gilvus*)—Common resident April–September. Breeds. Early spring 29 April 1990 (7 May); late fall 1 October 1965 (*Passenger Pigeon* 28: 121. 1966) (8 September). It is a common spring migrant; e.g., 14 at Stevens Point 14 May 1994; detections are fewer in fall. Breeding pairs are concentrated along the Wisconsin and Plover Rivers, and in the successional aspen forests of BVG and Dewey Marsh. The WBBA map might give a false impression of abundance in the eastern one-half of the county. My encounters with the species were very few in the northeast and along the length of the moraine, gathering only three breeding season records at the Tomorrow River-Poncho Creek

watershed. West of Casimir, a pair was building an early nest 15 May 1999.

**Philadelphia Vireo** (*Vireo philadelphicus*)—Uncommon migrant. Extremes: spring 10 May 2001 (16 May) and 30 May 1997; fall 13 August 2010 (J. Schaufenbuel) (2 September) and 24 October 2004. An erratic spring migrant; I recorded it on one date or not at all in ten springs. In the cold spring of 2002 it was found on nine dates 11–27 May. Six were at Stevens Point 20 May 1990. Relatively common in the fall, migrants peak sometime during the first one-half of September before scattering through to month's end. My notebooks show nine records in August and three in October. It favors aspen forest.

**Red-eyed Vireo** (*Vireo olivaceus*)—Common resident May–October. Breeds. Early spring 1 May 2001 (12 May); late fall (fresh road kill) 4 November 2002 (1 October). It is often the most common migrant passerine. Spring abundance peaks 20–25 May. In fall, waves of migrants appear suddenly after 20 August and continue during September. Breeding birds favor large tracts of mature deciduous forest; it is most common in the northern townships of Dewey and Sharon. Starkly illustrated on the WBBA map is its summer absence from the limited forests of BVG in the southwest (Cutright et al. 2006). The nesting season is long; there are five records of adults feeding fledglings 1–18 September (pers. obs.).

### Family Corvidae

**Gray Jay** (*Perisoreus canadensis*)—Three records. One at the Isaak Wal-

ton League clubhouse feeder, reported by Arol Epple in winter 1963–64 (*Passenger Pigeon* 26: 151, 1964) and by John Simonis in winter 1964–65 (*Passenger Pigeon* 27:168, 1965). Gerry Janz found two at Long Road Bog 17 November 1998, and one there 6–22 February 2004. I heard tell of a specimen collected in the 1980s, possibly at Dewey Marsh; however, no additional information available.

**Blue Jay** (*Cyanocitta cristata*)—Abundant resident. Breeds. It is a notable late September migrant in about two years in three. Fiehweg recorded 341 at Stevens Point on 25 September 1965 (*Passenger Pigeon* 28: 120, 1966); 670 passed over town on 21 September 2003 (pers. obs.). Forenoon fall migrants invariably are flying in a west-southwest direction. Spring migration is less obvious; exceeding 35 birds on only three dates 1989–2005 when the peak is 1 May. The onset of nest-building and egg-laying is consistently during early May. Bielefeldt's (1974) analysis of statewide Blue Jay distribution during the CBC season emphasizes the importance of oak species diversity on wintering population densities. Local CBC numbers range from 63 in 1991 to 539 in 1976.

**American Crow** (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*)—Abundant resident. Breeds. During my years in Portage Co., I mostly failed to pay attention to what crows do with their lives. Beyond the typical field trip tally of 10–30 individuals year round, the most consistent mention in my notes is of the annual flock of 150–350 that inhabit Jordan Swamp and the adjacent sod farm and cultivated fields between September

and February. In addition, I gathered 13 nest-building records, 11 of these in March and most of them in the city of Stevens Point where white spruce (*Picea glauca*) is a typical nest tree, often in a cemetery. Fledglings appear at the end of May and flocks of 100-plus form by mid-July almost anywhere in the county. Known only north to Stevens Point during field work by King 1873–77 (Schorger 1941), and described by Kumlien and Hollister (1903) as “migratory, and a common summer resident.” The recent 20-year CBC average is 457.

**Common Raven** (*Corvus corax*)—Uncommon resident. Breeds. Raven was first confirmed nesting in the county in a hillside red pine plantation at the Hemp fishery area at the Tomorrow River in May 1990. That nest was occupied through 1994; a second nest was built and used through 1998. Following an absence of six years, ravens again nested in that area in 2005. Elsewhere, fledglings have been recorded twice in Dewey Marsh and once in Sharon Township. Fledglings for all known successful nests appeared in early June. Believed to nest in Jordan Swamp. Six adults were at BVG 2 June 2003; a flock of 13 at Dewey Marsh 10 April 2001 is exceptional. Recorded on three of the first 37 CBCs but found annually since 1998.

#### *Family Alaudidae*

**Horned Lark** (*Eremophila alpestris*)—Common resident. Breeds. The migrations peak in early March (130 on 9 March 2000; *Passenger Pigeon* 62: 300. 2000) and late October. One hundred-fifty along Rainbow Drive on

28 September 2001 is an anomaly. Territorial males are evident in stubble fields and overgrazed pastures when snow cover becomes patchy in late winter. BVG and Stockton Township support sizable breeding populations; the recent conversion of grazing land to row crops at BVG will have uncertain effects. Cutright et al. (2006) describe an absence of larks in the northwest and, more broadly, in the southeast. Winter birds seem to wander erratically; small flocks are reliably found at BVG. Regular in counts of 20–50 on CBC 1972–1992; recorded in five years since, a maximum of five birds.

#### *Family Hirundinidae*

**Purple Martin** (*Progne subis*)—Uncommon resident April–September. Breeds. Early spring 8 April 1989 (25 April); late fall 1 September 1999 (8 August). Annually occupied colonies in Stevens Point known to me: Golla Road, Pfiffner Park, Bukolt Park, south Torun Road. Outside of town, one colony: Section 26E Eau Pleine Township. The two city park martin houses were monitored casually 1989–2005, averaging 2–3 pairs each. Sixty-three birds were in the parks area 22 July 2001, and the two houses held nine nests with young on 24 July 2002. In 2005, the combined total here was one active nest. The Golla Road house held eight nests on 20 July 1997; it was occupied sporadically thereafter. Exclusive of Stevens Point, Atlas confirmations encompass two quadrangles (Cutright et al. 2006). Our understanding of its status as a migrant is limited by a paucity of detections. Late April and early August appear to be seasonal peaks.

**Tree Swallow** (*Tachycineta bicolor*)—Common resident March–October. Breeds. Early spring 25 March 1995 and 2000 (1 April); late fall 23 October 2009 (J. Schaufenbuel) (12 September). An abundant spring migrant, most notable when cold temperatures concentrate flocks over lakes or marshes such as McDill Pond and Dewey Marsh where hundreds take refuge annually in April or May: 1200 at McDill on 13 April 2000; 330 at Dewey on 12 May 2001. Fall flocks are small and swallows often difficult to find after July; 60 is the largest August–October flock in my notebooks. Nests throughout the county and as the 21<sup>st</sup> century progresses, bluebird box trails fledge most of our young and the use of natural cavities is declining.

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow** (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*)—Uncommon resident April–September. Breeds. Early spring 10 April 2001 (21 April); late fall 4 September 1989 & 2005 (17 July). In April, several birds mingle within Tree Swallow (*Tachycineta bicolor*) flocks over McDill Pond; however, migrants are typically most common in early May, often found along sheltered stretches of the Plover and Wisconsin Rivers. At Lost Creek WA, 100 were present 13 May 2011 (eBird 2011d). Departure of summer residents is early and fall migrants are scarce. Twenty-one at Whiting 12 August 1990, 18 at Iverson Park 28 August 2005, and 24 at BVG 28 July 2008 (Kay Kavanagh, pers. comm.) are exceptions. Breeding locations are few and are not occupied annually; an exception is a semi-trailer permanently in place at a lumber yard in Whiting, where swallows nest annually

in the portals beneath the rear corners of the trailer frame. I have seen swallows investigating this structure at urban locations throughout Wisconsin.

**Bank Swallow** (*Riparia riparia*)—Fairly common resident April–September. Breeds. Early spring 11 April 1996 and 2002 (26 April); late fall 2 September 1997 (17 July). Migrants pass late April–early May and July–early August. Colonies come and go; in years where none are known departure is early. The vast majority of nesting colonies are small and the local soil characteristics dictate that swallows use human created disturbed-earth sites. Few persist. For example, in June 2000 during construction of a subdivision at the eastern edge of Stevens Point swallows dug 40 cavities in the walls of a newly excavated and temporarily idled home site basement. When construction resumed, the swallows relocated and dug 60 cavities in a nearby mound of displaced soil. Quarry sites at Section 28 Eau Pleine Township (30 nests) and at Section 26 Dewey Township (15 nests) supported swallows for several years. The late nest with young in Cutright et al. (2006) is from the Dewey colony (pers. obs.).

**Barn Swallow** (*Hirundo rustica*)—Common resident April–October. Breeds. Early spring 4 April 2000 (17 April); late fall 23 October 2009 (eBird 2011b) (11 September). It is a widespread migrant, especially July–September when it is the most abundant swallow. Staging swallows appear equally common in open agricultural land and over the major rivers. It breeds throughout the

county, singly or several among the major Cliff Swallow colonies. Nests with young span 5 June–21 August.

**Cliff Swallow** (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*)—Abundant resident April–September. Breeds. Early spring 7 April 2002 (14 April); late fall 16 September 1993 (11 September). Combined nest totals on three Wisconsin River bridges—US 10, Black Bridge, CTH HH—have exceeded 4000 in recent years. The Plover River Patch Street bridge annually supports several hundred nests; e.g., 462 on 22 May 1992. A total of 1590 active nests were on the US 10 bridge at Wisconsin River 27 May 1980 (Halvorsen 1981). The statement in Cutright et al. (2006) that this colony is “now gone” is untrue. An additional several hundred nests are built each year on the small bridges throughout BVG. Describing its Wisconsin distribution, Emlen (1957) includes the Wausau-Stevens Point region among areas where it is “most numerous.” Spring migrants concentrate over river impoundments during cold weather. Post-breeding, Cliff Swallows disperse quickly and encounters with staging or migrant flocks are rare; 300 at Stevens Point 23 August 2003 is exceptional.

### **Family Paridae**

**Black-capped Chickadee** (*Poecile atricapillus*)—Common resident. Breeds. Found in forested habitat throughout the county, primarily in middle-aged hardwoods, mixed forests, and low-land conifers. It was present in unusually large numbers at Tomorrow River-Poncho Creek watershed during winter 1992–93 and 1998–99. One

hundred ten were at Jordan Swamp on 20 December 2000. It is widely distributed during the breeding season when 34 nest building records span 2 April–21 May, and a common feeding station visitor anywhere year round.

**Boreal Chickadee** (*Poecile hudsonicus*)—Three records. One at feeder in Stevens Point in the “late 1950s,” and one at feeder at Isaak Walton League property in the “1970s” (Robbins 1991); one at Tree Acres, Plover Township 15 December 2001 (*Passenger Pigeon* 64: 180, 2002).

**Tufted Titmouse** (*Baeolophus bicolor*)—Uncommon semi-permanent resident. Breeds. First recorded in 1959 (Robbins 1991). Published records indicate that it was resident 1959–late 1980s. I found one or two at Iverson Park 17 October 1988–19 April 1989 and none again in the county until 24 May 2002, a singing male at the Wisconsin River west of Casimir. There is an 11 April 1998 record (*Passenger Pigeon* 60: 338, 1998). Since 2003, a few birds have been resident in the area of Maple Bluff Road, Stevens Point. A singing male repeatedly visited a potential nest cavity at the adjacent Plover River 4 May 2003 (pers. obs.). More widespread reports in 2009: pair at Blue Heron Lane in spring (G. Janz); one in Rosholt in May (M. Brocken); and the first county nesting record at Bancroft (Lora Hagen *fide* G. Janz). CBC: 1961–1964, 1966–1968, and 2005–2008; maximum of ten in 1963.

### **Family Sittidae**

**Red-breasted Nuthatch** (*Sitta canadensis*)—Locally common resi-

dent and irruptive winter visitor. Breeds. Following my 10 December 1989 encounter with 25 birds at the Tomorrow River, nuthatches were an erratic presence until late 1992 when they became (or returned as) the common resident they are today. The breeding population at Tomorrow River and Poncho Creek may exceed that of the balance of the county. A variety of conifer species and an abundance of yellow birch (*Betula alleghaniensis*) are unique to that watershed. It is rare in extensive coniferous forest. During 1990–1993, it was resident at Iverson Park and nested on three occasions. Despite little change in its resident abundance in the county after 1998, I did not obtain a breeding confirmation in subsequent years. Ten nest building records span 7 April–31 May. During the period 1990–2010, CBC numbers range from one bird in 1994 to 92 in 2004.

**White-breasted Nuthatch** (*Sitta carolinensis*)—Common resident. Breeds. Densities are greatest in extensive upland mixed or deciduous forest. Fewer occur in mesic lowland mixed forest with a greater eastern white pine component. Absent from coniferous forest. The breeding season interval is quite consistent each year: nest building spans the month of April, fledglings appear at the end of June.

#### *Family Certhiidae*

**Brown Creeper** (*Certhia americana*)—Uncommon resident. Breeds. It is local during the breeding season, found at the New Hope Pines SNA, Tomorrow River, Poncho Creek, Jordan Swamp, the Plover River upstream of Interstate 39, and from the

northeastern edge of the Dewey Marsh basin east throughout the northern tier of townships. The habitat at each site is different and includes upland eastern white pine, lowland hemlock-ash, silver maple-oak, and sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*)-birch. Nest-building records span 29 April–15 June, and nests with young 30 May–21 June. Of nine nests at Tomorrow River-Poncho Creek, five were placed in decaying eastern hemlock, and all nine nest trees were either in standing water or within 2 m of a stream. In winter, it is present at all of the breeding sites and regular at feeding stations. Exceptional CBC totals include 17 in 1978 and 23 in 1979.

#### *Family Troglodytidae*

**Carolina Wren** (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*)—About eight records. One found by Margarite Cuff 29 June 1968 (*Passenger Pigeon* 31: 250. 1969); CBC 29 December 1990; singing male at Iverson Park 10 Aug 1991; singing male, Stevens Point April 2002 (J. Schaufenbuel); Schmeekle Reserve 10 November 2002 and possibly the same individual periodically at 700 2nd St. North, Stevens Point 9 January 2003–2 November 2004; Bear Creek 10 January–10 February 2004 (*Passenger Pigeon* 66: 254. 2004); CBC 17 December 2005; Neenah paper mill, Stevens Point 3 October 2006 (G. Janz).

**House Wren** (*Troglodytes aedon*)—Common resident April–October. Breeds. Early spring 16 April 2002 (29 April); late fall 8 November 1998 (*Passenger Pigeon* 61: 187. 1999) (6 October). Migrants and breeding birds inhabit forest edge, clear cuts, lowland

deciduous forest, streams, brush piles, and any residential setting. Breeding densities in the county are highest at forested lowland stream or swampy areas where periodic high water due to flood or beaver activity kills trees creating nest cavities, log jams, and the tangled vegetation preferred by wrens. Two such areas are Poncho Creek and Jordan Swamp. The discovery of a family group is a common breeding confirmation; such observations span 17 June–30 August.

**Winter Wren** (*Troglodytes hiemalis*)—Common resident March–November. Breeds. Early spring 23 March 1991 (30 March); late fall 21 November 1991 (2 November). Widespread as a migrant in April and September–October, it is a very local nesting species. The silver maple floodplains of the Wisconsin and Plover Rivers often support high numbers of migrants: 14 at Plover River on 16 April 1995 and 11 at Wisconsin River 13 October 1995. Winter Wrens nest at hemlock forest and spring ponds at the Tomorrow River-Poncho Creek watershed, and locally in maple-birch forest throughout the northern tier of townships east of the Dewey Marsh basin. Occasionally found in summer in selectively logged upland forest. It is rare at Jordan Swamp where fledglings observed 3 June 1999. At Poncho Creek in 1994, nests with young were found on 27 June and 16 August. Two winter records: Wisconsin River west of the end of the old Riverview Drive (now the eastern anchorage of the CTH HH bridge), Stevens Point 10 December 1992–3 January 1993 (*Passenger Pigeon* 55: 261. 1993) and at Section 6W Eau Pleine Township 11 January 2003 (*Passenger Pigeon* 65: 158.

2003). The latter individual probably was seen earlier, on 28 December 2002 (Gerry Janz, pers. comm.) and is the same bird reported from adjacent Marathon Co. at that time (Dan Belter, pers. comm.).

**Sedge Wren** (*Cistothorus platen-sis*)—Common resident April–October. Breeds. Early spring 23 April 2001; late fall 20 October 1994. The areas of greatest abundance are Dewey Marsh, Jordan Swamp, Mead SWA, and locally at BVG. Sedge marsh adjacent to shrub carr is typical habitat. At Dewey Marsh, densities are high where bog birch is the primary woody vegetation. At BVG, the population has recently benefited (at least temporarily) from the removal of large areas of aspen forest and the aggressive mowing of emergent woody vegetation. While found in grass hay fields in the northwest, Sedge Wrens frequently occupy such sites only relatively late in the breeding season, commonly beginning in early July. In some years, wrens are entirely absent from this habitat. The local breeding phenology is poorly understood; I confirmed breeding on only two occasions.

**Marsh Wren** (*Cistothorus palustris*)—Rare migrant; uncommon and very local resident May–September. Early spring 9 May 2009 (eBird 2011b); late fall 25 October 1993. Found along the Plover River at the southwestern part of Iverson Park 5 July 1992 and 26 June–7 August 1993; at a beaver pond at Section 29 Dewey Township June–July 1998–2002; south of the Philippine Islands at Dewey Marsh in June or July 1995, 2002, and 2005; at Four Oaks Marsh in June 2000 and

2001; two at Lost Creek WA 6 July 2011 (eBird 2011d). Up to three singing males observed at Iverson Park and Dewey Township. Breeding is not confirmed. A male was building a nest at Dewey Township on 5 July 1998. It is present each summer at Bear Creek Marsh (G. Janz).

### **Family Polioptilidae**

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** (*Polioptila caerulea*)—Uncommon resident April–September. Breeds. Early spring 17 April 2002 (1 May); late fall 15 September 1990 (5 September). Portage County lies at the northern edge of the central Wisconsin range. As a result, migrants pass in tiny numbers, especially in fall. Eight along the Plover River in Stevens Point 11 May 2002 during a period of unusual cold is twice that of any other non-breeding season encounter. In the spring, detected arrival and nest-building occasionally occur only days apart; e.g., 1 and 5 May 2000, and 7 and 8 May 2005. The breeding season extends into August. Nests primarily in deciduous lowland forest. The use by breeding gnatcatchers of selectively logged upland deciduous forest is relatively brief and appears to begin a few years into the regeneration period. The summer distribution is patchy and pair density is low at the Wisconsin River west of Casimir, the Plover River, Dewey Marsh, Jordan Swamp, Tomorrow River, and Poncho Creek.

### **Family Regulidae**

**Golden-crowned Kinglet** (*Regulus satrapa*)—Common migrant; uncommon winter resident December–March. Breeds. Both spring and fall migrations are lengthy; kinglets are a

daily presence mid-March–early May, and September–November. There are two confirmed breeding locales: Dewey conifer bog and the white spruce plantations at the base of the Lake DuBay dam. As far as I have been able to determine, the first nest ever observed in Wisconsin was one at the Dewey bog 18 June 1994. Kinglets are summer residents there, and I again found nests with young on 28 June 1995 and 15 June 2003. Adults were carrying food at two separate spruce plantations at the Lake DuBay site on 12 June 2005. Breeding is suspected at Mead Conifer Bog where two kinglets were seen 25 May 2005. Small numbers winter at native and planted conifer sites throughout the county. Walter Sylvester reported kinglets November 1950–January 1951 (*Passenger Pigeon* 13: 80, 1950). It was recorded on all but four of the first 25 years of the CBC, including 88 on 15 December 1979. Found on five count days 1985–2009, a maximum of two birds.

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet** (*Regulus calendula*)—Common migrant. Extremes: spring 24 March 2003 (8 April) and 21 May 1996; fall 30 August 1998 (12 September) and 12 November 1989. Following spring arrival numbers rapidly increase, and the bulk of migration precedes that of neotropical species. In fall, kinglets follow the neotrops, with peak abundance in October. As with most passerines that both breed and winter on the North American continent, the migratory period is lengthy. Two CBC records: 14 December 1974, and a heard only bird 18 December 2009.



### Family *Turdidae*

**Eastern Bluebird** (*Sialia sialis*)—Common resident March–November. Breeds. Early spring 8 March 1991 (24 March); late fall 1 November 1999 (24 October). In spring, bluebirds are initially detected perched atop a nest box, and, except for the occasional sound of birds passing overhead, this is the species' station through July. Flocks numbering 30–80 and occasionally larger gather August–October, dwindling quickly with the onset of cold weather. The distribution of nest boxes is approaching saturation in the county; a strictly organized program monitors 787 boxes with 96% occupancy, fledging thousands of young (Hall 2011). The artificially maintained short-grass prairie habitat at the Stevens Point airport supports high densities of breeding and staging bluebirds. Due to the recent expansion of the local breeding population spring and fall extremes noted above are obsolete. More current details of timing and locations, and of several recent post-CBC winter records, were unavailable. CBC: count week 2006; three on 15 December 2007; one on 19 December 2010. There were no winter records prior to about 2006.

**Townsend's Solitaire** (*Myadestes townsendi*)—Three records. One at the Golla subdivision in Stevens Point 15 February–5 April 2004 (J. Schaufenbuel); one found by Tom Overholt at Tomorrow River near mouth of Poncho Creek 15 February 2004 (date approximate); a singing male at UWSP found by Alyssa DeRubeis and present 22 December 2010–20 March 2011.

**Veery** (*Catharus fuscescens*)—Common resident May–September. Breeds. Early spring 1 May 2001 (9 May); late fall 29 September 2003 (11 September). The maximum daily count of migrants is about five; overall, relatively few are seen during passage, especially in fall when it is difficult to find after mid-August. However, moderate numbers of nocturnal migrants infrequently heard overhead at Stevens Point: 90 on 16 September 1994; 125 on 29 August 1998; 67 on 17 September 2001. Veery breeds at wet-mesic interior forest sites, primarily in the northern one-half of the county. Thirty singing males were found along the northeastern margin of the Dewey Marsh basin 4 June 1996, and 17 at Jordan Swamp 3 June 1999. Small numbers occur in black spruce bogs and in dense stands of successional aspen forest in the northwest and (formerly—these forests largely now removed) BVG. Five egg records span 25 May–8 July. The 25 May record from Jordan Swamp is the earliest reported to the WBBA.

**Gray-cheeked Thrush** (*Catharus minimus*)—Uncommon migrant. Extremes: spring 28 April 1992 (13 May) and 21 May 1998; fall 2 September 2001 (19 September) and 14 October 2005. During the period 1988–2005, I found this thrush on average 1.4 days in spring, 2.4 days in fall. Unusual was spring 1998 when detected on nine days including four birds on 18 May, the maximum spring total. Equally few individuals in fall, but exceptional totals of nocturnal migrants include 232 ahead of severe weather at Park Ridge before midnight 17 September 1993. No other nocturnal event exceeds 17 birds. Terrestrial migrants

appear almost anywhere: residential lawns, pine plantations, deciduous forest.

**Swainson's Thrush** (*Catharus ustulatus*)—Common migrant. Extremes: spring 14 April 1983 (*Passenger Pigeon* 46: 31, 1984) (8 May) and 31 May 1993; fall 27 July 2005 (18 August) and 22 October 1994. Swainson's Thrush is more common in fall than in spring. Despite the lengthy interval between record arrival and departure, spring migration is relatively compressed. Nocturnal migrants exceeded 200 birds on seven dates 2–17 September during the period 1990–2003. Conservatively, 1000-plus passed ahead of severe weather before midnight 17 September 1993. Diurnal migrants are commonly found at interior deciduous forest sites.

**Hermit Thrush** (*Catharus guttatus*)—Common migrant and locally common breeding species April–November. Early spring 1 April 1998 (10 April); late fall 7 November 1996 (27 October). Migrations encompass the final three weeks of April and mid-September throughout October. In general, breeding thrushes inhabit wet forests, to include bog or spring pond environments with abundant standing water. It is one of the most common nesting species in the Dewey conifer bog. Elsewhere throughout its northeastern county range it is of scattered, local occurrence. Beginning in 2000, Hermit Thrush was found in summer in patches of clear cut jack pine east of the Stevens Point airport along the Plover River. Four CBC records of single birds: 20 December 1969; 17 December 1988; 17 Decem-

ber 2005; count week 16 December 2006.

**Wood Thrush** (*Hylocichla mustelina*)—Fairly common resident May–October. Breeds. Early spring 1 May 2001 (9 May); late fall 1 October 2001 (8 September). Nest building observations follow the average arrival date by one week, and first arrivals invariably found at known breeding locales. Fledglings appear during the middle part of July. August–September observations average about two annually. The true nature of seasonal migration is unknown. Breeding birds inhabit upland deciduous or mixed forest, primarily in the northern one-half of the county. Densities are low; however, selectively logged parcels within contiguous forest attract significant numbers of breeding birds beginning about three years after cutting.

**American Robin** (*Turdus migratorius*)—Common resident March–October; uncommon resident November–February. Breeds. Spring flocks of up to 200 individuals appear during and after snow melt in stubble fields, cemeteries, and wooded swamps. In fall, large flocks are found at the Rainbow Drive sod farm. Robins are frequently widespread in early winter, later becoming local at protected lowland sites such as Plover River, Poncho Creek spring ponds, and Jordan Swamp. Nest building records span 4 April–15 July; nests with young 9 May–10 July; and fledglings 22 May–12 August.

**Varied Thrush** (*Ixoreus naevius*)—Two records. Lake Emily 23 December 1984–9 February 1985, banded by Thomas Gustin (*Passenger Pigeon* 47:

148. 1985). A male at a feeder near Almond arrived in mid-November 2000 (*Passenger Pigeon* 63: 56. 2001), and remained until at least 1 March 2001 (*Passenger Pigeon* 63: 98. 2001).

### **Family Mimidae**

**Gray Catbird** (*Dumetella carolinensis*)—Common resident April–October. Breeds. Early spring 29 April 2001 (6 May); late fall 26 October 2001 (7 October). Spring migrants peak in mid-May. There is a lengthy period of fall abundance, late August through mid-September. Nest building efforts span 15 May–8 July. Latest nest with young and fledglings are 1 August 1995 and 3 September 2005, respectively. Catbird is a characteristic species of edge habitat, including natural forest openings, regenerating clear cuts, old fields, and residential peripheries. A winter record: Nancy Stevenson found one at a feeder in southeastern Carson Township during the 18 December 2004 CBC.

**Northern Mockingbird** (*Mimus polyglottos*)—Rare visitor and breeding species. Nested in the eastern part of the county in 1960 (*Passenger Pigeon* 18: 18, 1961). F. R. Sindelar (1968) banded three fledglings on 22 July 1966, probably in Stevens Point; the adults were originally found by Don Follen and Allen Jacobson. Additional records are one on 20 May 1973 (*Passenger Pigeon* 36: 28. 1974); one at Ellis on 13 July 1994 (M. Berner); one at Stevens Point April 1999–June 2000 (J. Schaufenbuel); one at Four Oaks in early June 2004 (*Passenger Pigeon* 66: 83. 2004) still present on 8 August (G. Janz); one at BVG 27 September–12 October 2008 (G. Janz, eBird 2011b).

**Brown Thrasher** (*Toxostoma rufum*)—Uncommon resident March–November. Breeds. Early spring 31 March 2000 (20 April); late fall 3 November 2010 (eBird 2011b) (23 September). Cutright et al. (2006) describe a county wide distribution; however, it is absent from many areas. I found it a surprisingly inconspicuous species and was never certain about its abundance, with detection dependent on often reluctant or unreliable vocalizations. It is common in oak-pine barrens at the Plover River, and throughout BVG at the innumerable thickets and brushy edges there. Perceived declines at maturing barrens may be real; declines at BVG more certain as large areas of woody vegetation removed as part of prairie-chicken management. Based on a consistent annual late June fledgling period, probably single-brooded in Portage Co. (see Cutright et al. 2006). CBC: 21 December 1968, 2 January 1971 (two birds), 2 January 1978, 17 December 2005. Additional CBC count week reports in 1990 and 2007.

### **Family Sturnidae**

**European Starling** (*Sturnus vulgaris*)—Abundant resident. Breeds. Most conspicuous in early fall, early spring, and during mid-summer when juveniles join adults in small flocks. Occasional concentrations in winter; e.g., 400 at farmstead in New Hope Township 10 January 1998. Largest flock in my notebooks is 1500 at the Rainbow Drive sod farm 29 September 1999. About 5000 were at BVG 16 August 2009 (eBird 2011b). Breeding density is greatest from the urban core out into industrial edges. A paucity of July–August fledgling records (pers.

obs.); primarily single-brooded. Absent from one WBBA quadrangle (Cutright et al. 2006), that encompassing Dewey Marsh, the quad with the lowest human population in the county.

### **Family Motacillidae**

**American Pipit** (*Anthus rubescens*)—Rare-uncommon spring migrant when the four observations in my notebooks span 11–15 May during 1999–2002. Of 41 eBird (2011b) reports 2009–2011, six are spring records 24 April–12 May. The largest flock is 15 at BVG 15 May 2002 (pers. obs.). The detection of pipits in spring may depend on observer presence at BVG, Rainbow Drive, and Lost Creek WA during a brief window of migration. It is a common fall migrant at those locations when the extremes are 28 August 2001 (*Passenger Pigeon* 64: 103, 2002) and 8 November 2010 (eBird 2011b). Due to its proximity with Stevens Point, Rainbow Drive and Lost Creek WA receive almost daily coverage in fall; in some years pipits are a constant presence and the largest flocks are 85 on 4 October 1997 (pers. obs.) and 92 on 26 September 2009 (eBird 2011b).

### **Family Bombycillidae**

**Bohemian Waxwing** (*Bombycilla garrulus*)—Uncommon winter resident November–April. Early fall 5 November 1998; late spring 11 April 1990. I experienced two winter-long irruption years: 1989–1990 and 2000–2001. In Stevens Point, 320 at Goerke Field 6 February 1990 and 170 at Channel Drive 30 March 2001 represent peak abundance during those events. Mostly urban flocks were present late winter-spring in four years: 2 Febru-

ary–3 April 1992; 31 March–7 April 2002; 29 February 2004; 29 January–28 March 2005. In remote Jordan Swamp, 160 birds were eating desiccated *Prunus* fruit 28 March 2005. Certain “groves” of crabapple (*Malus* sp.) in Stevens Point regularly attract waxwings, including those at Channel Drive and Goerke Field—Mid-State Technical College. CBC: 12 years including annually 1985–89 and in 1991.

**Cedar Waxwing** (*Bombycilla cedrorum*)—Common resident. Breeds. Reliably present late May–October, there are erratic, although predictable gaps in its relative abundance in November–December and March–April. During the period 1988–1997, consistently absent during both late fall and early spring. Between 1998 and 2005 it was common during late fall but continued erratic in early spring. September–October flocks on Plover River and Tomorrow River often exceed 200 birds (500 at Whiting 11 September 1990). Largest winter flock is 125 in Stevens Point 21 January 1990 concurrent with Bohemian Waxwing irruption. It breeds throughout the county in old fields, barrens, and rural residential neighborhoods. The nest is often placed in a small conifer. Nest building has been recorded 4 June–9 August. Three late nests with young span 5–8 September. Beginning in the early 1990s, found with greater frequency and in higher numbers on the CBC, peaking at 602 waxwings 19 December 2010.

### **Family Calcariidae**

**Lapland Longspur** (*Calcarius lapponicus*)—Abundant migrant; usually

rare January–February. Early fall 14 September 1998 and 2001; late spring 17 May 2004 (*Passenger Pigeon* 64: 304, 2002). Large flocks often present by late March; abundance continues through most of April. In fall, the relatively confined area of agricultural habitat along Rainbow Drive typically hosts several hundred longspurs throughout October, sometimes extending well into November. October flocks at BVG commonly exceed 1000 individuals. Crop stubble and disked ground are preferred; limited use of mown grassy forb habitats. There is a single (22 March 2003) record at Stevens Point airport where Snow Bunting (*Plectrophenax nivalis*) is common. In winter, exceptional numbers include 175 on 8 January 2007 (*Passenger Pigeon* 69: 508, 2007), and at BVG where 160 present 20 January 2000 (eBird 2011b). Single-digit winter flocks are more typical. Five CBC reports include three counts of one-two; 160 and 95 were found on the 1999 and 2001 counts, respectively.

**Snow Bunting** (*Plectrophenax nivalis*)—Common migrant and uncommon resident October–April. Early fall 17 October 1999; late spring 17 April 1992. Largest flocks occur November–December and March. Its mid-winter presence is irregular. Any crop stubble will concentrate birds. Representative sites include all of BVG, Rainbow Drive, and the Stevens Point airport. Flocks at Rainbow Drive include 250 on 6 December 1990 and 130 on 22 March 1998. One hundred-fifty were on frozen McDill Pond 11 November 1996.

### **Family Parulidae**

**Ovenbird** (*Seiurus aurocapilla*)—Common resident April–October. Breeds. Early spring 29 April 1990 (3 May); late fall 8 October 1995 (27 September). Territorial males are widespread by 15 May and overlap extensively with spring migrants. An inconspicuous fall migrant, four or five Ovenbirds might be seen any day through late September. Breeding birds preferentially inhabit mature mesic or wet-mesic hardwood forest; densities are greatest from Dewey Marsh east and south to New Hope Township. It is fairly common at lowland forest such as Jordan Swamp, and in the maple floodplain river corridors. It is uncommon in contiguous dry-mesic oak-jack pine or aspen forest. About 19 egg records span 25 May–4 July. In addition, a nest at the Tomorrow River contained eggs on 29 July 1997 and nestlings 4–11 August (pers. obs.). This is the latest Wisconsin egg record (Robbins 1991, Cutright et al. 2006).

**Louisiana Waterthrush** (*Parkesia motacilla*)—Seven Tomorrow River records: singing males 4 June 1989 and 16 April 1991; pair 29 April–12 June 1993; singing male 10–17 May 1995; one 29 July 1997; one 11 June 1998; 1–2 singing males 27 April–11 May 2000. One Poncho Creek record: singing male 27 June 1992. One at either Tomorrow River or Poncho Creek 19 June 2008 (eBird 2011c). One breeding record: three young fledged at Tomorrow River June 1993. Despite this event, which included nest building on 11 May and a nest with young 6 June, the May 1995 and 2000 records (within 40 m of the 1993

nest) were not accepted as probable breeding records, excluding Louisiana Waterthrush in Portage Co. from the WBBA. One pure migrant: Iverson Park 12 May 2002.

**Northern Waterthrush** (*Parkesia noveboracensis*)—Common migrant and locally uncommon resident April–October. Breeds. Extremes: spring 24 April 2002 (30 April) and 28 May 1993 and 1995; fall 10 August 2005 (21 August) and 9 October 1992. Seasonal peaks occur about 10 May and during the first one-half of September. Migrants favor any forest or shrub community that includes a sluggish stream or standing water. The breeding population is concentrated east of the Dewey Marsh basin in northern Dewey, Sharon, and Alban Townships. I recorded 11 singing males in Section 3, Sharon Township 25 June 1996, primarily in alder swamps. This species becomes quite common in the extensive forests in adjacent southeastern Marathon Co. (pers. obs.). Elsewhere, it occurs annually only at Jordan Swamp, where fewer than ten pairs inhabit the southern one-quarter, an area dominated by alder-sedge marsh associations. There are three records of dependent young: two at Dewey Township on 19 June 1996, and Sharon Township 10 July 1996.

**Golden-winged Warbler** (*Vermivora chrysoptera*)—Uncommon resident May–September. Breeds. Early spring 1 May 1992 (11 May); late fall 26 September 1995 (14 September). Spring migration occasionally extends into early June. In fall, individuals appear away from breeding areas beginning in late July. Northern Portage Co. is at

the southeastern limit of the statewide summer range (Cutright et al. 2006). Currently it occurs locally at Dewey Marsh, Mead SWA, and Tomorrow River. It is not present every year at Tomorrow River. It has increased around Dewey Marsh since 2000. Breeding density is low in the county; the population may be as few as 30 pairs. Southern (1962) did not include Portage Co. in the range of this species.

**Blue-winged Warbler** (*Vermivora cyanoptera*)—Common resident April–September. Breeds. Early spring 23 April 2002 (*Passenger Pigeon* 64: 300. 2002) (8 May); late fall 16 September 2002 (7 September). This species approaches the northeastern limit of its core Wisconsin range in Portage Co. (Cutright et al. 2006). There are few true migrants; individuals are arriving at, dispersing from, or departing breeding sites. These sites include, in decreasing abundance, Poncho Creek, Tomorrow River, Dewey Township, and the Wisconsin River west of Casimir. Other isolated populations probably exist at locations never visited by birders. During WBBA field work, I found six singing males in Sections 10S and 11S, Sharon Township, an area visited neither before nor since. There are 16 breeding confirmations from Poncho Creek, eight at Tomorrow River, two or fewer at any other site (15 May–2 August); an abandoned farmstead lying between hardwood forest and patchwork cropland is the source of most of the Poncho Creek breeding records. At the time of Southern (1962), there were no published county records; Gustafson's 16 May 1970 observation is the first (*Passenger Pigeon* 32: 28. 1971).

**“Lawrence’s Warbler”**—About seven records. The first was a female at Tomorrow River 26 May 1991. Poncho Creek records: singing male 12 June–3 September 1996 mated with Blue-winged Warbler and fledged three young; male 7 August and 9 September 1997; singing male 8 June 1998; fledgling male being fed by female Golden-winged Warbler 20 July 1998 and probably the same bird observed alone on 23 July 1998; male 10 August 1998 was again perhaps the same individual; male 4 September 1999; male 14 August 2002; female apparently of this form 18 June 2005, mated with Blue-winged Warbler. At Poncho Creek, an abandoned farmstead and adjacent selectively logged forest is the source of all except the 2002 record.

**“Brewster’s Warbler”**—The first county record, and the only one prior to 1992, found by Baumgartner 15 May 1966 (*Passenger Pigeon* 29: 47. 1967). About 21 records since 1992 include seven spring migrants 1–18 May; four records of putative migrants 19–29 August; nine scattered summer records 25 May–24 July. At Dewey Marsh, Denny Maleug photographed what is believed to be an individual male on 11 May each year 2005–2009. Territorial males are represented by one at Tomorrow River 26 May–1 June 1993, and one at Four Oaks 25–28 May 2005 (G. Janz). No breeding record. Among all records, there are eight at Tomorrow River-Poncho Creek, and about eight at Dewey Marsh.

**Black-and-white Warbler** (*Mniotilta varia*)—Fairly common resident April–October. Breeds. Early spring 25

April 2001 (2 May); late fall 30 October 1991 (27 September). An inconspicuous member of mixed species flocks, it is the prototypical May and September migrant, transients being most numerous during any general fallout event. The breeding population is concentrated in the north (Cutright et al. 2006), primarily in lowland mixed forests, usually with a strong paper birch (*Betula papyrifera*) component. It is a characteristic species at islets of birch amid lowland conifers at Dewey Marsh and Jordan Swamp, and widely distributed throughout the northeast where forests possess distinctly northern affinities. I obtained six nesting confirmations spanning 6 June–26 July. My notes for a 3 September 2002 Poncho Creek observation report a family group with two fledglings in a brush pile at an interior forest site and describe an adult feeding a fledgling a crane fly (*Pedicia albivitta*). In Kricher (1995), the latest continental nesting evidence cited is a 30 July Ontario egg date. Cutright et al. (2006) describe a couple of mid-August breeding records.

**Prothonotary Warbler** (*Protonotaria citrea*)—Six records: nest with three young at “paper mill” 27 June 1972 (Robbins 1991); 4 June 1980 (*Passenger Pigeon* 43: 57, 1981); two singing males along the Wisconsin River west of Casimir 23 May–17 June 1998 (*Passenger Pigeon* 60: 342. 1998 and 61: 112. 1999); one at Schmeckle Reserve 15 September 2003 (*Passenger Pigeon* 66: 146. 2004); one along River Road near Lake DuBay 9 August 2008 (G. Janz); one at mouth of Plover River 2 May 2011 (eBird 2011d). Robbins (1988) asked “How extensive are the

colonies . . . in the vicinity of Stevens Point . . . ?” The answer is probably “nonexistent,” at least on the Wisconsin River upstream from Whiting, and on the entire Plover River. Access to the backwaters of the Wisconsin River below Whiting is largely restricted to boat travel, and I know of no one who has done this.

**Tennessee Warbler** (*Oreothlypis perigrina*)—Common spring migrant; abundant fall migrant. Extremes: spring 28 April 1990 (7 May) and 1 June 1993; fall 5 August 2005 (12 August) and 20 October 2006 (J. Schaufenbuel). This is one of the most abundant neotropical migrants in Portage Co. Spring migration is relatively brief while fall passage frequently extends eight weeks beginning in early August. Migrant peaks at Stevens Point include 125 on 25 May 1997 and 175 on 13 September 2003. Twenty-one records 14–30 July 1989–2005 are all of adult males (pers. obs.); such records apparently represent birds in breeding condition dispersing from southern Canada (Rimmer and McFarland 1998), not the “true” migrants arriving after 10 August. The early and mean fall arrival dates do not include July records.

**Orange-crowned Warbler** (*Oreothlypis celata*)—Uncommon migrant. Extremes: spring 20 April 2003 (7 May) and 24 May 1997; fall 11 September 2002 (25 September) and 24 October 2004. This species is equally abundant in both spring and fall when one or two individuals represent a typical daily total. Dunn and Garrett (1997) cast doubt on early September Lower 48 reports of this species, and Dunn (Strycker 2008) in essence describes

such records as impossible; however, the accuracy of the county’s early fall arrival is not in doubt.

**Nashville Warbler** (*Oreothlypis ruficapilla*)—Common migrant and locally common resident April–November. Breeds. Early spring 22 April 2002 (*Passenger Pigeon* 64: 300. 2002) (1 May); late fall 2 November 1991 (8 October). Despite a relatively early arrival, spring migration often shows a spike in late May. In fall, birds first appear away from breeding areas in mid-August and migration continues into October. Fifty were at Iverson Park 15 September 2008 (eBird 2011c). It is an abundant breeding species throughout the Dewey conifer bog, and fairly common at northeastern Sharon Township where it nests in clearings and regenerating clear cuts in northern hardwood forest. At the Tomorrow River it is common in some years, rare in others. Several pairs nest at a tamarack bog in Section 16 Hull Township. Nashville Warblers colonize in low densities cut over barrens and pine plantations wherever they occur.

**Connecticut Warbler** (*Oporornis agilis*)—Uncommon migrant. Extremes: spring 12 May 1989 (18 May) and 11 June 2002; fall 15 August 1992 (31 August) and 29 September 1996. I found this warbler with about equal frequency during spring (21 records) and fall (25 records). It favors edge habitats, both upland and lowland, including open forest edge, hedgerows, and stream corridors.

**Mourning Warbler** (*Geothlypis philadelphia*)—Fairly common resident May–September. Breeds. Early spring 8 May 2000 and 2001 (17 May); late



fall 18 September 1993, 1997, and 1998 (8 September). As a migrant, it occurs in low numbers relatively late in spring and early in fall. The breeding population expands south to north. Densities are greatest at any selectively logged forest; warblers quickly inhabit such sites: 14 singing males were at an upland deciduous 16 ha parcel at Section 19, New Hope Township on 16 June 1997, six months after a selective cut. By 2005, warblers were no longer breeding at that site. In addition, found in small, naturally occurring openings in mature forest created by blow downs; densely forested riparian locations in thickets of fern ("pteridophytes" sp.); at power line corridors; and at the forested edges of abandoned agricultural land. I recorded eggs on 10 June and 2 July; dependent young 5–28 July.

**Kentucky Warbler** (*Geothlypis formosa*)—One documented record, "mid to late September" 2006, a window strike in Plover taken into rehabilitation (*Passenger Pigeon* 69: 360. 2007). The 9 May 1981 May Count (Anonymous 1981) report may be accurate; the details of observer and location are unavailable.

**Common Yellowthroat** (*Geothlypis trichas*)—Common resident April–October. Breeds. Early spring 30 April 2001 (7 May); late fall 22 October 1993 (3 October). Spring migration peaks around 20 May. Post-breeding concentrations noted by late July (48 in Carson Township 26 July 1997); it is common in August and through about 20 September when numbers quickly decline. It is one of the most widely distributed and abundant breeding species in the county. Breed-

ing pairs inhabit small wetland patches or expanses of shrub carr, conifer bog, or green ash. Also nests in more mesic upland thickets. Forty-five were at Jordan Swamp 25 May 1998. Several late May nest-building records; fledglings observed 26 June–22 August.

**Hooded Warbler** (*Setophaga citrina*)—Rare migrant and summer resident. Breeds. Individuals recognized as spring migrants display consistent timing: male at Tomorrow River 11 May 1993; singing male south of Stevens Point wastewater treatment plant 12 May 2000; female at Kozickowski Park 9 May 2002; adult female (singing a recognizable partial song) at Iverson Park 9 May 2005; female at Iverson Park 11 May 2010 (G. Janz). Adult males were at Poncho Creek 30 August–18 September 1997 and 2 August–18 September 2001. An adult female was at Tomorrow River 19 August–29 September 1998, with an immature there 26 August 2002. There were six June or July records at Tomorrow River-Poncho Creek 1999–2002. A female built a nest and laid four eggs at Poncho Creek 6–13 June 2000; a male was not detected at this site and the nest was abandoned. A female was feeding a fledgling (standing on the rim of the nest) at Tomorrow River 18 July 2002. Annually beginning in 2003, a pair has nested at Poncho Creek, arriving about 10 May. In 2003, nest-building observed on 3 June and 2 July. On the latter date, the male of the pair was observed carrying food, indicating double-brooding. In 2005, observations of female carrying food span 22 June–10 August, and an individual remained in the area through 30 Sep-

tember. A territorial male was at Section 20N Stockton Township May–July 2005 (J. Schaufenbuel). Most breeding season and September records are from selectively logged upland mixed white pine-oak-maple forest at publicly accessible New Hope Township locations. Hooded Warbler will decline as these areas regenerate.

**American Redstart** (*Setophaga ruticilla*)—Common migrant and uncommon summer resident May–October. Breeds. Early spring 1 May 2001 (9 May); late fall 11 October 2002 (1 October). Migrants occur in moderate numbers during May; peaks at Stevens Point include 44 on both 18 and 19 May 1996, and 41 on 25 May 1997. It is more numerous in the fall, especially during the first week of September (40 at Wisconsin River 7 September 1992), infrequently later (15 at Wisconsin River 20 September 1997). Cutright et al. (2006) show a patchy breeding distribution, one which I failed to adequately understand in terms of habitat preference. A 16 ha upland hardwood parcel in New Hope Township, selectively logged in January 1997, immediately attracted nesting redstarts, peaking at 15 singing males 18 June 2002. Countywide, observations of fledglings span 4 July–7 August.

**Cape May Warbler** (*Setophaga tigrina*)—Common migrant. Extremes: spring 1 May 2004 (*Passenger Pigeon* 66: 417. 2004) (8 May) and 29 May 1993; fall 15 August 2005 (26 August) and 25 November 1971 (*Passenger Pigeon* 34: 118. 1972). In spring, joins mixed species flocks in any deciduous habitat; in the fall it favors stands of exotic or native spruce and fir (*Abies* sp). De-

tections of seasonal migrants increased between 1989 and 1995 (50 at Plover River 15 May 1994), decreasing 1996 through fall 2000. Thereafter, the species seemed to recover its overall abundance, albeit with reduced seasonal peaks. The late fall record was banded by Frederick Baumgartner; he banded another 7 November 1972 (Robbins 1991).

**Cerulean Warbler** (*Setophaga cerulea*)—Fourteen records, the first 29 April 1978 (*Passenger Pigeon* 41: 36. 1979). Tomorrow River records: singing male 30 May–19 June 2000; singing male 29 May–24 June 2002; up to four 21 May–14 July 2003; 31 May 2004 (G. Janz); two singing males 16 May–7 June 2005; 26 May 2006 (G. Janz); four on 19 June 2008 (eBird 2011c). One was along the trail to Four Oaks Marsh 7 June 2010 (G. Janz). A singing male was at upland Poncho Creek 24 May 2004, and an adult female tended a fledgling in the creek bottom 5 July 2004. The majority of Tomorrow River records are from a 16 ha mature mixed hardwood ridge selectively logged in January 1997. Two pairs may have been present in 2003 when breeding was confirmed on 20 June (male carrying food) and 14 July (male feeding two fledglings). Migrants: male at Tomorrow River 21 May 2003; female at Poncho Creek 27 August 2003; male at Bukolt Park 13 May 2009 (eBird 2011c).

**Northern Parula** (*Setophaga americana*)—Uncommon migrant. Extremes: spring 2 May 1990 (11 May) and 25 May 1996; fall 1 August 2005 (29 August) and 26 September 1997. Parulas represent a small fraction of

individuals in mixed migrant flocks; it was notably scarce during spring 1996–2001, and fall 1998–2003. A scale (*Pulvinaria innumerabilis*) infestation affecting several species of river bottom trees attracted unusual numbers of parulas in spring 1995, and unprecedented numbers were seen during periods of cold weather May 2002. A singing male was at Poncho Creek 16 June 2003. Two other summer records probably represent early migrants: adult males at Poncho Creek 14 July 1998, and at Walkush Road 25 July 1999.

**Magnolia Warbler** (*Setophaga magna*)—Common migrant. Extremes: spring 29 April 1990 (9 May) and 5 June 2003; fall 10 August 1998 (23 August) and 13 October 1995. Magnolia Warbler is a steady presence in mixed species migrant flocks. It is reasonable to expect between five and ten birds during any day afield through 25 May in spring and through 25 September in the fall. Seasonal peak abundance may be late: 33 at Stevens Point 25 May 1997 and 10 at Iverson Park 21 September 1988. One summer record: female at Tomorrow River 21 June 1992.

**Bay-breasted Warbler** (*Setophaga castanea*)—Fairly common migrant. Extremes: spring 1 May 2001 (11 May) and 2 June 1997; fall 4 August 1992 and 1994 (17 August) and 3 October 1997. This species can be quite rare in spring. I found a total of 17 individuals 1989–1992. It has been a more reliable presence since then, except 1998 when I saw a single spring migrant. Even in years of relative abundance migration may span only a ten day period. Thirty-five were along the Plover

River on 15 May 1994. It is common in the fall, beginning about 20 August and extending throughout September. I found 20 on 28 August 1994. There are four records 4–8 August. Three July records: adult female at Poncho Creek 15 July 1992 (*Passenger Pigeon* 55: 90, 1993); adult male at Poncho Creek 20 July 1998 (*Passenger Pigeon* 61: 112, 1999); adult male in Stevens Point 22 July 2005 (*Passenger Pigeon* 68: 64, 2006). These probably represent early migrants.

**Blackburnian Warbler** (*Setophaga fusca*)—Uncommon migrant. Extremes: spring 1 May 1991, 1992, and 2000 (8 May) and 6 June 1995; fall 5 August 2000 and 2005 (10 August) and 10 October 1992. The daily count in spring exceeded ten birds on five occasions 1989–1997; seven is the maximum since. In fall, it is most numerous in late August, remaining a part of mixed species flocks throughout September; seven at Poncho Creek on 30 August 2002 is the largest daily count in my records. There are several summer records: Poncho Creek 15 July 1991; New Hope Pines 15 June 1995; the “Pipes” 12 June 1998; northwestern Sharon Township 15 June 1999. In 2005, singing males were at New Hope Pines through 17 June, and at ridge top stands of pine between Tomorrow River and Poncho Creek through 29 June. It is occurring with greater frequency at the latter site; Randy Hoffman (pers. comm.) recorded five birds there on 19 June 2009.

**Yellow Warbler** (*Setophaga petechia*)—Common resident, April–September. Breeds. Early spring 27 April 2001 (5 May); late fall 29 September

1989 (26 August). In spring, migrants concentrate at the Wisconsin River, its tributaries and adjacent wetlands; it is rare among mixed flocks in forested areas of the eastern moraine and contiguous northeastern forests. Fall migration commences in mid-July when birds appear along streams and wetlands throughout the county. Departure of the breeding subspecies *S. p. aestiva* usually occurs by mid-August. Six records during five years 6–29 September 1989–2003 are believed to refer to the subspecies *S. p. amnicola* (see Dunn and Garrett 1997); a 14 September 2003 bird was physically identified as such. Breeding birds are most common in Eau Pleine Township, the ditches at BVG, Wisconsin River above Stevens Point, Jordan Swamp, and Dewey Marsh. It is quite local elsewhere. Egg records span 23 May–25 June. Nesting habitat is predominately wetland thickets in disturbed open landscapes.

**Chestnut-sided Warbler** (*Setophaga pensylvanica*)—Common resident April–October. Breeds. Early spring 27 April 2001 (9 May); late fall 13 October 1995 (26 September). It is a common migrant, generally more so in the spring, when peak abundance is as late as 25 May. Fall dispersal of immatures often noted in early August, migration peaks at month's end. It nests at old field edges of oak and beaked hazelnut (*Corylus cornuta*) at Dewey Marsh; uses both selectively logged and undisturbed areas of Poncho Creek-Tomorrow River; and regenerating parcels east of the Dewey Marsh basin. It was confirmed in just two WBBA quadrangles (Cutright et al. 2006), Dewey Marsh and New Hope. Of 33 records of adults feeding young,

31 come from Poncho Creek-Tomorrow River and span 6 June–20 August (pers. obs.). A male feeding a fledgling at the Plover River 25 August 2000 is late, and is the only breeding record in the county's Central Sands basin. I apparently failed to report this observation to the WBBA.

**Blackpoll Warbler** (*Setophaga striata*)—Fairly common migrant. Extremes: spring 1 May 1992 (13 May) and 30 May 1997; fall 17 August 1990 (26 August) and 6 October 1996. Spring passage often brief and numbers low; 60 at Stevens Point 25 May 1997, 30 at Plover River both 26–27 May 2002, and 50 at Bukolt Park 13 May 2009 (eBird 2011c) are exceptional. Overall, it is more numerous in the fall and migration spans about five weeks. I found 17 at the Tomorrow River 16 September 1997.

**Black-throated Blue Warbler** (*Setophaga caerulescens*)—Rare-uncommon migrant. Extremes: spring 6 May 2002 and 2004 (15 May) and 21 May 2002; fall 20 August 1998 (6 September) and 30 September 2003. My notebooks describe ten spring records, all of single birds. In fall, I found this species 17 times, a maximum of two individuals on three occasions.

**Palm Warbler** (*Setophaga palmarum*)—Common migrant and locally fairly common resident April–October. Breeds. Extremes: spring 19 April 2002 (26 April) and 30 May 1994; fall 22 August 1998 (2 September) and 28 October 2002. Frequently an abundant spring migrant; fallouts include 70 at Whiting Park 29 April 1990 and 85 at Stevens Point 9 May 2005. Ten constitute a large number

during the extended fall passage. Migrants favor sparsely vegetated sand barrens. In 1994, discovered nesting in the Dewey conifer bog where the population is about 15 pairs. Six breeding confirmations span 15 June–19 July, including a nest 30 June 2003. Observations of juveniles molting into first basic plumage span 5–22 July, and include eight such individuals together a little removed from breeding habitat on 18 July 2000. Birds at this site may represent the most southerly population in North America of the nominate subspecies *S. p. palmarum*.

**Pine Warbler** (*Setophaga pinus*)—Fairly common resident April–October. Breeds. Early spring 11 April 2002 (23 April); late fall 26 October 2006 (J. Schaufenbuel) (19 September). Rarely encountered in mixed species flocks during spring migration; singing males are present in appropriate habitat by late April. In fall, more regular among long-distance migrants; however, multiple Pine Warblers often suspected (or known) to be a family group in temporary company with transients, especially in August. Further complicating its status as a migrant, singing males are frequently heard in breeding habitat in September. The nesting population prefers stands of eastern white pine, and it is found in that habitat from the Wisconsin River at Stevens Point east to Sunset Lake in New Hope Township. Also may occur at any mature red pine plantation. There is one outlying WBBA confirmation in the southwest from, appropriately, Pine Grove Township (Cutright et al. 2006).

**Yellow-rumped Warbler** (*Setophaga coronata*)—Abundant migrant and locally common resident March–November. Breeds. Early spring 22 March 2003 (6 April); late fall 12 November 1990 and 1992 (2 November). Spring abundance might peak any time between late April and mid-May. In fall, birds are consistently most numerous during the first week of October. Breeding birds are common in summer at the Dewey conifer bog; at large stands of white pine in the eastern part of the county, such as Sunset Lake and New Hope Pines; and scattered along the eastern bank of the Wisconsin River, Whiting north to Lake DuBay. In the latter region, inhabits both white pine and jack pine. Also nests in white pine at Jordan Swamp and Jordan Park, rarely at jack pine barrens along the Plover River between Hwy 66 and I-39. Yellow-rumpeds successfully nested in a mixed jack and Scotch pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) plantation at Whiting 1992–1994. Breeding confirmations include eggs 25 May 1998 at Jordan Swamp and dependent fledglings 19 August 2001 at northwestern Stevens Point. Four winter records: one at the Stevens Point feeder of E. F. Pierson 28 December 1963 (*Passenger Pigeon* 26: 149. 1964); CBC 21 December 1968; Frederick Baumgartner found one on the 14 December 1973 CBC that was present through 1 March 1974 (*Passenger Pigeon* 37: 80. 1975); CBC at Jordan Swamp 14 December 2002 (M. Berner).

**Yellow-throated Warbler** (*Setophaga dominica*)—One record. A male at Erickson Natural Area 16 May 2002 (*Passenger Pigeon* 64: 301. 2003).

**Prairie Warbler** (*Setophaga discolor*)—Two records. Adult female at Whiting well fields 11 June 1994 (*Passenger Pigeon* 57: 55. 1995); singing male at Dewey conifer bog 27 June–5 July 1997 (*Passenger Pigeon* 60: 86. 1998).

**Black-throated Green Warbler** (*Setophaga virens*)—Common migrant. Local resident June–August. Breeds. Extremes: spring 27 April 2001, 2003, and 2004 (3 May) and 1 June 2003; fall 10 August 2005 (19 August) and 12 November 1991. Migrants inhabit interior forest sites more so than other warbler species. Summering locales include sugar maple forests of Sharon Township where up to six singing males found during WBBA field work in June–July 1996; and hemlock-maple associations at Tomorrow River and Poncho Creek. Often present in early June at upland maple forests at Poncho Creek, but birds invariably abandon this site. It is sometimes heard in summer at northern Torun Road, sections 14 and 23 Dewey Township. A singing male was at Dewey conifer bog on 18 June 2003. Two breeding records: female feeding fledglings at Tomorrow River 10 July 2001; male feeding fledglings at Poncho Creek 29 August 2003. An additional late fall departure is 26 October 1995.

**Canada Warbler** (*Cardellina canadensis*)—Uncommon migrant and locally rare-uncommon resident May–September. Extremes: spring 9 May 1993 (15 May) and 13 June 1996; fall 29 July 2005 (15 August) and 22 September 1994. Spring passage is erratic. It may encompass a few days or three weeks, commonly the former. One to

three individuals is the daily complement. In 1997, 20 were in Stevens Point on 25 May, and 14 on 30 May. This period was marked by strong easterly winds 24–29 May, and Canada Warbler was part of a larger general movement of neotropical migrants. It is an early arriving migrant in fall when the daily count rarely exceeds a single bird. Breeding is not confirmed, although it almost certainly does so. Summering locales include the northeastern edges of Dewey Marsh basin (six singing males along Torun Road 11 June 2005), northern Sharon Township, Jordan Swamp (five singing males 28 June 1998), and the Tomorrow River-Poncho Creek watershed. It is present annually at all sites except the latter. Each of these sites is characterized by a stream or standing water, a dense shrub layer, and a mixed conifer canopy, often tamarack.

**Wilson's Warbler** (*Cardellina pusilla*)—Uncommon migrant. Extremes: spring 7 May 2002 (13 May) and 31 May 1997; fall 10 August 2001 (22 August) and 23 September 1995 and 1998. Present in tiny numbers among mixed species flocks, favoring the open inside edges of deciduous forest, brushy clear cuts, and hedgerows. Relatively more common in spring than fall; 14 were at Stevens Point 18 May 1996; 18 around town 25 May 1997. Five along the Wisconsin River 5 September 1994 is the largest fall tally in my notebooks.

**Yellow-breasted Chat** (*Icteria virens*)—Two known records: female just south of Stevens Point wastewater treatment plant 24 May 1997 (M. Berner); one north of Mead Park in

Stevens Point 22 May–15 June 2009 (J. Schaufenbuel). There are earlier records that apparently include breeding at McDill Pond. “The most northerly record we have . . . is Stevens Point” (Kumlien and Hollister 1903).

### **Family Emberizidae**

**Eastern Towhee** (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*)—Common resident April–October. Breeds. Early spring 11 April 2002 (29 April); late fall 16 October 1994 and 2001 (6 October). It is widely distributed in low densities throughout the county. Relatively common at barrens, old fields and selectively logged parcels within upland forest. CBC records from 29 December 1962 and 19 December 1976 refer to “Rufous-sided Towhee.” Spotted Towhee (*P. maculatus*) is a regular CBC visitor in Wisconsin. It cannot be determined if the Stevens Point CBC records were identified to the then recognized subspecies. Mrs. Peterson reported a bird “throughout the period” in fall 1948; the reporting period was October–January (*Passenger Pigeon* 11: 91. 1948). One during count week of the December 2003 CBC continued through 29 February 2004 (*Passenger Pigeon* 66: 255. 2004).

**American Tree Sparrow** (*Spizella arborea*)—Common resident October–May. Early fall 9 October 1991 (15 October); late spring 5 May 1989 and 2002 (23 April). In late March a vague increase in flock size and a more widespread distribution indicates the onset of migration, peaking in mid-April. Fall transients are most common in early November. Kent Hall found 535 scattered across BVG 12 November

1998; individual migrant and winter flocks typically number 20–50 birds. Occasional concentrations exceed 100 at favored stopover sites, e.g., 130 at BVG planted wildlife grain plot 6 November 2001. In winter, found primarily in weedy or brushy edges of agricultural fields.

**Chipping Sparrow** (*Spizella passerina*)—Common resident April–November. Breeds. Early spring 4 April 1998 (17 April); late fall 6 November 1994 (25 October). Breeding pairs are widespread by the end of April at forested sites with a significant coniferous component. It is the second most abundant nesting species at the Dewey conifer bog; common in residential landscapes; and tolerates aging conifer plantations. Among its many habitat choices in the county it may show a slight preference for mature eastern white pine. Dependent fledglings have been found 8 June–3 September. Post-breeding dispersal begins in late July and it is an abundant migrant in September and early October (160 at Stevens Point Airport 1 October 2005). Two winter records at Stevens Point feeders: 26–28 February 2001 (*Passenger Pigeon* 63: 99. 2001) and 1 December 2002–1 March 2003 (*Passenger Pigeon* 65: 159. 2003). One listed on the 31 December 1966 CBC was “not included in summary due to insufficient documentation” (Hilsenhoff 1967). Accepted CBC records are 16 December 2006 (*Passenger Pigeon* 69: 508. 2007) and 15 December 2007 (Domagalski 2008).

**Clay-colored Sparrow** (*Spizella pallida*)—Common resident April–October. Breeds. Early spring 17 April 2004

(*Passenger Pigeon* 66: 420. 2004); late fall 17 October 1992 (29 September). Kumlien and Hollister (1903) found this species "More common about Stevens Point than any other locality we know of." That remains true at Buena Vista Quarry SNA where annual visits 1989–2005 recorded 40-plus singing males in hardwood shrub savanna. Elsewhere, occurs in moderate densities at old fields and young pine plantations. While relatively scarce in barrens habitat, it is common at low-land shrub conifer and bog birch-sedge associations at Dewey Marsh. The earliest WBBA egg date (1 June 1997) is from that location (pers. obs.; Cutright et al. 2006). Kumlien and Hollister (1903) reported that "Specimens from sandy pine barrens of Portage Co. are so different from true *pallida* that Mr. William Brewster thinks they may prove a new race," and described them as "dark as a Swamp Sparrow" (*Melospiza georgiana*); however, the species remains monotypic (Knapton 1994). It is a common fall migrant, often among flocks of Chipping Sparrows. Fiehweg reported 35 on 1 October 1965 (*Passenger Pigeon* 28: 123. 1966), and Dan Williams found 51 on 10 September 1989 (*Passenger Pigeon* 52: 195. 1990).

**Field Sparrow** (*Spizella pusilla*)—Common resident March–October. Breeds. Early spring 31 March 2000 (12 April); late fall 29 October 1997 (21 October). This sparrow occupies territories quickly upon arrival; I failed to identify with certainty a spring migrant flock or individual. By mid-August dispersing birds form flocks along the brushy margins of old fields and forested barrens (22 at To-

morrow River 14 August 1997), with transients inhabiting such sites in numbers into mid-October (18 at Plover River 13 October 2001). Nests in forest clearings, old fields, barrens, and nascent conifer plantations. Throughout the 1990s a 4.2 ha mixed Scotch and jack pine plantation adjacent to McDill Cemetery in Whiting supported the highest pair density in the county; it is now developed. Nestling records span 28 May–3 August. "One wintered and was banded" in 1968–69 (*Passenger Pigeon* 31: 179. 1969). Single birds found on the CBC 19 December 1998 and 16 December 2006.

**Vesper Sparrow** (*Pooecetes gramineus*)—Common resident March–October. Breeds. Early spring 24 March 1993 (9 April); late fall (injured bird) 23 October 2002 (9 October). Its spring presence is established quickly. An informal annual survey conducted about 15 April, along both sides of the Plover River between I-39 and STH 66, typically revealed 15-plus singing males. In fall, occurs in small, pure flocks, often at barrens; occasionally joins other species, most frequently Savannah Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*), in crop stubble and brushy edge habitat. Vesper Sparrow nests in open pine barren-dry prairie associations. In addition, it is common at active crop land with at least some adjacent grass, old field, or barrens habitat. Sparrows may abandon such sites as crop becomes established. It is rare at contiguous, more mesic grassland sites, including much of BVG. Four observations of nests include eggs on 28 May and nestlings through 25 June. Family groups are common throughout July.



**Lark Sparrow** (*Chondestes grammacus*)—Formerly resident April–July; now casual in late spring. Breeds. About eight records since 1991: one at Section 3, Hull Township 9 May 1991; one at Whiting Park baseball field 19 May 1991; up to five at Whiting well fields 20 May–31 July 1994 included two nesting pairs; pair at Whiting well fields 18 May–18 June 1995; one near Whiting village composting site 29 April 2000; one at Plover River ski lodge 5–6 June 2005 was observed carrying nesting material; 10 May 2008 in Stevens Point (Stan Skutek); Rainbow Drive July 2008 (J. Schaufenbuel). Mostly anecdotal evidence suggests that it was formerly an uncommon breeding species, primarily at barrens along the Little Plover River. The well fields at both Whiting and Stevens Point (adjacent to the June 2005 record) are largely barrens. Each is now extensively planted in red pine. Historic records include a 23 May 1966 report by Baumgartner (*Passenger Pigeon* 29: 51. 1967), and a pair in “Portage Co. without evidence of nesting” summer 1973 (*Passenger Pigeon* 36: 80. 1974).

**Savannah Sparrow** (*Passerculus sandwichensis*)—Common resident April–November. Breeds. Early spring 20 March 1973 (*Passenger Pigeon* 36: 33. 1974) (16 April); late fall 6 November 2001 (20 October). Spring arrivals quickly take up territories throughout the county, primarily in cultivated and native grassland communities. A few concentrations of putative migrants have been noted in BVG in late April. In fall, due to frequent observer presence at Rainbow Drive and Lost Creek, known as an abundant migrant late Septem-

ber–October. It is the most common breeding passerine at BVG. In addition to grassland, breeding pairs inhabit sedge marsh, shrub savannah, and roadside ditches adjacent to row crops—especially soybean (*Glycine max*). Egg dates at BVG span 20 May–22 June (pers. obs.)

**Grasshopper Sparrow** (*Ammodramus savannarum*) Locally uncommon resident April–August. Breeds. Early spring 26 April 1990; late fall 29 September 2010 (eBird 2011c). The population at Section 2S, Grant Township in BVG exceeds that of the remainder of the county. This site is a minimally-managed shrub savannah-grassland mosaic, a portion of which forms the Buena Vista Quarry SNA. Nineteen singing males were here on 20 May 1998. During the breeding season, I never found a Grasshopper Sparrow anywhere else at BVG. The Stevens Point airport is the second most populous location, supporting fewer than ten breeding pairs. Depending on agricultural practices, it is of more or less annual occurrence at Section 31, Dewey Township, Section 4, Hull Township, and Section 24N, Stockton Township. There are a few summer records in the northwest. I occasionally found singing males in fallow fields grown up in weeds where row crops were harvested during the previous year. Males regularly sing throughout July, and the few breeding confirmations are represented by adults feeding young in mid-July; thereafter, this sparrow quickly vanishes and migrants are rarely detected.

**Henslow’s Sparrow** (*Ammodramus henslowii*) Uncommon resident April–July. Breeds. Early spring 19 April

1968 (*Passenger Pigeon* 31: 220. 1969); late fall 21 July 2005. BVG supports most of the county's breeding population, especially at Section 2S, Grant Township (a SNA; see preceding species). Informal June–July surveys at this location typically record ten-plus singing males. Elsewhere at BVG, one or two pairs inhabit each of fewer than five variable locations in any given year. Small numbers are found every year at the southeastern part of Mead SWA, and at Sections 30 and 31, Dewey Township. Habitat at the SNA is mixed shrub savannah-grass. Habitat at most other county locations is managed grassland or uncultivated hay fields. Timothy grass (*Phleum pratense*) is a ubiquitous component of the latter habitat. Despite many hours observing Henslow's Sparrows, I never obtained a breeding confirmation.

**LeConte's Sparrow** (*Ammodramus leconteii*)—Rare and local summer resident; casual migrant. It is occasionally reported from BVG in June. I never found this species there and am unable to determine locations of occurrence. In addition, currently active county birders do not find this species in summer. All records exclusive of BVG: 9 May 1971 (*Passenger Pigeon* 34: 37. 1972); 10 September 1990 (*Passenger Pigeon* 52: 195. 1990); 14 May 1994 (Frank 1994); singing male at Poncho Creek 17 May 1994 (small hayfield uncut during previous year); one at Poncho Creek 24 August 1995 (mixed grain wildlife forage plot); one at Schmeekle Reserve 14 September 2003; one along Mead Park, Stevens Point north levee 19 September 2003 (J. Schaufenbuel); four at an overgrown levee at Four Oaks Marsh 24 April 2004 (G. Janz).

**Fox Sparrow** (*Passerella iliaca*)—Common migrant. Extremes: spring 16 March 1995 (29 March) and 30 April 1989; fall 24 September 1991 (29 September) and 7 December 1993. Seasonal periods of peak abundance are early April and late October. In spring, migrants preferentially choose regenerating selectively logged forest parcels (a total of 160 at two such parcels at Poncho Creek 10 April 2000), lowland forest-marsh ecotones, and the major river corridors. In fall, in addition to those habitats, unharvested corn fields adjacent to forest and mixed grain wildlife forage plots (85 at a BVG plot 23 October 2002) attract Fox Sparrows. CBC records of single birds: 2 January 1978, 15 December 1984, 16 December 1989 (questioned by editor), 14 December 1991.

**Song Sparrow** (*Melospiza melodia*)—Common resident March–October. Rare resident November–February. Breeds. Early spring 13 March 1990 (23 March); late fall 30 November 2000 (*Passenger Pigeon* 63: 60. 2001). Territorial males quickly become widespread following spring arrival. Counts of 50-plus distributed throughout late September–October. Breeds in every wetland and brushy plant community; avoids only closed canopy forest. Nest building spans 18 April–29 July; eggs dates 7 May–12 June; nestlings 2 June–22 July. The ten CBC records (1960–2004), and a few additional early December records probably represent late migrants. Since 1988, one instance of overwintering: one at mixed grain Wild Turkey forage study plot Section 17, New Hope Township December 1994–March 1995 (a very mild win-

ter). Reported 28 January–4 February 1987 (*Passenger Pigeon* 50: 257, 1988) and 11 January 2007 (*Passenger Pigeon* 69: 508, 2007); well-documented observation at a Rosholt feeder 29 December 2010 (Maureen Brocken, pers. comm.).

**Lincoln's Sparrow** (*Melospiza lincolni*)—Rare spring migrant and fairly common fall migrant; locally common resident May–August. Breeds. Extremes: spring 28 April 2002 (9 May) and 28 May 1993; fall 31 August 1998 and 2001 (7 September) and 31 October 1997. My notebooks describe an annual spring passage totaling 3–8 individuals. In fall, a few accompany almost every mixed sparrow flock September–October. Nests at the Dewey conifer bog where the current population is about 30 pairs. In 2005, following initial visits to the northeastern quarter of the main basin, my estimate of the population doubled from the 15 pairs described in Cutright et al (2006). Fourteen records of adults feeding young span 16 June–4 August. Nestlings observed 15 June 2003; the contents of nests found 25 June and 7 July 2005 were not determined. Cutright et al. (2006) mistakenly place this population in Marathon Co. One was reported without documentation during the 14 December 1991 CBC.

**Swamp Sparrow** (*Melospiza georgiana*)—Common resident April–November. Breeds. Early spring 7 April 1998 (17 April); late fall 12 November 2003 (27 October). Spring migrants are most numerous in late April, primarily in breeding habitat, mixed shrub carr-sedge meadow; concentrations also occur along forested stream corridors. Fall migration is

lengthy and birds are widely distributed, common among mixed sparrow flocks at brushy edge, cut over lowland woodlots, and mixed grain wildlife forage plots. Cutright et al. (2006) describe a large gap in the statewide breeding distribution in Portage Co. Here it is found only in extensive wetlands such as Dewey Marsh, Bear Creek, Four Oaks, and Jordan Swamp. Sixteen observations of adults feeding young span 6 June–21 August. One was found by Gene Jacobs at Section 30N, Stockton Township during the 19 December 1987 CBC.

**White-throated Sparrow** (*Zonotrichia albicollis*)—Abundant migrant, locally fairly common resident May–August, rare resident December–February. Breeds. Early spring 11 April 1996 (17 April); late fall 23 November 1992 (4 November). There are several March observations; these are believed to represent over-wintering individuals rather than early arrivals. In spring, peak abundance is in early May. In fall, concentrations may occur at any time 1–20 October. Migrants are common in any brushy area, favoring the major river corridors, selectively logged forest, woodlot, and diverse agricultural landscapes. Early in the fall season forested areas seem to be selected over more open habitats. It is a common breeding bird only at Dewey conifer bog, near the southern limit of the statewide range (Cutright et al. 2006). Scattered nesting pairs occupy cut over sites within standing forest in the northeast. Summers annually at undisturbed stream side forest at Poncho Creek and Jordan Swamp; there are a few breeding confirmations at

each site. Out of place, a juvenile was at Lake Pacawa 28 July 1996. Status as a summer resident understood relatively recently. In 1949, two birds seen in June were described as “late stragglers” (*Passenger Pigeon* 11: 190, 1949). There is one published record of overwintering; one at a feeder “throughout the period” 1 December 2003–29 February 2004 (*Passenger Pigeon* 66: 256, 2004). We have 11 CBC records, including three birds on 19 December 2010.

**Harris’s Sparrow** (*Zonotrichia querula*)—Fifteen-plus records since 1991, including four in spring 7–20 May, and 11 in the fall 29 September–8 November. There is no published record prior to 11 May 1991 reported in Frank (1991). Individuals believed lingering for more than a single day are these: 3–8 November 1994 at mixed grain plot Section 17, New Hope Township; 16–23 October 2001 at Section 3, Pine Grove Township; singing male 19–20 May 2003 in Stevens Point; 7–10 October 2007 at BVG. The latter observation is the only record of multiple birds (two). In fall, Harris’s Sparrow associates with other sparrows at roadsides, woodlot edge, and at mixed grain plots. There are about three residential feeder records.

**White-crowned Sparrow** (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*)—Rare spring migrant; uncommon fall migrant. Extremes: spring 29 April 1996 (10 May) and 31 May 2004 (*Passenger Pigeon* 66: 422, 2004); fall 18 September 1994 and 1998 (27 September) and 6 November 2002. It was not unusual for the first birds that I found in spring to also be the last. Fall migrants

appear in single-digit flocks at hedgerows and willow thickets in open, often disturbed areas; the ditches and woodlot edges of BVG and Rainbow Drive offer an abundance of such habitat. Largest daily counts in my notebooks (20 on 12 October 1989 at Stevens Point, and 23 at BVG 23 October 2002) associated with mixed grain plots designed to attract deer or turkeys. There is a 29 July 2005 record, probably in Stevens Point (*Passenger Pigeon* 68: 65, 2006). One CBC record on 15 December 1984.

**Dark-eyed Junco** (*Junco hyemalis*)—Abundant resident August–May. Early fall 23 August 1998 (16 September); late spring 13 May 1983 (*Passenger Pigeon* 46: 37, 1984) and 2002 (1 May). Junco is arguably the most common migrant and winter resident central Wisconsin passerine. Seasonally, it is most numerous in mid-October and mid-April. In fall, large flocks often persist at BVG later than elsewhere. *J. h. oreganus* “Oregon Junco” records: count week of the 29 December 1964 CBC (Hilsenhoff 1965); a male at Park Ridge 2–3 November 1991; female at Park Ridge 9 April 1994; male at Park Ridge 28 October 1994; female at Tomorrow River 16 October 2001. *J. h. cismontanus* “Cassiar Junco” records: male at Poncho Creek 1 December 1997; female at Stevens Point 23 January 2001; male at Tomorrow River 16 October 2001; female at Stevens Point 17–25 December 2003; male at Stevens Point 30 December 2004. Except for the Tomorrow River and Poncho Creek birds, all records of western North American forms after 1990 were at feeders. There is one published record of “Cassiar

Junco" in Wisconsin; Peggy Hickey took five specimens at Madison 10 January–18 March 1949 (*Passenger Pigeon* 11: 131. 1949).

### *Family Cardinalidae*

**Summer Tanager** (*Piranga rubra*)—One record. A singing adult male was photographed at Kozickowski Park, Stevens Point 22 May 2005 (*Passenger Pigeon* 67: 495. 2005).

**Scarlet Tanager** (*Piranga olivacea*)—Common resident April–October. Breeds. Early spring 30 April 2001 (12 May); late fall 1 October 1996 (24 September). Spring migrants tend to blur quickly with territorial residents; however, peak abundance seems to be the last week of May. Nineteen migrants were at Stevens Point during the large passerine fallout of 25 May 1997. In fall, tanagers are most numerous in late August when five individuals is a high count. Breeding pairs are common in mature contiguous forest, often with a significant conifer component. Important sites include Tomorrow River-Poncho Creek, Wisconsin River, Plover River, and the northeastern townships. It was formerly common in mature jack pine-oak forest at the Stevens Point well fields. Tanagers abandoned this area entirely following the selective removal of the pine. Nest building efforts span 17 May–13 June; fledglings 21 June–3 August. A 2001 nest at Poncho Creek was completed about 13 June and held downy nestlings on 4 July. Impromptu song playback experiments at Poncho Creek in June–July 1996 revealed an average of 2.5 times as many adult males as any previous (or subsequent) unassisted field trip.

**Western Tanager** (*Piranga ludoviciana*)—One record. Tricia Schaufenbuel found an adult male at Kozickowski Park, Stevens Point 14 May 2007 (*Passenger Pigeon* 70: 82. 2008).

**Northern Cardinal** (*Cardinalis cardinalis*)—Common resident. Breeds. First recorded by Hornberg in 1935 (Young et al. 1941). That paper attempted to correlate the spread of the cardinal in Wisconsin to drought 1890s–1930s, with birds advancing up the Fox River and Wisconsin River Valleys 1932–35. It is widely distributed, reaching relatively remote forested sites at Tomorrow River where it is common, and Dewey Marsh, part of an area of general scarcity extending throughout the northeast. It reaches its greatest abundance at the villages of Park Ridge and Whiting adjacent to parkland along the Plover River. Observations of dependent young fall between 1 June and 13 October.

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak** (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*)—Common resident April–October. Breeds. Early spring 27 April 2001 (4 May); late fall 5 October 1990 (25 September). Spring arrivals, transients, and territorial pairs are numerous beginning in the second week of May. I recorded nest building on seven occasions 13–24 May. The breeding season typically concludes by mid-July. Population densities are greatest in hardwood or mixed forest in the river corridors, the northeastern townships, and the length of the moraine. Fall migration begins in mid-August (22 at Poncho Creek 18 August 2000) and often continues strong well into September (19 at Poncho Creek 19 September 1996).

**Blue Grosbeak** (*Passerina caerulea*)—One record. Dave Borchardt observed a male at his Amherst feeder on 10–11 May 1993. It was joined by a female on 11 May. Accepted by the state records committee (*Passenger Pigeon* 55: 387. 1993).

**Indigo Bunting** (*Passerina cyanea*)—Common resident May–October. Breeds. Early spring 30 April 2004 (*Passenger Pigeon* 66: 423. 2004) (14 May); late fall 15 October 1997 (28 September). There is no discernible spring passage. In fall, it is most numerous at the end of September. Following spring arrival there seems to be a period of relative breeding “inactivity.” Singing males are most conspicuous July–August; egg dates span 26 June–11 August; observations of dependent fledglings extend to 13 September. The 11 August egg date (Section 24N, Stockton Township) is the latest state record (Cutright et al. 2006). Buntings favor edge and old field habitat; they are a ubiquitous roadside species in late summer. Fall migrants are numerous at forest clear cuts and along watercourse thickets in diverse agricultural landscapes.

**Dickcissel** (*Spiza americana*)—Uncommon resident June–August. Breeds. Early spring 1 June 2011 (eBird 2011d); late fall 20 August 2005. I recorded Dickcissel in the county during 11 years 1988–2005. In six of those years observations were of fewer than three birds on three or fewer different dates. They were widespread in small numbers in 1988, 1999, 2000, and 2002. Numerous eBird reports in June–July 2011. A few sites are consistently inhabited: Sections 30, 31, and 35 Dewey Township;

Section 30N Stockton Township; southeastern Carson Township. Appears to choose wet cultivated hayfields where grass is the dominant forb. North of these areas Dickcissel is, at least in recent decades, of rare occurrence (Cutright et al. 2006). Inexplicably, few are ever found at BVG.

### **Family Icteridae**

**Bobolink** (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*)—Common resident May–September. Breeds. Early spring 17 April 1983 (*Passenger Pigeon* 46: 35, 1984) (7 May); late fall 15 September 1994 (1 September). Spring migration passes unnoticed. In BVG, where it is an abundant summer resident, territories are established after mid-May. Elsewhere, it is locally common at irregularly harvested or fallow grass hayfields, Conservation Reserve Program parcels or lightly grazed pastures. When water levels began to fall at the Dewey sedge marsh in 2002 Bobolinks colonized discrete patches of that vast lowland. First alfalfa (*Medicago sativa*) hay cutting in the county usually occurs before 15 June; nesting success at such sites is nil. Observations of adults feeding young span 11 June–29 July. Post-breeding flocks in excess of 200 individuals peak at the end of July and have appeared 11 July–15 August. Such flocks favor shrub carr-sedge lowlands and invariably occur west of the Wisconsin River.

**Red-winged Blackbird** (*Agelaius phoeniceus*)—Abundant resident March–November. Breeds. Early spring 5 March 1992 (20 March); late fall 17 November 2000 (31 October). Characteristic of spring migration, small flocks pass north on clear mornings in

late March. During September–October, blackbirds form massive roosts at Mead SWA (e.g., 15000 departing at sunrise 9 October 1995). Small mixed grain plots intended to attract deer will hold numbers of blackbirds until freeze-up. Breeding birds inhabit wetlands of every type and size. Areas of diversified agriculture also attract nesting pairs. There are seven CBC records. One “throughout the period” 1 December 2002–28 February 2003 (*Passenger Pigeon* 65: 160. 2003).

**Eastern Meadowlark** (*Sturnella magna*)—Common resident March–October. Breeds. Early spring 14 March 1996; late fall 29 October 1997. Its status as a transient is unclear. Singing males are widespread on territories by April. It is often undetected August–September; a few are seen annually in mid-October. Breeds throughout the county with centers of abundance at BVG, and in the wet grass hay fields of Linwood, Carson, and Dewey Townships. Thirty-six were in Carson on 15 August 1999. Egg records include 12 and 13 May in Grant Township. County wide, fledglings observed 11 June–25 July. Four CBC records include ten birds 21 December 1968; however, the likelihood of all ten being identified to species is remote. A 27–28 February 1987 record represents an early migrant (*Passenger Pigeon* 50: 257. 1988).

**Western Meadowlark** (*Sturnella neglecta*)—Locally common resident March–October. Breeds. Early spring 15 March 1995; late fall 11 November 2009 (eBird 2011c). Reliably found at only three sites circa 2005: Rainbow Drive (2–3 pairs); Stevens Point air-

port (5–8 pairs); and BVG, where the vast majority of the breeding population resides. The Rainbow Drive population apparently depended on a single 4.5 ha parcel of fallow grassland. This parcel is now developed and meadowlarks no longer occur (Gerry Janz, pers. comm.). Native habitat at the airport is upland pine barrens. It is kept in a condition of short grass prairie; the meadowlark population increased when the annual mowing was delayed to late August from the traditional July schedule. Ongoing conversion of grazing land to row crops will affect the population at BVG. CBC: 21 December 1968 and 16 December 1978. Meadowlarks unidentified to species are found at BVG November–February.

**Yellow-headed Blackbird** (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*)—Locally rare summer resident. Probably breeds but no direct evidence. Since about the 1990s, it is found in summer at Lime Lake, Stockton Township and at Four Oaks Marsh. Published records are notorious for their imprecision. A male at BVG on 18 June 1963 was the “first record for that area” (*Passenger Pigeon* 26: 67, 1964). No location is attached to the statement, “a colony of ten pairs was first seen there” in 1964 (*Passenger Pigeon* 27: 87. 1965); likewise in summer 1981 when “noted at a new site in Portage Co.” (*Passenger Pigeon* 44: 82. 1982). There is a 9 May 1992 anonymous record (Frank 1992). One at a BVG roadside 22 April 2007 (eBird 2011c), and one-two males at Lost Creek WA 5 June–8 July 2011 (eBird 2011d).

**Rusty Blackbird** (*Euphagus carolinus*)—Common migrant. Extremes: spring 1 March 2000 (*Passenger Pigeon* 62: 308, 2000) 12 March 1995 (29 March) and 14 May 1967 (Chipman 1967); fall 10 September 1998 (5 October) and 16 November 1999. Relatively scarce during spring when it has passed undetected; however, a few flocks of up to 40 is typical at forested stream bottoms. Common to briefly abundant in fall, October–early November. Largest fall flocks are found either in corn stubble (280 at Dewey Township 9 November 1997), or flying southeast after sunrise (325 over the Tomorrow River 19 October 1998 and 340 over Poncho Creek 9 November 1999). These cited peaks illustrate a rather dramatic increase in overall abundance during fall 1995–2001. Subsequent decline in detection of migrants; I found a total of 18 individuals in all of 2005. Migrants appear to be increasing somewhat since 2005 (Gerry Janz, pers. comm.). CBC: 15 December 1984.

**Brewer's Blackbird** (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*)—Common resident March–October. Breeds. Early spring 20 March 2004 (*Passenger Pigeon* 66: 424, 2004); late fall 25 October 1998. Spring migrant and fall dispersal flocks are concentrated at BVG and Rainbow Drive in late April and August–September, respectively. Two hundred-fifty were at Section 29W Buena Vista Township 18 April 1997; 200 at Rainbow Drive 14 September 1999 is the largest fall flock. Fewer such flocks detected in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; however, timing of observer presence at areas of concentrated occurrence greatly influences percep-

tion of seasonal abundance, especially in spring. Nests in open agricultural areas liberally endowed with natural (BVG) or established, uncultivated grass hay fields (Carson Township). The county breeding range is small (see Cutright et al. 2006). Initial nesting attempts hatch young in late May. Winter and CBC (1988, 1993, 1999) records invite confusion with Rusty Blackbird and Common Grackle.

**Common Grackle** (*Quiscalus quiscula*)—Common resident March–December. Breeds. Early spring 8 March 1992 (19 March); late fall 3 December 2000 (27 October). Migrants arrive with the first open water of spring, quickly establishing territories at urban and rural sites, especially where planted ornamentals or conifer groves occur. Nest building begins in mid-April and the breeding season concludes by early July. There is no consistent pattern of occurrence August–October except that a few birds are seen every mid-October; flocks of a few dozen may appear at any time during that interval. On 19–20 August 1992, up to 900 arriving from the south and descending to roost at Wisconsin River west of Casimir; grackles were seen next on 11 October. There are 16 CBC records; however, none since 1990. There is a report of “January [1989] records.” (*Passenger Pigeon* 51: 296, 1989).

**Brown-headed Cowbird** (*Molothrus ater*)—Common resident March–October. Breeds. Early spring 23 March 2003 and 2004 (3 April); late fall 23 October 2001 and 2003 (31 August). Territorial males are widespread by mid-April. Lurking females are ab-



sent only from extensive conifer bogs. I recorded 17 host species in Portage Co. The earliest egg record is 4 May (Eastern Phoebe); the latest is 18 July (Indigo Bunting). Fledgling records span 8 June (Chipping Sparrow) through 23 August (Red-eyed Vireo). Seventy were at a farmyard in Section 6, Amherst Township on 27 September 1995. Lost Creek WA hosted 115 on 8 May 2011 (eBird 2011d). Such observations occur in large mixed flocks of blackbirds. The last of three CBC records was in 1980. Formerly rare November–February at feedlots, a vanishing habitat. There are no recent winter records.

**Orchard Oriole** (*Icterus spurius*)—About 16 records since 3 May 1999 (J. Schaufenbuel). Not reported previously. Breeds. There are eight single day records 3–21 May. Five single day reports span 3–28 June. An adult male was at Section 25 Stockton Township 29 May–11 June 2006 (J. Schaufenbuel). Vince Heig discovered the first breeding pair, a nest with young at Standing Rocks Park in June 2009 (*vide* Gerry Janz). At least one bird was at BVG 7–20 June 2011 (eBird 2011d). Exclusive of the nesting pair, all records are of adult or subadult males. Orchard Oriole is found primarily in old field and hedgerow habitat.

**Baltimore Oriole** (*Icterus galbula*)—Common resident May–September. Breeds. Early spring 1 May 2000 and 2001 (6 May); late fall 17 September 1991 (3 September). Seasonal migrations peak in the middle of May and August. Departure is usually before September. Breeding birds use a variety of deciduous forest and forest edge habitats, avoiding interior forest

locations. Greatest breeding season densities may be in heavily forested residential neighborhoods such as Park Ridge. Orioles also nest at farmsteads, cemeteries, rural parks, roadsides, and at similarly isolated stands of large trees in native habitats. I did not observe nesting activity beyond 17 July; thereafter, family groups and staging birds frequently found in pure flocks of up to 15 birds. One at a feeder on the 31 December 1966 CBC, the first ever on a Wisconsin count (Hilsenhoff 1967).

### *Family Fringillidae*

**Pine Grosbeak** (*Pinicola enucleator*)—Irruptive resident October–March. Early fall 27 October 1990; late spring 13 March 1990. Observed during five winters 1988–2005. Seen on a single date in two of those winters; fairly common and widespread during winter 1989–90 (maximum 16 on 28 Feb), 1997–98 (30 on 10 December), and January–February 2004 (43 on 7 Feb). Only in 1990 were birds found in urban areas. Bickford found 30 grosbeaks on 2 November 1973 (*Pas-senger Pigeon* 36: 130. 1975). There are 16 CBC records, including 137 on 2 January 1978. Grosbeaks have varied tastes during their visits. I have observed them foraging in black spruce, jack pine, crabapple, mountain-ash (*Sorbus* sp), poison sumac, and yellow birch.

**Purple Finch** (*Carpodacus purpureus*)—Fairly common resident September–May; uncommon and local resident June–August. Breeds. Observations invariably include fewer than ten birds at any season. It ranges widely in winter, favoring maple-birch

lowlands, black spruce, balsam fir, and residential feeding stations. Relatively large groups in spring often observed foraging in budding *Acer* species. Portage Co. is near the southeastern limit of the statewide breeding range (Cutright et al. 2006). There are just three breeding records, although it likely nests annually at Dewey, Sharon and New Hope Townships. A few are found in Jordan Swamp in summer. Nested at Iverson Park in May 1993. Balsam fir (*Abies balsamea*) provided the substrate for two of three nests I've found. Summering finches are often associated with black spruce.

**House Finch** (*Carpodacus mexicanus*)—Common resident. Breeds. First recorded in 1987, it established its abundance quickly. Erik Munson reported "five successful nesting" in summer 1989 (*Passenger Pigeon* 52: 83. 1990); it reached rural areas later that year and had colonized all county villages by about 1992. Nest building efforts span 8 April–8 July. Away from human habitation, House Finch is observed flying north, most frequently in March, April, and September.

**Red Crossbill** (*Loxia curvirostra*)—Uncommon resident October–May; rare resident June–September. Breeds. It is erratic in its movements. Flocks averaging 15 birds may be present locally for a few weeks or several months October–May. Visiting crossbills forage primarily in both native and exotic pines; tamarack will also hold flocks for extended periods. I observed one sustained irruption 1995–96. Three breeding records at the end of that irruption: female carrying nesting material, Tomorrow River 11 April; nest with young in a

tiny stand of jack pine at 4 Park Ridge Drive, Stevens Point on 11 May, across the street from the Guardian Angel Cemetery where a female was carrying nesting material 14 May. A total of 103 crossbills were at the cemetery 10 May 1996. There is a 24 July 1969 record of 15 birds (*Passenger Pigeon* 32: 67. 1970). Described as present in the summer 1972 (*Passenger Pigeon* 35: 99. 1973); 24 July 1973 (*Passenger Pigeon* 36: 80, 1974); 12 May 1979 (Anonymous 1980); 4 June 1980 (*Passenger Pigeon* 43: 58. 1981). I saw juvenal-plumaged birds infrequently in June and July at the Tomorrow River. Breeding may occur occasionally in the large eastern white pine stands of New Hope Township. The California Academy of Sciences (CAS) holds several specimens of *L. c. minor*, collected at Stevens Point in winter 1896–1897. Kumlien et al. (1950) calls these the "Sitka Red Crossbill." Avibase (2011) describes *L. c. minor* without a common name, while *L. c. sitkensis*, which one might suppose would be called the "Sitka Red Crossbill," is named the "Small-billed Crossbill." The range of *minor* is north of the Great Lakes. *Sitkensis* is found on the west coast of the United States and Canada. In addition, the CAS holds two specimens from that same winter called *L. c. pusilla*, a subspecies described by Adkisson (1996) and Avibase (2011) as confined to the province of Newfoundland. Absent from the CBC 1991–2006. Thirteen CBC records.

**White-winged Crossbill** (*Loxia leucoptera*)—Irregular, fairly common resident primarily November–March. Early fall 11 August 1993; late spring 31 May 1972 (*Passenger Pigeon* 35: 30. 1973) where date is inferred from

statement, “present at end of [spring] period.” Status 1988–2009: irrupted in 1989–90, 1995–96 and 2008–09; essentially absent during nine years; present January–March in four years, and November–December during three years. The conifer bogs at Long Road, Mead, and Dewey are favored wintering locales. However, the adjoining cemeteries, Guardian Angel and St. Joseph in Stevens Point host the largest flocks, including 140 on 9 May 1990. A female repeatedly gathered birch bark strips from a single tree in the Dewey conifer bog 11 March 1997. I failed to locate the nest. The two females and a maximum of four singing males were the only crossbills found in the county that winter–spring. Two were with Red Crossbills on 24 July 1969 (*Passenger Pigeon* 32: 67. 1970). We have six CBC records.

**Common Redpoll** (*Acanthis flammea*)—Common resident October–April. Early fall 9 October 2005 (*Passenger Pigeon* 68: 180. 2006) (8 November); late spring 12 May 1979 (*Passenger Pigeon* 42: 42. 1980) (28 March). With the exception of its absence in successive winters beginning in late 1993, redpolls in the county generally followed the accepted “present every other winter” theory during the period 1988–2005. The largest migrant flocks occur during November (240 at Dewey Marsh 5 November 1997) and in mid-March (300 at Whiting 16 March 1996). Twenty-five birds is a typical winter flock. Describing its statewide range in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Kumlien et al. (1950) declare that it is “especially plenty at certain localities, as about Stevens Point,” and note the existence of a specimen from Stevens Point of “Greater Redpoll”

*Acanthus linaria [flammea] rostrata*. This subspecies typically winters from Manitoba and Ontario east to Newfoundland (Knox and Lowther, 2000).

**Hoary Redpoll** (*Acanthis hornemanni*)—Three records. Two birds in Whiting 16 March 1996 with a flock of 300 Common Redpolls (*Passenger Pigeon* 58: 444, 1996); reported present during winter 1997–98 (*Passenger Pigeon* 60: 286. 1998); one at feeder in southeastern Stevens Point 21 February 2009 (G. Janz).

**Pine Siskin** (*Spinus pinus*)—Common resident September–May. Breeds. Early fall 25 August 2009 (J. Schaufenbuel) (30 September); late spring 26 May 1990 (15 May). An irruptive winter visitor. During the period 1988–2009, it occurred in massive numbers 1989–1990 (500 at Park Ridge 27 January–11 February 1990), with smaller irruptions noted 1991–92, 1995–96, 2000–01 and 2008–09. In non-invasion years, it is most numerous October–November and April–May; there is almost always a small winter presence. Large flocks may occur briefly during any year in November, especially at stands of yellow birch. Siskins occasionally build nests during April and May following winters in which they were common. The nests are invariably abandoned unused; however, six nest-building efforts 11 April–12 May 1996 were followed by nests with young at Tomorrow River and along Wisconsin River at Stevens Point. Adults lingered in the county until 1 July that year. Three unsteady and unusually tame juvenal-plumaged birds were at Iverson Park 3 May 2005. One hundred were recorded a day prior to the 15

May 1970 May Count (Anonymous 1971); a small part of this count was conducted outside the county, but the siskins were likely found in Portage. It was “present after 20 May 1972” (*Passenger Pigeon* 35: 30, 1972), and “observed in Portage Co.” summer 1989 (*Passenger Pigeon* 52: 83, 1990).

**American Goldfinch** (*Spinus tristis*)—Common resident. Breeds. It is most numerous September–November. Rarely irruptive in winter, it did so 1992–1993 when flocks of 60–100 were widespread. I was unable to identify a spring migration in the county. Goldfinches nest in old fields, utility line corridors, successional edge, and unkempt residential areas. Nest building recorded 25 June–22 August. A 24 September 1996 Poncho Creek nest with young is one day shy of the latest report in Cutright et al. (2006).

**Evening Grosbeak** (*Coccothraustes vespertinus*)—Formerly a common irruptive resident August–May. Early fall 5 August 1997; late spring 16 May 1970 (*Passenger Pigeon* 32: 31, 1971) and 31 May 1973 (*Passenger Pigeon* 36: 33, 1974). The most recent winter irruption occurred in 1989–1990. During four years between 1991 and 1997 small numbers were found October–November, including 40 at Poncho Creek 27 October 1993. The very few 21<sup>st</sup> century records include “reported in Portage Co.” during spring 2003 (*Passenger Pigeon* 65: 319, 2003), and “October” 2007 (J. Schaufenbuel). Eppele (1962) banded about 250 individuals during winter 1961–62. Formerly annual on the CBC, including large numbers 1970–74; concurrently, recorded on several 1970s May counts.

It was last recorded on the CBC in 1994.

### Family *Passeridae*

**House Sparrow** (*Passer domesticus*)—Common resident. Breeds. Closely associated with human habitation, it does not stray from farms, villages, and towns. Probably declining as a reduced number of farmsteads host livestock, village feed mills close, and the urban environment tidies up. In Stevens Point, large numbers often conspicuous at roost sites located in dense landscaped hedges. I failed to develop a breeding phenology of this species. A roosting flock of 150 was in Stevens Point on 17 November 1988.

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*Murray Berner lived in Stevens Point for 17 years, heading back to California in 2005. He is currently preparing to write a recently completed county breeding bird atlas, doing field work for another, and contemplating coordinating the repeat of a third.*



Snow Bunting stretching by Michael Huebschen

# Migrating Raptors and Vultures at Cedar Grove, Wisconsin, 1991–2010: An Index of Population Changes?

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**M**ueller et al. (2001) analyzed the counts of raptors taken at Cedar Grove for the years 1951–1999. Numbers observed of seven species increased significantly during this period: Turkey Vulture, *Cathartes aura* (Fig. 1); Cooper's Hawk, *Accipiter cooperii* (Fig. 2); Red-tailed Hawk, *Buteo jamaicensis* (Fig. 3); Bald Eagle, *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* (Fig. 4); Osprey, *Pandion haliaetus* (Fig. 5); Peregrine Falcon, *Falco peregrinus* (Fig. 6); and Merlin, *Falco columbarius* (Fig. 7). Seven species showed no significant

change: Northern Goshawk, *Accipiter gentilis* (Fig. 8); Sharp-shinned Hawk, *Accipiter striatus* (Fig. 9); Broad-winged Hawk, *Buteo platypterus* (Fig. 10); Rough-legged Hawk, *Buteo lagopus* (Fig. 11); Red-shouldered Hawk, *Buteo lineatus* (Fig. 12); Golden Eagle, *Aquila chrysaetus* (Fig. 13); and American Kestrel, *Falco sparverius* (Fig. 14). One species decreased significantly—Northern Harrier, *Circus cyaneus* (Fig. 15).

In this paper we look at the trends for the years 1991–2010. Although the



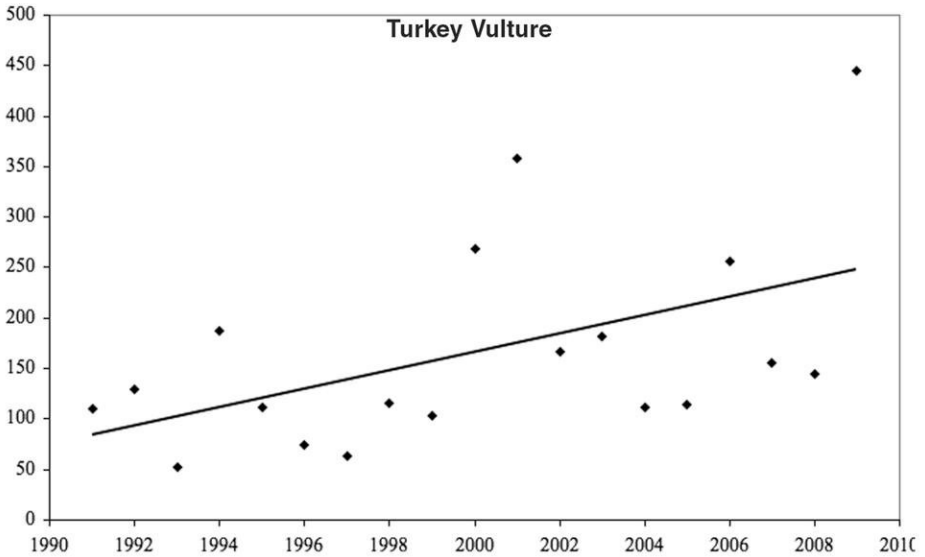


Figure 1. Turkey Vulture ( $y = 0.831x + 5.24$ ,  $P = 0.017$ ) indicating a significant increase in Turkey Vultures in migration. This continues an increase in the species since 1951!

number of observation days varied a bit from year to year (Mean = 102.5, standard deviation = 5.2), the difference was in the time when we began and/or ended observation, when few

birds were seen. We thus simply used the number of individuals seen per year for comparisons between years. Linear regressions ( $r$ ) were calculated for each species and the equation ( $y$ )

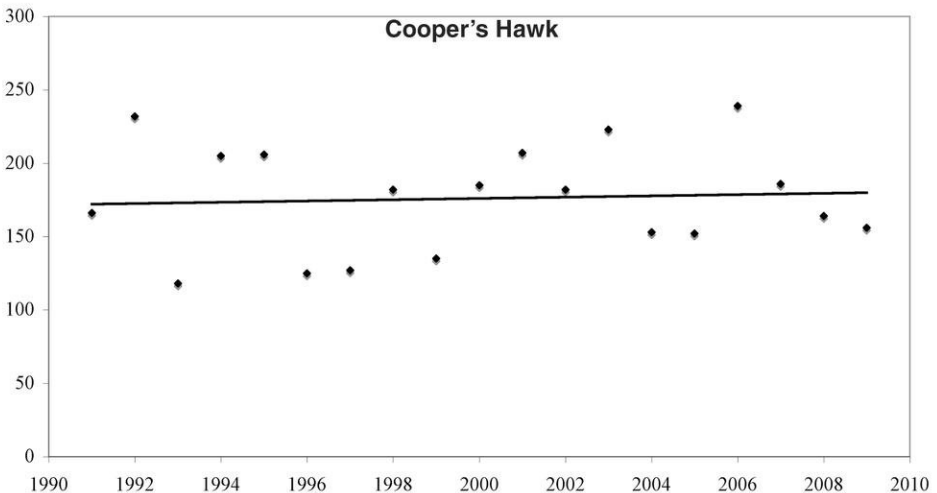


Figure 2. Cooper's Hawk ( $y = 0.088x + 0.15$ ,  $P = 0.847$ ) indicating no change in the abundance of Cooper's Hawks, after a significant increase from 1959 to 1999.

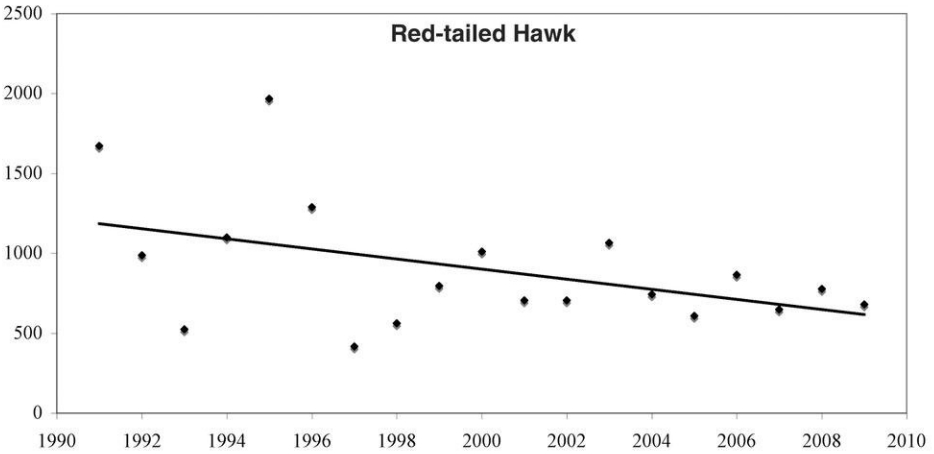


Figure 3. Red-tailed Hawk ( $y = -0.007x + 23.35$ ,  $P = 0.039$ ) indicating a significant decline, after a highly significant increase in 1951–1999.

of the regression line is given. These are shown in the graphs. A linear regression simply fits the best straight line to the data points. The probability ( $P$ ) of fit is also given, thus indicating the significance of the trend indicated by the line.

The recent increase in Bald Eagles is probably partially the result of an increase in the number of birds breeding nearby. It is not possible to differentiate between migrants and birds moving back and forth locally. The same is probably true of Turkey

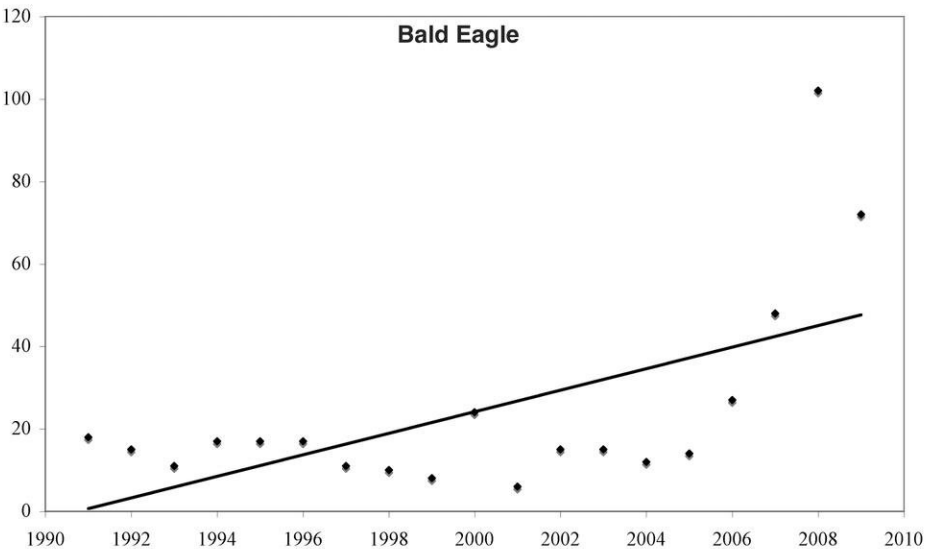


Figure 4. Bald Eagle ( $y = 0.152x + 6.50$ ,  $P = 0.002$ ) indicating a highly significant increase, after a highly significant increase in 1951–1999.

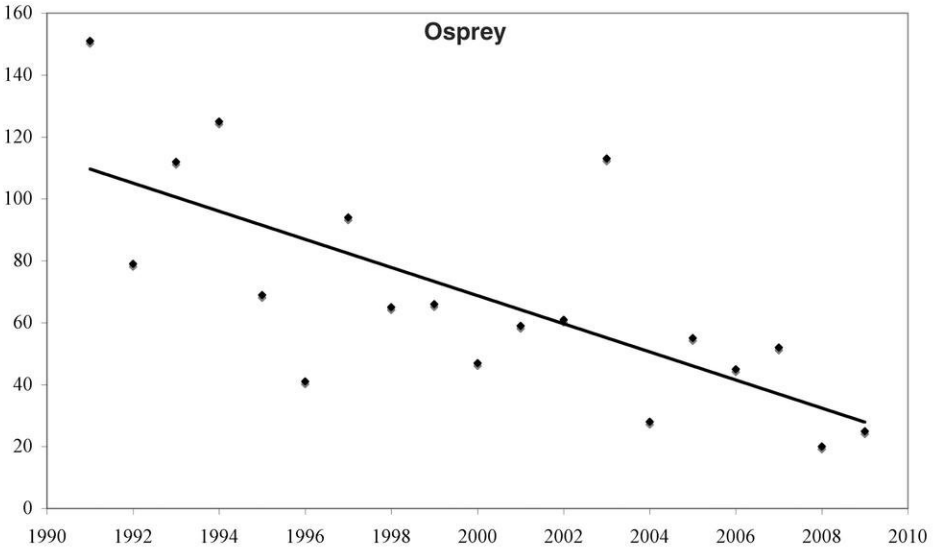


Figure 5. Osprey ( $y = -0.071x + 15.62$ ,  $P = 0.043$ ) indicating a significant decline, after a significant increase in 1951–1999.

Vultures. Cooper's Hawks showed a insignificant increase. No other species showed an increase in the last 20 years, and the decreases are statisti-

cally significant in 7 of 13 species (Northern Goshawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-shoulder Hawk, Osprey, Merlin, American

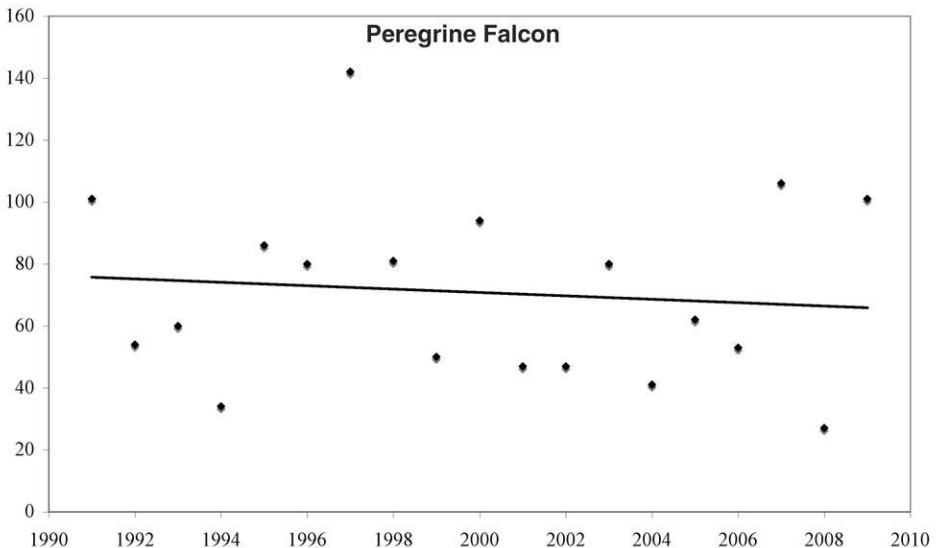


Figure 6. Peregrine Falcon ( $y = -0.031x + 12.65$ ,  $P = 0.526$ ) indicating a non-significant decline, after a significant increase in 1951–1999.

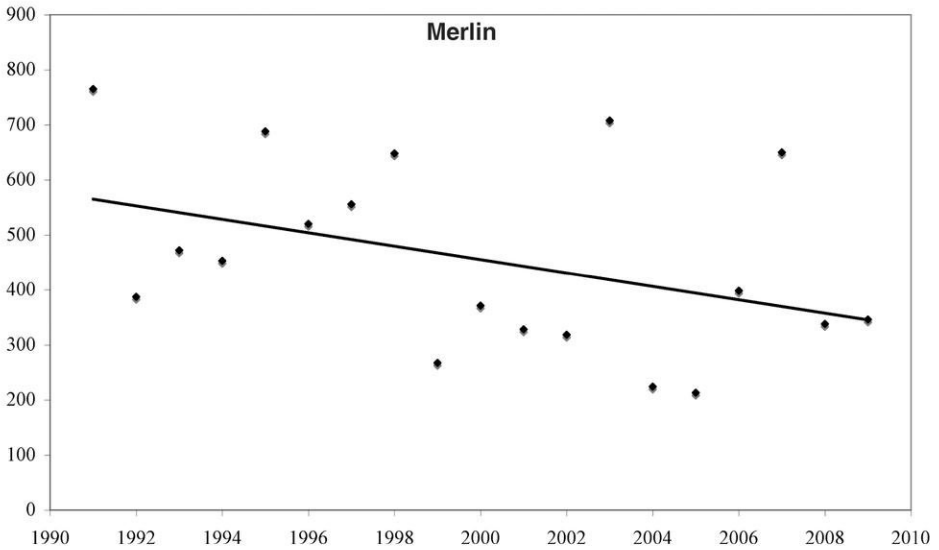


Figure 7. Merlin ( $y = -0.016x + 17.55$ ,  $P = 0.039$ ) indicating a significant decline, after a significant increase in 1951–1999.

Kestrel), and for all species combined (Fig. 16). This decline was not rapid: In the last 15 years (1996–2010) only the Northern Goshawk and American

Kestrel show significant declines. The declines may not represent a change in populations. Mueller and Berger (1961) showed that the counts at

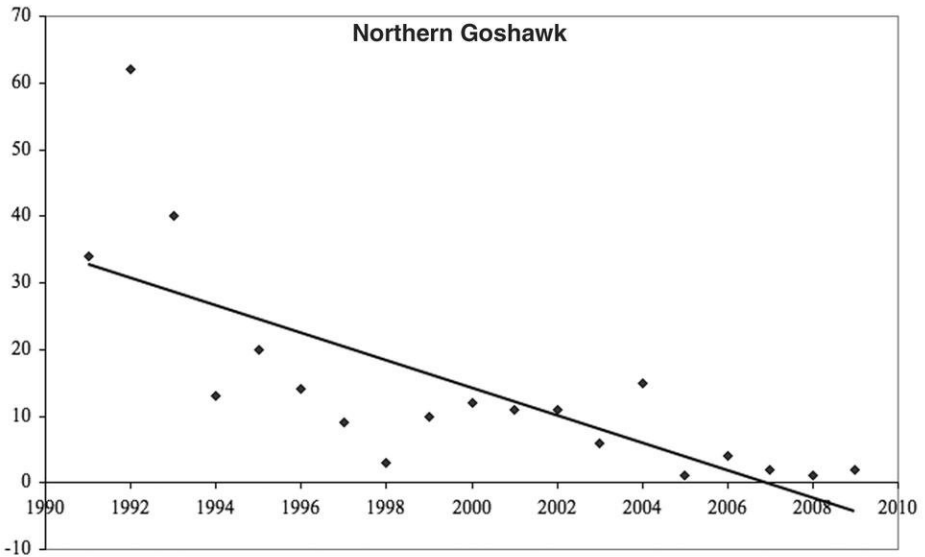


Figure 8. Northern Goshawk ( $y = -0.285x + 14.23$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ) indicating a very highly significant decrease in Northern Goshawks. The species was cyclic, with invasions in 1962–63, 1972–73, 1982, and a smaller incursion in 1992–1993. There was only a slight hint of an incursion in 2002–03.

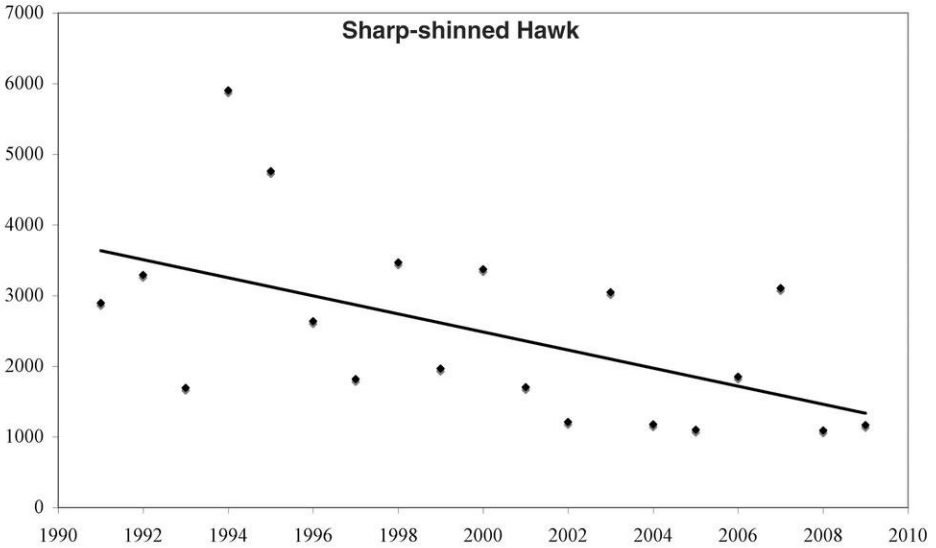


Figure 9. Sharp-shinned Hawk ( $y = -0.083x + 16.36$ ,  $P = 0.006$ ) indicating a highly significant decrease in the species after a non-significant increase in 1951–1999.

Cedar Grove are largely the function of weather conditions. A slow and consistent change in weather patterns is a

possibility, but an analysis of this would require considerable time and expense.

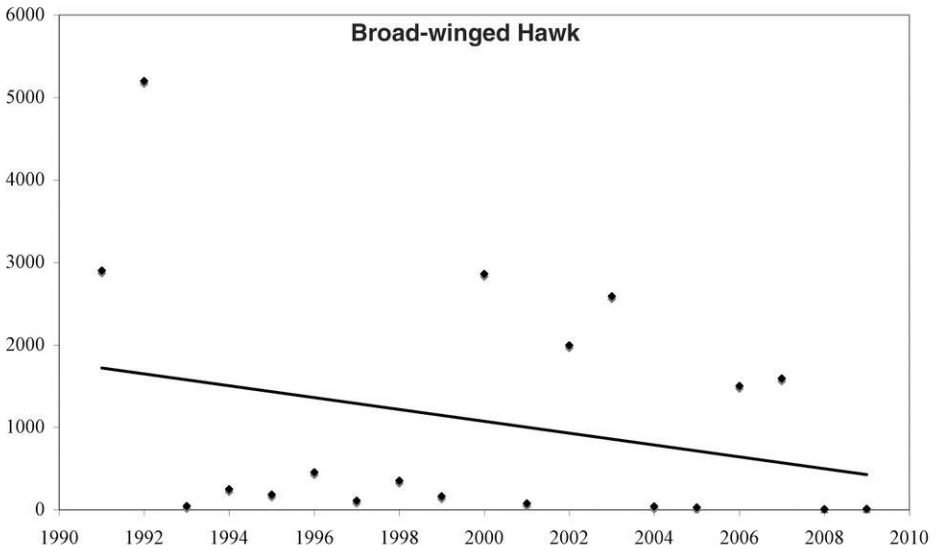


Figure 10. Broad-winged Hawk ( $y = -0.001x + 11.84$ ,  $P = 0.174$ ) indicating no trend, as none was shown since 1951. Broad-wing numbers vary greatly from year to year, and it is not surprising that no trends are evident. Most of the individuals of this species migrate during a 3-week calendar interval and are highly dependent on weather conditions favoring concentration at Cedar Grove during this interval.

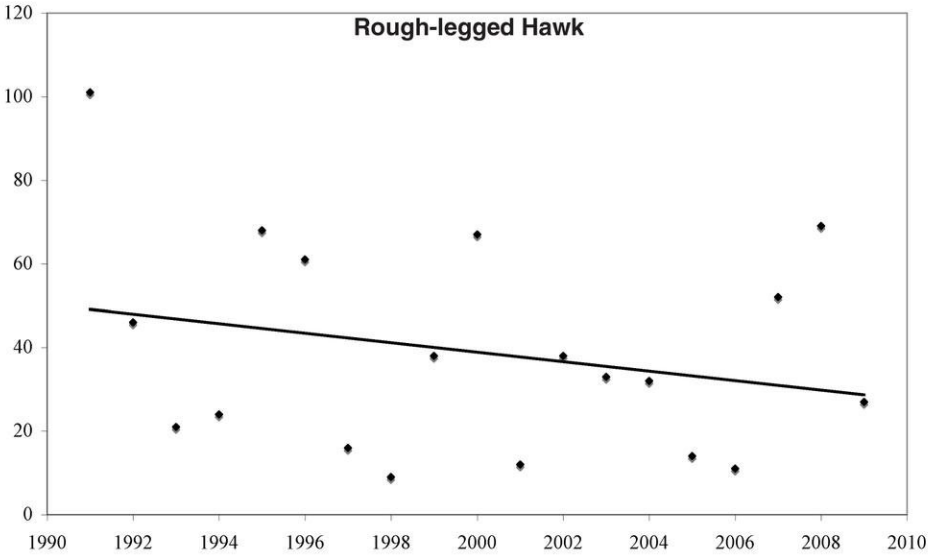


Figure 11. Rough-legged Hawk ( $y = -0.080x + 13.47$ ,  $P = 0.128$ ) indicating a non-significant decline after a non-significant increase in 1951-1999. Numbers of Rough-legs are relatively small and vary greatly from year-to-year.

West Nile Virus (WNV) is a likely cause of the declines. The virus was first discovered in birds in North America in 1999, and considerable avian mortal-

ity was noted (McLean 2006). But if the decline began in 1999, we might expect that more species than the goshawk and the kestrel would show declines in

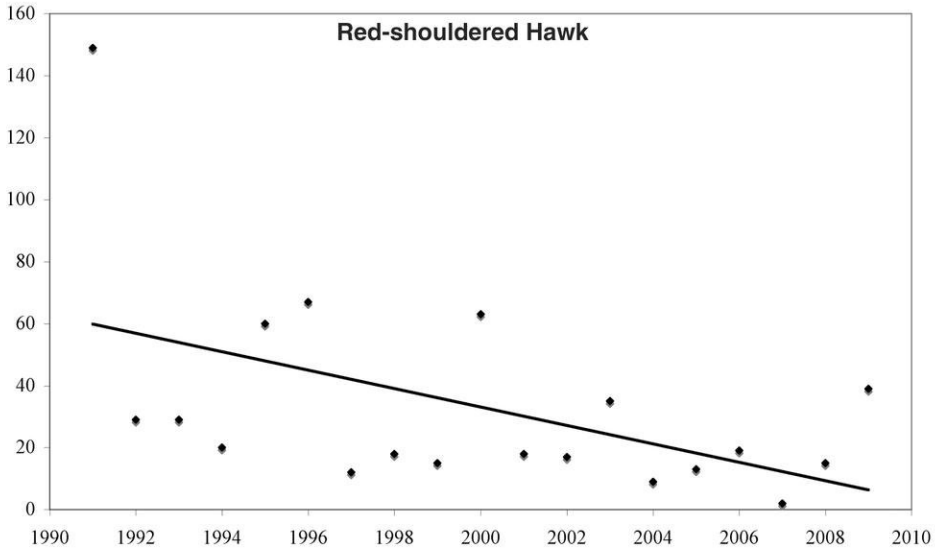


Figure 12. Red-shouldered Hawk ( $y = -0.092x + 13.42$ ,  $P = 0.028$ ) indicating a significant decline, after no trend in the years 1951-1999.

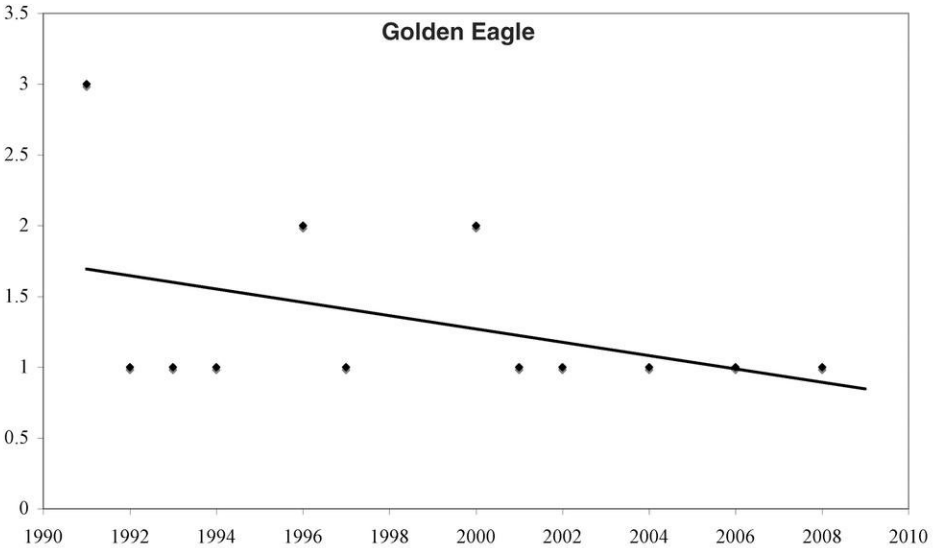


Figure 13. Golden Eagle ( $y = -1.966x + 12.27$ ,  $P = 0.167$ ). The few birds seen, and the great variation from year to year, result on no significant trends in this species since 1951.

the last 15 years. The annual variations in hawk counts, in which weather plays a role, may require a larger data base to show the effects of WNV. The long

term effects of the WNV on bird populations are unknown and only time will tell if populations return to prior levels. Anthropogenic causes of avian

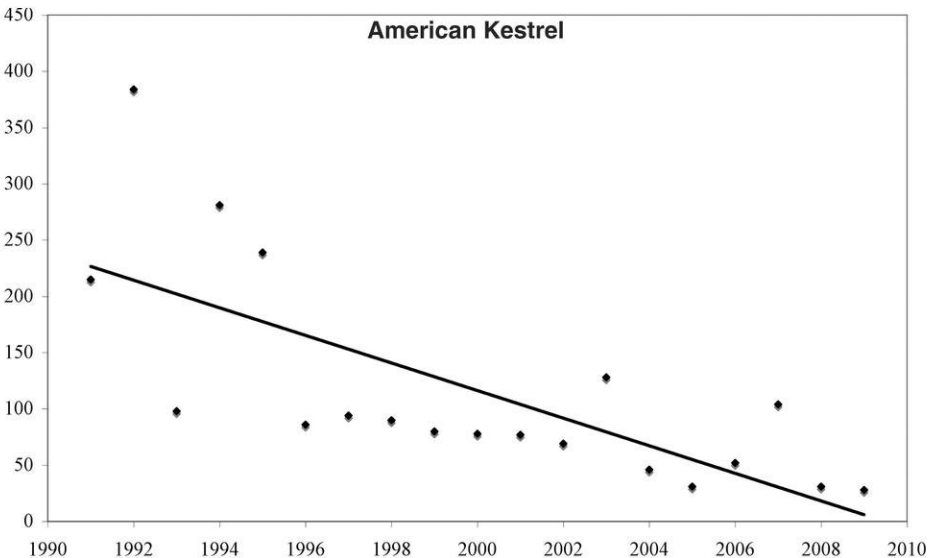


Figure 14. American Kestrel ( $y = -0.046x + 15.63$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ) indicating a highly significant decline, after no significant change in 1951–1999.

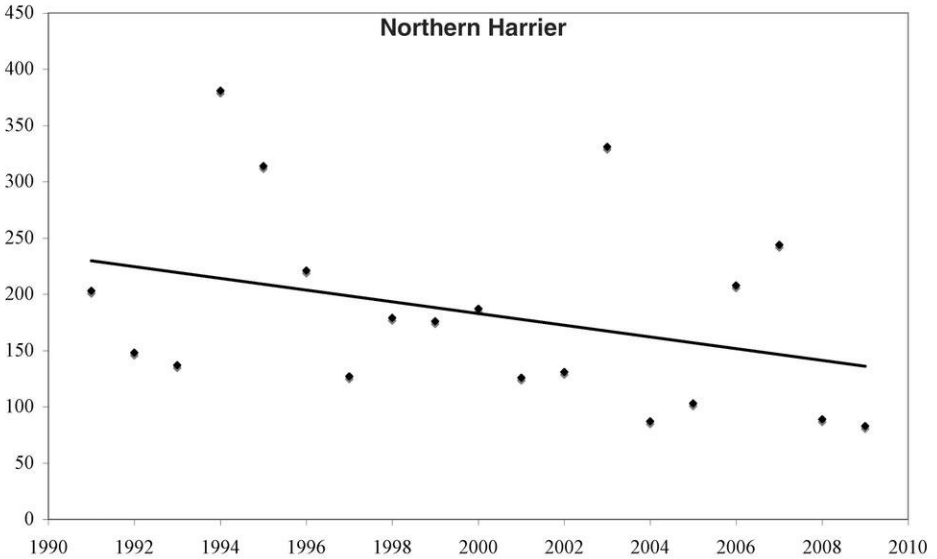


Figure 15. Northern Harrier ( $y = -0.026x + 15.17$ ,  $P = 0.103$ ) indicating a non-significant decline, after a highly significant decline in 1951–1999.

mortality are numerous. Pesticides, collisions with structures such as vehicles, buildings and windows, power lines, communication towers, and wind turbines; oil spills and other con-

taminants; and domestic cats are estimated to kill up to a billion birds per year in the U.S. (Erickson, Johnson, and Young 2005). Habitat loss in the breeding and wintering areas reduce

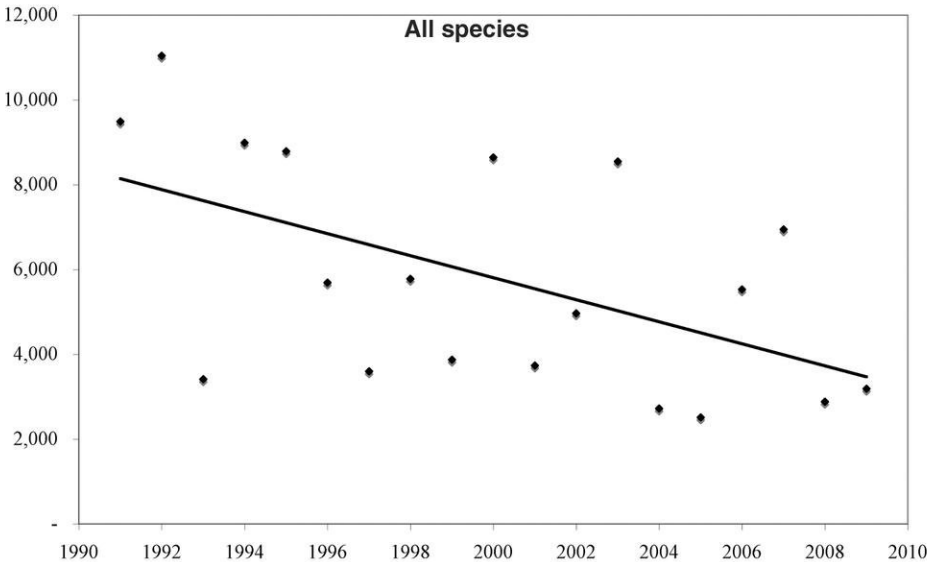


Figure 16. All species combined ( $y = -0.001x + 16.44$ ,  $P = 0.019$ ) indicating a significant decline.



survival and breeding. All of these are increasing every year and may slow the recovery from WNV.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# Open Ground Foraging of Horned Larks, Snow Buntings, and Lapland Longspurs on Wintering Grounds in Southwest Wisconsin

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## ABSTRACT

*In the winter, species such as Horned Lark (*Eremophila alpestris*), Snow Bunting (*Plectrophenax nivalis*), and Lapland Longspur (*Calcarius lapponicus*) will congregate together into mixed flocks. The objective of this project is two-fold; 1) determine which species are present in each flock and 2) observe if the birds feed together or separately. Data were collected by observing flocks on three, 60m<sup>2</sup> food plots. Supplementary data were collected by observing flocks on county roads. These data are important ecologically because they contribute to the knowledge of how these species behave in the winter away from their summer nesting grounds. This study will also provide useful insights into how numerous these species are within flocks. Little to no work has been done on these three species foraging together.*

## INTRODUCTION

In the summer months of late May, June, July, and early August, Horned Larks (*Eremophila alpestris*) nest across the whole of Canada (Fig. 1A); Snow Buntings (*Plectrophenax nivalis*) will be

nesting in the northernmost areas of Nunavut, Northwest Territories, Yukon and Alaska (Fig. 1C); and Lapland Longspurs (*Calcarius lapponicus*) nest on the coasts of the Hudson Bay and the Arctic Ocean (Fig. 1B) (Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, 2009). In the winter all three species converge into mixed flocks in the northern United States to escape the arctic winters (Beason 1995). All species are open ground birds and are some of the most common species in open fields of the Midwest (Best et al. 1997). The Snow Bunting and the Lapland Longspur are sparrow-like birds that change from bright plumages—June through August—to a drab brown—March through April (Ogilvie 1995). The Horned Lark is also a drab brown color in the winter, but is distinguished by two tufts of feathers, or “horns,” on either side of the head (Beason 1995).

What brings the three species together are the food sources, such as cracked corn and oats that remain in the fields after harvesting (Nethersole-Thompson 1966). These species are easy to study because of their

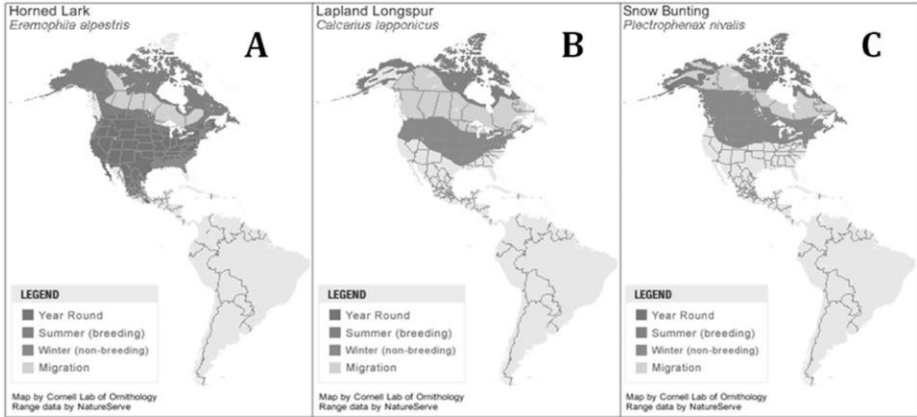


Figure 1A: [http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/horned\\_lark/id](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/horned_lark/id)

Figure 1B: [http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Lapland\\_Longspur/id](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Lapland_Longspur/id)

Figure 1C: [http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Snow\\_Bunting/id](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Snow_Bunting/id)

Figure 1. Geographic distributions of Horned Larks (*Eremophila alpestris*) (A), Lapland Longspurs (*Calcarius lapponicus*) (B) and Snow Buntings (*Plectrophenax nivalis*) (C). Range maps produced by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.

tameness, but little is known about their wintering areas (Hussel and Montgomerie 2002). It is important to study the interactions of these species because very little is known about which species constitute a mixed flock. The objectives of this project are to determine which species are present in each flock and to determine the ratios of these species in mixed foraging flocks.

## METHODS AND MATERIALS

At three sites located in Wisconsin, a 6 × 10 meter plot was cleared of snow down to the dirt (Figure 2). Sites were located on the University of Wisconsin-Platteville Pioneer Farm (LaFayette County), a second on the Digman Family Farm (Grant County), and a third on the Fogel Family Farm (Grant County). These sites were located on privately owned land consist-

ing of a snow covered corn field. Beginning on 1 February 2010, sites were baited with 100 pounds of cracked corn once a week in order to attract the mixed flocks. Sites were baited for a total of three weeks before collecting data. Data were collected from 22 February through 19 March 2010 as this is when the species are found in the area before migrating (Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology 2009).

At each site a hunting blind was placed 15 meters away from each food plot for the observer to stay hidden during the count periods. At the Pioneer Farm site a Cabela's Ice Fishing Shelter was used and at the Fogel and Digman sites an Ameristep Doghouse Hunting Blind was used. At 6:30 a.m. the observer spread an additional 50 pounds of cracked corn on the feeding plot, after clearing off any new snow that may have collected. The observer would then be stationed in the blind for two hours a day from 7:00



Figure 2. An example of a foraging plot used during the study, with the observation blind in the background. This plot was located at the UW-Platteville Pioneer Farm.

a.m. to 9:00 a.m. During the two hour observation period, data were collected by recording the number of birds per species in five minute intervals. If any other species such as Rock Pigeons (*Columba livia*), American Crows (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) or European Starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) appeared on the plot they were counted as "other species." Data were collected three days a week when weather permitted (e.g., wind speed over 20 miles per hour or blizzard conditions deterred observations). The observer rotated between sites making observations from each blind once in a single week. Supplementary data were collected by driving county roads looking for flocks of Horned Larks, Snow Buntings, and Lapland Longspurs as flocks may be seen along roadsides and farmyards (Lyon and

Montgomerie 1995). For every five-minute interval the number of birds per species in each flock was observed and recorded. Data were analyzed by using Two-factor ANOVA tests through Minitab for both the food plot data set and the supplementary data set.

## RESULTS

Birds were observed on 12 days during a 4 week study period. During a total of 24 hours of observations, birds were observed on foraging plots 100 times during 5 minute intervals. Horned Larks and Snow Buntings were the two most commonly observed species (Table 1). Average percent of flock was computed for each species of average flock sizes of 1–2 birds, 3–5 birds and 6 or more birds

Table 1. Average percent of flock is shown for the 3 primary study species for each of 3 flock-size categories. Standard deviation indicated in parentheses.

Flock Size	Species			
	Snow Bunting	Horned Lark	Lapland Longspur	Other
Small (1–2)	14.5% (± 0.36)	83.9% (± 0.37)	0.0% (± 0.00)	1.6% (± 0.13)
Medium (3–5)	34.1% (± 0.41)	54.9% (± 0.49)	11.0% (± 0.23)	0.0% (± 0.00)
Large (6+)	62.2% (± 0.35)	26.9% (± 0.38)	10.9% (± 0.20)	0.0% (± 0.00)

(Figure 3). Using a two-factor ANOVA test for the food plot data set, when comparing just the relationship of flock size (p-value = 0.926) showed no significance. Comparing the species (p-value = 0.001) and species/flock size interactions (p-value = 0.001) showed a strong significance.

DISCUSSION

Results show that Horned Larks are more likely to forage in flocks of 1–2 birds and that Snow Buntings are more likely to forage in flocks of 6 or more birds (Figure 3). Results also show that Lapland Longspurs and Other Species show no flock relationship. These data contradict previous research (Beason, 1995) that these three species forage in mixed flocks.

The findings of this research not only contribute to the overall knowledge of these species on their wintering grounds, but also to the knowledge of bird watchers and wildlife enthusiasts. Many people often try to find these species on their wintering grounds because they are far more convenient to observe during this time rather than in sub-arctic environments in the summer. Thanks

to the results of this research bird watchers who want to observe all three species should know that it is not likely they will find them in a single flock.

During the course of this study I was able to drive county roads in Grant County looking for flocks of birds along the roadsides. I call this particular set of data a Supplementary Data Set. I initially had not projected the Food Plot Data Set to collect enough data to provide significant results. I had intended to further prove the results from the food plot data by performing a two factor ANOVA test on the supplementary data, although despite effort, not enough data were collected to provide a significant data set.

The results of this study are very informative, but there are changes to consider if this experiment were to be replicated. A major aspect of this project that would demand consideration would be more than a single field season. Without a second, third, or fourth field season the validity of these data may be questionable. However strong the p-values for the statistical analyses are, at least a second field season would be required to strongly oppose previous research. To further

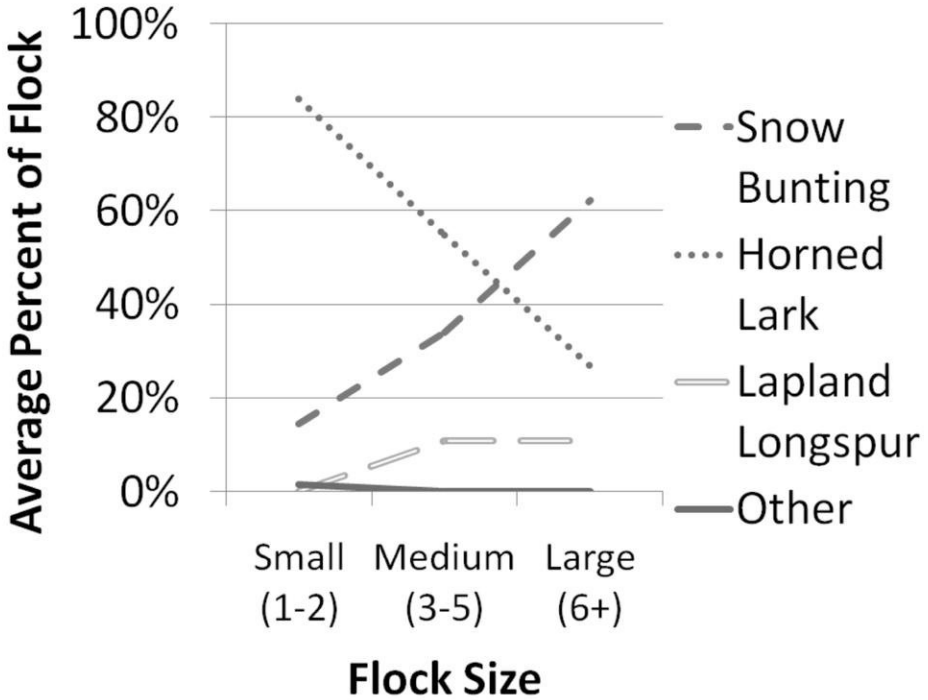


Figure 3: An interaction plot of the two factors, Species and Flock Size, clearly shows that Snow Buntings and Horned Larks vary inversely in their contribution to the percent of flock with the total flock size (p-value = 0.926).

validate the results of this experiment there would need to be more than one day per week of observations spent at a single field site. If there were to be three field sites in the same locations, a second observer would need to be available to also rotate between field study sites. Therefore the amount of data collected would double from 100 observations to 200 observations making for a much stronger data set. Lastly, in order to complete the supplementary data set, more observations would be needed.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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*Alex Stark graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Platteville in 2010 with a Bachelors of Science. While at Platteville he majored in Biology and minored in Biotechnology. Alex developed a passion for ornithology after a study trip to Churchill, Manitoba in 2008. Since then he has studied a variety of birds including Painted Buntings and Golden-cheeked Warblers. Alex plans to pursue a Master's of Science degree as well as a Doctorate Degree in wildlife ecology.*

## “From Field and Feeder”

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*Night time reports on a Northern Saw-whet Owl and a Great Horned Owl, reports of nesting attempts by Eastern Phoebe and Northern Rough-winged Swallows, and observations about Kirtland's Warbler in Wisconsin.*

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### SAY WHAT? SAW-WHET!

I'm one of those individuals who takes great pride in doing my best to maintain an intimate connection with the natural world, especially when I'm in my own 'hood in the woods. And I'm most grateful for the good fortune to have the opportunity to practice this daily on our private (especially in the winter!) woodlot on an undeveloped and pristine glacial pothole lake in southern Waushara County. It even gets better than that. Our property happens to be located adjacent to some larger areas of relatively undisturbed oak and white pine forests owned by a neighboring church camp. So more often than not, we get to feel like we are deeper in the wonders of the wilds than we actually are.

Thus, I was naturally most curious when I began to hear a particularly intriguing new sound emanating from various locations in the woods during the second half of February. The sound certainly seemed organic in origin, but the pitch and repetitive patterns were unlike anything I was familiar with. At first, I dismissed the sound as some sort of fluke. Perhaps

it was some lost and wayward creature (maybe a bird), starting to migrate much too soon and now lamenting its choice? But after a few weeks of hearing the sound almost nightly, I then began to realize that we were most likely sharing our late winter landscape with a secretive new neighbor.

But still there was something intrinsically baffling about this mysterious sound that was almost starting to convince me that maybe my ears were playing tricks on me. Could it be an electrical or mechanical noise coming from some distant workshop or garage? Some type of new high-tech ice fishing gizmo that someone was using down on the lake at night? A neighbor's video game with the surround sound turned all the way up?

I finally contacted friend and bird enthusiast/evangelist/artist Tom Schultz in Green Lake for some clues as to what we might possibly be hearing. Tom immediately responded to my e-mail, suggesting perhaps we indeed were hearing one or more Northern Saw-Whet Owls in our neighboring woods. When he mentioned that the Saw-Whet's calls could even resemble the backing-up beep of



certain motor vehicles (or a 'long series of whistled toots' as the bird guide indicates), I was now certain as to what we had been hearing for the past few weeks.

A few nights later, I went outside on the front deck for a peek at the late winter night sky. Once again, I began to hear that newly familiar sound, this time apparently somewhat closer than usual. So I decide to welcome our new neighbor to the area, doing my best to imitate his call, and immediately satisfied that I was able to quickly mimic the call so well. After all, I'm a professional musician whose specialty is playing primitive musical instruments made from all natural materials. So with either voice or instruments, I often attempt to respond to the calls, songs, hoots, and howls of the creatures in our vicinity. (I've been amazed by the many conversations I've had with the local tribe of Pileated Woodpeckers on one of my log slit drums from Africa, but that's another story altogether.) After all, aren't those very sounds exactly what inspired humans to create the very first musical instruments? I personally believe that there's no doubt that they were indeed somehow inspirational in the process.

What took place in the next few minutes was amazing. The origin of the owl's toot immediately shifted to a small cluster of red pines, perhaps 20 yards from the deck where I was standing. Wow, that was quick . . . he likes my Saw-Whet accent! So I made the sound again, and out of the dark woods toward the lights on the deck and straight for my head he came darting. I instinctively ducked under my wide-brimmed hat, while the bird banked sharply and settled into a

hemlock bough impossibly close to where I was standing. I discreetly opened the door to call my wife out to witness the owl only several arm lengths away, studying us with great intensity. Since the owl was now facing toward the rather subtle lights on the deck, we were able to closely observe it in detailed fashion for what seemed like forever.

I then described to Trish what I had done and proudly demonstrated my newfound expertise in native saw-whetese. Once again, the bird flew directly toward my face and I had to react quickly to avoid a close encounter of the not-desired kind. This owl was obviously extremely sensitive to my calls and presence. And then, to add to the already interesting situation, I coincidentally happened to respond to a text message sent to me by one of my daughters while the owl was now perched in a white pine tree just off the porch. Upon hearing the beeping of the cell phone keypad as I thumbed my response, the owl became even more stirred-up and excited by the frequency of the tones emitted. Yet he nevertheless continued to hold his post and observe us steadily from still just a few yards away.

At first, I wondered if perhaps the old boy—assuming it was a male—was looking to hook-up for a late night rite of spring rendezvous. But the more I thought about it, I realized it most likely considered me a foe, a challenger to his newly located territory. I know enough about messing with Mother Nature (and now know much more about protocol when calling owls!), so we decided that maybe it was best to at last leave the owl to the woods and the late February night.

Back inside the glow of our warm

log home, we buzzed with excitement as we recounted all that had happened in the last few minutes. It certainly was one of those experiences in this wild world of ours that burns its lasting images into your memory. It's an incident that I will not soon forget and it had already become a story that I've related to anyone willing to listen.

We heard the owl for another week or so and then it must have moved on. I'm hoping it was simply looking for a mate or more abundant prey, and not threatened by my possible threat to his territory. And if I do happen to hear a [Northern] Saw-Whet Owl in the woods next winter, I'll choose to simply enjoy his series of whistled toots accompanied by nothing other than the sound of a gloriously quiet late winter night.—*Bill Kehl, Waushara County*

### GONE FISHIN'

In late October, 2009, just after dusk (about 7 p.m.), Roy Meinzer and George Schad of Milwaukee were fishing about 15 to 20 yards from shore in moderately deep water on Lower Eau Claire Lake (near Hayward, Wisconsin) when a Great Horned Owl struck at a large surface musky lure (a Tallywacker). The boat from which the lure was cast was about 30 to 40 yards from shore. The lure had a spinner-like propeller on the back and churned the water when retrieved. The owl snatched the lure. They photographed the owl being reeled in (Figures 1 and 2).

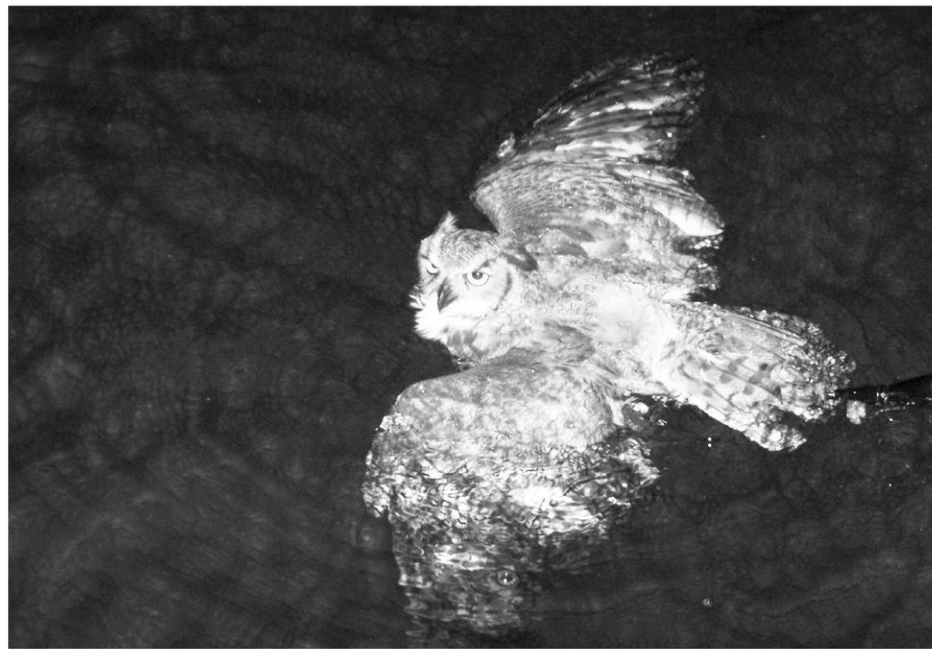
This suggests that this Great Horned definitely was fishing and maybe/probably has fished before. After the owl was reeled in (initially

from the sky as it was flying away with the embedded lure), the barb was snipped off (the lure had gone all the way through the meaty part of the left foot). The owl then calmly swam(!) doing the "breast stroke" with its wings all the way into shore where it climbed up on to the bank, shook off the water from its feathers, preened, and then flew off. The owl never thrashed or was aggressive. The two fishermen said that the owl swam as if it had done this before(!?!).

This event suggests that at least one Great Horned Owl fishes!—*Submitted by John O'Donnell, friend of one of the fishermen.*

### TRAVELING NEST

We found a mud/grass nest, with some really little hatchlings, in the underside frame of our gooseneck cattle trailer. On Thursday, 14 July, my husband had to take some cattle to market and we debated about what to do with the nest. We assumed it was of Barn Swallows because there was a pair constantly in the area. We decided to leave the nest and hope for the best. It was a 70 mile round trip and the trailer was gone 2 hours. When my husband got back, he felt in the nest and he thought the little guys seemed cold. I checked later and was happy to feel movement and see a little open beak pop up. However, I checked several times and saw no adults go in to feed them. The next morning I sat out and watched the trailer. Two Barn Swallows came by, but they went into a nearby shed. I was getting worried when I saw two small brownish/grayish birds land on the trailer. One went inside to the nest. It



Figures 1 and 2 show a Great Horned Owl as it is reeled into a fishing boat after striking a musky lure.

was a phoebe! All three youngsters seem fine and the parents come regularly.—*Mary Roenneburg, Barneveld, Iowa County.*

### **NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW EXPLORING VEHICLE TAIL PIPE AS POTENTIAL NEST SITE!**

From the last week in May 2011 through the first two weeks of June a pair of Northern Rough-winged Swallows maintained a constant presence near the parking lot containing Tribal vehicles at Little Bear Development Center in Oneida, Wisconsin. They were vocal and swooped near anyone who entered the area.

On the afternoon of 13 June, I watched the pair from about 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. They made a number of entries into the 3.5 inch diameter tail pipe of the Tribe's Chevrolet 250 half-ton truck, parked in the lot. Sometimes both birds would enter the pipe. At other times one of the pair would enter and look out while its mate would sit nearby, on the ground or on a nearby vehicle.

Close observation revealed small amounts of nesting material in the pipe (pieces of grass). The truck is typically used several times daily during the week. It had not been driven on Monday, 13 June and stands idle on weekends. It was used several times on Tuesday, the 14th. Observations on the 14th revealed that the swallows returned to the tail pipe on several occasions. By Wednesday they had largely given up entering the tail pipe and were not seen associated with the parking area for the remainder of that work week. The pair was again seen in and out of the tail pipe on 20 and 27

June but was not seen there during the day after 27 June.

The 3.5 inch tail pipe could provide a suitable nesting site for rough-winged swallows. The truck was idle for at least four days (27–30 May). During that time there was no human activity in the building or parking lot area. The tail pipe would have been a quiet, protected, site for at least four days running. Why the pair continued to enter the tail pipe even after the vehicle was being used several times a day is another question. If eggs had been laid in the tail pipe, they were not detected.

Nest structures for Northern Rough-winged Swallows could be made from metal or plastic pipe of 3–4 inch diameter. A bend in the pipe might take place after two feet. One end should be capped and the total length should be 3–6 feet. I noted rough-winged swallows entering and exiting PVC pipes in downtown Ripon, Wisconsin, in summers of 2009–2011.—*Bill Koonz, Oneida County.*

### **KIRTLAND'S OF THE GOLDEN SANDS**

A span of eighteen years seems like a long time between hearing the territorial song I was listening to this morning and the one I heard in 2003 in a giant stand of jack pine in Mio, Michigan. But as it turns out, it was a good wait, because I wasn't hearing the song a state away across Lake Michigan, but only a county away from my Marquette County home—in the sand country of Adams County, Wisconsin.

The beautiful male Kirtland's Warbler moved stealthily from tree-to-tree and stopped singing only after catch-

ing a breakfast of insects to feed the five gaping mouths in a nearby nest beneath a clump of blueberry bushes. He then returned to the highest spire of a nearby red pine and sang for several more minutes before flying off in search of dessert.

It was an emotional sighting for me; part of me feeling like I shouldn't be there in this federally-endangered birds' living room. But the birder part of me was excited and thrilled that I was hearing a song that up to a few years ago hadn't been heard in this part of the state for 100 or more years. I felt honored and privileged to see and hear a bird that I never thought I would see in Wisconsin in my lifetime.

Plum Creek Timber Company, the largest landowner in Wisconsin, owns this tract as well as others that this tiny colony of Kirtland's Warblers calls home. I heard two other males singing on another tract and researcher Sam Jonas said that there were several more. Sam should know; he has spent almost every waking hour of every day since May 2011 monitoring the singing males and keeping track of nest sites.

"We are happy that Plum Creek is working with the state and federal governments to manage part of these lands for Kirtland's Warblers," he said in a rare break from scanning the pine forests with his binoculars. "These birds are extremely site-faithful and will often nest within 10 meters of last year's nest."

But not all is good news for the Kirtland's Warbler recruitment class of 2011. "We had a heavy, cold rain at about the worst time possible—just as the birds were beginning to fledge. I found several nests abandoned and

dead fledglings in and around others. It was very disappointing," he stated matter-of-factly, his face grim.

"That said, we know for sure that four successfully fledged and that's four more Kirtland's Warblers that will return next year. Hopefully, there will be a few others."

Kirtland's Warblers prefer jack pine and in the case of the Adams County group, red pine or a mixture of the two. After about 20 years of growth, the habitat often becomes unacceptable to the warblers according to avian ecologist, Kim Grveles, who heads up the Kirtland's Warbler Management Plan for Golden Sands Resource Conservation Development.

"We've discovered that Kirtland's require the cover of lower limbs to help hide their nest and that after about 20 years, the trees begin to self-prune their bottom branches. When this happens, the birds need to find a new site and that is why successive yearly management of nearby tracts is so important for the continued breeding of these birds," Grveles said.

At the Adams County site, Kirtland's Warblers nest in fields with jack pine and northern pin oak. Their nests are always on the ground and often hidden under a blueberry bush. They almost always lay five creamy-white, speckled eggs that hatch in about two weeks, according to Jonas. Fledglings leave the nest two weeks later.

Without a doubt, Plum Creek's willingness to manage their lands for warblers and not just timber, will give Kirtland's Warblers a fighting chance to establish a sustainable breeding colony in Wisconsin. But the management plans are helping other species of special concern as well.

During our two-hour bird walk, we saw a pair of Lark Sparrows feeding fledglings in one of the clear-cuts. Eastern Towhees were everywhere. Black-billed Cuckoos called in the distance and Brown Thrashers sang from high in the tree tops. Chipping, Clay-colored, Vesper, Field, and Song Sparrows were common. Two Hermit Thrushes sang dueling sonnets from deep in the pines.

On the forest edges, Eastern King-

birds chased everything that dared venture through their imaginary territories. Yellow-rumped Warblers trilled from the mature pine stands; and “Nashville Warblers are everywhere,” smiled Jonas.

It appears that what’s good for Kirtland’s Warblers is good for their neighbors as well. And that would include you and me.—*Daryl Christensen, Marquette County.*



Snowy Owl by Dennis Connell

## 50 Years Ago in *The Passenger Pigeon*

Through the years, the WSO has used questionnaires sent to members to conduct several research studies. Research Committee Chairs Fred and Fran Hamerstrom included the following message about a new research project in this issue.

Several birds have recently expanded their range in Wisconsin, or are in process of doing so. It is important that such changes be documented at intervals while they are going on, rather guesses at 50 years or so later.

The Red-bellied Woodpecker is such a species. In April, 1951, *The Passenger Pigeon* published Arnold J. Peterson's "The Red-bellied Woodpecker in Wisconsin, Range and Population Study, 1950." Now, over a decade later, it is time to take stock again. Has the Red-bellied Woodpecker continued to spread?

Will everyone please help by filling out at least the first question of the accompanying questionnaire. The answer to that one question will help establish the present range, for comparison with Peterson's map of 1950. Answers to the other questions will tell when the woodpecker reached different parts of the state, and whether it has changed in numbers.

Ask your friends, for example in your local bird club, to help, too. Please fill out as much as you can of the questionnaire and return it promptly (December 1 at the latest) to Fred and Fran Hamerstrom, Plainfield, Wisconsin.

*Excerpt from Vol. 23(4), 1961 by WSO Historian Noel J. Cutright, 3352 Knollwood Road, West Bend, WI 53095. h. 262 .675. 2443, w. 262. 268. 3617, [noel.cutright@we-energies.com](mailto:noel.cutright@we-energies.com).*





Hooded Merganser by Bob Larsen

# Lessons From the Seasons: Winter 2010–2011

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One of the big events of the 2010–2011 winter reporting season was the large number of Bohemian Waxwing sightings. The frequency of reports peaked in mid-December, and as the winter proceeded the flocks probably coalesced with an amazing 800 reported from the Ashland area in early February. By most accounts and adjectives tossed around on the social bird networks, this was an invasion year.

The season's lessons explore the facts behind the statements and asks question to gain clarity. The questions for this lesson are: 1.) What is the definition of invasion?; 2.) How does this winter's Bohemian Waxwing numbers compare to past winter seasons?; 3.) Is there a trend in the periodicity of invasions?, and if so, 4.) Is there a reason for the change?

The answer to question one comes from our own Sam Robbins. In his monumental compilation of our collective bird knowledge, *Wisconsin Birdlife* (1991), he gives one actual and one conjectured definition for the meaning of Bohemian Waxwing invasion. Sam states, "in invasion years

birds roam around in flocks of up to 200 birds. Another more subtle definition occurs earlier in the text, "they may show up almost anywhere in the state. But there appears to be a concentration of records from northwest to southeast, with a scarcity of records from the southwest."

The winter of 2010–2011 definitely met the 200 threshold with the 800 birds seen on that massive flock in the Ashland area. In addition, 300 birds were reported in Lincoln County, 250 in Door County, 205 in Burnett County, 200 in each of Vilas, Oneida, Forest, and Florence Counties. Even the second definition of birds elsewhere in the state held true with 70 birds seen in Eau Claire County, 15 from Monroe County, and 17 from Washington County. By all past accounts this winter was an invasion year.

Now the question of how this past winter stacks up against other invasion years. I again looked to Sam's book for insight. He looked back into all the birds' records and concluded invasion of Bohemian Waxwings occurred in the winters of 1879–1880,

1883–1884, 1897–1898, 1908–1909, 1921–1922, 1931–1932, 1942–1943, 1947–1948, 1958–1959, 1961–1962, 1966–1967, 1972–1973, 1980–1981, 1983–1984, 1986–1987, and 1987–1988. Or looking at the data from another perspective the return intervals for invasion during this time frame were 4, 14, 10, 13, 10, 11, 5, 11, 3, 5, 6, 8, 3, 3, and 1 years.

Unfortunately, Sam's information stops after the 1987–1988 winter, because the book had to be published. To get the information up to date, I went through all the past winter season reports from the *Passenger Pigeon* and for more recent years, I consulted the ebird data. The criteria used were any reports of flocks of approximately 200 or more birds seen in the winter or moderate numbers reported at or northeast of a line from Eau Claire to Fond du Lac.

The above criteria led to adding 1989–1990, 1991–1992, 1993–1994, 1995–1996, 1996–1997, 1997–1998, 1998–1999, 1999–2000, 2000–2001, 2001–2002, 2004–2005, 2005–2006, 2007–2008, 2009–2010, and 2010–2011. The intervals between invasions were 2 (from the end of Sam's data), 2, 2, 2, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 3, 1, 2, 2, and 1 years, respectively.

Clearly, a change in trend has occurred over the years. Even more revealing is that several winters within the two and three year intervals fell just short of the established criteria. Only the winters of 2002–2003 and 2006–2007 had very low numbers. If nearly annual in meeting the criteria established, then invasion is probably not a good word to use for flocks of approximately 200. The norm over the past twenty plus years is to have large flocks on a near annual basis.

Fifteen of the past twenty years has had flocks of 200 or more birds and two additional years had flocks of 150.

Several flocks of more than 200 with one estimated at 800 makes the winter of 2010–2011 an invasion year for Bohemian Waxwing. We may, however, need to change our definition of invasion when 85% of the winters over the past 20 years meet the definition. More intriguing though are the potential causes of the change in trends.

An obvious reason is that much older records had a very limited number of birders in the state, especially in the far north. In fact, many of the 1880s records were before birding came into being. Maybe the discrepancy is merely an artifact of a limited number of people actively looking for birds. The paucity of records from the 1950s and 1960s occurred when there was an active corps of birders in the state. Therefore, at least some level of credence exists for invasion followed by very limited numbers, historically.

Bohemians, like their cousins the Cedars, feed heavily on fruits in the winter, but also eat buds and occasional winter insects, such as stoneflies emerging from forested streams. Historically, the populations of these fruiting bodies would ebb and flow with the yearly vagrancies of water and temperature making the resource variable in its availability. Today, there may be a more consistent source of winter's sugary foods, especially in urban areas. The planting of ornamental mountain ash has been implicated as a reason for the increase and dependability of a winter foods source. In addition, fruits like apples, service berries, and hawthorns are identified as being important winter food sources.

Another implication to consider is the banning of DDT. This chemical was used extensively on fruits into the early 1970s. After the ban, the invasion period narrowed significantly. This conjecture has not been proven and is at best anecdotal. Also, the trend only changed from an approximately 9.75-year invasion average to an approximate 4.6-year invasion average. Today's slightly greater than one year average cannot be explained by this fact alone.

In sum, the winter of 2010–2011 was truly an invasion year for Bo-

hemian Waxwing with numbers unprecedented in decades. The definition of invasion may need revision for this species with its recent change in winter occupancy on Wisconsin's fruity landscape. Keep an eye on this species over the next several winters to see if the trends continue.

#### LITERATURE CITED

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Hairy Woodpecker by Eric Preston

# The Winter Season: 2010–2011

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## WEATHER

An overview of this winter season would include lots of snow in most parts of Wisconsin with generally over-all cold temperatures. December began in Northeast Wisconsin with very little snow cover and cool temperatures. Then the first of 2 major snowstorms dumped 7" of snow on December 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>. Again this year far northeastern Wisconsin missed out on all but 2 major snowstorms for a total accumulation of only 29". This amount was less than half that reported in the Fox River Valley in east central Wisconsin just 2 hours south. Daryl Tessen reported that the Appleton area received approximately 60" of snow during the entire season. The storm of December 10<sup>th</sup> dropped 11" of snow in the Fox River Valley. He noted cold temperatures until the end of December when his area experienced a minor thaw. Karen Etter Hale from Jefferson County commented that December was cloudy with seasonable temperatures, until they experienced a high of 50°F on the 31<sup>st</sup>. Noteworthy in southern Wisconsin were the cold temperatures early in December that resulted

in many frozen lakes by the middle of the month. In January some small 2 to 4" snowfalls in Northeastern Wisconsin kept a continual snow cover until the beginning of February. Temperatures remained seasonal there throughout the month of January. Hale described January as "benign" in her area, but in contrast, February had wild extremes, from a 16" blizzard to begin the month to -17°F on the 10<sup>th</sup>, then 50°F on the 17<sup>th</sup>, with 1" of rain/sleet on the 20<sup>th</sup>. In Northeast Wisconsin there was virtually no snow fall throughout the balance of the season. However, on February 11<sup>th</sup> the coldest temperatures of the season (-19°F) were recorded here. In contrast, on February 20<sup>th</sup> Tessen noted another significant snow storm with 13–14" reported in the Appleton area. Temperatures there were generally cold until another mild thaw occurred in mid-February.

## NOTABLE RARITIES

Harlequin Duck was reported from 5 counties: Dane, Manitowoc, Milwaukee, Sheboygan, and Waukesha. As usual within the last 10 years all 3 scoter species were reported along



Lake Michigan, plus inland sightings of White-winged in Dane County and Black in Jefferson County. Barrow's Goldeneye appeared in 3 counties; Door, Milwaukee, and Sheboygan. Gray Partridge was reported in 5 counties: Kenosha, Iowa, Grant, Manitowoc, and Shawano. Spruce Grouse was found in 3 counties; Ashland, Forest, and Vilas. A Western Grebe was seen in late January in Kenosha County. A lingering Dunlin was found in Sheboygan County while 3 Black-legged Kittiwakes were discovered in

Ashland County. For the 5<sup>th</sup> consecutive year a Slaty-backed Gull was reported. A Rufous Hummingbird visited a feeder in Dane County. Black-backed Woodpeckers were reported from 3 northern counties: Florence, Forest, and Vilas. Ruby-crowned Kinglets were found on the Ephraim CBC, while Townsend's Solitaires were reported from 3 counties: Bayfield, Portage, and Sauk. Varied Thrush was noted in 8 counties while Northern Mockingbird was a count week bird in Trempealeau County. Besides the

perennially reported Yellow-rumped Warbler that was found in 9 counties, 3 other warblers were reported and accepted by the Record's Committee: Palm and Wilson's in Milwaukee County and Common Yellowthroat in Waukesha County. Harris's Sparrows were reported in 2 counties, Grant and Jefferson; while the Golden-crowned Sparrow stayed 12 days in Dane County affording good looks for many birders. This sparrow hadn't been recorded in the state since 1992.

### DISCUSSION

A total of 172 species was reported this season. This number compares to 170, 168, and 169 from the previous 3 seasons. The only exotic species not included in the report below were two European Goldfinches in December in Dane County (Murray). Hybrid species have been included in the reports. Again this year all 10 of the species that I have been following in recent years were reported: Surf, White-winged, and Black Scoter, Barrow's Goldeneye, Red-throated Loon, American White Pelican, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Carolina Wren, and Northern Mockingbird. Less than 20 years ago these species were not regularly seen during the winter season in Wisconsin. Winter finch numbers in northern Wisconsin were higher this year. Very good numbers of Bohemian Waxwing, Pine Grosbeak, Purple Finch, and Pine Siskin visited our northern Wisconsin climes. More modest numbers of Red and White-winged Crossbill, Common Redpoll, and Evening Grosbeak flew our northern skies this winter. At least 6 sightings of Hoary Redpoll were docu-

mented and accepted by the Records Committee, compared to none last year.

### SPECIAL FEATURE: GULL SPECIES IN DOUGLAS COUNTY

Karl Bardon has written another great summary of gulls seen and photographed from the Duluth-Superior area. Below is an excerpt of his report. "For the third season in a row, I have been attempting to document the number of individuals of the more uncommon gulls in the Duluth-Superior harbor during the fall and winter of 2010–2011. This is done by analyzing photos, most of which I have posted to [www.pbase.com/karlbardon](http://www.pbase.com/karlbardon) under Duluth-Superior gulls fall/winter 2010–2011. Every year this project seems to get more time-consuming—this year it has taken me until late January to sort through all the photos. I have been even more thorough this year, with the main galleries documenting virtually all individuals. Any comments are welcome (including additional dates for individual birds documented here). The total numbers documented include the following:

Sixty-eight Thayer's Gulls, including 33 first-cycle, 10 second-cycles, 7 third-cycles, and 18 adults (compared to 49 total individuals last year and about 25 the year before). This increase is probably mostly due to a much more intensive effort on my part to identify every individual first-cycle bird, which I had not done in the past.

Ten Iceland Gulls, including 1 first-cycle, 2 second-cycles, 2 third-cycles, and 5 adults (compared to 12 total last year and 5 the year before). Perhaps



even more than ever, many individual Iceland-Thayer's Gulls appeared to be intermediate and identifications seemed arbitrary. My continued study of adult primary pattern suggests that as many as half of all Iceland-Thayer's Gulls in Duluth-Superior are actually hybrids (or intergrades, since these are undoubtedly the same species).

Twenty Glaucous Gulls, including 14 first-cycles, 1 second-cycle, 4 third-cycles, and 5 adults (adult count based on most seen at one time). Although the overall number seemed less than previous seasons, this is the first season I have attempted to identify every individual non-adult Glaucous Gull.

Fourteen Great Black-backed Gulls, including 11 first-cycles, 2 second-cycles, and 1 adult (compared to 15 total last year and 5 the previous season).

Four Lesser Black-backed Gulls, including 2 first-cycles and 2 adults (compared to 2 first-cycles and 1 adult last season).

One Slaty-backed Gull, adult present from 19 December 1010–16 January 1011, following a third-cycle last year which may or may not be the same individual.

Two California Gulls, both of which were adults, following a first-cycle bird last season.

One Nelson's Gull, an adult seen 29 November–2 December 2010, appearing to be the same individual seen last year on 1–3 January 2010."—Karl Bardon.

## STATISTICS

Again this season statewide reports reflected increased coverage. Reports were received from all but one county,

Menominee, with 5 counties, Iron, Langlade, Price, Sawyer, and Waushara submitting fewer than 20 species. Dane (107) and Milwaukee (104) were the only counties to top 100 reported species. With only 6 counties reporting fewer than 20 species, many of counties that have traditionally limited coverage were well represented this year. Species reports included CBC data, 56,171 approved ebird reports, single and multi-county reports, photographs, selected Wisbirdn reports, and long and short form documentation reports. Information in this report regarding the CBCs included only those more uncommon species that were found on 14 or fewer counts. Count week CBC sightings were represented in parenthesis while some CBC data may be included in reports following initial CBC data. These abbreviations are included in this report: BOP = beginning of period, EOP = end of period, TTP=throughout the period, m. obs = many observers, and CBC = Christmas Bird Count.

## REPORTS

**(1 December 2010–28 February 2011)**

Species marked with "\*\*\*" need long form documentation to be valid.

Species marked with "\*" need short form documentation to be valid.

**Greater White-fronted Goose**—One individual remained TTP at Lower Mud Lake, Dane County (m. obs) and was reported during the count week on the (Madison) CBC. A late migrant noted 4 December, Jefferson County (Stutz). First spring migrants reported 3 on 13 February, Dane (Jakoubek), 30 on 23 February, Kenosha (Dixon), 1 on 23 February, Racine Counties (Fare).

**Snow Goose**—One individual found during the count week on the (Burlington) CBC. Reported in 8 counties: Dane, Manitowoc, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, St Croix, Waukesha, and Winnebago. Last reported 14 January, Dane County (Nolan) with early spring sightings 18, 19, 20 February, Racine, Waukesha, and Manitowoc Counties (Gustafson, Szymczak, Sontag).

**Canada/Snow Goose**—One Individual reported 5 January, Polk County (Maercklein).

**Ross's Goose\***—Lingered into early December in 3 counties: 3 December, Dane (Thiessen), 4, 6 December, Kewaunee (Swelstad), 9, 10, 11 December, Manitowoc (Sontag).

**Cackling Goose**—Total of 11 individuals reported on 4 CBCs: Lake Geneva 4, Madison 1, Waukesha 4, Wautoma 1. Reported in 8 counties: Adams, Dane, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Milwaukee, Rock, Waukesha, and Winnebago. Last reported 30 December at South Shore Park, Milwaukee County (Coulter, V and W Zimmerman). First spring arrivals 23 February, Rock (Mueller), 27, 28 February at Lower Mud Lake and the Yahara River, Dane Counties (Paulios, Thiessen).

**Canada Goose**—Reported in 47 counties with maximum number of 5000 on 10 December, Green Lake County (Schultz).

**Mute Swan**—Total of 106 individuals found on 9 CBCs with maximum number of 46 on Washington Island CBC. This number compares to 80 individuals found on that count last year. Reported in 15 counties with maximum number of 73 on 3 February, Door County (Gustafson).

**Trumpeter Swan**—Total number of 273 individuals found on 14 CBCs with maximum number of 187 on the Hudson CBC. Reported in 20 counties with maximum number of 150 on 20 December, St Croix County (B. Wilson). That number represents an increase of at least 5 more counties than reports from the previous 3 seasons.

**Tundra Swan**—Total of 117 individuals found on 6 CBCs with maximum number of 41 on Hales Corners CBC. Reported in 12 counties with maximum number of 600 on 3 December, Dane County (Schilke). Found TTP in Dane County (m. obs).

**Wood Duck**—Reported in 11 counties with maximum number of 5 on 2 December,

Milwaukee (Lubahn) and 9 December, Waukesha Counties (Coulter). January reports on 1 January, Rock (Yoerger), 3 January, Waukesha (Szymczak), 5 January Medford Mill Pond, Taylor (Risch), 14 January, Dane (A Nolan), 14 January, Milwaukee (Holton), 22 January, Manitowoc (Domagalski), 27 January, Brown (Baumanns), 30 January, Rock Counties (Szymczak).

**Gadwall**—Reported in 12 counties with maximum number of 75 on 27 February, Dane County (Jakoubek).

**American Wigeon**—Two individuals found on 2 CBCs: Lake Geneva, and Madison. December reports in 3 counties: Dane (Evanston, Nichols, Schwarz), Eau Claire (Szymczak, TTP-J Polk), Waukesha (Coulter, Gustafson, Szymczak). Six January reports: 2 January Walworth County, (Wiedenhoeft), 3 January Eau Claire (Polk, Szymczak), 16, 21 January Sheboygan County (Tessen, Batterman), 16 January Dane County (E. Wood). Spring migrants first reported on 18 February, Racine County (DeBoer, Gustafson), 27 February Eau Claire County (Cameron).

**American Black Duck**—Reported in 37 counties with maximum number of 200 on 29 December Bay Beach Sanctuary, Brown County (A. and N. Kearns).

**Mallard**—Reported in 52 counties with maximum number of 1000 on 23 January Fox River mouth, Brown County (Kavanaghs).

**Blue-winged Teal**—One individual reported 5 December Lower Mud Lake, Dane County (Paulios). Four individuals found 18 December on Madison CBC (McDowell).

**Northern Shoveler**—Total of 373 individuals found on 2 CBCs: (Appleton), (Green Bay), Madison 372, and Oshkosh 1. Reported in 6 counties: Brown (Baumanns, Hagenow, Schilke, Swelstad), Dane (TTP-m. obs), Milwaukee (Gustafson, Lubahn), Sheboygan (Batterman), Waukesha (Coulter, Gustafson, Szymczak), and Winnebago (Tessen, TTP Ziebell).

**Northern Pintail**—Two individuals found on 2 CBCs: Milwaukee, and Washington Island. Reported in 8 counties: Adams, Dane, Door, Jefferson, Kenosha, Manitowoc, Milwaukee, and Winnebago. Last reported 18 December, Milwaukee County (Korducki, Prestby, Weber). Early spring migrants began 19 February, Mani-

towoc (Sontag), 23 February on the Des Plaines River, Kenosha Counties (Dixon).

**Green-winged Teal**—One individual found on Shiocton CBC. Reported in 2 counties: 17 December, Outagamie (MHNC) and 3 on 22 December, Waukesha (Coulter). This number compares to sightings in 6 counties last season.

**Canvasback**—Total of 107 individuals found on 10 CBCs with maximum number of 70 on Lake Geneva CBC. Reported in 15 counties with maximum number of 110 on 4 December Spring Harbor Beach, Dane County (Schwarz).

**Redhead**—Total of 152 individuals found on 11 CBCs with maximum number of 80 on Lake Geneva CBC. Reported in 16 counties with maximum number of 50 on 29 December, Milwaukee (Bontly) then 86 spring migrants on 26 February, Winnebago Counties (Ziebell).

**Ring-necked Duck**—Twelve individuals found on 6 CBCs with maximum number of 6 on Green Lake CBC. Reported in 16 counties with maximum number of 60 on 6 December, Dane County (Schwarz).

**Greater Scaup**—Total of 7946 individuals found on 11 CBCs with maximum number of 3627 on Milwaukee CBC. Reported in 13 counties with maximum number of 5000 on 22 January, North Point, Milwaukee County (Prestby).

**Lesser Scaup**—Total of 109 individuals found on 11 CBCs with maximum number of 60 on Milwaukee CBC. Reported in 16 counties including these inland counties: Dane, Jefferson, Green Lake, Rock, Waukesha, and Winnebago.

**Harlequin Duck**\*—One female found on the Sheboygan CBC was seen TTP (m. obs). Reported in 4 other counties: 14 December, 19 February, Milwaukee (Sloan, Tessen), 28 December, Dane (Heikkinen, Thiessen), 8 January, 5 February, Manitowoc (Tessen), 26 February, Waukesha (Szymczak).

**Surf Scoter**—Reported in 5 counties: BOP, Ashland (Anich), 1, 10 December, Milwaukee (Gustafson, Bridge, Prestby, Schwarz, Yoerger), 3 December, Manitowoc (Tessen), 28 December, 19 February, Sheboygan (N and Z DeBruine, Tessen), 1 January, Door (Krouse),

**White-winged Scoter**—Two individuals found on 2 CBCs: Hales Corner and Madison. Reported in 7 counties: Dane, Door, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, and Sheboy-

gan with maximum number of 5 on 28 December, Sheboygan County (DeBruine).

**Black Scoter**—Seven individuals found on 3 CBCs: Cedar Grove 2, Milwaukee 2, and Racine 3. Reported in 6 counties: Jefferson, Manitowoc, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, and Sheboygan with maximum number of 19 on 4 December at Wind Point, Racine County (Howe). Last reported 19 January, Sheboygan County (Cullen, Herrmann).

**Long-tailed Duck**—Total of 31 individuals found on 6 CBCs with maximum number of 15 on Kenosha CBC. Reported in 9 counties: Dane, Kenosha, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Sheboygan, and Winnebago with maximum number of 35 on 1 December, Manitowoc County (Sontag).

**Bufflehead**—Reported in 22 counties with maximum number of 200 on 23 January, Milwaukee County (Huf).

**Common Goldeneye**—Reported in 41 counties with maximum number of 3200 on 26 February, Winnebago County (Ziebell).

**Barrow's Goldeneye**\*\*—Reported in 3 counties: 9 December–12 February (Fig. 1) Sheboygan (m. obs), 15 December, Milwaukee (Sloan), 8 January, Door (Krouse).

**Hooded Merganser**—Reported in 18 counties with maximum number of 90 on 1 December at Turville Bay in Lake Monona, Dane County (Schwarz).

**Common Goldeneye/Hooded Merganser**—One individual reported 16 December, Milwaukee County (T. Wilson).

**Common Merganser**—Reported in 42 counties with maximum number of 6000 on 23 December, Milwaukee County (M. Goodman).

**Red-breasted Merganser**—reported in 18 counties with maximum number of 5000 on 18 December, Racine County (Dixon, Hoy Audubon, Wenzel).

**Ruddy Duck**—Total of 126 individuals found on 13 CBCs with maximum number of 56 on Green Lake CBC. Reported in 14 counties with maximum number of 30 on 5 December, Winnebago County (Reimer).

**Northern Bobwhite**—Six individuals found on 2 CBCs: Pardeeville 4 (Doverspike),



Figure 1. Barrow's Goldeneye at North Point, Sheboygan on 7 January 2011 was photographed by Jim Edlhuber.

(Poynette), Stevens Point 2 (Hall). Also reported TTP, Kenosha County (Hoffmann).

**Gray Partridge**—Fifteen sightings reported in 5 counties: 5 on 14 December, Kenosha (Hoffmann), 5 on 14 December Blanchardville CBC, Iowa (Block, Engel, Weckstein), 13 on 17 December Bridgeport CBC (Stark, Yoerger) and 8 on 21 January, Grant (Kirschbaum), 5 on 23 December–12 February, Manitowoc (Domagalski, A. and J. Holschbach, Sontag), 6 and 7 individuals on 20–27 January, Shawano (Swelstad).

**Ring-necked Pheasant**—Reported in 39 counties with maximum number of 27 on Blanchardville CBC on 14 December, Lafayette County (Weckstein).

**Ruffed Grouse**—Reported in 29 counties with maximum number of 9 found 31 December on the Armstrong Creek CBC, Forest County (Domagalski).

**Spruce Grouse**—One individual found on Clam Lake CBC. Reported in 3 counties: 2, 15, 17, 23 December, Ashland (Anich, S and D Baxter, Brady), 25 February, Forest (Anich), 9, 31 December, 17, 18 January, 4, 5, 24 February, Vilas (Anich, Bontly, Hagenow, Schaefer). Compared to last season when only 2 sightings were reported the entire season, the increase in sightings was largely due to an ongoing survey of colored individuals conducted by Nick Anich.

**Greater Prairie-Chicken**—Total of 23 individuals found on Arpin CBC. Reported in the traditional location at Buena Vista Grasslands, Portage County 3 and 4 on 26, 5 on 27 December, 13 and 21 on 29, 48 on 30 January (Prestby, Keyel, McDonald, Tessen, Oksiuta, Schultz). Also reported were 3 on 5 February, Wood County (Gold).

**Wild Turkey**—Reported in 65 counties with maximum number of 175 on 5 January, Marathon County (Belter). Not reported in Douglas, Fond du Lac, Iron, Menominee, Price, Sawyer, or Waushara.

**Red-throated Loon**—Last reported 10 December at Bradford Beach and South Shore Park, Milwaukee (Bridge, Prestby, Schwarz, Yoerger), Harrington Beach, Ozaukee (Bridge, Prestby, Schwarz, Yoerger), Wind Point, Racine Counties (Dixon, Wenzel). Then no reports until 15 January at Kohler-Andre State Park (Thiessen), 16 January, Sheboygan (Tessen), 30 January at Schlitz Audubon Center, Milwaukee Counties (Matrisc). Only February reports on 5 February, Ozaukee (Gyllenhaal), 12 February, Manitowoc (A. and J. Holschbach), 13 February, Sheboygan Counties (Bontly).

**Common Loon**—Last reported 2 on 15 December, Kenosha County (Hoffmann). Other December reports: 1, 3, 4 December, Dane (Paulios, Prestby, Schwarz), 3 on 1, 3 December Menasha Locks, Winnebago (Uslabar), 3, 6 De-

cember, Manitowoc (Tessen), 5 December, Milwaukee Counties (Mooney). Then a mid-February report on 12 February at Point Beach State Park, Manitowoc County (A. and J. Holschbach).

**Pied-billed Grebe**—Four individuals found on 2 CBCs: Fond du Lac 1, (Kenosha), Lake Geneva 3. Three individuals reported BOP, Dane (Schwarz), 2 individuals 2 December, Waukesha (Gustafson), and apparently an overwintering bird from 8 December–19 February, Kenosha Counties (Hoffmann).

**Horned Grebe**—Ten December and one late February sightings reported in 6 counties: BOP, Kenosha (Hoffmann), 2, 5 December, Waukesha (Gustafson, Szymczak), 6 on 3 December on Lake Geneva, Walworth (Pugh), 2 on 4 December, Jefferson (Stutz), 24, 25, 27, 30 December, Milwaukee (Flores, Goodman, Matrisch, DeBruine), 27 February, Rock (Yoerger).

**Western Grebe**\*—One bird photographed 26 January, Kenosha County (Boone, Fitzgerald).

**Double-crested Cormorant**—Total of 36 individuals found on 4 CBCs: Appleton 10, Fond du Lac 4, Green Bay 21, Oshkosh 1. Reported in 6 counties with maximum number of 20 on 3 December along the Fox River mouth in Green Bay, Brown County (Swelstad). TTP, Brown (m. obs), TTP, Outagamie (Tessen), TTP, Winnebago (Evanson, Tessen, Uslabar, Ziebell), 3 December Wind Point, Racine (Dixon, Wenzel), 8 December, Kenosha (Hoffmann), 9–14 December Port Washington Harbor, Ozaukee (Frank, Cullen, Hermann, Bontly) Counties.

**American White Pelican**—Total of 12 individuals found on 3 CBCs: Appleton 1, Green Bay 7, Oshkosh 2. Reported TTP along the Fox River at De Pere Dam and Fox River Mouth, Brown County by 13 observers. Maximum number of 6 individuals 12 December and 5 January (Van Duyse, Baumanns), 2 individuals reported 1–30 December, Winnebago County (Ziebell).

**Great Blue Heron**—Reported in 13 counties with over-wintering birds in Iowa (A. Holschbach) and Waukesha Counties (Szymczak).

**Turkey Vulture**—Total of 8 individuals found on 2 CBCs: New Franken 3, Palmyra 5. Only other December reports were on 10, 26, Walworth County (Gustafson, Howe). Earliest spring report 3 individuals 24 January, Wauke-

sha County (Gross). Possible over-wintering bird 12 February, Walworth (Gustafson), followed by 19 February, Kenosha (DeBoer), 19 February Arena Boat Landing, Iowa (Yoerger), 3 on 25 February, Jefferson (Evanson), 26, 27 February, Waukesha (Cullen, Szymczak), 2 on 27 February, Rock (Klubertanz), 28 February, Dane (Henrikson) Counties.

**Bald Eagle**—Reported in 64 counties with maximum number of 215 in Buffalo City, Buffalo County (K. Goodman).

**Northern Harrier**—Reported in 26 counties an increase of 5 counties over last season. Northernmost reports from Douglas (LaValleys), Taylor Counties (Risch).

**Sharp-shinned Hawk**—Reported in 40 counties with northernmost reports from Ashland (Brady, Anich), Barron (Reichhoff), Bayfield (Anich), Florence (Kavanaghs), Lincoln (Evanson, Nemec), Polk (Maercklein), Taylor (Risch).

**Cooper's Hawk**—Reported in 39 counties with northernmost reports from Barron (Reichhoff), Polk Counties (Maercklein).

**Northern Goshawk**—Eleven individuals found on 8 CBCs. Reported in 9 counties: Dane (Covert, Bridge, Stutz, Szymczak), Douglas (LaValleys), Florence (Kavanaghs), Forest (Domagalski, Prestby, Schaefer, Yoerger), Manitowoc (Baumanns), Oconto (Kavanaghs), Sawyer (Olsen), Sheboygan (N. and Z. DeBruine), and Taylor (Risch).

**Red-shouldered Hawk**—Fourteen individuals found on 14 CBCs. Reported in 12 counties with northernmost reports from Chippewa (Polk), Polk (Maercklein).

**Red-tailed Hawk**—Reported in 59 counties with maximum number of 32 on 15 January, Buffalo County (Cameron).

**Rough-legged Hawk**—Reported in 57 counties with maximum number of 23 on 19 February Buena Vista Grasslands, Portage County (Jackson).

**Golden Eagle**—Nineteen individuals found on 10 CBCs with maximum number of 4 on Nelson CBC. Reported in 9 counties: Adams (Grouch, Heikkinen, Mooney), Buffalo (Betchkal, Duerkson, Jackson, Roth-Reynolds, Schoenborn), Grant (Ellis, Fissel, Romano, Thiessen), Iowa (Prestby, Romano, Thiessen), Jackson (Johnson, Schultz, Tessen), Monroe

(Epstein), Sauk (Prestby, Tessen), Vernon (Duerkson, Hayes, Jackson), and Waupaca (Tessen).

**American Kestrel**—Reported in 50 counties with maximum number of 10 on 2 January, Grant County (Evanson).

**Merlin**—Fifteen individuals found on 12 CBCs. Reported in 21 counties with northernmost reports from Ashland (N. and P. Anich), Florence (S. Cutright). This number represents a 33% increase from last season's reports.

**Peregrine Falcon**—Nineteen individuals found on 9 CBCs with maximum number of 5 on Milwaukee CBC. Reported in 12 counties with northernmost reports from Brown County (Abbott, Bontly, Rickaby, Schilke, Swelstad).

**Virginia Rail**—Seven individuals found on 3 CBCs: Hartford 1, Palmyra 4, Poynette 2. Seven sightings reported in 2 counties; 19–27 December Lulu Lake, (Gustafson, Howe), three individuals reported 26 December from Pickerel Lake, Walworth (Howe), 27 December at Pike Lake State Park, Washington (Schaefer). Last reported at Lulu Lake 14 January (Gustafson).

**American Coot**—Total of 904 individuals found on 14 CBCs with maximum number of 787 on Lake Geneva CBC. Reported in 18 counties with maximum number of 1000 on 5 December, Waukesha County (Szymczak).

**Sandhill Crane**—Six individuals found on 2 CBCs: (Fort Atkinson), Fremont 1, (Lake Geneva), Oconomowoc 5. Reported in 13 counties with maximum number of 150 on 6 December, Dane County (Thiessen). Last reported 6 December, Racine County (Howe), then a mid-winter report on 8 January, Dane County (Lohre). Early spring migrants began returning 18 February, Racine (Howe), Waukesha Counties (Gross).

**Killdeer**—One individual found on Retreat (Sauk City) CBC. Reported in 9 counties: Dane (McDowell), Iowa (Prestby), Kewaunee (Swelstad), Milwaukee (Hagner, T Wilson), Monroe (Epstein), Racine (Fare), Rock (Klubertanz, Mueller), Sheboygan (Fissel), and Vernon (West). Three midwinter sightings reported 2, 9, 15 January, Monroe, Dane, and Vernon Counties (McDowell, Epstein, West). Spring migrant first reported 19 February at Estabrook Park, Milwaukee County (Hagner).

**Dunlin**—Reported on 5, 6, 9 December, Sheboygan County (Fissel, Tessen, Swelstad).

**Wilson's Snipe**—Total of 27 individuals found on 13 CBCs with maximum number of 6 found on Beloit CBC. Reported in 9 counties: Columbia (Christensen), Dane (Brouhard), Grant (Jackson, Legler), Green (Klubertanz, Yoerger), Monroe (Epstein), Rock (Yoerger), Vernon (West), Walworth (Howe), and Waukesha (Gustafson, Howe, Szymczak).

**Black-legged Kittiwake**\*\*—Remarkably, 3 individuals were reported in Chequamegon Bay, (Fig. 2) Bayfield County 7–9 December (Anich, Brady, Oksiuta). See "By the Wayside."

**Bonaparte's Gull**—Five individuals found on 2 CBCs: Kenosha 4, Riveredge 1. Reported in 2 counties; 260 on 17 December, Kenosha (Hoffmann), 3 on 23 December at Bradford Beach, Milwaukee (Coulter).

**Ring-billed Gull**—Reported in 27 counties with maximum number of 1000 on 2 December, Calumet County (Domagalski).

**Herring Gull**—Reported in 31 counties with maximum number of at least 3000 on 28 February, Winnebago County (Tessen).

**Herring/Glaucous Gull**—Reported 27 December, Douglas County (Iliff, Gyllenhaal, Kolbeinsson).

**Thayer's Gull**—Total of 7 individuals found on 5 CBCs: Bayfield 1, Green Bay 1, Milwaukee 3, Sauk City 1, Sheboygan 1. Reported in 11 counties with maximum number of 21 on 5 December, Douglas County (Bardon).

**Iceland Gull**\*—Two individuals found on 2 CBCs: Kewaunee, Milwaukee. Reported in 11 counties with maximum number of 6 on 5 December, Douglas County (Bardon).

**Thayer's/Iceland Gull**—Reported 5 December, 2, 16 January, Douglas County (Bardon).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull**\*—Total of 5 individuals found on 3 CBCs: Hales Corners 2, Kenosha 2, Milwaukee 1. Reported in 11 counties with 2 individuals on 4 December, Jefferson County (Stutz). All sightings were reported from counties along Lakes Michigan and Superior except these inland counties: Dane, Jefferson, Waukesha.



Figure 2. Black-legged Kittiwake (juvenile) at Chequamegon Bay marina off Washburn in Bayfield County on 9 December 2010 by Ryan Brady.

***Slaty-backed Gull*\*\***—For the 5<sup>th</sup> consecutive year in Wisconsin this rare gull was photographed, documented, and accepted by the Records Committee. An adult bird was reported 19 December–30 January, Douglas County (Bardon).

***Glaucous Gull***—Total of 17 individuals found on 12 CBCs with maximum number of 5 on Sheboygan CBC. Reported in 15 counties with maximum number of 11 on 29 December, Manitowoc County (A. and N. Kearns).

***Great Black-backed Gull***—Total of 10 individuals found on 5 CBCs: Green Bay 1, Hales Corners 1, Kenosha 2, Kewaunee 2, Sheboygan 4. Reported in 13 counties with maximum number of 7 on 26 December, Sheboygan (A. and N. Kearns), 1 February, Manitowoc Counties (Sontag).

***Rock Pigeon***—Reported in 61 counties with maximum number of 301 on 15 December, Dodge County (Bontly).

***Eurasian Collared-Dove*\***—One individual found on Poynette, (Baraboo) and on (Woodland Dunes SW) CBC. Reported in 5 counties: 7 December–EOP, Manitowoc (Doma-

galski), 26, 27 December, 16 February, Columbia (Fissel, Gustafson, Schwalbes, Tessen), 15 January, 11, 12 February, Grant (m. obs.), 16 January, Crawford (Otto), an amazing number of 17 on 13 February, Iowa (Prestby).

***Mourning Dove***—Reported in 68 counties with maximum number of 145 on 15 December, Dodge County (Bontly). Not reported in Iron, Menominee, Price, or Waushara Counties.

***Eastern Screech-Owl***—Reported in 23 counties with maximum number of 10 on 26 December Mt. Horeb CBC, Dane County (Prestby, Stutz). Northernmost reports from Door, Dunn, Marathon, and Taylor Counties.

***Great Horned Owl***—Reported in 47 counties with maximum number of 16 on 14 December Blanchardville CBC, Lafayette County (Gabanski, Willard).

***Snowy Owl***—Two individuals found on 2 CBCs: Hustisford, New Franken. Reported in 12 counties with southernmost reports from Kenosha County (Hoffmann).



Figures 3 and 4. Rufous Hummingbird coming to the feeder at the home of Kay and Robert Simandl, town of Roxbury, near Sauk City in December 2010. Photos are by Robert Simandl.



**Barred Owl**—Reported in 26 counties with maximum number of 4 on 26 December Mt. Horeb CBC, Dane (Prestby, Stutz) and 26 February, Portage Counties (Pendergast).

**Long-eared Owl**—Six individuals found on 6 CBCs. Reported in 7 counties: Brown (D and M Ferry), Door (C. and R. Lukes), Kenosha (Dixon), Kewaunee (Mueller, Schroeder), Marquette (Christensen), Milwaukee (Bontly, Prestby), and Racine (DeBoer).

**Short-eared Owl**—Seven individuals found on 4 CBCs: Appleton 1, Hales Corners 2, Rosendale 1, Waterloo 3. Reported in 9 counties: Fond du Lac (Burckhardt), Green (Block, Engel), Iowa (A. Holschbach), Jefferson (m. obs.), Marquette (Christensen), Milwaukee, Ozaukee (m. obs.), Portage (Prestby), and Sheboygan (N. and Z. DeBruine, Swelstad). Maximum number of 6 reported on 16 January, Jefferson County (Yoerger).

**Northern Saw-whet Owl**—Twelve individuals found on 8 CBCs with maximum number of 3 on Baraboo CBC. Reported in 8 counties: Columbia (Christensen), Dane (Bridge, Prestby, Schilke, Stutz), Iowa (Holschbach), Kewaunee (Mueller, Schroeder), La Crosse (Wiegel), Rock (Yoerger), Sauk (Prestby, Thiessen, Witynski, Yoerger), St. Croix (Persico), Washington (Schaefer), and Waukesha (Coulter, Duchek, Howe, Weber).

**Rufous Hummingbird**—An individual reported BOP—8 December (Figures 3 and 4), Dane County (Simandl).

**Belted Kingfisher**—Reported in 30 counties with Bayfield (Oksiuta), Burnett (Maercklein), Dunn (P. Campbell), and Rusk (Szymczak) the most northern.

**Red-headed Woodpecker**—Reported in 22 counties with maximum number of 7 on 1 January, Spider Lake, Sawyer County (Pertile). Reported from these northern counties: Dunn (P. Campbell), Sawyer (Gagliardi, Pertile), and Washburn (Haseleu, Pertile).

**Red-bellied Woodpecker**—Reported in 59 counties with maximum number of 36 on 14 December on Blanchardville CBC, Iowa County (Block, Engel). Reported in these northern counties: Bayfield, Burnett, Florence, Sawyer, and Washburn.

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**—Total of 22 individuals found on 14 CBCs with maximum number of 3 found on both Bridgeport and

Trempealeau CBCs. Reported in 10 counties: Columbia (Dischler), Dane (Dischler, Etter-Hale, Fenske, E. Wood), Iowa (Prestby), Kenosha (Hoffmann), La Crosse (Hayes), Pierce (R. Anderson), Portage (Hall), Walworth (Howe), Waukesha (Kent, Moretti, Nowack, Renner, G. Zimmerman), and Winnebago (Harriman).

**Downy Woodpecker**—Reported in 69 counties. Not reported in Langlade, Menominee, or Price.

**Hairy Woodpecker**—Reported in 67 counties. Not reported in Langlade, Menominee, Price, Shawano, or Waushara.

**Black-backed Woodpecker\***—Six individuals found on 5 CBCs: Armstrong Creek 1, Caroline 2, Clam Lake 1, Fifield 1, Three Lakes 1. Reported in 3 counties: 30 December, Florence (A and N Kearns), 10, 27 January, 19, 25 February, Forest (Tessen, Evanson, Kavanagh, J. and P. Trick), and 15 February, Vilas (Tessen).

**Northern Flicker**—Reported in 36 counties. Northernmost reports from Dunn, Eau Claire, Pepin, Pierce, St. Croix, and Taylor Counties.

**Pileated Woodpecker**—Reported in 59 counties with maximum number of 7 on 17 December on Bridgeport CBC, Grant County (Stark, Yoerger).

**Eastern Phoebe**—One individual reported 11 December, Forest County (Prestby).

**Northern Shrike**—Reported in 59 counties with maximum number of 7 on 19 December on Ashland CBC (Brady).

**Gray Jay**—Total of 35 individuals found on 7 CBCs. Over half of this number (18) were found on the Armstrong Creek CBC. Reported in 3 counties: 31 December–25 February, Forest (m. obs.), 31 December, 10, 22 January, Oneida (Duchek, Tessen, Rosenstiel), and 12, 13 February, Vilas (Uher-Koch, Koch).

**Blue Jay**—Reported in 69 counties with maximum number of 103 on 26 December on Mt. Horeb CBC (Prestby, Stutz). Not reported in Langlade, Menominee, or Price.

**American Crow**—Reported in 71 counties. Not reported in Menominee.

**Common Raven**—Reported in 36 counties. Southernmost reports from Juneau, Monroe, and Sheboygan.

**Horned Lark**—Reported in 50 counties with maximum number of 175 reported 23 February, Rock (Mueller) and 28 February, Ozaukee Counties (Mueller).

**Tree Swallow**—Two individuals continued from the Fall Season to 3 December at South Metro Pier, Oak Creek, Milwaukee County (Gustafson). See “By the Wayside.”

**Cave Swallow\*\***—One individual continued from the Fall Season to 3 December at South Metro Pier, Oak Creek, Milwaukee County (Gustafson). See “By the Wayside.”

**Black-capped Chickadee**—Reported in 71 counties with maximum number of 208 on 18 December on Peshtigo CBC, Marinette County (Kavanaghs).

**Boreal Chickadee**—None were found on the CBCs. Reported in 4 counties: 23 December–19 February, Forest (Belter, Bontly, Hagenow, Kavanaghs, Prestby, Schaefer, Tessen), 31 December, 8 January, Oneida (Duchek, Prestby), 3 February, Ashland (Anich), and 15, 27 February, Vilas (Peczynski, Tessen).

**Tufted Titmouse**—Reported in 37 counties with maximum number of 14 on 26 December on Mt. Horeb CBC, Dane County (Prestby, Stutz). This number compares to reports from just 32 counties last season.

**Red-breasted Nuthatch**—Reported in 54 counties with maximum number of 87 on 31 December on Armstrong Creek CBC, Forest County (Domagalski).

**White-breasted Nuthatch**—Reported in 68 counties with maximum number of 63 on 14 December on Blanchardville CBC, Iowa County (Block, Engel). Not reported in Langlade, Menominee, Price, or Shawano Counties.

**Brown Creeper**—Reported in 41 counties with maximum number of 10 on 18 December, Dane County (Bridge, Stutz).

**Carolina Wren\***—Nineteen individuals found on 13 CBCs with maximum number of 3 on La Crosse CBC. This southern specialty was found in 11 counties. The most northern were Door (Ford) and Pierce Counties (Sirvio).

**Winter Wren**—Nine individuals found on 5 CBCs: (Baraboo), Blanchardville 1, Brussels 3, Clyde 2, Lake Geneva 2, Madison 1, (Palmyra). Reported in 12 counties with TTP reports in Waukesha County (Szymczak).

**Golden-crowned Kinglet**—Reported TTP in Dane (m.obs) and Waukesha Counties (m.obs). Reported in 28 other counties including these more northern: Ashland (Anich, Brady), Bayfield (Brady), Florence (Kavanaghs), Forest (Domagalski, Kavanaghs, Swelstad), Lincoln (Uttech), and Marinette (Kavanaghs).

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet**—Three individuals found on 18 December on the Ephraim CBC, Door County (Tupa).

**Eastern Bluebird**—Reported in 28 counties with reports in these more northern: Buffalo, Manitowoc, and Trempealeau.

**Townsend's Solitaire\***—Three individuals found on Baraboo (Bayfield) CBC. Reported in 3 counties: 5 December, 21 February, Bayfield (Brady), 22 December–23 February UW Stevens Point, (Figures 5 and 6) Portage (originally reported by DeRubeis then m.obs), 3 December–19 February Devil's Lake, Sauk (m.obs).

**Hermit Thrush**—Fifteen individuals found on 7 CBCs with maximum number of 6 on Milwaukee CBC. Reported in 7 counties: 5 December, 12 January, 16 February, Dane (Jakoubek, Evans, Tessen), 21 December, Kenosha (Hoffmann), 28 December, Iowa (Schneider), 13 December–24 January at multiple locations, Milwaukee (m.obs), 20 December, Outagamie (Tessen), 18 December Milwaukee CBC, Ozaukee (Bontly, Strelka), 19 December EOP, Waukesha (Howe, Szymczak, T Wilson).

**American Robin**—Reported in 42 counties with maximum number of 125 on 15 January, La Crosse County (Jackson).

**Varied Thrush**—One individual found on Wautoma CBC. This rare but regular winter visitor in Wisconsin was seen in 8 counties: 7 December EOP, Vilas (Casey), 10 December, Iron (Hagstrom), 17 December–18 January, Dunn (Cameron, P Campbell), 26 December, Marquette (Christensen), 22–24 January, Manitowoc (Domagalski, Sontag, Tessen), 26 January, Columbia (Schwalbes), 11 February EOP, Door (Engstrom, Rutledge), 12 February, Trempealeau (Jackson).



Figure 5. Townsend's Solitaire that wintered on the campus of UW-Stevens Point from 22 December into March 2011. Photo by Alyssa DeRubeis, who first found the bird.



Figure 6. Townsend's Solitaire on the UW-Stevens Point campus was photographed by Dan Jackson on 31 December 2010.



Figure 7. Yellow-rumped Warbler found and photographed at Observatory Hill in Marquette County on 5 December 2010 by Donna Richards.



Figure 8. Golden-crowned Sparrow at Eagle Optics in Middleton between 20–31 December 2010 as photographed by Tom Prestby.

**Gray Catbird**—One individual found on Palmyra CBC 26 December, Walworth County (Howe).

**Northern Mockingbird\***—One individual was reported during the count week on Trempealeau CBC. This bird came to a feeder in Trempealeau County 7–10 January (Jackson).

**Brown Thrasher**—Three individuals found on 3 CBCs: Baraboo, Bayfield, Hustisford, (Sturgeon Bay). Reported in 4 counties: TTP, Dane apparently surviving well on a diet of cracked corn (Anderson), 15 December, Dodge (Fissel), 24 December, Trempealeau (Stellpflug), 28 December, Bayfield (Howk).

**European Starling**—All but 1 county reporting with a maximum number of 2335 on 18 December for just 1 portion of the Stockbridge CBC, Calumet County (Domagalski).

**American Pipit**—One individual recorded on Milwaukee CBC. Only reports were in December in 4 counties along Lake Michigan: 3–6 December, Manitowoc (Sontag), 4–11 December, Racine (Dixon, Fare, Howe, Wenzel), 10 December, Sheboygan (Bridge, Prestby, Schwarz, Yoerger), 10, 17, 18 December, Milwaukee (Cullen, Herrmann, Korducki, Prestby).

**Bohemian Waxwing**—The 2010–2011 season was a very good year for this waxwing species with reports from 28 counties. This number compares to 16, 20, and 12 counties that reported in the last 3 years respectively. Maximum number of 800 on 6 February, Ashland County (Brady).

**Cedar Waxwing**—Reported in 34 counties with maximum number of 200 on 15 January, La Crosse County (Jackson). Last season 45 counties reported this waxwing species.

**Lapland Longspur**—Reported in 39 counties with maximum number of 335 on 18 December on Peshtigo CBC, Marinette County (J. Campbell).

**Snow Bunting**—Reported in 59 counties with maximum number of 1000 on 10 December, Marathon (Hoeft) and 12 December, Taylor Counties (Risch).

**Common Yellowthroat**—One bird reported 7 December at Vernon Marsh, Waukesha County (Gustafson).

**Palm Warbler**—Two separate sightings 3, 5 December at South Metro Pier and McKinley Park, Milwaukee County (Gustafson, Feuersenger). See "By the Wayside."

**Yellow-rumped Warbler**—Eighteen individuals found on 6 CBCs with maximum number of 11 on Kenosha CBC. Reported in 9 southern counties as far north as Door (T Wilson) and Marquette (Fig. 7), (Fissel, Richards). Earliest report on 3 December, Milwaukee County (Gustafson). Other December reports: Crawford (West), Grant (Legler), Ozaukee (Frank), and Waukesha Counties (Fissel). Last reported 1 January, Sheboygan (Scheiman) and 25, 26 January at Wehr Nature Center, Milwaukee Counties (Mooney, Szymczak).

**Wilson's Warbler**—One individual lingered until 3 December at South Metro Pier, Milwaukee County (Gustafson). See "By the Wayside."

**Eastern Towhee**—Three individuals found on 3 CBCs: Hustisford, Madison, Owen. Reported in 2 counties: 12 January, Clark (Risch), 21 January, Crawford (Kirschbaum).

**American Tree Sparrow**—Reported in 59 counties with maximum number of 216 on 14 December on Blanchardville CBC, Iowa County (Block, Engel).

**Chipping Sparrow**—One individual found on Pardeeville CBC. Reported in 3 counties: 15 December Pardeeville CBC, Columbia (Martin), 22 December Meadow Valley CBC, Wood (Yoerger), 24 January, Eau Claire (Lind).

**Field Sparrow**—Two individuals found on 2 CBCs: Madison, Milwaukee. Reported in 2 counties: 17, 18 December, Dane (Willard), 18 December, Milwaukee (Szymczak).

**Vesper Sparrow**—Reported in 2 counties: 1 December, Marquette (Christensen), 4 December, Kewaunee (Swelstad).

**Savannah Sparrow**—Four individuals found on 4 CBCs: Cassville, Milwaukee, Palmyra, Pardeeville. Reported in 5 counties: 14 December, Racine (Howe), 13, 16, 18 December, 19 January, Milwaukee (m. obs), 16 December, Columbia (Christensen), 2 January, Grant (A. Holschbach), 28 January–21 February, Manitowoc (Domagalski, Sixel)).

**Fox Sparrow**—Nineteen individuals found on 14 CBCs with maximum number of 3 on Waukesha CBC. Reported in 9 counties com-

pared to 23 last season: 4 December (Jakoubek), 5 December, Dane (Tessen), 4, 5, 7, 9 December, 8 January, Milwaukee (Bontly, Abert), 14 December, Jefferson (Fissel, Schwarz), 16, 18 December, Rock (Yoerger), 18 December, Milwaukee (Flores, Wiskowski), 18 December, 10 February, Racine (Hoy Audubon, DeBoer), 18, 25 December, 19 January, Waukesha (Gustafson, Szymczak, Weber), 22 December, Crawford (A Holschbach), 2–22 January, Ozaukee (S Cutright), 4, 10, 23 January, 19 February, Dane (Kreitinger, Thiessen, Schwarz), 16 February, Iowa (Tessen).

**Song Sparrow**—Reported in 25 more southern counties with reports as far north as Brown, Calumet, Manitowoc, Portage, and Waushara. Maximum number of 11 reported on 16 December Beloit CBC, Rock County (Yoerger).

**Lincoln Sparrow**—Reported in 2 counties: 3 January, Grant (Ouren), 5 January, Sauk (Tessen).

**Swamp Sparrow**—Reported in 9 southern counties with Manitowoc the most northern: Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Grant, Rock, Sauk, Walworth, and Waukesha.

**White-throated Sparrow**—Reported in 20 southern counties as far north as Brown, Buffalo, Door, and Waupaca. Maximum number of 10 reported on 9 January, Milwaukee County (M Goodman).

**Harris's Sparrow**—One individual found on Waterloo CBC. Reported in 2 counties: 14 December–23 January, Jefferson (m. obs), 3 January, Grant (Ouren).

**White-crowned Sparrow**—Total of 31 individuals found on 14 CBCs with maximum number of 6 on Columbus CBC. Reported in 12 southern counties as far north as Buffalo and Manitowoc.

**Golden-crowned Sparrow**\*\*—One individual discovered at Eagle Optics in Middleton by McDowell 20–31 December, (Fig. 8) Dane County (m. obs). See “By the Wayside.”

**Dark-eyed Junco**—Reported in 67 counties with maximum number of 572 on 14 December on Blanchardville CBC, Iowa County (Block, Engel). Not reported in Iron, Langlade, Menominee, Price, or Rusk.

**Summer Tanager**—One individual photographed 6 December Ripon, Fond du Lac County (McGowan).

**Northern Cardinal**—Reported in 65 counties with maximum number of 76 on 14 December on Blanchardville CBC, Green County (Stotz). Not reported in Douglas, Iron, Langlade, Menominee, Price, Sawyer, or Waushara.

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak**—One individual found during the count week on (Kenosha) CBC. Four reported in 3 counties: 2 on 11 December, Kenosha (Hoffmann), 23 December, Richland (Hirschys), and 23 February, Shawano (Motquin).

**Red-winged Blackbird**—Reported in 21 counties with maximum number of 85 on 5 February, La Crosse County (Jackson). Northernmost report 27 December Rhinelander, Oneida County (D. and S. Scheiman).

**Eastern Meadowlark**—Six individuals found on 5 CBCs: Brussels 2, Columbus 1, Fond du Lac 1, New Franken 1, Shawano 1. Reported in 3 counties: 15–22 December, Milwaukee (Flores, Wiskowski, Herrmann, Holton, Petherick, Sloan), 19 December, Door (Lukes), 29 January, 5 February, Rock (Jakoubek, Yoerger).

**Western Meadowlark**—One individual lingered in Brown County until 3 December (Baumanns). A probable early migrant was reported 19 February at Belmont State Natural Area, Lafayette County (Allen).

**Meadowlark species**—Nine individuals found on 7 CBCs. Reported in 2 counties: 15 December, Dodge (Bontly), 18 February, Grant (Allen).

**Rusty Blackbird**—Three individuals found on 3 CBCs: Bayfield, (Luck), Madison, Mt. Horeb. Ten sightings reported in 5 counties: 18, 26 December, Dane (Heikkinen, Prestby, Stutz), 31 December, 29 January, 24 February, Waukesha (T Wilson, Szymczak, Gustafson), 5, 13 January, Polk (Maercklein), 15 February, Racine (Gustafson), 16 February, Iowa (Tessen).

**Brewer's Blackbird**—Six individuals reported on the Randolph CBC.

**Common Grackle**—Total of 25 individuals found on 10 CBCs with maximum number of 10 on New Franken CBC. Reported in 11 counties: Ashland, probably overwintered,





Figure 9. Hoary Redpoll at the home of the photographer Ryan Brady, west of Washburn in Bayfield County on 26–27 February 2011.



Figure 10. Hoary Redpoll (right) with Common Redpoll for comparison by Ryan Brady at his home in Bayfield County, 26–27 February 2011.

(Brady), Bayfield, probably overwintered, (Brady), Iowa (Martin), Kenosha (Dixon, Hoffmann), Marathon (Hoeft), Milwaukee (Abert), Oneida (Kavanaghs), Taylor (Risch), Vernon (Forchione), and Waukesha (Gustafson). Maximum of 3 reported 27 February, La Crosse County (Mitchell). Common Grackle was found in just 6 counties last season.

**Brown-headed Cowbird**—Reported in 18 counties with maximum number of 45 on 14 December on SE quadrant of Blanchardville CBC, Iowa County (Gabanski, Willard).

**Baltimore Oriole**—One individual photographed 5 December, Columbia County (Bartholomai).

**Pine Grosbeak**—An outstanding showing of this irruptive finch with reports in 14 mostly northern counties as far south as Kewaunee (Mueller, Piaskowski, J. and P. Trick, Schiffman) and Winnebago (Ziebell). This compares to sightings in only 6 counties last season and 8 in 2008–2009, while 23 counties reported Pine Grosbeak in 2007–2008. Maximum number of 60 mostly female or immature birds was reported 16 January, Bayfield County (Brady).

**Purple Finch**—Reported in 43 counties with maximum number of 40 on 18 December, Outagamie County (Sachs). Sightings reported from these northern counties: Douglas, Florence, Forest, Marinette, Polk, Rusk, and Vilas.

**House Finch**—Reported in 49 counties with maximum number of 100 on 18 December on the Madison CBC, Dane County (Evanson).

**Red Crossbill**—Fourteen individuals found on 4 CBCs: Baraboo 2, Fiefeld 5, Lake-wood 2, Three Lakes 5. Reported in 6 counties during each of the 3 winter months: Ashland, Florence, Forest, Oneida, Portage, and Vilas with maximum number of 36 on 26 January, Vilas County (J Baughman).

**White-winged Crossbill**—Total of 227 individuals found on 9 CBCs with maximum number of 54 on Phelps CBC. Reported in 10 counties during each of the 3 winter months: Ashland, Douglas, Forest, Lincoln, Oneida, Outagamie, Rusk, Taylor, Vilas, and Waukesha (Wilson). Maximum number of 29 reported on 17 December on Clam Lake CBC, Ashland (Brady) and 19 December on Manitowish Waters CBC, Vilas Counties (NLDC birders, David).

**Common Redpoll**—A modest irruption year with reports in 24 counties as compared with 48, 65, and 14 counties reporting the past 3 respective seasons. Reported in these more southern counties: Crawford, Dane, Grant, Lafayette, Milwaukee, Racine, and Waukesha. Maximum number of 115 reported on 31 December on Armstrong Creek CBC, Forest County (Domagalski).

**Hoary Redpoll\*\***—Six photos or reports were documented and approved by the Records Committee: 26, 27 December, Milwaukee (Gustafson, Lubahn), 27 January, 14 February, Ashland (Buckardt, DeWitt), 10 February, Dane (Allard), 26, 27 February (Figures 9 and 10), Bayfield (Brady), 26 February, Sawyer (Pertile), 27 February, Door Counties (Rutledge). See “By the Wayside.”

**Pine Siskin**—Reported throughout the state in good numbers with reports in 59 counties. Maximum number of 125 reported on 25 February, Oneida County (Paulios). This compares to 40, 66, 32 counties reporting the past 3 respective seasons.

**American Goldfinch**—Reported in 69 counties with maximum number of 201 on 18 December Peshtigo CBC Marinette County (J. Campbell). Not reported in Langlade, Menominee, or Waushara.

**Evening Grosbeak**—Reported in 8 counties: Florence (Domagalski, Kavanaghs, Strelka), Forest (m. obs), Iron (Brandt), Marinette (Kavanaghs, Swelstad), Oconto, (Kavanaghs), Oneida (Bridge, Prestby, Yoerger), Portage (Pendergast, Stoik), and Taylor (Risch). Maximum number of 100 reported 31 December, Forest County (Duchek).

**House Sparrow**—Reported in 58 counties with maximum number of 520 on 26 February Bay Beach Wildlife Sanctuary, Brown County (Rickaby).

## CONTRIBUTORS

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Sandhill Crane pair by Jeff Virant

## “By The Wayside”—Winter 2010–2011

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*Some of the species documented with reports this season as rare or uncommon include Barrow’s Goldeneye, Black-legged Kittiwake, Tree Swallow, Cave Swallow, Palm Warbler, Wilson’s Warbler, Golden-crowned Sparrow, and Hoary Redpoll. Below are selected descriptions of some.*

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### **BARROW’S GOLDENEYE** *(Bucephala islandica)*

**18 December 2010, Sheboygan River mouth, Sheboygan County**—I first spotted this bird by scoping towards the mouth of the Sheboygan River from the Blue Harbor Resort. It was among a large flock of Common Goldeneye, scaup, and Red-breasted and Common Mergansers that had rafted in the closest open water of the now-frozen river. A scope (20–60×, 80 mm) was essential because the flock was approximately 300 yards down river and the piers were icy and too dangerous to walk. The Barrow’s Goldeneye stood out from the Common Goldeneye because it had the black from the back extending further down the sides, and it had a black spur extending from the shoulder area down toward the waterline (but not reaching the waterline). Additionally the white patch between the bill and the eye was crescent shaped, not oval as on the Common Goldeneye. The Barrow’s and Common Goldeneye were similar in size. A short time later I moved to

North Point and was surprised to see another (I though) adult male Barrow’s Goldeneye very close to shore, easily viewable with just binoculars. Additional field marks were seen at this time. I was able to count the white dots extending rearward over the scapulars from the shoulder area (there were six). I also saw the two white lines in the black area between these white dots and the white of the sides. The forward white line seemed to be broken in a group of white dashes. Also readily apparent at this very close range and in contrast with the Common Goldeneye was the steep forehead and the shorter, stubby black bill. Both species had yellow eyes and white breasts. The Barrow’s Goldeneye remained at this location for about 5 minutes and then flew south, landing near the north pier among another raft of ducks. I drove back to the pier, but by the time I arrived, this raft had disappeared. I returned to the river and saw the raft in its original location. There was only one Barrow’s Goldeneye in the raft. My suspicion is that the raft was spooked, that the majority of

the birds moved to the north side of the north pier with the Barrow's Goldeneye moving to North Point, and then eventually a regroup occurred at the original location. I cannot rule out the possibility of two Barrow's Goldeneyes in the area, so it will be something to look for.—*Thomas C. Wood, Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin.*

**BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE**  
(*Rissa tridactyla*)

**7 December 2010, Chequamegon Bay, Bayfield County**—Ryan Brady had reported a juvenile Black-legged Kittiwake in Washburn earlier in the morning. I searched the Washburn waterfront without finding the bird and then moved to the Bono's Creek boat landing. As I scanned the bay, I noticed a Ring-billed Gull sized bird flying north-easterly. I noted a relatively stiff wing beat when the bird flew in my direction. The bird appeared very bright white and a couple times I thought that I could see a yellow bill. The underside and tail were unmarked white. The back of the head and neck appeared to be darker than the front of the bird. The underside wing tips showed only a very small amount of black, perhaps an inch or a little more. Not having any experience with an adult Black-legged Kittiwake, I consulted my Sibley guide and found that the adult Black-legged Kittiwake was a close match. I re-found the bird and verified the ID.—*Tim Oksuta, Ashland, Wisconsin.*

**TREE SWALLOW**  
(*Tachycineta bicolor*)

**3 December 2010, South Metro Pier in Oak Creek, Milwaukee**

**County**—Try as I might, I could not be sure I was seeing any blue-green backs on these 2 swallows, even with good light. Mostly, they appeared more brownish-gray backed. The undersides were completely white, with dark under wings. The dark crown extended just past (below) the eye in a straight line (no white around the eye), forming a sharp contrast with the white throat. In flight, there was a slightly forked tail, which was barely noticed during some aerial maneuvers, but evident most other times. In my previous observation (29 Nov.) report, the same traits were noted, but with better light and a little closer range.—*Dennis Gustafson, Muskego, Wisconsin.*

**CAVE SWALLOW**  
(*Petrochelidon fulva*)

**29 October and 3 December 2010, South Metro Pier in Oak Creek, Milwaukee County**—Summarizing key points seen 3 December were the pale rump, square tail, buff/cream color throat, (blending into white undersides), forehead a little lighter than crown, but not white (color not seen clearly today), pale nape, and cheeks the same color as the throat (which gives it a dark capped appearance I have noticed each time). A Sharp-shinned Hawk I had seen nearby earlier made a pass at the 3 swallows (2 Tree Swallows also present), but fortunately missed them and continued on.—*Dennis Gustafson, Muskego, Wisconsin.*

**PALM WARBLER**  
(*Setophaga palmarum*)

**3 December 2010, South Metro Pier in Oak Creek, Milwaukee County**—The call notes of a Yellow-rumped Warbler alerted me to 2 warblers in a brushy area along the sewage treatment plant wall. A second, higher pitched call note (only given once) told me the 2<sup>nd</sup> warbler was another species. Observed first was the continual tail pumping of this warbler (both perched and on the ground). From below the overall body color was a very dull yellow, a little brighter towards the rump. Some streaking was present on the breast (very diffuse, not sharp). Above, the body was primarily a dull gray or gray brown. Two faint lighter wing bars were present. There was a dark horizontal line through the eye and a lighter line above that. The throat was pale (off white/cream).—*Dennis Gustafson, Muskego, Wisconsin.*

**5 December 2010, McKinley Park, Milwaukee, County**—Size and shape about Yellow-rumped Warbler, overall drab grayish-brown color, somewhat lighter on the belly. Slightly buffy edges to greater and median coverts giving the appearance of weak or faint wing bars. Dark tertials and secondaries edged grayish forming a grayish wing panel. Visible primaries appeared all-dark. Very striking long pale grayish supercilium reaching well behind eye. Contrasting to this, a dark eyestripe. A fine malar stripe of darker color going down towards sides of breast where splitting up into a fine streaking on the sides and the flanks. Most characteristic features (apart from the stripy appearance of the

bird's head) noted at once were the yellow undertail coverts, which were the only colorful part of the otherwise drab looking bird. Bill and legs appeared dark.—*Matthias Feuersenger, Mannheim, Germany.*

**WILSON'S WARBLER**  
(*Cardellina pusilla*)

**3 December 2010, South Metro Pier in Oak Creek, Milwaukee County**—A scolding Song Sparrow drew my attention. Upon investigating, I heard a different call note as well, and caught a flash of bright yellow. I managed to get several excellent views of this warbler, both perched and foraging on the ground. The undersides were very bright yellow (completely) and were otherwise unmarked. Upper body parts were uniformly yellow-green with no wing bars. The eyes (which stood out on the yellow face), were dark as was the thin warbler bill. The cap was jet black, ending at the yellow forehead.—*Dennis Gustafson, Muskego, Wisconsin.*

**GOLDEN-CROWNED SPARROW**  
(*Zonotrichia atricapilla*)

**20 December 2010, Eagle Optics, Middleton, Dane County**—It was hopscatching. That's what initially drew my attention to the large sparrow eating birdseed below our feeders at Eagle Optics. Foraging along with it were dozens of House Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos, a few American Tree Sparrows, and one Song Sparrow. Observing the big brown sparrow without binoculars, at first I thought I was looking at a juvenile White-crowned

Sparrow given its shape and long tail, but something about it seemed different—its breast was very gray. I reached for pair of binoculars and took another look at my mystery sparrow. Once I got a good view of its black and yellow crown, I was reasonably certain it was my first-ever Golden-crowned Sparrow.—*Mike McDowell, Madison, Wisconsin.*

**21 December 2010, Eagle Optics, Middleton, Dane County**—A sparrow distinctly larger than nearby juncos was seen perched and feeding on the ground. Most obvious was the bright yellow crown which became more streaked towards the back (a winter adult). It was outlined by thick black lines towards the front. A thin white eye ring was present and the thin black horizontal line extending behind the eye. The face, throat, breast, and belly were all unmarked gray, a little paler on the throat. The bill was dark on top and paler below. The wings and upper back were rusty or tan, streaked with black and with two white wing bars. The lower back and tail were uniform gray, with a suggestion of tan coloring.—*Dennis Gustafson, Muskego, Wisconsin.*

**24 December 2010, Eagle Optics, Middleton, Dane County**—When I arrived, Mike McDowell from Eagle Optics was with five other birders and they had spotted the bird in the weedy patch behind the store parking and delivery area. I used 10×42 binoculars and a 20–60×, 80mm spotting scope. The best view was obtained when the sparrow perched in the open on an arbor vitae tree for a couple of minutes. This was about 50 yards from my position and provided an excellent scope look. The sparrow had a yellow crown, bordered on the sides by black.

There was a small strip of black feathering in front of the crown just above the bill. The back was brown with thick dark stripes. The wings were brown with two wing stripes. The forward wing stripe was much shorter than the posterior wing stripe. The under parts were plain unstreaked grayish brown and the rump seen in flight appeared tan. The tail was long and grayish brown. The bill was black on the top of the upper mandible and dull yellow on the lower mandible. This sparrow was noticeably larger than the Juncos which were nearby.—*Thomas C. Wood, Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin.*

#### **HOARY REDPOLL** (*Acanthis hornemanni*)

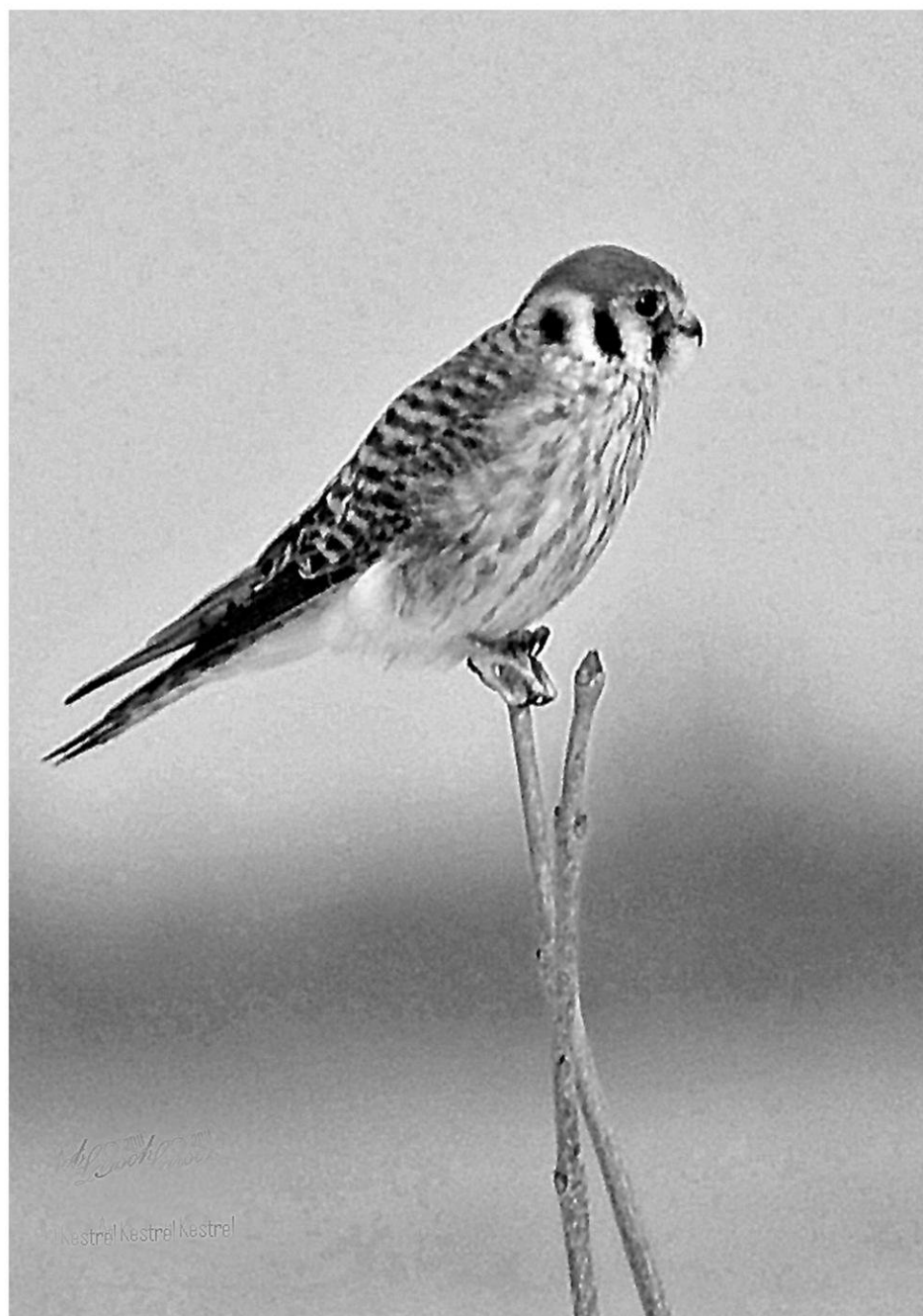
**27 December 2010, Coast Guard Impoundment, Milwaukee County**—A finch, smaller than adjacent Tree Sparrows (closer to the goldfinches), was spotted feeding at the top of a weed stalk. Its very white appearance caught my attention. Seeing the red circular crown and black face and upper throat told me I had a redpoll. Further study revealed extensive white on the cheeks, back, wing bars, and secondaries. The rump and under tail coverts were also white, with no streaking detected. Even streaking on the flanks was very thin and almost absent. The small bill was yellow. Only a hint of pink was present on the breast. The forehead angle appeared a little "steeper" (like a Barrow's Goldeneye compared to a Common Goldeneye), but that is subjective. In flight, the redpoll was almost as white as a snow bunting. This was one of the whitest

Hoary Redpolls I have ever seen.—  
*Dennis Gustafson, Muskego, Wisconsin.*

**26–27 February 2011, Bayfield County**—I looked out my window and saw a lone redpoll perched in the trees near my feeders. Upon closer inspection, the bird's head was rather pale, the bill looked fairly small, the breast had only a small amount of light pink, and the under tail coverts appeared white and unmarked. I ran outside and got remarkable views and respectable photos of the bird's front side from close range. Indeed my initial observations were confirmed, particularly as the bill was very small and triangular in profile, the under tail coverts completely white, and the sides/flanks showed few and very thin

dark streaks. Unfortunately, I never saw the bird's upperparts before it flew out of sight. However, the bird returned the following day, this time in the company of some Common Redpolls, and its identity was even more obvious as the head and mantle were a cold frosty grayish-white and the remiges were broadly edged in white. Like the under tail, the rump was white without streaking. Adjacent Common Redpolls of the same sex (male) were much browner above, had larger bills, thicker streaks on sides/flanks, some streaking on under tail coverts, and deeper, more extensive pink on upper breast.—*Ryan Brady, Washburn, Wisconsin.*





American Kestrel by Bob Larson

# WSO Records Committee Report: Winter 2010–11

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**T**he WSO Records Committee reviewed 36 records of 15 species for the Winter 2010–11 season, accepting 28 of them (78%). The bird of the season was undoubtedly Wisconsin's ninth Golden-crowned Sparrow, only the second state record since 1965. Other highlights included Rufous Hummingbird, Cave Swallow, Black-legged Kittiwakes, yet another Slaty-backed Gull, and six Hoary Redpolls south to Dane and Milwaukee Counties. All observers who submitted documentations were notified of the committee's decisions by e-mail.

## **ACCEPTED RECORDS**

### **Barrow's Goldeneye—**

- #2010-089 Sheboygan Co., 18 December 2010, T. Wood; 8 January 2011 (*See* photo in *The Winter Season: 2010–2011*), Gustafson; 9 January 2011, Mooney.  
#2010-090 Sheboygan Co., 27 February 2011, T. Wood.

The male (2010-089) was seen by many observers throughout the winter season, typically in the company of

many Common Goldeneyes for direct comparison. Key field marks noted were the white crescent between the bill and the eye, black shoulder spur, and squarish white spots within the black back. The head profile was flat-crowned with a steep forehead and stubbier bill than Common.

The February bird was a female seen at close range with Commons. It was described as having a steeper forehead, more pronounced "bulge" at the back of the head, and a distinctly shorter and stubbier bill when side-by-side with female Commons. It also had a bill that was nearly all orange except for a black tip (nail) and a small black patch on the top of the bill at the center.

### **Black-legged Kittiwake—**

- #2010-091 Bayfield Co., 7–9 December 2010, R. Brady (photos) (*See* *The Winter Season: 2010–2011*); 7 December 2010, Oksiuta).

Three individuals were seen together, including two juveniles and one adult, the latter very rare in the state and much of the interior U.S.

The juveniles showed a distinctive black “M” on the upperwings amidst an otherwise grayish back and whitish-gray flight feathers. Both had a bold black neck collar, black ear spot, black bill, and a slightly forked white tail with black terminal band. They were smaller and slimmer than adjacent Ring-billed Gulls. The adult was similar in size and shape but showed solid gray back, only a dusky gray ear patch leaking onto the nape, and an entirely yellow, unmarked bill. In flight, the adult’s wingtips both above and below featured only a small triangle of black, completely lacking any white.

**Slaty-backed Gull—**

#2010-106 Douglas Co., 19 December 2010 to 30 January 2011, Bardon (photos).

This individual was seen in the Duluth-Superior harbor on both sides of the Wisconsin-Minnesota border for over a month. Excellent close-up images were obtained of the bird (on the Minnesota side) perched, in flight, and adjacent to Herring Gulls for direct comparison. The description and photos show the characteristic “string of pearls” on both the upper and underwing, which is formed by the white subterminal tongue tips on the outer primaries, most distinctively on p8. Also noted were dark pink legs, yellow eyes, moderate head streaking, black back, and wide white trailing edge to the wing, especially along the outer secondaries. Its size and structure were similar to Herring Gull. The observer took great care to eliminate superficially similar hybrids as potential identifications. It is possible this is the same third-cycle individual that was seen here in late

fall and early winter 2009, now in adult plumage.

**Rufous Hummingbird—**

#2010-105 Dane Co., 4 December 2010, Simandl (photos).

No written description was provided but photos (*See The Winter Season: 2010–2011*) reveal a small, short-tailed hummingbird with greenish back, rufous-orange sides/flanks, whitish throat and chest, and rufous-orange bases to nearly all tail feathers. Clearly a *Selasphorus* hummer, the short tail projection and extensive rufous bases eliminate Broad-tailed. Allen’s is eliminated because photos of the spread tail in flight clearly show the second innermost rectrices (tail feathers) are notched and not lanceolate.

**Tree Swallow—**

#2010-084 Milwaukee Co., 3 December 2010, Gustafson.

Seen by many observers through the end of November in the company of the Cave Swallow, these two individuals showed bluish-green upperparts from tail to crown, clean white underparts from throat to vent, dark underwings, no white above the eye and only slightly forked tails, eliminating all other possible swallow species. Only one other Tree Swallow has been found later into the winter season (7 December 1968).

**Cave Swallow—**

#2010-045 Milwaukee Co., 3 December 2010, D. Gustafson.

This record-late individual was first seen in late November and documented by many observers during the month. Lingering into December, this documentation noted the bird’s

squared off tail, pale orange rump, and rust-colored forehead. Most importantly, the throat and cheeks were pale buffy and highly contrasted the dark-capped head.

#### **Palm Warbler—**

#2010-102 Milwaukee Co., 3 December 2010, Gustafson.

#2010-103 Milwaukee Co., 5 December 2010, Feuersenger (photos).

Both birds were described as warblers that above were drab gray-brown with faint wing bars. Below, both were dull yellow and had some diffuse streaking but were highlighted by bright yellow undertail coverts. Both also had a creamy pale throat with dark eyeline and long light-colored supercilium. Gustafson also noted continual tail pumping when the bird was perched and actively foraging on ground.

#### **Wilson's Warbler—**

#2010-108 Milwaukee Co., 3 December 2010, Gustafson.

This record-late individual was bright yellow and completely unmarked below with uniformly yellow-green upperparts lacking wing bars or any white in the tail. Dark eyes stood out on the yellow face and most evident was a jet black cap that ended at the yellow forehead. Also noted was a distinctive sharp call note reminiscent of Winter Wren but a bit huskier.

#### **Golden-crowned Sparrow—**

#2010-094 Dane Co., 20 December 2010, McDowell, Prestby (photo) (*See The Winter Season: 2010–2011*); 21 December 2010, Mooney, Gustafson; 24 December 2010, T. Wood; 27 Decem-

ber 2010, Longhenry (photos); 30 December 2010, Reischel (photo).

This individual was seen and photographed by many observers over multiple days. Photos and descriptions indicate a large sparrow with brown back, long tail, two white wing bars, and entirely gray underparts from throat to belly. Most distinctive was a broad golden-yellow central crown bordered on each side by moderately broad black stripes running posterior from each side of the bicolored bill (dark above, pale below). This pattern of head plumage was inconclusively suggestive of an adult bird.

#### **Summer Tanager—**

#2010-107 Fond du lac Co., 6 December 2010, McGowan (photos).

Furnishing a rare winter record for the state, this individual was a bit smaller than a robin and largely olive-yellowish throughout. It was described as having a large, light-colored bill and photos support this, as well as the thin broken pale eye ring and olive wings (as opposed to dark or black in Scarlet). The bird ate shelled peanuts and suet from neighborhood feeders for several days.

#### **Hoary Redpoll—**

#2010-095 Dane Co., 10 February 2011, Allard (video).

#2010-096 Sawyer Co., 26 February 2011, Pertile (photos).

#2010-097 Bayfield Co., 26–27 February 2011, R. Brady (photos) (*See The Winter Season: 2010–2011*).

#2010-098 Ashland Co., 14 February 2011, DeWitt (photos).

#2010-099 Milwaukee Co., 26 Decem-

ber 2010, Lubahn (photos), Gustafson.

#2010-100 Door County, 27 February 2011, Rutledge (photos).

The Records Committee was delighted to receive photo/video support for all of the documented Hoary Redpolls this season. Most images helpfully included Common Redpolls in the same images for direct comparison. All showed “lighter” redpolls overall characterized by the following combination of features: (1) paler, silvery-gray mantle; (2) undertail coverts with zero or one thin dark streaks; (3) flanks with only sparse and/or thin dark streaks; (4) an unmarked white rump, and (5) a relatively short, triangular bill. However, bill size is variable and, as in several of the above records, not all Hoaries show the classically stubby bill typically depicted in field guides.

#### RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED

##### **Barrow’s Goldeneye—**

#2010-090 Milwaukee Co., 15 December 2010.

This female bird stood out amidst a raft of Common Goldeneyes due to its orange bill. Other features noted included an “egg-shaped” head, more slaty-grey body, and light-colored neck. Photos support the orange bill but the other listed features are not diagnostic between Barrow’s and the more expected Common. Moreover, a small percentage of female Commons—and Barrow’s/Common hybrids—show mostly orange bills, and in one submitted photo the bird’s head shape and bill size appear similar to adjacent Commons. The committee was intrigued by the photos but

they were too distant to be conclusive and the description failed to clarify key head and bill shape features needed to clinch this difficult identification.

##### **Mew Gull—**

#2010-101 Winnebago Co., 1 January 2011.

This gull was smaller than adjacent Herrings with a dark gray mantle, small unmarked bill, dark eye, and smudgy back of head and neck. However, this was the extent of the field marks noted, with no mention of body proportions/structure (e.g. slender shape, round head), primary pattern (bird was not seen in flight), leg color (not visible as bird rested on ice), or broad white tertial crescent. Overall, too many details were not seen or noted and thus Thayer’s Gull or even adult Black-legged Kittiwake, among others, are not confidently eliminated by this report.

##### **California Gull—**

#2010-093 Milwaukee Co., 19 February 2011.

This adult bird was identified based on its size being larger than Ring-billed but smaller than Herring, a darker mantle than Herring or Thayer’s, a dark eye, and thin bill with both dark and red spots. It was only seen resting/lying on ice and never in flight. Unfortunately, while the correct identification may have been made, the details seen and noted fall short of that needed for acceptance by a records committee. There was no mention of body proportions/structure, wingtip pattern or color, leg color, or amount and pattern of head streaking, all important features for winter gull identification. Size and

mantle color is also highly variable among gulls and varying viewing conditions. As such, other identifications such as Thayer's Gull, a hybrid, or unusual Herring Gull cannot be safely eliminated.

**Rufous Hummingbird—**

#2010-105 Dane Co., 4 December 2010.

The observer saw a hummingbird having rufous sides, some rufous on its wings and tail, "a little color" in the gorget (exact color not noted), and a green back. While likely a *Selasphorus* hummer based on this description, this level of detail does not allow identification to species level. The observer also commented on photos the homeowners shared that showed "the rectrices of a Rufous . . . wider than an Allen's." However, the observer did not see this feature him/herself and tail feather width is not completely diagnostic between the two species.

**Pine Warbler—**

#2010-104 Winnebago Co., 2 February 2011.

This bird came to a window feeder and picked suet from the ground for a few minutes of observation. It was described as very drab and larger than a kinglet. The observer also wrote, "Shape, size, bill, and behavior said warbler . . . It had an eye ring and wing bars. Throat, breast, sides, and belly were whitish. Head, back, wings and tail gray. Top of head appeared darker than the rest of the head." Unfortunately, this description leaves doubt that the bird was even warbler, let alone the species indicated. Although the identification may indeed have been correct, without more details options such as Cape May,

Orange-crowned, Yellow Warbler, and others are all possibilities based on what was written.

**"Audubon's" Yellow-rumped Warbler—**

#2010-088 Crawford Co., 22 December 2010.

Seen for only two minutes by a single observer, this warbler was about five inches long with an overall grayish-tan color, slight eye ring, and light streaking down the chest to flanks. It was said to have the "distinctive undertail pattern matching Yellow-rumped Warbler" but no details were given. It was felt to be an Audubon's instead of the expected Myrtle because it had brighter yellow spots on either flank, a yellowish wash throughout the throat, more white in the tail, a sharp call note, and a plain face. However, brightness of flank spots and the amount of white in tail are not diagnostic field marks between the two subspecies. Also, the committee had concerns that the documentation noted a "bright yellowish wash" through the throat but a separate email to Wisbirdn indicated much less confidently that the bird "appeared to have a yellowish wash through the throat." In this message, the observer also seemed to raise doubt about his/her own identification when finding a Myrtle at the same location a few weeks later. All in all, while the report is intriguing, there are too many gaps and inconsistencies in the documentation to accept this record.

**Golden-crowned Sparrow—**

#2010-094 Dane Co., 22 December 2010.

While the observer undoubtedly saw the bird in question, the descrip-

tion was limited to just the following phrases: “larger sparrow; yellowish crown, brownish sides on crown; brownish back, wings; ‘darker’ breast.” This does not eliminate White-throated Sparrow or perhaps even White-crowned Sparrow and is inadequate, on its own merit, for supporting the identification of such a rare species in the state.

**Hoary Redpoll—**

#2010-096 Sawyer Co., 26 February 2011.

Although very likely the same bird seen and photographed by Pertile the same day very near the same location (above), this observer’s description was limited to “almost looked leucistic in comparison to the other Common Redpolls.” There were no details on specific field marks of any kind and thus no support for the identification as written.

## WSO Awards—2011

**T**he Board of Directors of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology presented four awards on Saturday, 16 May 2011, at the annual convention held in La Crosse, Wisconsin—a Bronze and a Silver Passenger Pigeon, and two Certificates of Appreciation.

### BRONZE PASSENGER PIGEON AWARD

The Bronze Passenger Pigeon is given to individuals who have made exceptional contributions to the study

and appreciation of birds outside of service to WSO, particularly at the state or local level. The 2011 Bronze Passenger Pigeon was awarded to Fred Leshner (Fig. 1) for long period of service on behalf of birds in the La Crosse area. Fred has birded the Mississippi River Valley for more than 60 years in Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota and served as President for the ornithological societies in all three states during that time (1983 in Wisconsin). He was a charter member of the La Crosse

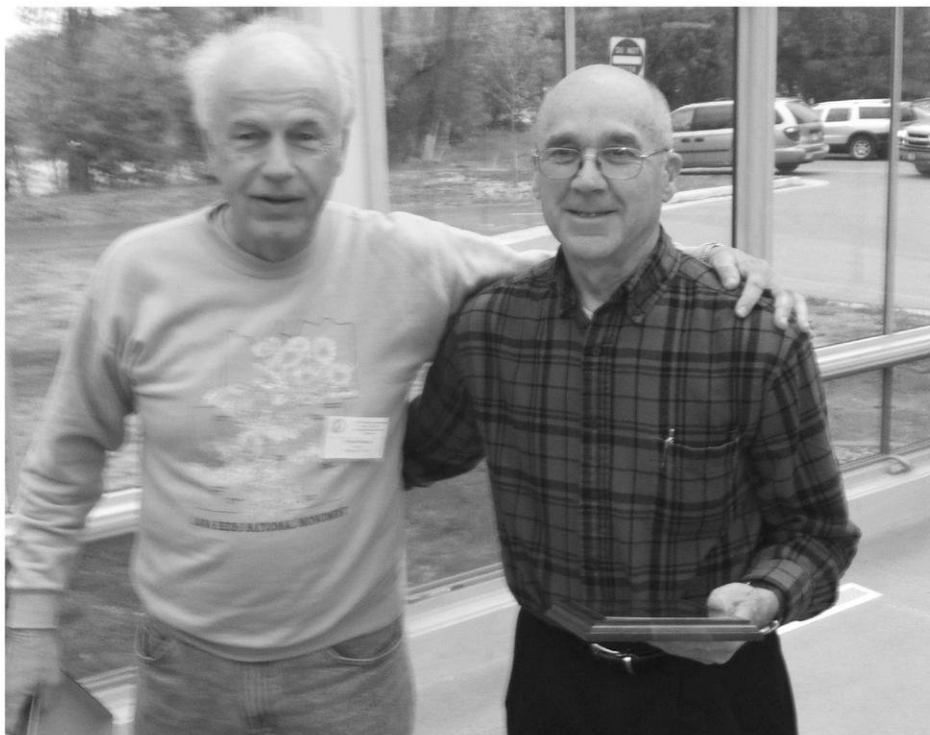


Figure 1. WSO Awards Chair, Daryl Tessen (left), presenting the 2011 Bronze Passenger Pigeon Award to Fred Leshner (right).



Audubon Society in 1965 (now the Coulee Region Audubon Society). Fred has been a field trip chair for the local Audubon, and the compiler, as well as participant, for the La Crosse Christmas Bird Count for many years. He has been a volunteer on the observation deck at Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge, was a field observer for the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas and author of several species accounts, has conducted Breeding Bird Surveys (BBS) for many years, and helped with Kirtland's Warbler surveys in the Black River State Forest in the 1990s. He was a contributing writer for several editions of Wisconsin's Favorite Bird Haunts, has led field trips for WSO along the Mississippi for many years (the Lansing Loop trip), and was one of the organizers for the 1990 tri-state convention in La Crosse.

Fred's greatest outreach to beginning birders was probably the birding workshops he organized and conducted from 1983 to 1990 at Pigeon Lake Field Station called "Birding in Northwestern Wisconsin" and "Birding the Upper Mississippi Valley" started in 1988. These events introduced many to birding in this area of Wisconsin and made many of the attendees life-long birders.

The Society is proud to present the 2011 Bronze Passenger Pigeon to Fred Leshner for his outstanding contributions to birding, not only in Wisconsin, but also in Iowa and Minnesota.

#### **SILVER PASSENGER PIGEON**

The Silver Passenger Pigeon Award is given to individuals who have served the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology in an outstanding and dedicated man-



Figure 2. Scott Baughman, recipient of the 2011 Silver Passenger Pigeon.

ner—both in quality and length of service to the Society.

The 2011 Silver Passenger Pigeon was awarded to Scott Baughman (Fig. 2). Scott served as Secretary of WSO from 1993–1996, Chair of the Convention Committee from its inception for six years, on the Records Committee for five years, and has helped lead many of the WSO field trips over the years.

The Society is pleased to present the 2011 Silver Passenger Pigeon Award to Scott Baughman for his many efforts on behalf of WSO.

#### **CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION**

The Certificate of Appreciation is given to individuals who have already



Figure 3. Jeff Baughman (left) and Thomas Schultz (right) receiving their 2011 Certificates of Appreciation.

received a Silver Passenger Pigeon Award but continue to serve WSO in various capacities. Two Certificates were presented for 2011.

The 2011 Certificate of Appreciation given to Jeffrey Baughman (Fig. 3) reads in part:

“Whereas Jeffrey Baughman has continued to serve the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Inc. with enthusiasm and diligence since receiving the Silver Passenger Pigeon in 2004; has served as co-chairman for the Society’s Field Trips, lending his expertise and patience for the past 24 years (1987-

current); served as President of the Society during 2004–2005, at which time he originated the Convention Committee, serving on that committee as Chair for the field trips during conventions; was a major contributor to Wisconsin’s Breeding Bird Atlas; and served on the Records Committee;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Inc. expresses its grateful appreciation to Jeffrey Baughman in recognition of his exceptional continuing service to the Society.”

The 2011 Certificate of Appreciation given to Thomas Schultz (Fig 3) reads in part: “Whereas Thomas Schultz has continued to serve the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Inc. with enthusiasm and diligence since receiving the Silver Passenger Pigeon in 1994; and has served as co-chairman for the Society’s Field Trips, lending his expert knowledge, guidance, and patience for the past 24 years (1987–current); is current President of the Society (2010–2011); was a

major contributor to Wisconsin’s Breeding Bird Atlas; has made major contributions of his outstanding art work to the last three editions of Wisconsin’s Favorite Bird Haunts, plus various convention t-shirts, and has served on the Records Committee;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Inc. expresses its grateful appreciation to Thomas Schultz in recognition of his exceptional continuing service to the Society.”

# Report of the Annual Meeting

## 14 May 2011

### MINUTES OF THE 2011 ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING OF THE WISCONSIN SOCIETY FOR ORNITHOLOGY

The annual meeting of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology came to order at 11:25 a.m. on 14 May 2011 at the Myrick Hixon EcoPark, in La Crosse. WSO President Tom Schultz presided.

Welcome to WSO's 72<sup>nd</sup> annual convention, "Birding the Upper Mississippi and Coulee Region." Tom Schultz thanked the WSO Convention Committee for arranging this convention in La Crosse and voiced appreciation for the help and service of everyone involved. In particular, he thanked Dan Jackson, who served as WSO's local contact in La Crosse and who arranged field trips and enlisted local leaders.

Today, the convention is switching the scheduled order of the business meeting and lunch, because the food is late. We'll move as quickly as we can, Schultz said. He introduced WSO Treasurer, Christine Reel.

Christine Reel introduced the "Financial Report" section of WSO, *Annual Report for Members, May 2011* (WSO, 2011), which supplies a roadmap for the meeting. The WSO annual report will be printed in the winter issue of *The Passenger Pigeon*.

The 2011 financial report is pretty standard, Reel said. WSO Policies say

that anything spent should be covered by WSO member dues. We were in good shape in 2010/11 (cost, @\$24,000, versus income, @\$28,000), so members will face no dues increase. This financial situation is due mainly to WSO's increasing use of *eBadger Bird*, which saves \$6.70 per issue in mailing and printing costs.

Generous donations from WSO members included a sizable bequest from the estate of Thomas Ashman, which focused on youth education. WSO bequest funds were funneled partly to Bird Kits and general youth use. WSO Youth Education chair Barbara Duerksen is working with the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative (WBCI) Education Committee to plan other programs. Other donation support from WSO members has been good. Honey Creek gained over \$7,000.

Reel then turned to the financial report's summary, which had been arranged in tabular form, comparing 2008, 2009, and 2010 for WSO revenue and expenses, grants administered by WSO, and WSO balance sheets. Footnotes accompanying these three sections just explain some entries more definitively (e.g., the Miscellaneous Expenses footnote under Unrestricted Revenue tells what those expenses were in 2010), Reel said. Column figures under the *Passenger Pigeon* row entry record both funds received and funds spent for Color Printing. If you enjoy

the color pictures in the *Pigeon*, you could help with a specified donation, and Reel will make sure that the funds are applied to the proper account. Take time to look at the finances, Reel said, for this is what makes everything else happen.

Reel briefly covered WSO Restricted Revenue and Expenses (p. 3), calling attention to Honey Creek, where committee chair Levi Wood is spearheading a project on garlic mustard control. Grants administered by WSO and other nonbudget projects (p. 4) include nonprofit granting organizations with whom WSO has agreed to hold monies before funneling them out to specified uses. The WSO Balance Sheet (p. 5) shows that the Society holds over \$506,000 in assets and has no liabilities. Part of this total is for us to use (\$86,000), while the rest remains restricted in use.

Are there questions, Reel asked? No one responded. The Financial Report section of the *WSO Annual Report* was approved as presented.

President Tom Schultz said thank you to Christie Reel for her hard work as WSO Treasurer. She's done a bang-up job in reports and so forth, said Schultz.

WSO President Tom Schultz said to meeting participants, "You have before you published annual reports." [See The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Inc., *Annual Report for Members, May 2011* (Waukesha: WSO, 2011); hereafter, *Annual Report*.] The meeting proceeded.

### **Reports of Officers:**

President—President Tom Schultz said that he had received an email from the Iowa Ornithological Society,

asking if WSO were interested in co-sponsoring a fall meeting/convention later this year, 2011. Schultz replied that the Society had already scheduled an annual meeting in La Crosse in May and was planning a joint-meeting with the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative (WBCI) at the end-of-September/first-of-October 2011. Schultz plans to keep this Iowa offer in mind for future years. It's good to share ideas with our fellow states, he said.

Vice President—WSO Vice-president Carl Schwartz announced, and displayed, the availability of a special WSO cap (beige baseball cap, featuring Tom Schultz's Barred Owl image semi-encircled by "Wisconsin Society for Ornithology" in nonserif script). He presented a gift cap to Schultz. Speaking of T-shirts and caps, Schwartz said, people can also pick up Bird City T-shirts and hats. He said that he had Bird City handouts for convention attendees to peruse. When you get home, Schwartz said, think about it and see if your town can be a Bird City. Schwartz went on to trail issues at Honey Creek. The Honey Creek Committee, specifically, Levi Wood, has worked with the Sauk County Conservation Department to determine the scope of work and has hired a contractor. This is a way to use the money that you've so generously donated, said Schwartz. There's more to see on this property than birds, he said. Come see what your donation money has done to improve the WSO Honey Creek landholding. Schwartz said that he had on hand a few extra pledge forms for the Honey Creek Birdathon/Bandathon, which takes place next weekend, 21–22 May 2011.

The WSO Vice-president's other role, said Schwartz, is to determine a

place for upcoming annual conventions. In 2012, the WSO will meet back in Madison, after the passing of 23 years, this time at the Holy Wisdom Monastery. In 2013, WSO will meet in Ashland, for the first time since 1992, convening at the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center on Memorial Day weekend. For 2014, the centenary year of the extinction of the Passenger Pigeon, WSO is scouting the southwestern corner of the state, hoping to meet close to the Pigeon memorial at Wyalusing.

Concluding official business for the vice-president, it was moved, and seconded, that the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology hold its annual convention on 10–13 May 2011 in Middleton/Madison at the Holy Wisdom Monastery. All voted in favor of the motion.

Secretary—WSO Secretary Jane Dennis urged WSO members to be involved in Society workings. WSO is moving in new directions, she said, and would appreciate your applying your talents, “especially techies.”

Editor—WSO co-Editor Bettie Hariman said that she was willing to take member comments and questions as well as suggestions for improvements in *The Passenger Pigeon*. If WSO members have any money left, she said, the *Pigeon* color fund can always use a few bucks. Your donation money allows WSO funds to be used for conservation, for research, and the like, she said.

### **Reports of Committee Chairs:**

Awards—Awards Committee Chair Daryl Tessen said that WSO awards will be given to recipients tonight at the banquet. There are three different awards to be given to four recipients,

for a total of four awards. Tessen said that this is his eleventh year as Awards Chair, and he needs to make sure that we are not slighting anybody. If you know of someone who deserves appreciation, he said, please contact me for Gold (professional), Bronze (local), Green (conservation), and Silver (service to The Society) WSO Passenger Pigeon awards, and for Certificate of Appreciation (people still giving service). Tessen expressed fear and concern that we are forgetting someone. Please, he said, contact me, by September. Snail mail is very good, Tessen said, even telephone.

Badger Birder—Mary Uttech does a great job as *Badger Birder* editor, President Tom Schultz said, though she had recently contacted him saying that she would like to step down (after 11 years of service). Uttech would be more than happy, she said, to help you with transition. *Badger Birder* articles as well as the photos are now all contributed. If volunteering for the task of *Birder* editor, you would also become WSO Board member. In sum, the *Birder* editor position is now mostly formatting (though you can add/amend as you wish) and getting to be on the WSO Board.

Bird Reports Coordinator—WSO Bird Reports Coordinator Randy Hoffman recently handed over his Society duties to Joe Schaufenbuel. Schaufenbuel said that he appreciates getting the information for the seasonal reports. A lot of reports are now coming from *eBird*, he said, but we are still taking written submissions.

Bookstore—President Tom Schultz introduced Penny Fish, who is taking over the position of WSO Bookstore Manager. WSO has a barebones inventory, Fish said, mainly comprising

*Breeding Bird Atlas of Wisconsin and Wisconsin's Favorite Bird Haunts*. There are fewer than 200 *Wisconsin Birds—Field Checklists* in inventory, she said, though the checklist is to be updated soon. Fish said that everyone at this convention has been friendly and cooperative, and she thanks you a lot.

Conservation—Bill Mueller has been active as WSO Conservation Committee Chair, contributing regular updates to the WSO Board of Directors. He has sent a lot of information to Wisbirdn, now providing links to available information. Mueller has represented WSO in bird conservation advocacy throughout the year. He is preparing a lead resolution for the State of Wisconsin legislature. He is an active member of the strategic planning committee recently formed by the WSO Board of Directors. He has coauthored, with Scott Diehl and Noel Cutright, a WBCI Issues Paper, “Window Collisions and Birds” (<http://www.wisconsinbirds.org/collisionsbirds.htm>).

Field Trips—Field Trip Committee co-chair Tom Schultz said that there’s not much to report. Neither he nor co-chair Jeff Baughman could make it to all of the scheduled WSO field trips, but Daryl Tessen and Scott Baughman have helped out. There will soon be a WSO website page with field trips, he said. The description of, and schedule for, the next Costa Rica trip, 4 February to 7 March 2012, will be in the June/July issue of *The Badger Birder*.

Historian—WSO Historian Noel Cutright drew a laugh when he complimented President Tom Schultz for recording record attendance at a WSO annual business meeting by switching times with lunch.

Honey Creek—At the suggestion of

The Nature Conservancy (TNC), WSO Honey Creek Chair Levi Wood said, WSO applied for a Land Improvement Grant (LIP) from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR). Wood applied in October 2010; he reapplied (among fewer competitors) in December, and WSO got a small grant of \$5,000, requiring a match of \$3,600. The match is made up by the summation of \$12 per volunteer hour contributed. Jim Elleson and company have so far been working on garlic mustard by hand spraying the invasive plants. They started during the last weekend in April and have continued through May. Combating garlic mustard at Honey Creek has been done once this spring and hopefully will be repeated next fall, and again next spring. We may then get to the point of manual control.

Membership—See the numbers in the graph (*Annual Report*, p. 11), said WSO Membership Chair Jesse Peterson. From 2005, the high point of the last five years, WSO has experienced a 6.4% dropoff in membership. We’re in growth mode at the moment, he said: we added one member last year, representing a 0.01% growth rate. Please spread the word about WSO, Peterson said. That’s the way we get new members.

Website—President Tom Schultz said that the new WSO website would be coming out in the next couple of months, and that WSO Webmaster Lennie Lichter would like to step down. And please, WSO members, step up, Schultz said. There will be a new WSO website that is driven partly by the need for “forms” and also by the desire to be user friendly. This should be fun to see when launched.

Youth Education—WSO Youth Edu-

cation Chair Barbara Duerksen said that the Society could use support for its Youth Grants, and it does take donations. Duerksen will accept suggestions for WSO youth education activities.

That concludes committee reports, President Tom Schultz said. Let me introduce the Nominating Committee.

Bill Mueller, representing the Nominating Committee (composed of Mueller, Jesse Peterson, Penny Fish, and Dan Jackson), said that the committee had contacted the appropriate people for nominees, and they all had said "Yes." You'll find their names right here, on the annual report. Tom Schultz and Carl Schwartz, President and Vice-president, Neil and Bettie Harriman, co-Editors, Christine Reel, Treasurer, and Jane Dennis, Secretary, have all accepted a request to serve for another year. It was "so moved" that the named individuals continue in their designated positions. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

We will need volunteers to review the minutes of the 2011 WSO business meeting, Schultz said. Karen Johnson, Christine Reel, and Chuck Heikkinen volunteered.

President Tom Schultz thanked the WSO committee chairs and officers for all their hard work at every meeting. We'll continue the fine work of everyone, he said, with a few replacements.

A move to adjourn the 2011 business annual meeting of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology was seconded and approved. The meeting adjourned at 12:22 pm.

## FINANCIAL REPORT

WSO's Policies (adopted April 2005) state that annual dues payments

shall cover the cost of membership services—that is, all costs in providing *The Badger Birder*, *The Passenger Pigeon*, and other direct membership benefits, and the costs associated with maintaining membership and soliciting renewals and new members. The breakdown of those costs during 2010 is as follows:

### *Pigeon*—

Expenses for 2010 (4 issues)  
(not including color printing) \$18,802

### *Birder*—

Expenses for 2010 (11 issues) \$4,866  
Total publication costs \$23,668  
Membership expenses \$1,099

### **Total cost of**

**membership services \$24,767**

Membership dues received \$28,350  
Library subscriptions/  
back issues \$564

### **Total membership-related**

**income \$28,914**

The costs of membership services were significantly less than membership income during 2010. Once again, this achievement is in large part thanks to Membership Chair Jesse Peterson and *Birder* Editor Mary Uttech for making electronic delivery of *The Badger Birder* possible, and the nearly 600 members who save the organization printing and mailing costs by receiving our newsletter as a pdf file.

Your generous support of WSO continues, and donations during 2010 amounted to over \$38,000, including \$7,702 in support of WSO's Harold and Carla Kruse Honey Creek Nature Preserve in the Baraboo Hills. The donations include a sizeable bequest from the estate of Thomas Ashman, earmarked for supporting our youth projects. It is owing to your generosity



that WSO continues in a solid financial position. **Thank You!**

Of the total assets as of 31 December 2010 (\$506,769—*see* **III. WSO Balance Sheet as of 31 December**), the amount available to cover general operating expenses is \$86,816; the re-

mainder is restricted. All of the amounts listed as received in **Restricted Revenue** in Part I, as well as in **II. Grants Administered by WSO and Other Non-budget Projects** must be reserved for their intended use.

# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

## I. WSO Statement of Revenue and Expenses, 2008–2010

Unrestricted Revenue*	2010	2009	2008
Birder Adv/Back Issues	350	445	687
Convention	875	1,171	2,636
Donations-Unrestricted	2,370	3,976	2,148
Interest/Dividends	152	918	5,115
Membership Dues	28,350	28,145	26,255
Pigeon-Subscr/Back Issues	564	863	911
Color Fund	1,186	1,165	80
WSO Pubs/Bookstore	687	1,288	1,388
Miscellaneous**	2,654	143	543
<b>Total Unrestricted Revenue</b>	<b>37,188</b>	<b>38,114</b>	<b>39,763</b>

\* Unrestricted Revenue includes some amounts that are actually restricted as to use (e.g., donations for hotline and color printing in the *Pigeon*). They are included here because, if donations do not completely cover the costs, the Board of Directors is committed to covering them from general operating funds.

\*\* Miscellaneous Unrestricted Revenue during 2010:

- USFWS grant administration fee, \$2,570;
- sales of book by Charles Kemper donated by Charlie to WSO, with proceeds covering WSO's 2008 donation to help with improvement of his property as a natural area, \$70;
- Hotline donations, \$12;
- Rebate for bankcard use, \$2.

Expenses (Unrestr Rev)	2010	2009	2008
Administration	1,930	2,035	1,798
Awards	147	150	177
Birder	4,866	6,487	6,055
Field Trips	10	24	
Hotline	450	450	444
Membership	1,100	985	1,647
Pigeon	18,802	20,950	19,941
Color Printing	4,434	3,273	2,922
Publicity	19		69
Records	85	115	136
Schol/Grants	1,435	1,000	3,900
Treasurer	473	659	450
Website	319	499	232
WSO Pubs/Bookstore	240	403	534
Printing	241	237	
Miscellaneous*	681	147	1,733
<b>Total Expenses (Unrestr Rev)</b>	<b>35,232</b>	<b>38,558</b>	<b>45,471</b>

\* Miscellaneous Unrestricted expenses during 2010:

- Peregrine Falcon educational poster, created by Hoo's Woods Raptor Center, \$500
- Refurbish prairie-chicken mural, Buena Vista Grasslands Wildlife Area, \$175
- Youth education, \$6

<b>Restricted Revenue</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>
Duck Stamps	1,020	1,060	1,150
Endowment-Donations	110	5,396	362
Interest/Div/Cap Gains	613	1,590	4,312
Life/Patron Memberships	1,550	1,850	1,825
Honey Creek-Donations	611	521	1,541
Bandathon	7,091	5,752	4,747
Schol/Grants-Donations	306	396	241
Interest/Dividends	34	291	1,497
Youth Schol/Grants Dons*	17,605	926	195
WSO Pubs-Atlas Sales	1,196	3,528	2,698
Haunts (5th ed.) Sales	1,804	8,388	3,331
Miscellaneous**	1,351	3,284	1,210
<b>Total Restricted Revenue</b>	<b>33,291</b>	<b>32,982</b>	<b>23,109</b>

\* Youth scholarship/grants donations include a bequest from the Thomas Ashman estate.

\*\* Miscellaneous restricted revenue during 2010:

- Donations for WBCI meeting, \$621
- Sales tax transferred from convention and bookstore, \$610
- Superior field trip collection to cover Porta-Potty, \$120

<b>Expenses (Restr Rev)</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>
Duck Stamps	1,013	1,077	1,107
Honey Creek	7,609	2,419	2,564
WSO Pubs-Atlas/Haunts Sales	689	1,164	674
Haunts (5th ed.)		25,806	15,158
Youth Schol/Grants	300	350	300
Miscellaneous*	1,271	1,671	1,095
<b>Total Expenses (Restr Rev)</b>	<b>10,882</b>	<b>32,487</b>	<b>20,898</b>

\* Miscellaneous restricted expenses during 2010:

- WBCI meeting, \$621
- Sales tax on convention T-shirts and bookstore sales, \$531
- Superior field trip Porta-Potty, \$119

## II. Grants Administered by WSO and Other Non-budget Projects, 2008–2010

<b>Grants</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>
Atlas Mgmt Income	18	157	894
Atlas Mgmt Expenses			
Bird Kits Inc	8,511	900	1,576
Bird Kits Exp	-8,388	-635	-1,423
Convention Inc	11,242	6,910	9,481
Convention Exp	-11,242	-6,910	-10,981
Costa Rica Trip Inc		16,480	23,000
Costa Rica Trip Exp		-29,405	-10,075
Fly WILD/1 Bird 2 Habs Inc	1,100	540	1,349
Fly WILD/1 Bird 2 Habs Exp	-700	-6,242	-708
Grant-Bald Eagle Inc	1,832	397	921
Grant-Bald Eagle Exp	-1,832	-397	-892
Grant-Osprey Inc			
Grant-Osprey Exp			-1,968
Grant-USFWS Inc	14,320		
Grant-USFWS Exp	-10,748		
Grant-WNV Tracking Inc			1,071
Grant-WNV Tracking Exp			-954
IBA Quad 30 Campaign Inc			
IBA Quad 30 Camp Exp	-6,000	-1,000	-620
Nicaraguan F Gd Inc	1,477		

<b>Grants (Continued)</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>
Nicaraguan F Gd Exp			
Pur Martin Partners Inc		350	
Pur Martin Partners Exp	-100	-250	
SRSEF Inc	314	347	943
SRSEF Exp			
WBCI Gull Symp Inc			
WBCI Gull Symp Exp	-1,245		
WBCI IBA Migr Surv Inc			
WBCI IBA Migr Surv Exp	-3,741		-2,100
WBCI Outreach Inc	1,800	3,725	7,500
WBCI Outreach Exp	-1,800	-3,725	-7,500
Misc Inc			3,510
Misc Exp			-3,510

### III. WSO Balance Sheet as of 31 December 2010

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>
General Funds	212,483	195,858	218,290
Bookstore	560	620	5,190
Slides			1,447
Endowment	98,428	94,327	74,862
Atlas Mgmt	29,686	29,668	29,511
Schol/Grants	54,597	54,805	54,825
SRSEF	30,204	29,890	29,543
Inventory-WSO Pubs	48,916	52,530	30,355
Slides			1,665
Fixed Assets (Equip/Land)	31,895	31,895	31,895
<b>Total</b>	<b>506,769</b>	<b>489,593</b>	<b>477,583</b>

## ANNUAL REPORTS OF OFFICERS

### *President—Thomas Schultz—*

Buena Vista lands: WSO owns two parcels of land in the Buena Vista Marsh that are currently being managed for Greater Prairie-Chickens. Two things are currently in the works: one is a set of improvements to the current kiosk and displays that are taking place. In August of 2010 I had some communications with Linda Lyon regarding a request for WSO to provide funding for renovation of the habitat painting that is on display there. The board voted to contribute the requested amount of \$175. This is a portion of a larger kiosk renovation that is being undertaken. Also, I have

filed the necessary papers to re-apply for possible acceptance of these lands into a USDA Grassland Reserve Easement, which would provide WSO with a nice one-time income—IF our application is approved. We are still awaiting word about this.

Strategic planning: I am currently serving on the Strategic Planning Committee, an ad hoc group that is examining the future of WSO in order to possibly update our mission statement. We are exploring ways for keeping WSO viable as an important ornithological organization.

Conference phone for board meetings: For the last two board meetings, I have worked to establish long-distance participation from Ryan Brady, the

new Records Committee head—who lives in far northern Wisconsin. This has allowed us to experiment with two different modes of communication; one being the use of a conference phone, and the other was the use of Skype. The latter is accomplished via the Internet, and there is therefore no cost to WSO (unless we decide to upgrade the digital camera), and Ryan seemed to think it performed even better than the conference phone—especially with the added benefit of providing a visual view of our board members during the proceedings.

**eBird sponsorship:** Following communications that I had with Chris Wood of eBird, the board discussed the possibility of an annual sponsorship of eBird. Since most of our bird reports are now coming through eBird, it seemed to be a logical move. At our January meeting, the board voted to provide funding to help pay for the continuation of a Wisconsin eBird web portal—which commits an annual payment of \$1,500 during the life of the five-year contract.

***Vice President—Carl Schwartz—***

**Conventions:** The formal duties prescribed for the vice president revolve largely around securing a site for the following year's convention. To that end, I have worked with the Madison Audubon Society to host next year's 73rd annual gathering, partnering with the WSO Convention Committee, to return the convention to the state capital for the first time in 23 years. Seems high time given the large number of active birders and WSO members in that area, not to mention the abundance of birding hotspots in the vicinity. At this writing, the leading site under consideration for the con-

vention is the Holy Wisdom Monastery in Middleton. Tentative dates are 10–13 May 2012, the weekend prior to UW graduation. My thanks to Marsha Cannon and MAS executive secretary Karen Etter Hale for their help in arranging a site.

With the assistance of Ryan Brady, WDNR-WBCI Bird Monitoring Coordinator, plans for the 2013 convention center on Ashland, along the shore of Lake Superior at the foot of the Bayfield Peninsula. The Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center has been tentatively booked for Memorial Day weekend (23–27 May 2013). There are still some capacity issues to review in light of the growing attendance at recent conventions, but there is great interest in returning to the city, home of Northland College and the Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute, for the first time since 1992. (We also met there in 1980.)

And WSO is even looking ahead to 2014, when the organization will center its whole year around the national observance of the 100th anniversary of the death of the last Passenger Pigeon at the Cincinnati Zoo in 1914. WSO's own Dr. Stan Temple of UW-Madison is helping plan events nationally and here in Wisconsin. The Passenger Pigeon is commemorated in WSO's emblem and in the name of our ornithological journal. The board has decided it would be appropriate to hold that year's convention in the vicinity of the Passenger Pigeon Monument, high on a bluff in Wyalusing State Park, overlooking the confluence of the Wisconsin and Mississippi Rivers. Prairie du Chien is our first choice, if a suitable facility can be found. I'd appreciate hearing from

any member with thoughts on that matter.

**Strategic planning:** As vice president, I also am serving on the board's strategic planning committee, which is assessing the current health of our organization, examining similar organizations in other states and mapping a plan for the future to keep WSO healthy, vital, and responsive to both the needs of its members and the cause of bird conservation overall.

**Birdathon:** Ancillary to my duties as vice president are responsibilities that I hope are near and dear to many WSO members. First, as coordinator of the annual Honey Creek Birdathon/Bandathon for the past nine years, I want to thank folks for their past support and encourage all of you to join us next weekend (21–22 May) in the Baraboo Hills. And let me also say a special thank you to UW Professor Anna Pidgeon and her dedicated crew of banders for their work there.

Details are in the last issue of *The Badger Birder*, but the walk up the valley steps off at 8 a.m. It's an especially good year to be on hand to take advantage of a \$2,500 boardwalk repair and extension on the valley trail. Farther along, you can take note of efforts by Levi Wood's Honey Creek Committee to tackle invasive species (such as garlic mustard) on WSO land.

Last year we raised \$7,071, some \$1,300 more than the record set the previous year. Since many donors pledge a specified amount per species seen or heard, efforts were helped by the record 100 species tallied. It also marked the sixth straight year the Birdathon has recorded at least 90 contributors, a testament to the special

place that both the society and Honey Creek hold in members' hearts.

**Bird City Wisconsin:** WSO is a founding partner of Bird City Wisconsin, for which I serve as coordinator. It is a part-time paid position. Noel Cutright, the WSO past president who led the effort to establish Bird City, serves on the project's Steering Committee. Launched in February 2010, Bird City already has recognized 20 communities that have met specific criteria designed to strengthen urban bird conservation statewide. Stick around this afternoon to learn more about the difference this organization is making.

**Treasurer—Christine Reel—**See Financial Report.

**Secretary—Jane Dennis—**

As Secretary for the Wisconsin Society of Ornithology during 2010–2011, I recorded and reported on actions at the quarterly meetings of the WSO Board of Directors. During the year, the Board welcomed several new members. Maureen Leonard, from Milwaukee, replaced Sheldon Cooper as Research Committee chair; Ryan Brady, from Ashland, replaced long-serving Jim Frank as Records Committee chair; Joe Schaufenbuel, from Stevens Point, replaced Randy Hoffman as Bird Reports Coordinator; and Penny Fish, from Sheboygan, replaced Margaret Jones as Bookstore manager. WSO could be moving in new directions in several respects.

The WSO Board of Directors itself made movements in new directions on the Society's behalf. In July 2010, the Board decided that WSO would make substantial contributions both from its general operating funds and

from the WSO Important Bird Areas funds to support setting up the Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory, based at the Forest Beach Migratory Preserve in Ozaukee County. This could be the next exciting chapter in Wisconsin's ornithological development, said WSO Historian Noel Cutright. It could become a key site for monitoring, surveying, and research in the Great Lakes areas.

In April 2011, the WSO Board decided that the Society would be an "organizational friend" of the proposed Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge, which the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is exploring the possibility of establishing in southeast Wisconsin and northeast Illinois. The USFWS study area encompasses 350,000 acres of land in Walworth and Kenosha counties, Wisconsin, and McHenry and Lake counties, Illinois. If the proposed refuge were established, it could improve or restore from 10,000 to 30,000 acres of drained wetland basins along with historic prairie and forest habitats as well as link now-established conservation lands. Conserving habitat corridors between these existing protected parcels would enhance their conservation value.

The WSO Board of Directors embarked upon a Strategic Planning Process to envision the Society's future and determine how to move toward that future. WSO past-president and current *Passenger Pigeon* co-editor Bettie Harriman said that the Society owes it to the birders and birds of the State of Wisconsin that the members of WSO have a vision of where we are going. WSO was the place for birders to go in the 1960s; it has now been supplemented with other organiza-

tions. WSO wants to remain a place to go for birders of Wisconsin. With strategic planning, WSO can decide how this can happen. Once WSO has a vision of where it wants to go, along with the principles and values to guide its movement, the Society can monitor progress. Both the WSO Board of Directors and WSO members will participate. We need your input, your wants, your vision. WSO members will help set new directions for the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology.

***Editors, The Passenger Pigeon—Bettie and Neil Harriman—***

All four issues of Volume 72 of *The Passenger Pigeon* appeared in 2010. This year saw several changes in the personnel who contribute to our journal: the Springfield notes compiler changed from Marilyn Bontly to Andrea Szymczak; the Fall field notes compiler changed from Ted Gostomski to Bob Domagalski; and the change from David Kuecherer to Dennis Malueg as Art Editor was begun with both of them working on the Winter issue. The Editors sincerely thank Marilyn, Ted, and David for their work and contributions to the *Pigeon* and wish them "good birding" from now on. Please join us in welcoming Andrea, Bob, and Dennis as they carry on their respective tasks for your journal.

The Editors also appreciate the efforts of all those who contributed to every issue: Jesse Peterson and Tom Schultz for the President's Statement; Noel Cutright for 50 Years Ago in *The Passenger Pigeon*; Randy Hoffman for his Lessons From the Seasons column; Jim Frank for the WSO Records Committee Reports; and David Kuecherer for the art. We especially thank the

four seasonal editors for each season report – Marilyn Bontly and Andrea Szymczak for Spring, Randy Hoffman for Summer, Bob Domagalski for Fall, and Kay Kavanagh for Winter.

We again urge each of you who enjoys the color photos that appear in the *Pigeon* to help WSO cover the extra cost for this. Please send the WSO Treasurer, Christine Reel, your contribution to the *Pigeon* Color Fund.

And finally, thanks to each person who sent in words or pictures for us to publish in your journal.

#### ANNUAL REPORTS OF COMMITTEE CHAIRS

##### *Awards—Daryl Tessen—*

Awards to be announced at convention banquet.

##### *The Badger Birder Editor— Mary Uttech—*

Completed 11 issues of the newsletter. (Mary has asked to be replaced as editor.)

##### *Bird Reports Coordinator— Randy Hoffman—*

After nearly six years of service to the organization, I am handing over the reins to Joe Schaufenbuel. As of April 1, 2011, Joe is the new Bird Reports Coordinator for WSO.

Many changes have been made since I assumed the duties. First and foremost every season editor is new. When I came on board, the four seasonal editors had nearly one hundred years of experience in writing about and interpreting the seasonal events for the membership. Concurrent to their departure, the rapid use of eBird

changed the face of bird reports for the state.

An average of 60 to 80 paper copies per season was mailed to me in the mid 2000s. Much time was consumed manually going through these pages to glean the data for *North American Birds* and *The Passenger Pigeon*. In addition, a significant amount of time was given to updating the WSO forms, maintaining a mailing list, copying and mailing forms. The intervening years changed everything.

Today as many as 500 birders submit sightings to eBird seasonally. Only 10 or so persons still use the regular mail, and a few submit eforms from the WSO web site. This new medium for data collection and analysis is in its infancy, but great things can be expected in the future. Much better methods to evaluate trends in bird populations, hotspots for migration, or getting a handle on population size are but a few of the advances foreseen.

To get current with the new data interpretation, guidelines were developed and approved by the WSO Board. These guidelines instruct the season editors as to what data should and should not go into a seasonal report. Improvement is still needed in the interactive communication between birders submitting sighting data and the Records Committee Chair and Bird Reports Coordinator. With Ryan Brady and Joe Schaufenbuel, respectively, filling those positions, I would expect an improvement in our communication capabilities.

##### *Joe Schaufenbuel—*

As the incoming coordinator, I want to thank Randy Hoffman for his helpful guidance in getting me off to a good start. Changes in the WSO

Long and Short Documentation Forms are near completion. The hard work of others will soon provide us with a useful new tool in documenting the birds of Wisconsin. A native and kid birder from northeastern Iowa, I have lived in Wisconsin since 1986, first in Saint Croix Falls and for the past twenty years in Stevens Point. I look forward to meeting WSO members and serving you in the capacity of Birds Reports Coordinator.

**Bookstore—Margaret Jones—**

The Bookstore supplies WSO-published materials to the public, to resale outlets including nature centers, birding stores, and the ABA, and to educational settings such as universities and libraries. The Bookstore continued to sell several donated items in 2010; all proceeds from these sales reverted to WSO.

Total sales for 2010 were approximately \$3,600, with 2,126 items sold via 103 orders. Sales of *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Wisconsin* continued to be steady with 42 units sold. A total of 71 copies of *Wisconsin's Favorite Bird Haunts* was sold. "Paired for Spring" kestrel prints continued to sell steadily with 13 prints sold this year. The Bookstore appeared at the annual WSO Convention in Door County, and sales totaled approximately \$4,270. The WSO Board decided to sell WSO window decals on-site only as of 2010, due to shipping costs.

The Bookstore continues its relationship with the online Nature Mall. Total sales were \$213, resulting in earnings to WSO of \$56. As before, WSO earns a portion of Nature Mall sales only when Nature Mall is accessed via the Bookstore webpage link.

Total sales to resale outlets were \$1,336 with 20 orders filled.

Additional Bookstore Manager duties included:

- working closely with USPS to maximize shipping/handling efficiency while minimizing costs
- updating the Bookstore page of the WSO website as needed
- attending quarterly Board meetings
- facilitating sales via advertising in both *The Passenger Pigeon* and *The Badger Birder* and timely postings to Wisbirdn

**Penny Fish** has taken over as Bookstore Manager following Margaret's resignation.

**Conservation—Bill Mueller—**

During the past year as WSO's Conservation chair I have shared conservation-related information with WSO members through Wisbirdnet on a weekly or biweekly basis, providing links to a variety of bird conservation topics, from organization that included the American Bird Conservancy, the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative, BirdLife International, The Point Reyes Bird Observatory, the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Network, the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center, the Boreal Bird Network, and others. As part of the Bird Conservation Alliance, I have participated as WSO's representative in advocacy efforts throughout the past year.

At the present time and with the help of the WSO Board of Directors, I am preparing a Lead Resolution to be shared with the Wisconsin Legislature and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

As one member of a new committee within WSO's Board, I have



worked on the Society's new Strategic Planning Effort for 2011.

Along with Scott Diehl and Noel Cutright, I co-authored an update to the WBCI Issues Paper entitled "Window Collisions and Birds," which is available on the WBCI website at <http://www.wisconsinbirds.org/collisionsbirds.htm>.

**Education—Mariette Nowak—**

As Education Chair, I have promoted landscaping with native plants for birds. In the year since our last annual meeting, I have given 10 presentations on the subject and have written a number of related articles. Restoring native plants in our human-dominated landscapes is essential to maintaining the biodiversity of our country. There are simply too few natural areas left to sustain our birds and other wildlife species.

I also continue to coordinate work on a WSO video on Wisconsin birds to be distributed to educators, libraries, etc. If any WSO members are educators or other potential users of such a video, I would appreciate your suggestions and encourage you to contact me.

**Field Trips—Jeff Baughman and Tom Schultz—**

No written report.

**Historian—Noel Cutright—**

I continue to prepare the "50 Years Ago in *The Passenger Pigeon*" column that appears in each issue of our quarterly journal.

I also continue to correspond with WSO members and others about various historical happenings in the world of Wisconsin ornithology. I'm always interested in obtaining informative

material having a historical interest for deposition in the WSO Archives located at UW-Green Bay.

As time allows, I've been entering data from checklists from Mary Donald into eBird. I encourage others who have checklists lying around to do the same.

**Honey Creek—Levi Wood—**

No written report.

**Membership—Jesse Peterson—**

In 2010, membership remained steady relative to the previous five years. The renewal rate has remained steady in recent years and the number of new members in 2010 was very near the five-year average.

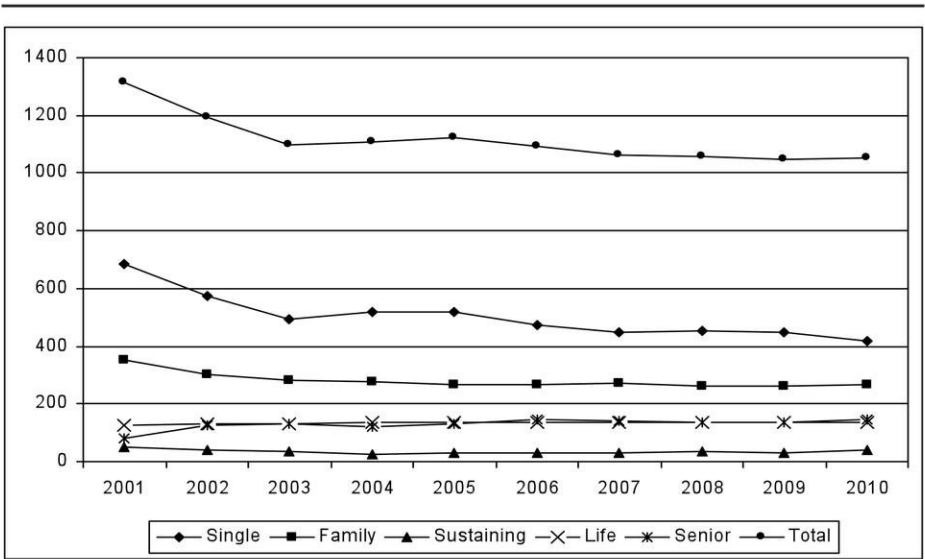
Membership activities and accomplishments throughout the past year include:

- Continued oversight of printing and mailing of *The Badger Birder*;
- Continued oversight of distribution of the *e-Badger Birder*, the electronic version of the WSO newsletter, to approximately 440 subscribers;
- Monitored and managed the publication exchange program;
- 26 current exchange partners;
- Managed the annual membership renewal activity via postal mail and e-mail;
- Three renewal notices as required
- E-mail reminders to try to minimize postal mail efforts and costs; and,
- Managed the new member "on-boarding" activity, including sending out a "Welcome" packet to each new member.

Total Membership at 2010 calendar year end

Category	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Single	685	572	494	520	521	473	450	454	449	418
Family	351	304	282	275	268	268	272	261	261	267
Sustaining	49	40	34	25	32	30	28	33	31	38
Life (1 of 4)		2	0	2	3	2	1	2	0	1
Life (2 of 4)	3	2	2	0	1	3	2	1	1	0
Life (3 of 4)		1	2	1	0	1	3	2	1	1
Life-Couple (1 of 4)		0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Life-Couple (2 of 4)	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0
Life-Couple (3 of 4)		0	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	0
Life	126	130	129	133	134	135	134	136	135	137
Life-Couple	0	0	1	3	3	10	10	10	13	13
Patron	6	7	7	8	8	7	7	7	6	6
Senior	79	126	131	120	129	147	141	137	137	147
Student	6	6	7	11	15	12	11	11	11	17
Honorary Life	4	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Board	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1313</b>	<b>1195</b>	<b>1096</b>	<b>1106</b>	<b>1122</b>	<b>1095</b>	<b>1065</b>	<b>1160</b>	<b>1050</b>	<b>1051</b>
New Members			48	95	74	43	34	46	72	51

Membership Trends 2001–2010



**Publicity—Sandy (Ursula) Petersen—**  
No written report.

**Records—Ryan Brady and Jim Frank—**  
Most notable was the addition of Prairie Falcon to the state list after an extensive review of records submitted over previous years.

The WSO Records Committee evaluated the following records by season:

Season	Reviewed	Accepted	Not Accepted
Winter 2009–10	16	12	4
Spring 2010	52	44	8
Summer 2010	24	21	3
Fall 2010	58	41	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>32</b>

Overall acceptance rate = 79%

Committee members for the Winter, Spring, and Summer seasons were Jim Frank (chair), Mark Korducki, Ryan Brady, Jerry DeBoer, and Steve Lubahn. After 20 years of exemplary service, Jim Frank resigned from the committee prior to the Fall season. Ryan Brady became Chair and Tom Prestby filled the fifth and final slot.

The Records Committee took advantage of WSO website improvements. Electronic rare bird forms were revised, the most significant change being the addition of confirmation pages e-mailed to the observer for saving and printing. The committee also developed its own page on the site, although it will take months or years to populate content and make it fully functional. With features such as bylaws and member profiles, state review list, documentation guidelines and forms, and archived records and seasonal reports, the page provides functionality for observers, transparency of committee activities, and a

centralized yet accessible repository for the state’s rare bird records.

**Research—Maureen Leonard—**  
I assumed the duties of Research Chair in summer 2010. While I had been provided with a set of qualifications the chair should have, I would also like to have input regarding how members of WSO want the organization to be involved with research projects.

I have had meetings with representatives of the Urban Ecology Center and the Yerkes Observatory to discuss possible WSO involvement at these sites in new and ongoing research, but no definitive plans or projects have been proposed.

I plan on contacting researchers around the state to highlight their projects on our website if they wish. I hope to include avenues for members to contact the researchers to participate if they need volunteers. We will also have citizen science opportunities, including the Milwaukee BIOME project and the Urban Ecology Center.

I have been pointed to an article by Dr. Samuel Robbins<sup>1</sup>, which outlines 89 questions that remained unanswered about birds in Wisconsin. These questions are an excellent starting point for research projects that the WSO can work on. In the coming year, I will be approaching other members of the board to prioritize these questions and to collect data to answer them. Many would be addressable using already existing records, but the legwork needs to be done, while others may require field projects.

Robbins, S. D. 1988. Some unanswered questions about Wisconsin

birdlife. *The Passenger Pigeon*, 50: 187–191.

**Scholarships and Grants—Michael John Jaeger—**

Four research proposals were funded for a total of \$1,892.33 in 2011 under the Small Grants Program:

- A Steenbock Award of \$392.33 was granted to Tom Klubertanz for “Cook Arboretum Forest Birds Research Project.”
- A \$500 WSO Grant was awarded to Kristen Malone for her project, “Genetic analysis of inbreeding in Wisconsin Sharp-tailed Grouse (*Tympanuchus phasianellus*) before and after a rapid population decline.”
- A \$500 Steenbock Award went to William Stout for his continued work on “An Urban Cooper’s Hawk Population and Nesting Study in the Metropolitan Milwaukee Area.”
- Another \$500 Steenbock Award was awarded to JoHanna Burton for “The role of interspecific competition on double-brooding in the Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*).”

**Website—Lennie Lichter—**

No written report. (Lennie has expressed a wish to be replaced following transition to the new website design.)

**Youth Education—Barbara Duerksen—**

Youth Grants Program—grants are awarded in spring and fall to students for bird research or education.

- **Fall 2010 grant:** The WSO Youth Grant Committee awarded a grant of \$200 to Nina Myszkowski of Richland Center, for her bird education grant proposal, “Field Guide for

Richland Center Birds in the Winter Season.” The field guide with photographs of local birds will be published for use in the school and local library.

- **Spring 2011 grant:** In April 2011, the committee awarded a grant of \$220 to Alison Hunter of Merrill for a bird education project, “Owl Fun,” in her 4-year-old kindergarten class at NTC in Merrill. The class enjoyed a visit from a Great Horned Owl from the Mead Wildlife education program and will use the educational items to learn more about owls.

Youth Education Coordinator activities of the past year:

- Held outdoor bird conservation workshops as a part of the Richland County Conservation Field Days for sixth graders.
- Attended WSO board meetings and education committee meetings of WBCI, the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative.
- Continued development of the bird kit project, a joint project of WSO and WBCI to introduce students to the common birds of Wisconsin and their habitats, with the use of a kit containing binoculars, a scope and tripod, field guides, and educational materials. Information about the bird kits is on the WSO and the WBCI websites. New kits have been placed with the Raptor Education Group in Antigo and the Neighborhood House in Milwaukee. Additional kits were offered at a discount to northern Wisconsin bird education groups with the aid of funds from the Thomas Ashman bequest. As a result, the following groups have received bird kits: CESA #11 of

Turtle Lake, Cable Natural History Museum, St. Croix Valley Bird Club of River Falls, Navarino Nature Center of Shiocton, Oconto County 4-H Club, Crandon Middle School, Wild Rivers Interpretive Center of Flo-

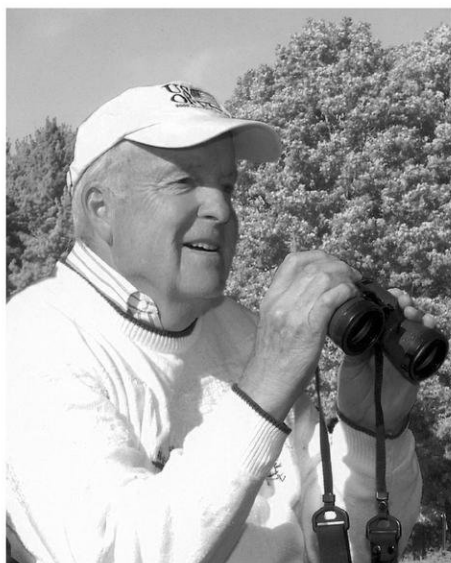
rence, Goodman-Armstrong Creek School of Goodman, The James Newman Clark Bird Museum of Eau Claire, and The Ridges Sanctuary of Bailey's Harbor.



KUECHERER, D.R.  
EASTERN KINGBIRD

Eastern Kingbird as illustrated by Dennis Kuecherer

**William “Bill” Hilsenhoff**  
**13 July 1929 – 16 June 2011**



No person's life can be reduced to a number, but when reviewing Bill Hilsenhoff's contributions to WSO and to Wisconsin birds, the number 1,685 is very instructive.

That's because 1,685 is the number of hits you get between 1958 and 2002 when searching on Bill's name in the online database of *The Passenger Pigeon*. Bill was an indefatigable contributor to the journal, and these hits represent the many articles he wrote, his species reports in the field notes section, citations of his articles by other authors and the many times his name appeared in indexes and on the list of WSO Committee Chairs.

Bill's interest in birds started with a merit badge in bird study that he earned as a Boy Scout. He joined WSO in 1955 at the age of 26, and submitted his first sightings to the journal's field notes section just three years later. And so began a lifetime of not just watching birds, but of compiling voluminous notes and data about them that he would later summarize into succinct and readable articles for *The Passenger Pigeon*.

In 1966, Bill took on the task of writing up the results from Wisconsin's many Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) for the journal. He continued as WSO's Christmas Count editor for an astonishing 34 years, publishing his final report in 2000 (along with an informative companion article that examined population trends over 60 years of Wisconsin CBCs).

He also carefully documented and wrote about spring migration in the Madison area, and particularly enjoyed birding in the University of Wisconsin Arboretum and at Picnic Point on the UW-Madison campus. In "What happened to the spring bird migration in Wisconsin?" (Fall 2002), he summarized a remarkable 40-year dataset of personal field observations from Madison as well as a variety of sites in northern Dane and southern Columbia counties. Volunteers are al-

ready at work entering Bill's records into Cornell University's eBird database, so his data will be available for future research efforts.

Bill served as the Winter Field Notes Compiler from 1966 to 1975, and was one of the original members of the Records Committee (1979 to 1982), serving as its chair for two of those years. He received the Silver Passenger Pigeon Award from WSO in 1978, a Certificate of Appreciation in 1989, and was one of the first recipients of the Sam Robbins Lifetime Achievement Award in 2002.

Bill's involvement with Wisconsin birds extended beyond WSO through his involvement with the Madison Audubon Society, which he served both as one-time president and as a member of its Board of Directors.

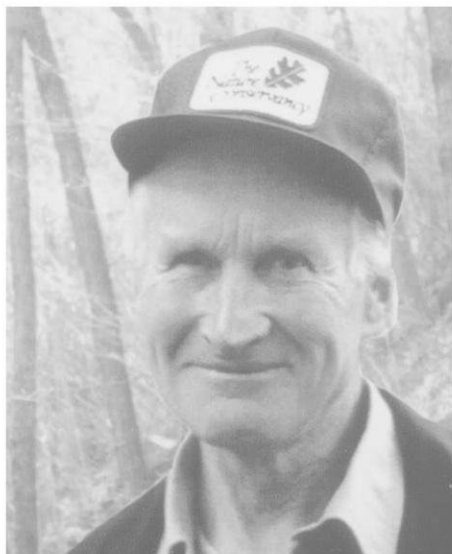
Professionally, Bill was a "bug man," and his list of accomplishments, honors, and awards in the field of aquatic entomology far outnumber his many

achievements in the bird world. He was a longtime professor in the UW-Madison Entomology Department (where he received a Faculty Meritorius Emeritus award in 1999), the president of many entomological organizations, and the developer of a biological water quality index used widely by scientists around the world. In 2010, he received the Award of Excellence and the Environmental Stewardship Award from the North American Benthological Society.

In recent years, Bill and his wife Jane split their year between Madison and Green Valley, Arizona, where they hiked the canyons and deserts in search of Elegant Trogons and Vermilion Flycatchers. Bill passed away on 16 June 2011, in Middleton, Wisconsin.

Tod Highsmith  
Madison, Wisconsin

**Harold G. Kruse**  
**18 April 1925 – 9 July 2011**



**H**arold G. Kruse, 86, died 9 July 2011 at Maplewood Nursing Home in Sauk City, where he had been living for the past seven years. His was the passing of an extraordinary individual, a beloved and respected conservationist of the highest rank. Many of us care about the environment, but relatively few of us actually defend the environment. Harold devoted virtually his entire life to preserving and protecting, in his words, “the natural beauty of our area, and particularly the biotic diversity of the Baraboo Hills and the Lower Wisconsin River.”

Harold and his sister Caroline grew

up on Hickory Hill Farm, two miles south of Loganville. He attended country school for eight years, walking the mile and a half to school through woods and fields, a formative influence no longer an option for today’s school children. Opportunities for nature exploration were also provided by a quieter time than exists today; work horses, not tractors, for example, were still being used at Hickory Hill during Harold’s childhood. Another major influence was his grade school teacher, Vera Moll, a nature enthusiast who brought nature books to school, and also introduced the children to Ranger Mac’s weekly radio program on conservation. Fishing trips were also fond childhood memories. These years, Harold recalled, were “the most enjoyable years of my life.”

He had considered a career in forestry, but this was not to be because of World War II. His choice after high school graduation in 1943 was military service or a job deemed essential for the war effort; Harold secured a deferment to work on the farm for the remainder of the war. His readings during these years included the writings of prominent philosophers such as Albert Schweitzer and his reverence for life, but perhaps the most influential book in Harold’s life was Louis Bromfield’s “Pleasant Valley,” in which



the author emphasizes such farming methods as contour plowing and nitrogen-fixing cover crops. This book and also organic farming literature convinced Harold that his future lay at Hickory Hill, where, he wrote, he “could maintain the family farm, provide a good home for my own future family, enjoy nature, and set an example of good land management which others would hopefully follow.” In 1951 he married Carla Ochsner; the Ochsners are also several generation residents of Sauk County. Market gardening—raising vegetables for the Madison farmers’ market and local restaurants—became the Kruses’ most successful farming venture.

His commitment to the environment is perhaps best illustrated by his discovery in the early 1940s of Honey Creek Valley in the southwestern corner of the Baraboo Hills; he was so taken with the natural beauty and birdsong that he vowed “then and there” to do whatever he could to preserve this valley. His opportunity came in 1956 when he led the first of what would become annual hikes in the valley for the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology (WSO). This outing led to a decision by the WSO Board a year later to establish a nature preserve at Honey Creek.

The Wisconsin Chapter of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) began its Baraboo Hills project in 1962; the next year, because of his familiarity with the area and with local people, Harold was invited to join. He became a keystone of the project, and is richly deserving of all the awards he’s received. He negotiated with land owners, arranged land purchases, led field trips, posted property lines and repaired fences, helped build the Honey

Creek Nature Center, served as a Wisconsin Chapter Trustee of TNC from 1968 to 1984 and, in general, became TNC’s local ambassador and advocate.

He was also active in a number of other organizations, including the Baraboo Range Preservation Association, National Farmers Organization, Natural Foods Association, Friendship Rural School Historical Society, and the Citizens Natural Resources Association, for whom he testified against the use of DDT in the late 1960s and the ’70s.

He also found time to write a history of land protection in the Baraboo Hills; a collection of nature essays entitled “Birds in My Life”; and (edited by his daughter Gretchen) a collection of his letters to local newspapers, which includes résumés of his involvements in local zoning disputes.

He was raised fundamentalist Lutheran, but as a young man began to question his religion and soon became a Free Thinker and a longtime member of the Free Congregation of Sauk County.

He remained upbeat throughout his life, despite hard times and in his later years failing health. When asked how he found time to do all the farm chores which could be overwhelming, raise a family, and contribute so much to conservation, he replied, “By taking time away [when] I probably should have been making money—now we have no money, but we do have a lot of memories. I learned to take care of the earth, and that’s important.” On another occasion, he said that “we all have to do something. I just do what I can.” What he did, and what he bequeathed, is beyond measure.

Harold is survived by two daughters, Peggy Kruse of Alaska and Gretchen

(Richard Shuman) Kruse of Loganville; a son Richard Kruse of Loganville; a sister Caroline Kruse of Reedsburg; seven grandchildren; nieces, nephews and other relations; and countless friends.

Memorials in Harold's name can be directed to TNC of Wisconsin for their Baraboo Hills project, Baraboo Range Preservation Association, Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, or Friendship Rural School Historical Society.

Kenneth Lange  
Baraboo, Wisconsin

Harold Kruse joined WSO in January 1948, and his first job for WSO was as Chair of the Supply Department (now what we call the Bookstore) starting in 1954. He received a Silver Passenger Pigeon in 1964 for his service to WSO. In May 2010, WSO presented Harold with the Green Passenger Pigeon for his life as a conservationist; see *The Passenger Pigeon*, 72(4): 401–402.

Harold's most lasting and important contribution to WSO was when he convinced the Board of Directors to establish a nature preserve at Honey Creek, with the first 30 acres being purchased in 1960. At its 2010 April meeting the WSO Board officially named the area the WSO Harold and Carla Kruse Honey Creek Nature Preserve.

While Harold was certainly a husband, father, farmer, naturalist, author, and conservationist who devoted his life to the preservation (conserve, restore, and sustain) of the land he loved in the Baraboo Hills, to WSO members who came to Honey Creek each spring Harold was the leader of the "hike to the waterfall." Starting in 1956, Harold led what has become an

annual event and continued to lead it until he physically could not do so. That is where I met Harold and learned to understand the Honey Creek Valley through his appreciation of it. His hikes were never boring or fast-paced. He stopped often along the way to explain rock formations, creek behavior, past homesteading activity, plant life, and to identify the birds, listen to their songs, and discuss their natural history. As one walked along the path up Honey Creek Valley with Harold, you learned how all of parts of the valley were woven together to create and sustain this beautiful place. If you went on these hikes annually, you began to come to know at least this portion of the Baraboo Hills through Harold's eyes and maybe to appreciate it as much as he did.

Now others lead the annual hike and relate the information about the valley, but at least to this WSO member, it will always be Harold's voice I hear telling the history and life of the Honey Creek Valley. Harold and the Valley are one.

In his book "A Naturalist's Journey," Ken Lange titled the chapter about Harold *Guardian of the Hills*—a more appropriate title can not be imagined. WSO will be forever grateful to Harold Kruse, Guardian of the Hills, and especially of the Honey Creek Valley.

Bettie Harriman  
Passenger Pigeon Co-Editor

*Editor's Note: The first memorial encompasses Harold's entire life, the second is just a tribute to his association with WSO and the Honey Creek Valley.*



Short-eared Owl by Dennis Connell

## About the Artists

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**Dennis Connell** from Nekoosa, Wisconsin, is an avid nature photographer. For the past 13 years he's been photographing wildlife and nature. Dennis enjoys digitally capturing wildlife doing what it is they do in their daily lives: feeding, nesting, courting, caring for the young, hunting, or whatever it is they need to do to preserve their species. His goal is to produce sharp clear images of the subject for himself and others to enjoy. You can see more images at: [www.freewebs.com/dcimages](http://www.freewebs.com/dcimages)

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**Michael J. Huebschen**, age 63, has been an amateur wildlife photographer for about 45 years. He is retired from UW-Oshkosh and lives in Oshkosh, Wisconsin with his wife Cynthia. They enjoy travel, wildlife observations, hiking, canoeing, and fishing

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**Major Dennis R. Kuecherer** is retired from the US Army and from many years of doing field work for WDNR, the Department of the Interior, and the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas. He has been an active birder most of his life, and enjoys drawing and photographing birds as well as counting them. He is an active birder in the Ozaukee and Milwaukee County area now that he lives in Mequon.

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**Bob Larson**, who lives in Kaukauna, is an advanced amateur photographer who concentrates his photography in the Fox Valley area. All nature centers and Haunts areas are fair game. Outagamie, Winnebago, Calumet, Brown, and Waushara Counties get the most attention. He switched to digital just before it became affordable and has been learning ever since.

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**Eric Preston** is an amateur nature photographer who travels the Midwest, and beyond, to photograph the natural world. He especially likes looking for and photographing birds and butterflies in the native grasslands of southern Wisconsin. His photographs have appeared in numerous books and magazines, including Birder's World and the Gulls of the Americas. He has been interested in birds and nature for most of his life. He currently lives in Madison, Wisconsin, with his wife Kim and son Anders.

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**Jeff Virant** is an amateur photographer (mostly landscape) and an amateur birder who is proud to be a WSO member. Most of his birding is done on his own little corner of paradise, a 10 acre hobby farm located on Rainbow Pond, a Trumpeter Swan favorite site in Polk County, near Amery. By day, Jeff is a Family Practice physician in Stillwater,

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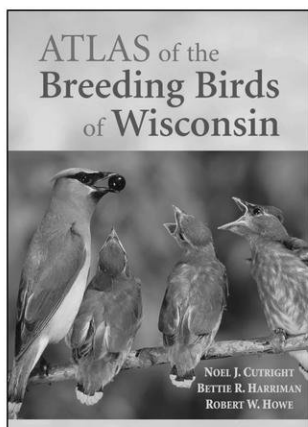
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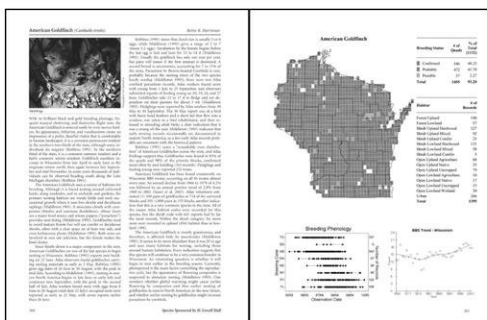
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