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Send all manuscripts and related correspondence to the Editors. Information for "Seasonal Field Notes" should be sent to the Bird Reports Coordinator (see inside back cover). Art work and questions about the art should be sent to the Assistant Editor for art (see left column). Manuscripts that deal with Wisconsin birds, ornithological topics of interest to WSO members, and WSO activities are considered for publication. For detailed submission guidelines, see pages 131–132 of the Summer 2007 issue (Vol. 69, No. 2) or contact the Editors. As a general guide to style, use issues after Vol. 60, No. 1, 1998.

Front Cover: Boreal Owl found in Bayfield County in the Town of Barnes on 9 February 2013, photographed by Pam Toshner. This is one of six Boreal Owls reported this winter in five Wisconsin counties.

Let's Have a Party—with Meaning

There is something about a major anniversary or birthday that has always fascinated me, whether it is on a personal or institutional level. Maybe it's because major milestones are always a great excuse for holding a celebration.

My family just recently celebrated my mother's 90th birthday, and we used the event to host a family reunion that brought folks here from as far as Denver and New York City. I also fondly remember my wife Barbara's and my 25th anniversary (even though it was 17 years ago) because we hosted a big dinner for a lot of relatives and good friends. It was so great to get to spend an evening together with all of them.

One institutional milestone actually ended up shaping both my career and much of the rest of my life when, at age 16, a journalism professor recruited me to attend the University of Illinois so I could work for the student newspaper and take a shot six years from then at becoming editor during The Daily Illini's centennial year. Somehow, it all worked out just that way.

The thread that links all of these anniversary and birthday events is that major milestones offer us an opportunity to reflect on important parts of our lives, to celebrate their meaning with friends we hold dear, and, if we are committed, to use the occasion to rededicate ourselves to the things we believe in and, perhaps, to embark on an important new venture.

So you can imagine how excited I am to be in a position to help WSO get ready for two important commemorations in 2014 that I see defining the year for our Society:

- First, 2014 marks the centenary of the extinction of the Passenger Pigeon. The story of the Passenger Pigeon is unlike that of any other bird. With a likely population between 3 and 5 billion, it was the most abundant bird in North America. Yet human exploitation drove it to extinction over the course of a few decades. Project Passenger Pigeon (P3) will mark this anniversary and promote the conservation of species and habitat, strengthen the relationship between people and nature, and foster the sustainable use of natural resources.
- Second, WSO—which embraced the Passenger Pigeon in its logo and as the name of its respected quarterly journal—will celebrate its own 75th anniversary.

In 1989, on the occasion of its 50th anniversary, one of my predecessors, John Idzikowski, was given to observe in one of his *President's Statements*: "This year we celebrate the 50th year of a happy marriage between amateur and professional ornithology in Wisconsin. Not since . . . we celebrated our 25th anniversary, have we taken the time to look backwards and pat ourselves and others on the back."

John saw the occasion as an opportunity to "do far more than give well-deserved recognition." It was a time, he said, to "revitalize our purpose for existence and clarify the sometimes forgotten visions of the past. This issue should encourage us to analyze our past, determine our strengths and weaknesses, and plot a course for the future."

That seems particularly well said, and I would like to think that also is what WSO is in the midst of right now, having completed the second of two in-depth surveys of its members (as well as many state birders outside the Society). Members have told us that our current strengths lie in our field trips, our publications, web site (*wsobirds.org*), and our conventions, and they want to see us continue to excel in all of those, while giving more attention to addressing important bird conservation issues and promoting the scientific study of birds.

The planning committee is committed to bringing forward new initiatives in those areas for discussion at our 2014 convention, to be held 15–18 May in Prairie du Chien. The convention will also focus in multiple ways on our two important commemorations for the year. Highlights will include:

- A special rededication event at the Passenger Pigeon Monument at Wyalusing State Park at 10 a.m. Saturday 17 May. The monument is undergoing an extensive restoration and WSO is providing new signage for the site atop a bluff overlooking the confluence of the Wisconsin and Mississippi Rivers.
- Saturday afternoon's plenary session at the convention will focus on the Passenger Pigeon, including a look at whether this species is a suitable candidate for a potential "de-extinction" project.
- Friday evening's Passenger Pigeon Awards ceremony, honoring those whose service to the Society, the public, and avian conservation has been exemplary.
- Saturday evening's convention banquet, which not only will celebrate WSO's 75th birthday with a look back at the last 25 years, but also lay out the challenges we face to remain a vital and relevant force in avian conservation in the years ahead. To prove, in other words, that we have truly taken the lessons of the Passenger Pigeon, to heart.

All in all, it promises to be an important weekend. I hope many of you already have the dates circled on your calendars.

Carl Schwartz

President

Historic Distribution of Common Loons in Wisconsin in Relation to Changes in Lake Characteristics and Surrounding Land Use

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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to evaluate changes in water quality and land-use change associated with lakes that are south of the current breeding range of Common Loons in Wisconsin but that historically supported breeding loons. Museum collection records and published accounts were examined to identify lakes in southern Wisconsin with a former history of loon nesting activity. Historical and recent water quality data were obtained from state and USEPA databases for the former loon nesting lakes that were identified and paleolimnological data were acquired for these lakes from sediment cores used to infer historical total phosphorus concentrations from diatom assemblages. U.S. General Land Office notes and maps from the original land survey conducted in Wisconsin during 1832–1866 and the National Land Cover Database 2006 were utilized to assess land use changes that occurred within the drainage basins of former loon nesting lakes. Our results indicate that the landscape of southern Wisconsin has changed dramatically since Common Loons last nested in the region. A number of factors have likely contributed to the decreased ap-

peal of southern Wisconsin lakes to breeding Common Loons, including changes to water quality, altered trophic status resulting from nutrient enrichment, and reductions in suitable nesting habitat stemming from shoreline development and altered water levels. Increased nutrient and sediment inputs from agricultural and developed areas likely contributed to a reduction in habitat quality. Implications for managing the expansion of breeding Common Loons back into the historic breeding range are addressed.

The Common Loon (*Gavia immer*) is a lake-dependent wildlife species sensitive to changes in habitat quality, including water quality and availability of suitable nesting substrate. The breeding range of the Common Loon has shifted northward in the Great Lakes states from former southern range limits that once (as recent as 100-150 years ago) extended throughout southern Minnesota to northern Iowa, throughout southern Wisconsin to northern Illinois, and throughout southern Michigan to northern Indiana and Ohio (Bent 1919; Fig. 1, Evers 2007). The Common Loon was described as a common breeder on small lakes from the southern tier of Wisconsin counties northward at the turn of the twentieth century (Kumlien and Hollister 1903).

In Wisconsin, the breeding extent of Common Loons has more recently been limited to the northern two-thirds of the state. Figures 2a and 2b depict the southern breeding extent

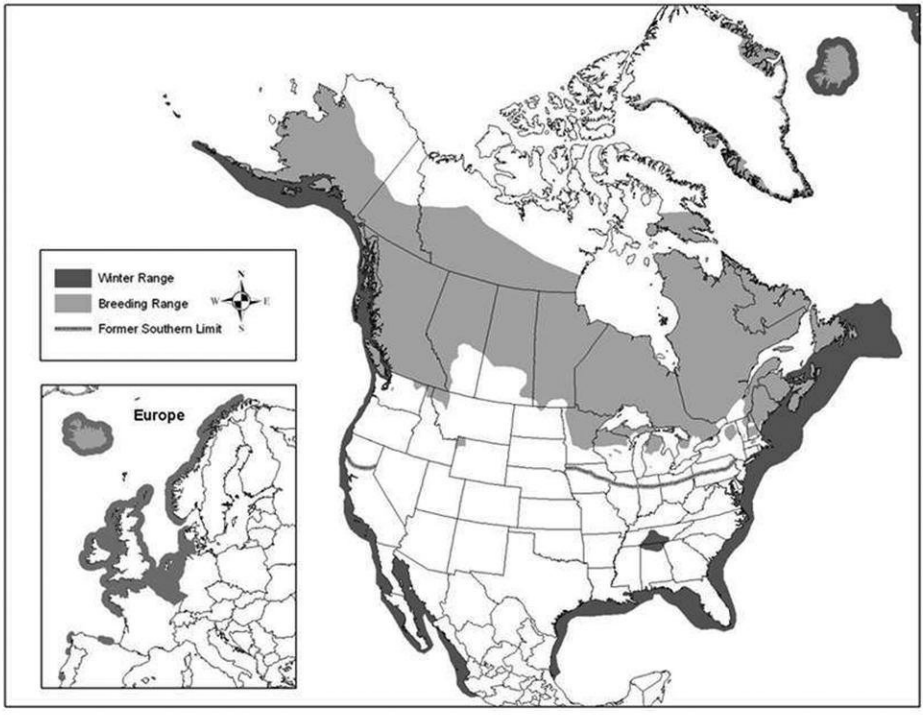

Figure 1. Distribution of the breeding and wintering range of the Common Loon (from Evers 2007).

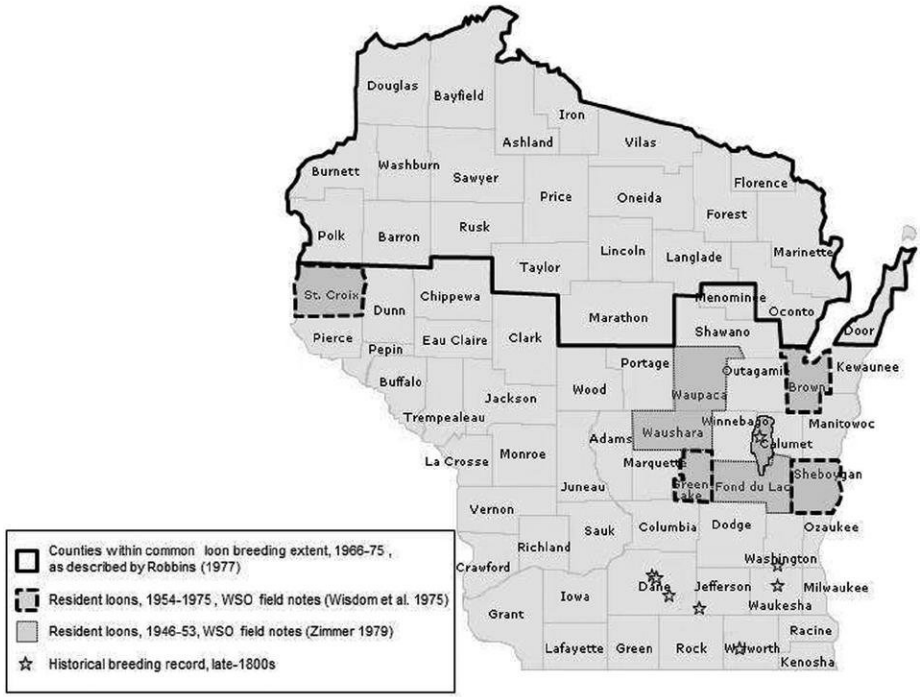

Figure 2a. Breeding extent of the Common Loon in Wisconsin prior to 1976.

of the Common Loon in Wisconsin established for the period 1966–1975 by Robbins (1977), resident loon locations reported by Zimmer (1979), and the primary range for nesting loons as incorporated into the Project LoonWatch Common Loon Survey in Wisconsin (Gostomski and Rasmussen 2001). Resident loons were documented within central Wisconsin (St. Croix, Brown, Green Lake, and Sheboygan Counties) as recently as 1954-1975 in Wisconsin Society for Ornithology field notes (Wisdom et al. 1975); and in Waupaca, Waushara, and Fond du Lac Counties during 1946–1953 (Zimmer 1979). Resident Common Loons have also been present in the Glacial Lake Wisconsin Sand Plain ecoregion since at least the mid-1960s (K. P. Kenow, unpublished data).

Recent surveys indicate a steady increase in the Common Loon population in northern Wisconsin since 1985 when the Wisconsin Loon Population Survey was initiated (Gostomski and Rasmussen 2001; LoonWatch Wisconsin Loon Population Survey results, http://www.northland.edu/loon-population-survey.htm). Survey results suggest that the adult loon population has increased 168% from 2,385 ± 208(SE) in 1985 to 4,006 ± 340 in 2010 (P. R. Rasmussen, unpublished data). An expanding loon population is also evident within the Glacial Lake Wisconsin Ecoregion of central Wisconsin. Owners and managers of reservoirs associated with cranberry operations in this region indicated

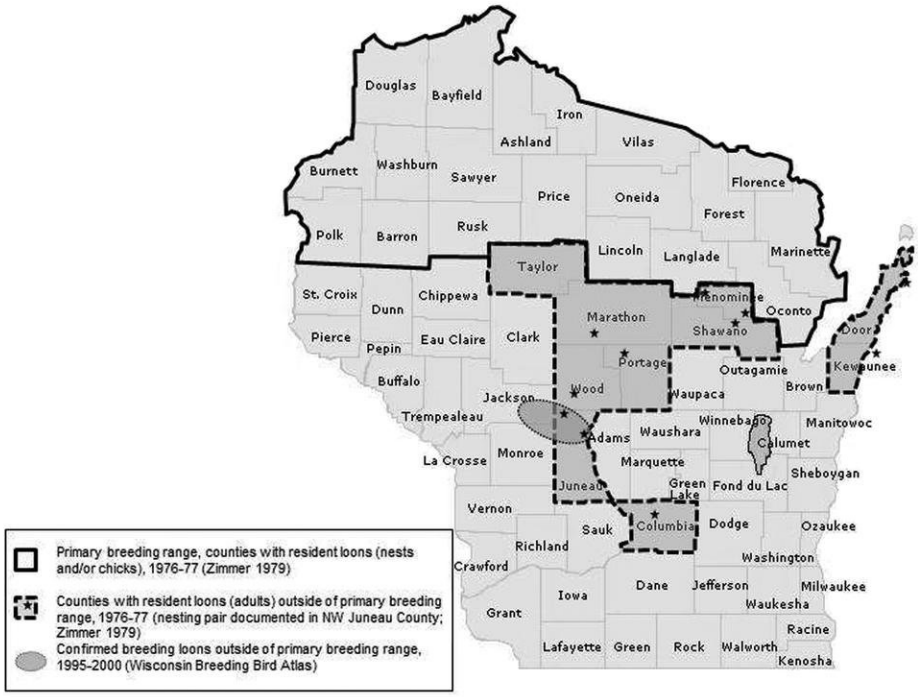

Figure 2b. Breeding extent of the Common Loon in Wisconsin, 1976–2000.

there had been a sizeable increase in the number of breeding loons since about 1995 (K. P. Kenow, unpublished data). In addition, recent anecdotal observations indicate non-breeding adult and subadult loons using lakes in central (Jackson, Wood, Monroe, La Crosse, Green Lake, Marquette Counties) and southern (Sauk and Dane Counties) Wisconsin during summer months. These observations provide evidence that circumstances may be favorable for the expansion of breeding Common Loons back into the historic breeding range, and resource managers may be in position to enhance this restoration potential. It is likely that changes in habitat characteristics of lakes within the species' former range in Wisconsin were associated with the range constriction, so a better understanding of these changing habitat conditions coupled with knowledge of regional breeding habitat requirements are required to best manage for restoration. We investigated changes in water quality and land-use associated with lakes that are south of the current breeding range of Common Loons in Wisconsin but that historically supported breeding loons.

METHODS

Museum collection records (UW-Madison Zoological Museum, Louisana State University Museum of Natural Science, Chicago Field Museum, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Mil-

waukee Public Museum, Bell Museum of Natural History, Webster House Museum, US-Stevens Point Museum of Natural History and Biology Research Collection, UW-Whitewater Science Department, Walworth County Historical Society, Hoard Museum-Ft. Atkinson), published accounts (Robbins 1977, Kumlien and Hollister 1903, Zimmer 1979, Robbins 1991, Schorger 1929, Wisdom et al. 1975, Keeler 1890, Carr 1890), and Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas (Cutright et al. 2006) Common Loon nesting data were examined to identify lakes in southern Wisconsin with a former history of loon nesting activity.

Historical and recent water quality data were obtained from state and USEPA databases (e.g., Wisconsin Surface Water Integrated Monitoring System [SWIMS], EPA Legacy STORET) for the former loon nesting lakes that were identified. Paleolimnological data were acquired for these lakes from sediment cores used to infer historical total phosphorus concentrations from diatom assemblages (Garrison 2000, Garrison et al. 2008). Trophic state index values (Carlson 1977) were calculated based on historic and recent total phosphorus concentrations.

The original vegetation cover of Wisconsin, compiled from U.S. General Land Office notes and maps from the original land survey conducted in Wisconsin during 1832–1866 (Finley 1976), and the National Land Cover Database 2006 (NLDC 2006; Fry et al. 2011) were utilized to assess land use changes that occurred within the drainage basins of former loon nesting lakes. Lakeshore development was based on house density determined within a 100-meter buffer surrounding each lake and derived from USDA National Agriculture Imagery Program 2005 high-resolution imagery.

RESULTS

We obtained historical (late 1800s-early 1900s) records that documented Common Loon breeding activity on eight southern Wisconsin lakes that are south of the current breeding range (Table 1, Figure 2a). Evidence was based on museum egg collections at three lakes (Island, Winnebago, Pewaukee lakes), an adult collected during the breeding season at Lake Five in Waukesha and Washington Counties, and published accounts concerning Lakes Koshkonong, Delavan, Mendota, and Monona.

Historic phosphorus levels were inferred for six of the eight lakes from sediment-core analyses either from the particular lake or from lakes within the area with similar morphometry, landscape position, surface/groundwater interfaces, and soil conditions. All of the lakes of interest fall within the Southeastern Wisconsin Till Plains Level III ecoregion. Average summer total phosphorus readings for seven of the eight lakes were extracted from the SWIMS database.

Delavan Lake (Walworth County)—

Kumlien and Hollister (1903) documented a "few" nesting loons on Delavan Lake through 1888 with "possibly a straggling pair now and then for a few years later." A sediment core was not collected from this lake, but similar lakes have been sampled in the vicinity. Historically, lakes of this type had phosphorus levels around 15-20 $\mu g\ L^{-1}$ (Garrison et al. 2008). Average

Table 1. Wisconsin lakes historically supporting breeding Common Loons that occur south of their current breeding distribution.

Lake Name	County	Location (UTM Easting, Northing)	Evidence of historic loon nesting (year; reference)	Record type	Last recorded occurrence
Koshkonong	Jefferson, Dane, Rock	339823 E, 4748895 N	1873; Kumlein and Holister 1903	Account	ca 1873
Delavan	Walworth	367905 E, 4717975 N	1888; Kumlein and Holister 1903	Account	ca 1890
Island	Dane	312650 E, 4755130 N	1888; C.K. 1890, UW-Madison Zoological Museum records	Eggs	not present in 1889–1890
Winnebago	Calumet, Fond du Lac, Winnebago	386110 E, 4875990 N	1884; UW-Madison Zoological Museum records	Eggs	
Pewaukee	Waukesha	393050 E, 4769305 N	1869, 1874; Smithsomian records	Eggs	no summer sightings in Waukesha County since 1958
Five	Waukesha, Washington	396560 E, 4783260 N	1925; Milwaukee Public Museum records	adult present on 1 May	
Mendota	Dane	302520 E, 4775380 N	ca 1890; Carr 1890	Account	no records by 1929
Monona	Dane	308190 E, 4771400 N	ca 1890; Carr 1890	Account	no records by 1929

summer total phosphorus levels in Delavan Lake over the past 5 years have been 25–30 μg L^{-1}, and recent average summer Secchi readings have ranged between 1.9—2.9 m (Table 2). Recently, the lake is more eutrophic than it was historically. Land use change analysis indicates cultivation and development have resulted in a drastic reduction in forest and herbaceous cover within the drainage area of Delavan Lake (Table 3). The lakeshore house density in 2006 was 18.8 houses per km of shoreline (Table 4).

Island Lake (Dane County)—

Eggs collected from a loon nest at Island Lake on 20 May 1888 are housed at the UW-Madison Zoology Museum collection. An account of the collection indicated that loons were not present on Island Lake during the two years subsequent to the collection (Keeler 1890). A sediment core was collected from this lake. However, this lake is a deep water marsh and the sediment at the bottom of the core was representative of a wetland rather than a lake. Consequently, the diatom communities in the top (recent) and bottom (historical) slices of the core were very different. This difference was largely the result of different habitats and not necessarily related to nutrients. Island Lake appears to have alternated between a deep water marsh with abundant emergent vegetation and an open water system dependent upon abundant rainfall (P. Garrison, unpubl. data). Therefore, it was not possible to accurately reconstruct the historical phosphorus concentrations. Recent phosphorus data are not available. While the lakeshore housing density at Island Lake is relatively low (1.0 houses per km shoreline; Table 4), 70% of the lake drainage area is now cultivated and 15% developed (Table 3). It is likely that agricultural practices during the past 60 years have resulted in higher sediment and phosphorus delivery to the lake.

Lake Five (Waukesha and Washington Counties)—

An adult loon was collected on Lake Five on 1 May 1925 according to Milwaukee Public Museum records. This collection likely occurred during the breeding season; accordingly, we have included Lake Five as a lake that potentially supported breeding loons at one time. A sediment-core has not been collected at Lake Five, but similar deep seepage lakes in the area have a pre-settlement phosphorus concentration of about 13–15 μg L^{-1}. Recent summer phosphorus concentrations averaged 14–31 μg L^{-1} with Secchi readings averaging 2.5–4.0 m (Table 2). Primary changes in land cover since historic times are reductions in forest (–27%) and herbaceous (–43%) land cover, and increases in cultivated (+33%) and developed (+34%) land cover (Table 3). Shoreline house density was 13.5 houses per km shoreline in 2006 (Table 4).

Lake Koshkonong (Jefferson, Dane, and Rock Counties)—

Kumlien and Hollister (1903) indicated that Common Loons bred on Lake Koshkonong "30 years ago"; that is to say, in the 1870s. Subsequent to this time, loons occurred on Lake Koshkonong and other small lakes in southern Wisconsin during migration.

A core was not collected from this lake because of significant habitat changes. Lake Koshkonong has undergone a major change in water quality and habitat alteration since 1900. Prior to the early twentieth century, Lake Koshkonong was a deep water marsh with dense emergent vegetation and was renowned for its abundant waterfowl (Kumlien 1877, Main 1945). Market hunting for waterfowl was very popular on this lake prior to about 1917. At that time, the water level was raised via a dam and much of the emergent vegetation was inundated (Hylan 1923, Sinclair 1924). The water quality became significantly degraded beginning in the 1940–50s as changing agricultural practices resulted in increased delivery of sediments and nutrients to the lake by the Rock River. This agricultural-related degradation has been documented with sediment cores in lakes Nagawicka and Ripley, which are located in southeastern Wisconsin (Garrison 2004, Garrison and Pillsbury 2009). Recent concentrations of total phosphorus are relatively high in this hypereutrophic lake and summer water clarity is poor (Secchi readings average 0.3–0.5 m; Table 2). Land use change analysis indicated that most of the herbaceous land cover historically present within the drainage area of the Lake Koshkonong has been placed under cultivation (Table 3). The shoreline housing density in 2006 was 8.5 houses/km (Table 4).

Lakes Mendota and Monona (Dane County)—

Carr (1890) reported that Common Loons were nesting on the Madison lakes in 1890. By 1929, loons in adult plumage were frequently observed in Dane County during the summer, but there were no recent breeding records (Schroger 1929). A sediment-core was analyzed from Lake Mendota, but the diatom community had very few taxa and an accurate determination could not be made of historical phosphorus concentrations. Historical phosphorus concentrations in southern Wisconsin lakes similar to these stratified drainage lakes were likely 15–20 μg L^{-1} (Garrison et al. 2008). Recent average summer phosphorus concentrations are much higher (22–75 μg L^{-1} in Lake Mendota; 30–94 μg L^{-1} in Lake Monona) and the trophic state of these lakes has shifted from a historical mesotrophic state to eutrophic (Table 2). Recent summer Secchi readings averaged 1.2–1.8 m on Lake Monona and 1.2–2.8 m on Lake Mendota. The historic land cover within the drainage area of these lakes was predominately oak forest, but is now largely developed (Table 3). Shoreline house densities in 2006 were 18.2 houses/km on Lake Mendota and 30.0 houses/km surrounding Lake Monona (Table 4).

Lake Winnebago (Calumet, Fond du Lac, and Winnebago Counties)—

Four Common Loon eggs were collected from Lake Winnebago in 1884 and are housed in the UW-Madison Zoology Museum collection. It is uncertain how recently breeding loons have used Lake Winnebago. Resident loons were noted in Fond du Lac County as recently as about 1950 (Zimmer 1979). Sediment-core analysis indicated the phosphorus concentration at the top (recent) was 145 μg L^{-1} and 85 μg L^{-1} at the bottom

Table 2. Historic (late-1800s) and recent (2007-2011) average summertime total phosphorus concentrations, Secchi readings, and trophic states of southern Wisconsin lakes that historically supported breeding Common Loons based on paleolimnological assessment estimates and recently measured values.

Lake	Core collected	Total phosphorus (µg L^{-1}) Historic level	Total phosphorus (µg L^{-1}) Recent level[b]	Secchi reading (m) Recent level[b]	Trophic State Index (TSITP)[c] Historic	Trophic State Index (TSITP)[c] Recent	Trophic class shift Historic → Recent
Delavan	no	15–20[a]	25–30	1.9–2.9	43–47	51–53	mesotrophic → eutrophic
Island	yes	na	na	na	—	—	—
Five	no	na	14-31	2.5-4-0	—	42-54	—
Koshkonong	no	na	104-492	0.3-0.5	—	71-94	—
Mendota	yes	15-20[a]	22-75	1.2-2.8[d]	43-47	49-66	mesotrophic → eutrophic
Monona	no	15-20[a]	30-94	1.2-1.8	43-47	53-70	mesotrophic → eutrophic
Winnebago	yes	40-50[a]	93-213	0.5-1.2	57-61	70-81	eutrophic → hypereutrophic
Pewaukee	yes	20	14-22	0.5-1.1	47	42-49	mesotrophic→ mesotrophic

[a]Garrison et al. 2008.
[b]Source: Wisconsin DNR Surface Water Integrated Monitoring System average annual summertime records for 2007-2011.
[c]Calson Trophic State Index (Carlson 1977) based on total phosphorus concentration.
[d]Source: North Temperate Lakes Long Term Ecological Research program (http://lter.limnology.wisc.edu), NSF, Center for Limnology, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Table 3. Change in land use from the time of the original Wisconsin land use survey (ca 1830) to current (2006) land cover within drainage areas of lakes that historically supported breeding Common Loons.

Lake	Drainage area (km^2)	Open water 1830	Open water 2006	Δ	Wetland 1830	Wetland 2006	Δ	Forest 1830	Forest 2006	Δ	Herbaceous 1830	Herbaceous 2006	Δ	Cultivated 1830	Cultivated 2006	Δ	Developed 1830	Developed 2006	Δ
Delavan	81,080	9.2	8.9	–0.3	2.0	1.4	–0.6	46.6	8.0	–38.6	42.2	1.1	–41.1	0	62.0	+62.0	0	18.6	+18.6
Island	75,558	0.2	1.4	+1.2	7.9	3.9	–4.0	73.9	8.1	–65.8	17.9	0.6	–17.3	0	70.4	+70.4	0	14.8	+14.8
Five	108,179	3.6	4.4	+0.8	10.3	10.3	0	42.5	15.9	–26.6	43.6	0.4	–43.2	0	33.2	+33.2	0	33.8	+33.8
Koshkonong	143,923	28.0	29.3	+1.3	7.7	9.7	+2.0	14.6	10.5	–4.1	49.7	0.6	–49.1	0	43.6	+43.6	0	5.3	+5.3
Mendota	82,276	41.6	44.4	+2.8	4.4	2.1	–2.3	51.8	6.7	–45.1	2.1	<0.1	–2.1	0	7.4	+7.4	0	39.2	+39.2
Monona	110,332	13.2	13.6	+0.4	19.2	6.9	–12.3	62.6	7.1	–55.5	5.0	<0.1	–5.0	0	14.0	+14.0	0	58.3	+58.3
Winnebago	478,384	97.8	99.8	+2.0	0.4	<0.1	–0.4	1.5	<0.1	–1.5	0.3	<0.1	–0.3	0	<0.1	0	0	<0.1	0
Pewaukee	89,242	9.8	10.1	+0.3	16.7	3.7	–13.0	18.6	13.8	–4.8	54.8	0.3	–54.5	0	27.6	+27.6	0	44.3	+44.3

Table 4. Lakeshore house density (2006) within 100 m buffer of southern Wisconsin lakes that historically supported breeding Common Loons.

Lake	Number of houses	Perimeter (km)	House density/ km shoreline
Delavan	492	26.1	18.8
Island	4	4.2	1.0
Five	45	3.3	13.5
Koshkonong	410	48.4	8.5
Mendota	699	38.4	18.2
Monona	813	27.1	30.0
Winnebago	3,592	181.2	19.8
Pewaukee	765	22.2	34.5

(historic). Radiochemical analysis indicated the bottom sample was deposited during the middle of the twentieth century, so phosphorus concentrations in the early part of the century were likely lower (they probably were around 40–50 μg L^{-1} based upon the results of a core taken in 2007; P. Garrison, unpubl. data). Recent average summer phosphorus concentrations ranged from 93 to 213 μg L^{-1} and the average Secchi depth was 0.5–1.2 m (Table 2). Lake Winnebago is now classified as hypereutrophic based on total phosphorus concentrations. Shoreline housing density was 19.8 houses/km in 2006 (Table 4).

Lake Pewaukee (Waukesha County)—

Eggs were collected from Common Loon nests on Pewaukee Lake in 1869 and in 1874 (both collections by B. Goss). These eggs reside in the National Museum of Natural History Vertebrate Zoology Birds Collection, Smithsonian Institution. Robbins (1991) indicated that no June or July sightings of Common Loons had been reported in Waukesha County since 1958. Analysis of a sediment-core slice representing the period in the late-1800s indicates that phosphorus concentrations at that time about 20 μg L^{-1}, while recent summer phosphorus concentrations have averaged between 14 and 22 μg L^{-1} and Secchi readings averaged between 0.5 and 1.1 m (Table 2). The predominant pre-settlement vegetation within the Lake Pewaukee drainage area was characterized by oak openings. Most of this land cover has since been cultivated or developed (Table 3). The recent shoreline housing density was 34.5 houses/km—highest among the lakes we evaluated (Table 4).

Discussion

Our results indicate that the landscape of southern Wisconsin has changed dramatically since Common Loons last nested in the region. Watershed land use surrounding lakes assessed in this study has undergone substantial alteration, with a median of 30% (maximum = 70%) of watershed areas now under cultivation and a median of 26% (maximum = 58%) having been developed. While it is not clear if landscape changes alone deter loons from using these lakes for breeding, increased nutrient and sedi-

ment inputs from agricultural and developed areas likely contributed to a reduction in habitat quality.

Since the 1800s, most of the lakes we evaluated in this study have experienced increased concentrations of phosphorus, a nutrient that typically affects biotic growth in Midwestern U.S. lakes (Robertson et al. 2002). Phosphorus enrichment promotes phytoplankton growth, leading to eutrophication and a corresponding reduction in water clarity. In addition to external phosphorus loading, summer water clarity in eutrophic lakes is also affected by food web interactions (i.e., planktivory level) and degree of water column mixing (internal phosphorus recycling) as driven by weather (Lathrop et al. 1999). Common Loons are generally considered to be visual predators. Consequently, lake suitability for loons is strongly influenced by water clarity as identified in several loon habitat preference studies (Vermeer 1973, McIntyre 1975, Blair 1992, Found et al. 2008, Kuhn et al. 2011, Meyer et al. 2013).

Factors associated with shoreline development may negatively affect the value of lakes to breeding Common Loons. Meyer (2006) presented evidence of a threshold of shoreline building density of 25 buildings per km that appears to preclude territorial pair occupancy on highly developed lakes. Two of the lakes we evaluated (Monona and Pewaukee) had housing densities in excess of this threshold and three lakes exceeded 18 houses per km. It is not likely that the buildings themselves are the ultimate factor causing lack of lake use by loons (McIntyre 1988), but building densities are likely indices of the cumulative impact of multiple factors such as nest habitat alteration, disturbance, or increased predator densities. Southern Wisconsin lakes are close to large cities and towns and serve recreational boating of surrounding population centers, contributing to disturbance. Among New Hampshire lakes, Kuhn et al. (2011) identified negative associations of Common Loon use with presence of agricultural and developed lands, lake total phosphorus concentration, road density, and proximity to human population centers.

Implications for managing Common Loon range expansion—

A number of factors have likely contributed to the decreased appeal of southern Wisconsin lakes to breeding Common Loons, including changes to water quality, altered trophic status resulting from nutrient enrichment, and reductions in suitable nesting habitat stemming from shoreline development and altered water levels. However, there may be opportunities to improve habitat conditions in select lakes within the Common Loon's former breeding range in Wisconsin and take advantage of an expanding loon breeding population. Restoration efforts would need to emphasize improving water quality (specifically water clarity), providing suitable nesting habitat, ensuring a rich forage base, and tending to disturbance issues while focusing on lakes near source loon populations.

Water clarity may be improved through reduction in phosphorus loadings and biomanipulation (e.g., rough fish removal to promote a trophic cascade leading to reduced phytoplankton populations). A comprehensive rehabilitation plan that in-

cluded these elements was implemented during 1989 to 1991 to shift Delavan Lake from a hypereutrophic to mesotrophic state (Roberson et al. 2000). While success was limited in reducing phosphorus concentrations, rough fish removal followed by game fish restocking resulted in cascading effects of reduced populations of planktivorous fish to increased populations of large zooplankton that kept phytoplankton populations low. Consequently, water clarity improved with average summer Secchi depth values increasing from < 2 m to > 3 m for at least 8 years post treatment. Reduced external phosphorus loading of Nagawicka Lake in Waukesha County, Wisconsin, resulted in reduced summer total phosphorus levels and consequently a shift in the lake's trophic state from usually a eutrophic state to usually mesotrophic or sometimes oligotrophic condition (Robertson et al. 2007). In 2010, Wisconsin implemented more restrictive phosphorus water quality standards for the purpose of protecting fish and aquatic life as well as human health (WI Adm. Code Chapters NR 102, NR 151, and NR 217). The regulation is expected to reduce external phosphorus loadings to rivers, streams, and lakes thereby resulting in improved water quality.

The provision of artificial nest platforms provides a means of ameliorating the effects of nest habitat loss associated with lakeshore development. Nest platforms have been used extensively throughout the breeding range of Common Loons to mitigate the effects of nesting habitat loss resulting from shoreline development, nesting failure due to fluctuating water levels, and shoreline-based nest predation (Piper et al. 2002, Evers 2007, Desorbo et al. 2007). In addition to demonstrating a positive effect on reproductive success, Piper et al. (2002) concluded that nest platforms may be used to increase the availability of breeding habitat and induce loons to breed on lakes without established territories.

Founding of new territories is frequently observed in Common Loons (Piper et al. 2006) but they exhibit limited dispersal from natal lakes among first-time breeders as well as of displaced breeders (Piper et al. 2000, Evers 2007). Inter-season displacement of breeders to establish new territories has been documented up to 5.4 km (Piper et al. 2000) and intra-season displacement is generally within 4 km (range 0.4–20.5 km) of their former territory (Evers 2001). The average dispersal distance of Common Loons banded as juveniles to establish breeding territories was within 13 km (range 1-64 km) of their natal lake (Evers 2000). Therefore, proximity to established breeding loon populations should also be considered when planning restoration efforts (i.e., initial focus should be placed on lakes within about 20 km of established breeding loons). In discussing the risks and benefits of founding new territories, Piper et al. (2006) point out that founding loons risk not attracting a mate to the new territory for several years. Given equal habitat suitability, it follows that the likelihood of two loons encountering one another and establishing a new territory is related to the proximity to an established loon population.

Despite changes to landscapes and lake habitat quality across central and southern Wisconsin, recent popula-

tion trends coupled with restoration strategies outlined above may provide an opportunity to return breeding Common Loons to portions of their former breeding range.

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Bald Eagle surveying his world by Stephen Fisher

The Autumn of 2012 at Cedar Grove

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The autumn of 2012 was the 63rd year of continuous operation of the Cedar Grove Ornithological Research Station. Trapping at the station began on 18 August and closed on 17 November. During this 92 day period we watched for migrants from dawn to dusk, and counted or estimated their numbers. We attempted to trap all hawks using bow-nets, dou-gaza traps, and mist nets. We also operated a 136m long line of 61mm (stretched mesh) mist nets with 72m of them extending to a height of 8m. Beginning on 23 September, we left the mist nets open at night to passively capture owls.

The 2012 fall season, like the last several years, saw below-average number of migrating raptors. The number of raptors observed was down 20.6% from the ten year average (Table 1). Of the

Table 1. Numbers of diurnal raptors observed and the percent trapped.

	Observed			% Trapped		
	2012	Average 2011	2002–2011	2012	2011	Average 2002–2011
Turkey Vulture	611	227	210.8	0	0	0
Northern Harrier	88	106	150.6	5.7	7.5	3.5
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1120	2103	1670.8	15.4	7.4	15.5
Cooper's Hawk	144	191	182.5	23.6	23.6	27.6
Northern Goshawk	6	5	5.0	83.3	60	70
Red-tailed Hawk	640	759	742.6	19.2	16.5	15.6
Red-shouldered Hawk	3	5	16.1	0	0	5
Broad-winged Hawk	293	32	776.2	0.3	0	0.2
Rough-legged Hawk	8	21	30.1	0	0	0.3
Bald Eagle	66	134	50.1	0	0	0.2
Peregrine Falcon	47	92	66.3	14.9	8.7	17
Merlin	393	399	383.1	10.7	8.5	13.7
American Kestrel	27	55	56.3	0	1.8	3.7
Osprey	44	52	58.3	0	0	0
Unidentified	53	73	62.6	0	0	0
Total raptors	**3543**	**4314**	**4464.7**	**11**	**8.9**	**11.3**
Total raptors*	2595	4003	3419.2	15	9.7	14.7

*Less vultures, Broad-winged Hawk and Osprey

Table 2. Numbers of owls netted.

	2012	2011	Average 2002–2011
Long-eared Owl	5	4	10.8
Short-eared Owl	0	0	0.1
Great Horned Owl	0	0	0.4
Barred Owl	1	0	0.6
Northern Saw-whet Owl	68	68	74.4
Eastern Screech-Owl	2	3	2.3
Total	**76**	**75**	**88**

13 raptor species where the 10 year average is >5, only 3 were seen in above-average numbers (Turkey Vulture, Bald Eagle, and Merlin). Bald Eagles continue to be seen in significantly greater numbers than the average from the past ten years (Linear regression, $y = 12.055x - 24137$, $p = 0.0012$). Our raptor observations showed no other significant trends.

The number of migrants seen at Cedar Grove is highly dependent on weather (Mueller and Berger 1961, 1967). Westerly winds drift southbound migrants to the shore of Lake Michigan, where they avoid flying over the water. Westerly winds of sufficient strength were often lacking this fall, contributing to a below-average raptor count.

The 390 hawks trapped fell well below the ten-year average of 503. Trapping percentages for individual species were about average (Table 1).

Table 3. Numbers of non-raptorial birds netted.

	2012	2011	Average 2002–2011
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	11	8	8
Northern Flicker	17	9	20.2
Eastern Wood-Pewee	0	4	3.5
Eastern Phoebe	11	15	14.8
Red-eyed Vireo	11	12	13.6
Blue Jay	20	13	16
Brown Creeper	23	15	22.7
Golden-crowned Kinglet	18	13	13.7
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	24	18	16.2
Swainson's Thrush	307	210	221.3
Gray-cheeked Thrush	42	21	30
Hermit Thrush	226	108	118.3
Palm Warbler	5	6	7.4
Yellow-rumped Warbler	52	39	39
American Redstart	11	9	7.3
White-throated Sparrow	68	63	51.9
Fox Sparrow	96	90	56.1
Dark-eyed Junco	259	182	137
Pine Siskin	18	5	10.5
American Goldfinch	31	39	30.5
Total All Species	**1610**	**879**	**1143.7**

Table 4. Numbers of non-raptorial migrants observed.

	2012	2011	Average 2002–2011
Double-crested Cormorant	71	421	1266.6
Great Blue Heron	28	13	22
Tundra Swan	324	9	153.4
Canada Goose	8661	7116	7712
Sandhill Crane	40	5	119.9
Commom Nighthawk	359	1798	572.1
Chimney Swift	286	633	616.4
Red-headed Woodpecker	10	4	5.1
Northern Flicker	90	334	591.7
Blue Jay	1195	1924	1851.2
Purple Martin	0	2	13.9
Swallow sp.	584	1198	2573.7
American Robin	2097	3668	3204
Cedar Waxwing	10753	14334	10671.2
Blackbird sp.	1788	3149	2793.2
Small Finches	1566	2864	1675.8
All non-raptorial migrants	**32021**	**42411**	**39016.2**

We caught 76 owls this fall which is also below the previous ten-year average of 88 (Table 2). Our best night of owl trapping came on the night of 21 October when 14 owls were caught.

The increases or declines noted may not reflect any real population change. The year-to-year variations in the number of birds netted can probably be attributed to the variations in weather conditions producing concentrations of the birds. In 2002 we began noting the number of non-raptorial birds netted which now gives us enough years of data to compare our annual netting to a ten-year average.

The number of non-raptorial birds netted was above average (Table 3). Only 5 of the twenty species were caught in below-average numbers. The largest increases occurred in Swainson's Thrush, Hermit Thrush, Dark-eyed Junco, and Fox Sparrow (Table 3). The single significant increase compared to the previous ten years was Fox Sparrow ($y = 5.5818x - 11144$, $P = 0.0068$). The only significant decrease was Red-eyed Vireo ($y = 1.5758x + 3175.4$, $P = 0.0487$).

Our most interesting netted bird was a Carolina Wren. A pair was in the area throughout the season.

The numbers of non-raptorial migrants observed this year also declined and was much lower than the ten-year average (Table 4). The most notable decline was in the number of Double-crested Cormorants observed ($y = 225.6x + 453933$, $P = .00375$). The number of Cormorants observed reached a high of 2747 in 2004 and a low of 71 in 2012.

Dan Berger, John Bowers, and Meredith Benesh (Intern) were present at the station almost every day. Rick Hill, Carol Kroscher, Tom Meyer, David Hecht (Intern), Steve Holtzman, Rachel Cass, Andrew Reinke, the Kaspars, Bill Robichaud, and Diane TenPas also helped with the operation.

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The Cedar Grove Ornithological Research Station is a non-profit organization incorporated under Chapter 131 of the Wisconsin Statutes, and it relies heavily on public donations for continued operation. All personnel (except interns) are unpaid volunteers. We thank all the WSO members who have contributed to the station.

Black-bellied Whistling Duck by David Lund

Strategic Conservation Planning: The Relationship between the Landscape and Landowners in the Central Wisconsin Grassland Conservation Area

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ABSTRACT

As stewards promote conservation on a landscape, challenges often arise stemming from limited time, budgets, or personnel to implement the stewardship ideals envisioned. Coinciding with these challenges, our societal values and thoughts toward conservation have grown more complex and demanding. An emerging strategy to implement more effectively conservation goals on the land is known as strategic conservation planning. Strategic conservation planning is a tool that may be utilized to promote conservation initiatives effectively through comprehensively combining space, time, natural and anthropogenic processes, along with processes to develop consensus among stakeholders (Pressey et al. 2007). This research project studies the landscape and landowners of the Central Wisconsin Grassland Conservation Area (CWGCA). ArcGIS was utilized to complete a geospatial analysis of the CWGCA landscape focusing on land use, core grassland habitat, and the location of landowners who had previously indicated their interest in promoting grassland conservation initiatives on their land. By understanding the location of the interested landowners in conjunction with their relative location to core grassland habitat, a telephone survey was conducted to understand the perspectives landowners (n=14) hold toward government agencies working in the area. Results provide several landscape specific priorities to promote the expansion of core grassland habitat, along with insights into the experiences and attitudes of landowners. None of the telephone survey respondents indicated

that they have been involved in a decision-making process for the future of the CWGCA, along with a majority of respondents never having visited wildlife areas in the CWGCA. Moreover, survey respondents generally believe that government agents working in the CWGCA do not understand their priorities as landowners and state that there are frequent negative interactions with government agents.

Introduction

What does effective conservation on the landscape look like? The challenges to promote conservation effectively on landscapes worldwide have resulted in numerous strategies with varying amounts of success. The copious number of variables to consider when making management decisions to best promote conservation initiatives on the landscape may overwhelm even the most competent land stewards. So many agencies and organizations across North America face difficult decisions on a daily basis with a limited amount of dollars, personnel, and time to pursue all conservation ambitions. These challenges are pervasive throughout many agencies and organizations working for conservation, making it quite clear that conservation needs to begin prioritizing areas of the landscape to achieve more effectively the mission and goals (Beger et al. 2010).

An approach coming to the forefront of the conservation sphere known as strategic conservation planning promotes a spatial targeting process designed to increase the effectiveness of conservation activities. The purpose of strategic conservation planning is to aid the decision-making process in order to reduce time and maximize conservation dollars through the prioritization of actions to take on the most important parcels of land on the landscape (Amundsen 2011). Strategic conservation planning has been cited as taking an initial investment of time and money, yet the results have proven to be beneficial in the long run, displaying stronger, more concrete conservation results (Amundsen 2011).

Benefits to Strategic Conservation Planning

As our society's definition of conservation changes throughout time, our strategies need to as well. Our society has developed a complex understanding and definition of conservation with much more of an emphasis on a sustainably producing landscape that also considers conservation of biodiversity (Angelstam et al. 2003). This shift in our society's definition of conservation came about when it was shown that even the largest protected areas or parks (Yellowstone National Park, for example) cannot solely house the complete biodiversity that conservationists aim to promote (Adams 2006). Conservation no longer defined as an island of fenced-in biodiversity becomes more complex; it is now defined in terms of habitat networks, management regimes, protected status, restoration projects, and the overall permeability of the landscapes (Adams 2006). As conservation is now assessed on different scales (including site specific, local, and regional) this provides a need to revisit and re-evaluate conservation initiatives with a new perspec-

tive that strategizes and prioritizes (Angelstam et al. 2003).

Strategic conservation planning looks to expand the efforts that were once too narrow, and prioritize efforts that were once too grandiose. Strategic conservation planning efforts look to broaden the narrow "single-species" approach to planning and broaden planning efforts to entire ecosystems instead of site-specific wildlife areas (Theobald et al. 2000; Iowa State University 2008). While there is an emphasis in strategic conservation planning to look at maps, assign priority levels to parcels of land, and develop strategy, it is also abundantly clear that a local "bottom-up" approach must be used to have meaningful, long-lasting actions on the landscape (Theobald et al. 2000; Smith 2008).

Bottom-up Approach to the Planning Process

Planning for conservation is about human values (Theobald et al. 2000). In order to prioritize conservation activities effectively, multiple stakeholder participation must be present so as to provide a wide spectrum of community values. The "bottom-up" approach to strategic conservation planning is not a specific process; rather it is a collection of methods aimed at increasing the role of local stakeholders in identifying and solving conservation problems. The need to incorporate local perspectives in a bottom-up approach has developed due to the outdated, unrealistic, and ineffective methods once dominantly used by government agencies to act in the best interest for the wider community (Campbell & Marshall 2000; Smith 2008). Strategic conservation planning must avoid placing the entire decision making process solely in the hands of government agents, scientists, and other technical specialists. The key to successful conservation is to encourage citizens in articulating their personal values and goals in order to develop effectively the desired endpoints for the landscape in which they live (Theobald et al. 2000; Smith 2008). Although technical and scientific data are absolutely necessary in a planning process, this information alone is not sufficient to inform conservation planning (Theobald et al. 2000). Both the planners and those that will be affected by the outcomes must work together for true success (Theobald et al. 2000). Having the public involved in creating strategic objectives will then allow an agency or organization to reach out to the owners of specific parcels to fulfill the strategy with the support of the general public. The benefits of strategic conservation planning are numerous, compared to the more limiting historical conservation efforts, because it enables an agency or organization to save more land, improve stewardship efforts, help the decision-making process with clear criteria, improve fundraising efforts, and improve credibility (Amundsen 2011). In addition, a process that focuses on specific geographic areas can make it easier to identify local stakeholders and engage them in a meaningful process.

Central Wisconsin Grassland Conservation Area

With the benefits of strategic conservation described above, the follow-

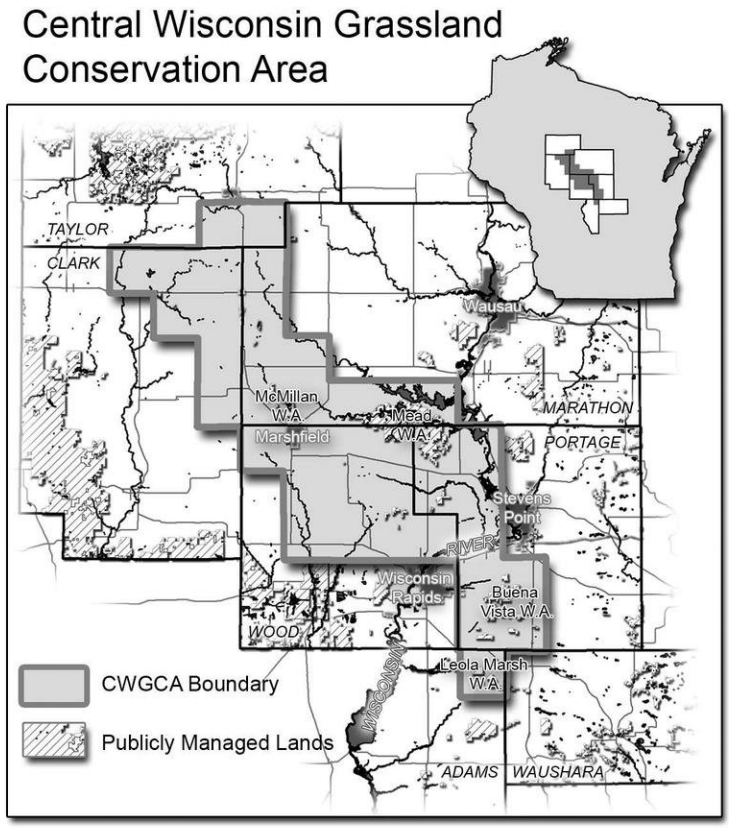

Figure 1. Study Area: the 'S' shaped CWGCA—Information based on Wisconsin DNR maps (2013).

ing will convey an overview of our research area, the Central Wisconsin Grassland Conservation Area (CWGCA). The CWGCA will then be inspected using the lens of strategic conservation planning, community values, and collaboration.

CWGCA Background Information—

Central Wisconsin boasts some of the best open landscapes in the midwest. Grassland prairie is one of such ecosystems in this landscape and is home to the native Greater Prairie-Chicken (*Tympanuchus cupido*). Figure 1 illustrates the current CWGCA area which is comprised of an 'S' shaped border running through the center of the state (WDNR 2013A). This 'S' shaped conservation area runs through the counties of Taylor, Clark, Marathon, Portage, Wood, and Adams as shown in Figure 1. The CWGCA provides an expansive biome for the Greater Prairie-Chicken and many other grassland-dependent species. There has been a dramatic decline in grassland ecosystems in Wisconsin, as well as throughout North America; thus, the documented decline of prairie and savanna plants and ani-

mals has caused great concern for scientists, hunters, and the public.

To ameliorate this decline of Wisconsin grassland ecosystems, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) is aiming to increase the amount of grassland preserved in the state. The current areas established under permanent grassland protection are approximately 22,000 acres (WDNR 2013B). This large tract of grassland is mandated to be managed and preserved for biodiversity and grassland health, yet the Greater Prairie-Chicken (the umbrella species), still remains threatened and on the decline (WDNR 2013B). Factors behind the declining Wisconsin grassland habitat go back to 200+ years of Wisconsin land use decisions. The CWGCA is surrogate grassland that was once forested and later cleared for agricultural production. Central Wisconsin, like much of the mid-western United States, has seen a great change in agriculture practices and production. Problems that have altered the central Wisconsin grassland within the last half century include an upsurge in cranberry beds and cranberry production, declining grassland grazing, an encroaching forest becoming established on pasture land, along with more center-pivot irrigation agriculture development, and rural residential development, to name but a few.

The Greater Prairie-Chicken—

The Greater Prairie-Chicken of the CWGCA is a vulnerable species and at risk of falling below a critical threshold where recovery is not likely. The Greater Prairie-Chicken is very area-sensitive with a low tolerance for human disturbance and habitat change (WDNR 2013B). The Greater Prairie-Chicken's choice of habitat requires both short grass for mating, tall grass for nesting, and limited to no tree cover to reduce predation. The Greater Prairie-Chicken requires different types of grass and many acres of open space. An undisturbed tall grass prairie of 10,000-20,000 acres of non-fragmented prairie land is estimated to be the ideal habitat coverage to maintain a healthy breeding population of Greater Prairie-Chickens, although "Little information has been published on mortality of juvenile Sage Grouse or the level of production necessary to maintain a stable population" (Connelly et al. 2004). It should also be noted that Greater Prairie-Chicken is not migratory.

Threats to the Greater Prairie Chicken—

The Greater Prairie-Chicken population of central Wisconsin is facing unprecedented pressures that are both natural and anthropogenic. Although harsh spring rains and summer droughts are threats to the Greater Prairie-Chicken population, human interactions remain by far the greatest threat. The direct effects of the human interactions include the fragmentation of the Greater Prairie-Chicken's habitat which creates isolated Greater Prairie-Chicken populations which leads to the limitations of possible dispersal, as well as a bottleneck in genetic variety and a situation where it is impossible to re-colonize areas. Other anthropogenic effects affecting the Greater Prairie-Chicken population include the use of pesticides on crops that reduce the availability of insects (food source). The

stress on water resources that center-pivot agricultural production puts on the ecosystem affects the ecosystem's ability to rebound from droughts, also indirectly affecting the Greater Prairie-Chicken population. The use of fire as a management tool is also limited, thus allowing forest succession to encroach upon the open grasslands. Trees and telephone poles create perches for predatory birds that further restrict Greater Prairie-Chicken population growth.

Greater Prairie-Chicken Rehabilitation—

The overall Greater Prairie-Chicken population in central Wisconsin is declining and is at a consistent height of vulnerability (Riddle et al. 2013). The Greater Prairie-Chicken population is continually threatening to cross a threshold where the population is unable to recover.

The "Wisconsin Greater Prairie-Chicken Management Plan 2004-2014" was written by the WDNR in order to document a 10-year program goal to guarantee the viability of the Greater Prairie-Chicken population in Wisconsin (WDNR 2013B). The primary purpose of this document is to motivate conservation practices through governmental and non-governmental partnerships. The document has aimed to conserve grassland habitat and the Greater Prairie-Chicken by permanently conserving an additional 15,000 acres of grassland by 2014. Much of the document is focused on the connectivity of Greater Prairie-Chicken populations.

The Greater Prairie Chicken Management Plan introduces a program for preservation, which is identified through nine 10-year objectives, 51 strategies, and 17 data research needs. Of the nine objectives, numbers one through six discuss habitat implementation, where the last three objectives discuss genetic diversity, recovery plans, and grassland partnerships.

The public was addressed in the Management Plan with regards to the needed collaborative efforts in coordination with both public and private lands, partnerships, public responses and opinions, historical public participation, government actions, public awareness of grasslands, booming grounds on public and private lands, public and private land conservation strategies, etc.

METHODS

Two objectives were completed in order to couple the prioritization of the most significant parcels of land with the landowners interested in grassland conservation. The first research objective was a geo-spatial analysis of the CWGCA. The second research objective executed a telephone survey of the landowners who had both previously indicated interest in grassland conservation initiatives and also live near core grassland habitat.

Objective 1: Geo-spatial Analysis—

The first objective of this research focuses on understanding current land use patterns within the CWGCA area. This objective inspects how the land is being used to identify where the current grassland habitat is and to identify how much core grassland habitat exists in the CWGCA. The spatial analysis was developed using ArcGIS (ver. 10.1) to analyze CWGCA

land cover, grassland fragmentation, and grassland core habitat. A three-step approach was used to complete this analysis, including:

- Step 1: Land Cover Data Processing & Reclassification;
- Step 2: Identification of Fragmenting Land Uses;
- Step 3: Grassland Fragmentation Analysis.

These steps are a modified analysis procedure using the Landscape Fragmentation Tool version 2 developed by Parent et al. (2007) for understanding forest fragmentation and applying this technique to grassland habitat fragmentation.

Step 1: Land Cover Data Processing & Reclassification—

In order to begin the process of targeting landowners for improved grassland conservation efforts, it is necessary to acquire high quality spatial data that allow for identifying where these grasslands exist. For this study the USDA 2010 National Agricultural Statistics Service Cropland Data Layer (NASS CDL) (USDA 2010) provided recent, relatively fine-scale (30 meter by 30 meter cell resolution) land cover data. More importantly this dataset included information about the location of grasslands and various pasture types critical to understanding Greater Prairie-Chicken habitat in the CWGCA.

The first step in developing this analysis required aggregating land cover types into meaningful use classes. This process was accomplished by reclassifying the NASS CDL into 8 categories, including: (1) row crops—such as corn and soybeans, (2) fixed agriculture—such as cranberries and orchards, (3) grasslands—including various pasture types, (4) forest and shrublands, (5) barren, (6) wetlands, (7) urban, and (8) water. This common technique allowed for understanding current land use patterns in the six counties that encompass the CWGCA.

Step 2: Identification of Fragmenting Land Uses—

The next step in the analysis process, in order to use the Landscape Fragmentation Tool, requires determining if each land use classification is target habitat, a fragmenting land use (negatively affecting the target habitat type), or a non-fragmenting (or benign) land use type. For the purposes of this analysis the aggregate land use categories were reclassified into the following:

- Target Habitat: Included only the grassland land use category as these represent the desired habitat type in the CWGCA.
- Fragmenting Land Use: Included row crops, fixed agriculture, forest, and urban land use categories as they represent land uses that are actively or have the potential to displace grasslands in the CWGCA.
- Non-fragmenting Land Use: Included wetland and water as neither land use type is likely to replace grassland habitat in the near future.

Step 3: Grassland Fragmentation Analysis—

The three land cover types (target, fragmenting, and non-fragmenting)

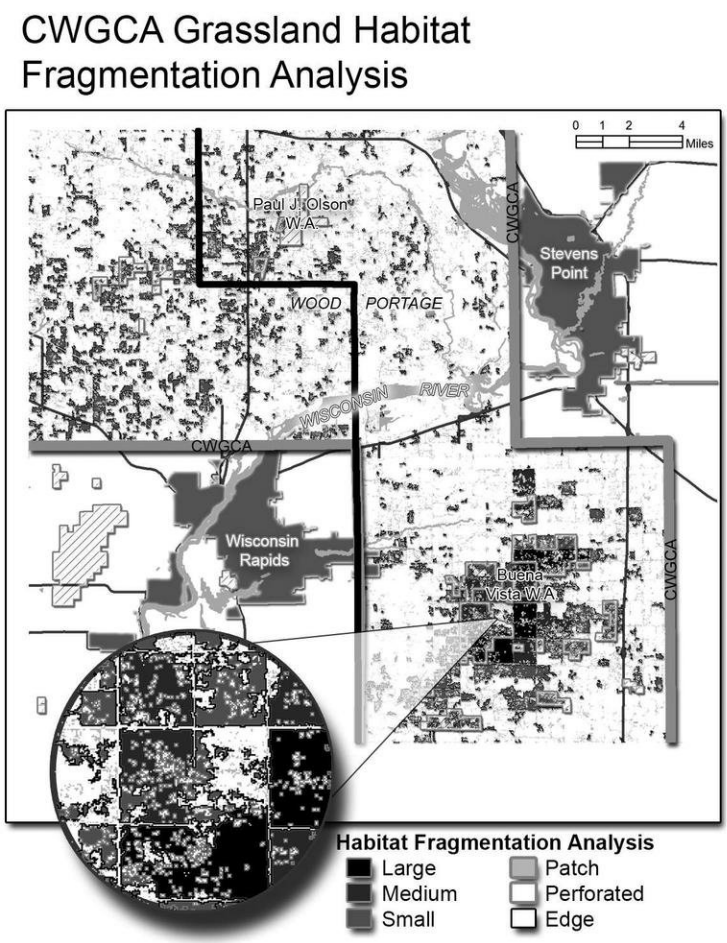

Figure 2. This figure shows the results of the grassland fragmentation analysis, focusing on the Buena Vista Wildlife Area.

were then analyzed using the Landscape Fragmentation Tool (Parent et al., 2007). The Landscape Fragmentation Tool requires an edge to determine the difference between core and non-core habitat. Due to minimum values required within this process (as the edge must be at least one cell in size), the edge was calculated at 30 meters. The Landscape Fragmentation Tool produced an estimate that breaks down the target habitat into the following six classifications: *Core*, grassland habitat separated into 3 subcategories (large > 500 acres, medium 250–500 acres, small < 250 acres), *Patches* (small, non-core habitat), *Perforated* (sections of grassland broken up by fragmenting uses), and *Edge* (30 meter perimeter on core habitat). As shown in Figure 2, the Landscape Fragmentation Tool successfully identified all 6 classifications within the CWGCA.

Objective 2: Overview: Quantitative Analysis of Landowner Attitudes and Involvement in the CWGCA—

The second objective built upon geo-spatial analysis and initiated the human dimensions aspects of strategic conservation planning. The location of landowners who had indicated interest in grassland conservation initiatives on their private land were identified on the CWGCA landscape. A telephone survey was then conducted with the landowners that met the research criteria. Criteria identified the landowners who owned parcels within two miles of the previously evaluated core grassland habitat. The purpose of the telephone survey was to gather quantitative data to understand landowner's involvement with grassland conservation, and their attitudes toward trust and communication with the government agencies working in the CWGCA. The following steps were executed to complete Objective 2:

- Step 1: Identification of Interested Landowners.
- Step 2: Telephone Survey Design.
- Step 3: Sample Description.

Step 1: Identification of Interested Landowners—

The dissemination of the postcard is a result of a combined effort on behalf of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Golden Sands Resource Conservation and Development Council, Inc. (RC&D) in 2010. These two entities partnered together to create a mailing packet as an outreach method for the CWGCA. The mailing packets were partially funded by the United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) through the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act grant. The packet that was mailed to landowners included a cover letter, a CWGCA partnership project description flyer, a county specific trifold explaining the different conservations programs offered to landowners, a Farm Service Agency (FSA) fact sheet about the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) program for enhanced grassland wildlife, and a pre-paid post card in which landowners were encouraged to indicate any items that matched their interest.

The pre-paid postcard sent to 1,605 landowners by the Golden Sands RC&D in July, 2010 provided landowners the opportunity to indicate their interest in grassland conservation programs. The following is the postcard which was sent to landowners:

> "Please check the item(s) that match your interest. Then simply mail this postage paid card back to us! We'll send you more information or have a representative contact you.
>
> - I want information about local, state, and federal rental payments, easements, or cost-share programs that protect grasslands and provide income.
> - I want information about a conservation easement with a non-government organization and possible savings on my property.
> - I want information about rotational grazing and turning a healthy profit on my livestock.

- I want information about selling all or part of my property for permanent grassland protection.
- I am undecided. Please call me soon to talk about these options.
- I'm not interest in any of the above. Please take me off your mailing list.

Name, telephone number, best time to call."

The following are the distinguishing criteria which generated a list of 1,605 landowners to receive the initial 2010 mailings:

- Booming grounds—Within a half mile of active or historical booming grounds.
- Nesting grounds—Within a mile of active or historical nesting grounds.
- Adjacent or abuts public owned or managed property.
- Landscape—Primarily open and undeveloped.
- Acreage—A minimum of 20 acres.

A total of 71 landowners (4%) sent back a postcard indicating an interest in grassland conservation. The landowners wanting to be taken off the mailing list were not a part of those 71. The Golden Sands RC&D staff working in the Grassland Conservation Program then matched the landowner's interest with the appropriate government agency. At that point the government agency was responsible for contacting the landowner in order to determine the landowner's eligibility of their land for conservation initiatives.

A key informant at the Golden Sands RC&D helped provide the research team with the responses and contact information for all of the landowners that replied to the postcards. Of the 71 landowners that expressed interest in promoting conservation initiatives on their land only 63 were geo-coded into point shape files through ArcGIS because their primary mailing addresses were within the CWGCA. Surrounding the point shape files (landowner's location) a two mile buffer was used to identify those landowners who are proximal to core grassland habitat. Landowner names and addresses were then searched in a white pages database to ensure their accuracy. The landowners (n=27) that were proximal to core grassland and had matching names, addresses, and telephone addresses were then identified as the sample for the telephone survey.

Of the identified landowners (n=27), six were not possible to contact (reasons including disconnected telephones, landowners moving, and deceased), leaving a total of 21 landowners on the list. Of the 21 landowners, there were 14 who fully completed the telephone survey yielding a response rate of 66.6%. Data were then cleaned for responses which were incomplete to negate the problematic issues associated with computations.

Figure 3 displays the identification of the landowners who have expressed both interest in promoting grassland conservation efforts in the CWGCA and are proximal to grassland habitat. Tiger Roads data were clipped into the 6-county CWGCA area from the Wisconsin Map data. The buffer tool was then applied to the point shape files that represented the landowners who expressed interest in grassland

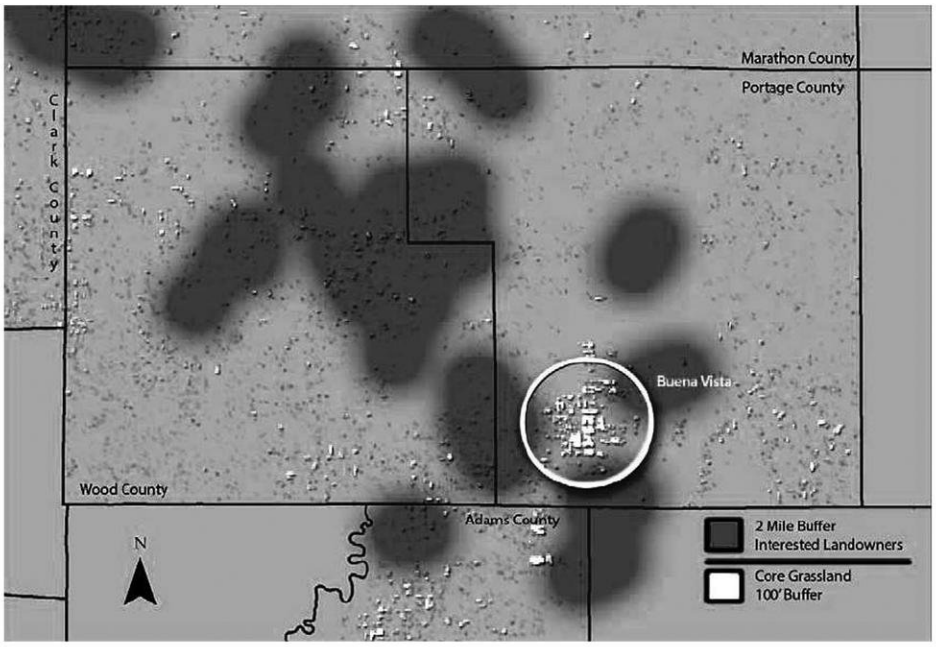

Figure 3. Twenty-four landowner's were identified through geocoding addresses within a 2 mile buffer of core grasslands. Please note that the 2 mile buffers indicating landowners in this image has been purposefully distorted to restrict information that may be used to identify specific landowners.

conservation initiatives within the CWGCA. A buffer of two miles was used to determine which landowners own parcels in proximity to grassland core habitat.

Step 2: Telephone Survey Design—

Landowners within the CWGCA were identified as being both interested in promoting grassland conservation initiatives on their lands and owning parcels of land within two miles of core habitat. The CWGCA Landowners Survey was designed to gather a better understanding of the involvement of landowners in CWGCA landscape planning, landowners experience interacting with government agents, and their communication preferences. Literature on the spectrum of public participation (Arnstein 1969) also provided topics for survey design.The variables that were measured in the telephone interview include:

- Landowner's attitudes toward government agent's and agencies ability to communicate.
- Landowner's involvement in the CWGCA.
- Landowner's trust in government agencies involved in the CWGCA.

The CWGCA Landowner Survey and script was developed firstly on an online survey web-site (surveymonkey.com) to ensure accuracy of results while telephoning landowners. Before

telephoning landowners an introductory letter was sent in the mail to all landowners on the survey list stating information about the purpose of the research and to expect a telephone call (Dillman 2000). All questions for the telephone survey were quantitative in nature utilizing binary or Likert-type scaling systems. The final question was open ended and asked about thoughts toward the future. The research team typed responses while on the phone with the survey respondents.

RESULTS

The research objectives were successfully implemented as indicated above, yielding results both geographic and quantitative in content. The following section is divided into two parts: the landscape inventory and the quantitative results of the telephone survey. Following the results a discussion will provide insight into how both objectives interact with each other.

Objective 1 Results: Core Grassland—

The following is an account of the fragmented grassland acres in the six-county grassland analysis. Approximately 10% of the six county area is comprised of grass parcels. These numbers are an approximation based on conversion of raster cells into acres:

- 2,654 acres of core grassland habitat;
- 6,338 acres of perforated grass;
- 23,068 acres of edge grass; and,
- 377,443 acres of grass patches.

Most striking in regards to the fragmentation analysis are the thousands of acres of grass patches (approximately 377,443 acres) within the CWGCA six-county area, while only approximately 2,654 acres are in core grassland. This indicates that while grassland is abundant, it is highly fragmented and in small acreage clusters. Additionally, the relative abundance of perforated (approximately 6,338 acres) and edge (approximately 23,068 acres) grassland identified by the fragmentation analysis indicates that existing core grassland area could be enhanced through the management of key parcels. This can be seen in Figure 2 where Buena Vista, which is managed for the Greater Prairie-Chicken and grassland, has potential to increase quickly the size of core grassland habitat. Once again we see management challenges in the CWGCA, as efforts to promote habitat connectivity that enables species to move about the landscape may not be supporting the core habitat that is integral to the Greater Prairie-Chicken survival (Hodgson et al. 2009).

Objective 2 Results: Telephone Survey—

The results of objective 2 revealed the landowners' involvement with the CWGCA, their experience communicating with government agents, and their trust in the government agencies. Although this was a preliminary study, lacking an ideal sample size to make broader generalizations, there are still trends and overwhelming agreement among this sample of landowners on many topics that are important to future work in the CWGCA.

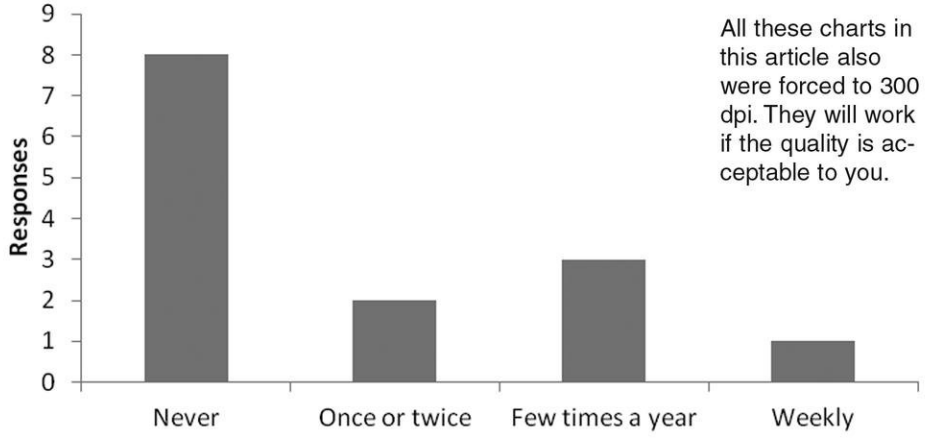

Figure 4. Landowner Visits to the CWGCA. Horizontal axis displays the frequency of visits, whereas the vertical axis displays the number of respondents that indicated their visitation to the CWGCA.

Objective 2 Results: Landowner Involvement—

Figure 4 represents the landowners' (n=14) experience visiting the Wildlife Areas (Buena Vista, Leola, Paul J. Olson, Mead). The vertical axis presents the number of landowners who responded to the according frequency visits. Fifty-seven percent of the respondents indicated that they have never been to any of the CWGCA Wildlife Areas mentioned above.

Figure 5 displays the respondents' average involvement in the CWGCA. The horizontal axis presents several statements which indicate involvement. The vertical axis represents per-

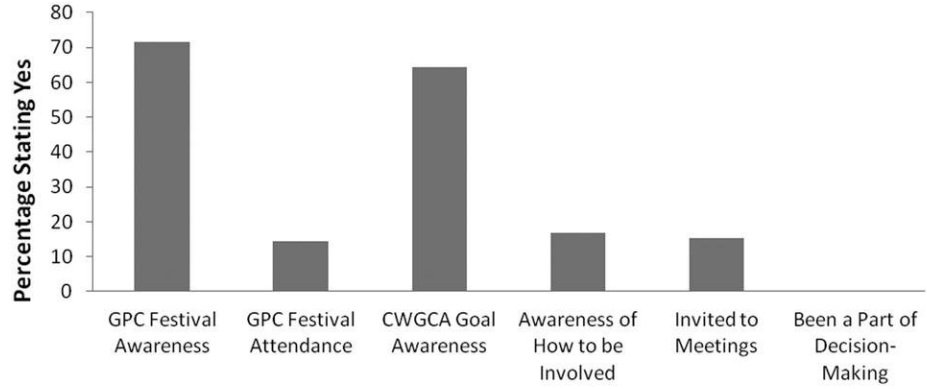

Figure 5. Respondents Involvement in the CWGCA. The horizontal axis represents several statements that indicate the involvement of the respondents; the vertical axis represents the percentage of respondents who have indicated their involvement. Seventy percent of the respondents indicated that they knew about the Greater Prairie-Chicken Festival, whereas 0% indicated that they have ever been a part of the decision-making process.

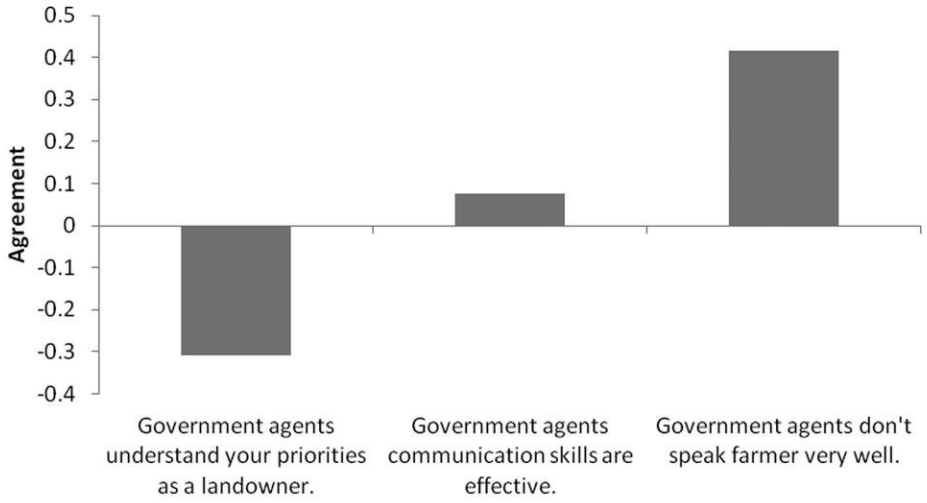

Figure 6. Agency communication skills. A Likert-type scale was utilized to understand the respondent's agreement level to several statements about government agent's communication skills. The horizontal axis represents several statements about government agent.

centage of respondents that answered yes to the statements.

Results indicate that 70% of the respondents (n=14) stated that they are aware that there is a Greater Prairie-Chicken Festival which occurs yearly in mid-April, yet only 14% of the respondents (n=14) stated that they have attended the festival. Sixty-four percent of the respondents (n=14) stated that they are aware of the goals of the CWGCA; however, only 17% of the respondents (n=12) stated that they are aware of how to be actively involved in the CWGCA landscape decision-making processes. These numbers may stem from the fact that only 15% of the respondents (n=13) stated that they had been invited to stakeholder meetings that take place for the CWGCA. Lastly, 0% of the respondents (n=13) stated that they have ever been a part of making decisions for the future of the CWGCA.

Objective 2 Results: Communication with Government Agents—

Figure 6 conveys three statements that were asked of the respondents to indicate their experience with government agents' communications skills. A Likert-type scale was utilized to accurately understand the attitudes toward the ability of government agents to communicate effectively. The horizontal axis represents the statements of the respondents and the vertical axis represents their agreement, where negative 1 is disagreement, 0 indicates neutrality, and positive 1 is an agreement to the statement.

Respondents (n=12) generally disagreed about the statement "government agents understand your priorities as a landowner" with a mean of –0.31. Respondents (n=13) indicated that there is a slight agreement about the statement "government agents communication skills are effective" with a mean of 0.07, while a large

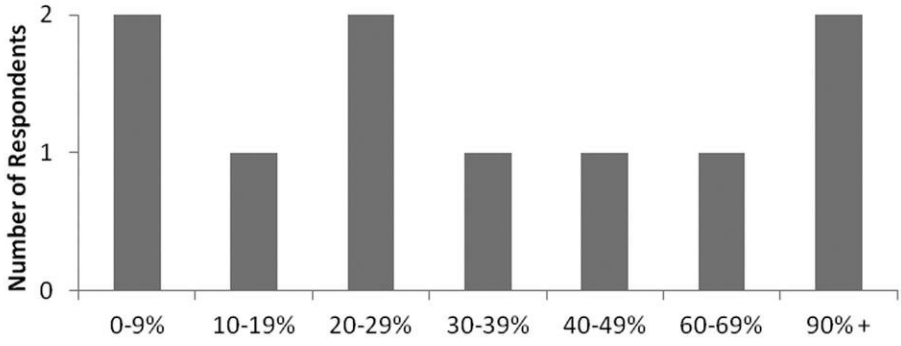

Figure 7. Negative interactions experienced with government agents. The horizontal axis represents the percentage of negative interactions with government agents that a landowner may experience; the vertical axis represents the number of respondents.

majority of respondents agreed with the statement that "government agents don't speak farmer very well" with a mean of 0.41.

Figure 7 represents the respondents' (n=10) percentage of negative interactions with government agents. The horizontal axis provides percentage categories indicating what the respondents determined to be their average negative interactions with government agents. The vertical axis represents the number of responses. Results indicate that approximately 40% the respondents (n=10) experienced negative interactions with government agents at least 50% of the time or more.

Table 1 indicates the various methods a government agency may communicate with landowners. Figure 8 gives a visual representation of the same data. It was asked of the landowners through the telephone survey what their preferred method of communication with government agencies is, where negative one is not preferred, 0 is neutral, and positive one is preferred. Respondents indicated that social media (n=13), with a mean of –0.7 and email (n=13), with a mean of –0.6 were the least preferred methods of communication. The telephone (n=13), with a mean of 0.4, publications (n=11), with a mean of 0.5, and direct mail (n=12), with a mean of 0.8, were found to be the

Table 1. The various methods a government agency may use to communicate with landowners.

Communication Preference	Mean	# Responses
Social Media	–0.6923	n=13
Email	–0.6154	n=13
Agency Visit	–0.1818	n=11
Websites	0	n=13
Site Visits	0.3077	n=13
Informational Meetings	0.3077	n=13
Telephone	0.3846	n=13
Publications	0.5455	n=11
Direct Mail	0.833	n=12

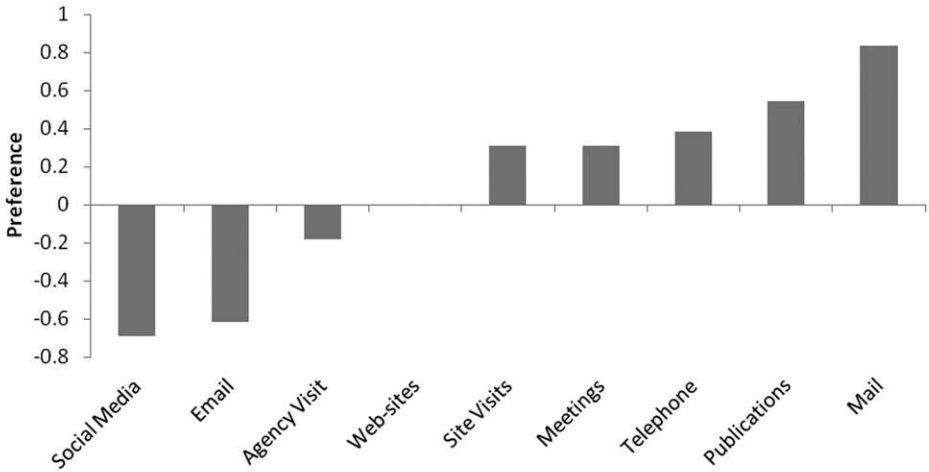

Figure 8. Preferred communication methods. The horizontal axis displays the spectrum of communication methods; the vertical axis illustrates the average respondent's preference toward the communication method. –1 is not preferred, 0 is neutral, and +1 is preferred

most preferred method to communicate. Please note that it was direct mail that provided contact information of this sample.

Objective 2 Results: Trust in Government Agencies—

Figure 9 illustrates the respondents who have previously worked with, or are currently working with, the government agencies that are involved in the CWGCA. The horizontal axis illustrates the agencies which are active in the CWGCA, whereas the vertical axis conveys the percentage of the respondents that stated yes to working with the agencies at any given time. Fifty-seven percent of the respondents

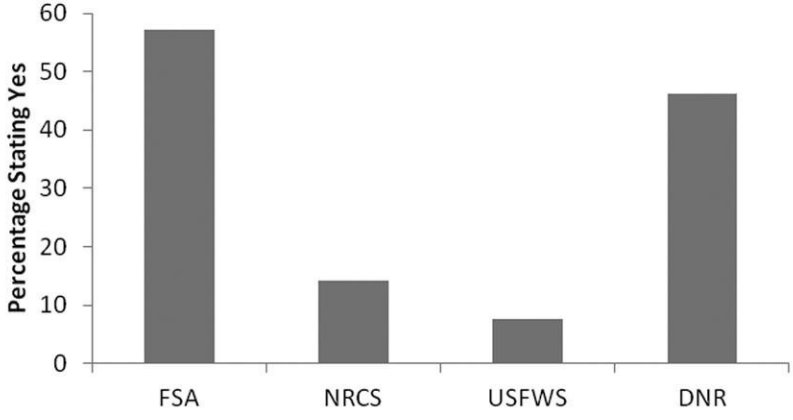

Figure 9. Respondents experience working with agencies in the CWGCA. The horizontal axis lists the different agencies working in the CWGCA; the vertical axis represents the percentage of respondents who have previously, or currently are, working with those agencies.

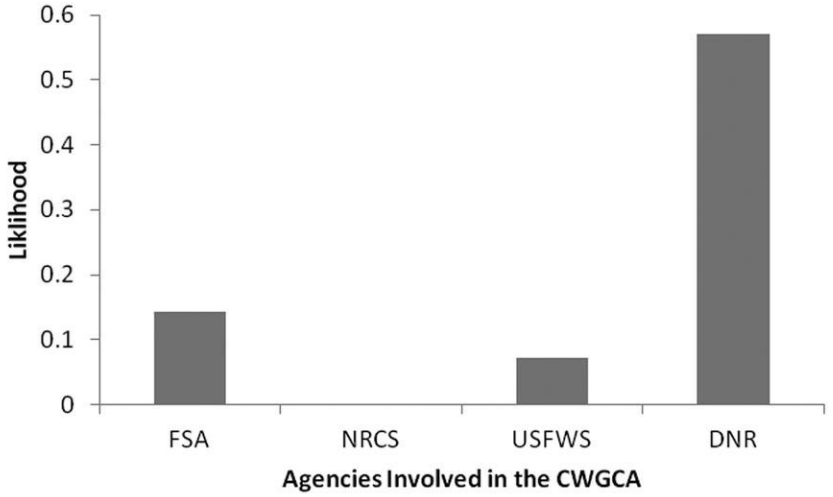

Figure 10. Respondents trust in agencies. The horizontal axis list the agencies working in the CWGCA; the vertical axis indicates the respondent's agreement, where 0 = neutral and +1 = likely to work with the agency in the future.

(n=14) stated that they have had a history working with the FSA while 14% of the respondents (n=14) stated that they have worked with the NRCS. Eight percent of the respondents (n=13) stated that they have worked with the USFWS, while 46% of the respondents (n=13) stated that they have worked with the DNR.

Figure 10 displays the results of the respondents' trust in the agencies working in the CWGCA by utilizing a Likert-type scale. The horizontal axis lists the agencies working in the CWGCA whereas the vertical axis indicates the respondent's agreement, where 0 = neutral and +1 is likely to work with the agency in the future. Respondents (n=14) indicated a slight likelihood to work with NRCS, with a mean of 0.14 likelihood, whereas respondents (n=11) provided overall neutrality toward the NRCS, with a mean of 0.0. Respondents (n=14) indicated a near neutral likelihood to work with the USFWS, with a mean of 0.07, while the respondents (n=14) were the most likely to work with the DNR in the future, with a mean of 0.57.

Discussion

The results of both the geo-spatial analysis and quantitative research completed through the telephone survey provide many aspects to discuss about the future of the CWGCA. What we can observe through the various maps presented in the results sections clearly indicates the likely areas of grassland expansion, as well as the areas that would not be effective to pursue for grassland expansion. There are three apparent results from the geo-spatial analysis. The first is that the Wisconsin River appears to be functioning as a barrier between the northern and southern parts of the CWGCA. This suggests that the CWGCA could be managed differently, with one grassland complex an-

chored in Paul J. Olson in the north and Buena Vista anchoring the south. The second result indicates that there is a need to prioritize investments for core habitat by focusing on connectivity and restoration within existing grassland habitat hotspots. This investment for core habitat is especially important in a world where climate change and extreme weather events are anticipated (Hodgson et al. 2009). The landscapes, land uses, and demographics of the CWGCA also ought to be inspected further since landowners have different values throughout the area. Thirdly, efforts to expand the core grassland complexes may benefit from looking for opportunities in the northwest of the northern section of the CWGCA, as the southern section already houses several large core areas lacking in other parts of the CWGCA.

The telephone survey provided information directly from the type of landowners that have indicated their interest in providing grassland conservation initiatives on their land. In regards to the respondent's involvement with the CWGCA it is shown that respondents have heard of the Greater Prairie-Chicken Festival, although generally do not attend. It is also shown that they know about the goals of the CWGCA, but are not aware of how to be involved. These results illustrate the disconnect between the CWGCA and the people living in the immediate area. Furthermore, a majority of the respondents state that they have never once been out to the CWGCA Wildlife Areas. Other results show that only a few landowners have been invited to CWGCA meetings, but none of them responded stating that they have been involved in the landscape decision-making process. These results strongly suggest that the government agencies involved in the CWGCA initiatives can benefit from enhancing their efforts to gather input from landowners in the CWGCA, but face a public that currently appears to be uninvolved in any type of collaborative process. The geospatial analyses of this research project cannot ensure a public that will be interested in participating; however, the methods undertaken for this research have utilized a tool which allowed insight into the types of landowners that are willing to implement conservation practices on their property. Geo-spatial analysis provides a tool for managers to respond to the complex natural resource problems at a landscape scale (Thompson et al. 2011).

Results of the communication section of the telephone survey indicate that government agents are not excelling at understanding the priorities of the landowners, nor able to effectively relate to farmers. These results further support the results of the overwhelming percentage of frequent negative interactions. The results alone strongly illustrate the necessity for government agents both to develop their understanding of the priorities of the landowners in the CWGCA and to improve their communication methods.

Respondents also indicated which agencies they have worked with previously as well as the likelihood of working with agencies in the future. What is notable about these differences is that fewer respondents would be likely to work with the FSA in the future. This can be dually noted for the NRCS. On the flipside, many respondents stated that they have worked with the WDNR in the past and indicated that they are likely to continue to work with WDNR in the future.

Conclusion

The CWGCA boasts some of the best open landscapes east of the Mississippi, yet the decline of the indicator species, the Greater Prairie-Chicken, displays an overall negative trend for the health of this grassland. While there are limitations in the small sample of landowners surveyed for this research, our findings suggest that a strategic conservation planning process that creates opportunities for landowners in the CWGCA to discuss the future that they envision for this landscape can provide benefits and resolve some of the on-going challenges in managing for grassland habitat.

For a successful strategic conservation planning process in the CWGCA the involvement and work of a wide diversity of partners and stakeholders is required to obtain a sense of shared ownership on the landscape. By involving a wide variety of stakeholders working towards a collective vision efforts are likely to be a success (Gray 1989). In situations where the community has minimal connection to "place," it has been shown that building trust is problematic and such efforts are likely to be undermined by non-local and economic forces (Armitage et al. 2009). It is integral that stakeholders affected by decisions understand ecological data and analysis; otherwise, approaches may be seen as excessively technical and discourage efforts (Theobald et al. 2000).

It is not likely that any single agency or organization has the ability to achieve a successful CWGCA on its own. Collaboration through the partnering of the different stakeholders in the CWGCA is likely to provide direction to each stakeholder on how to effectively implement appropriate tasks based on the abilities and strengths of that stakeholder.

Geospatial

A 6-county CWGCA management regime comes across as a grand vision which is short on focused detail. The need to re-examine the CWGCA with more detail requires a focused strategy that identifies and prioritizes particular parcels of grasslands. The advantage to focusing on strategic parcels allows managers to concentrate acquisition, management, and community engagement resources to where they are needed the most and where they will do the most good. The data show that there are a lot of parcels of grass on the landscape (approximately 377,000 acres); yet less than 3,000 acres are considered core habitat when running the fragmentation tool. This provides a further question as to how (and where) the 22,000 acres of grassland cited in the Greater Prairie-Chicken Management Plan is managed (WDNR 2013B). Managers looking to expand core grassland habitat now have the tools to prioritize parcels, identify the landowner of specific parcels, and engage specific communities to garner the support needed in directed manner necessary for success. The search for core habitat through the fragmentation tool provides quantifiable measurements of grassland in the CWGCA. Knowing the amount and location of core habitat in the CWGCA is one of the most important findings of this research project and is worth further investigation.

Attitudes and Values

The future of the CWGCA relies on developing a strong understanding of the priorities and values of the landowners in the CWGCA. The CWGCA landscape is a landscape dominated by many types of agriculture production and that dominance is not likely to change. If conservation is to take place on this landscape it must do so in a way that is acceptable and compatible to the value systems of agricultural producers of the region. The respondents of the telephone survey show that there are an unacceptable number of negative interactions with government agents that regularly occur. The regular negative interactions that landowners experience are backed with further data which indicates that firstly landowners believe that government agents do not understand their priorities, and secondly government agents are not able to relate adequately. Although the findings are negative, it is noteworthy that the majority of the respondents did state that they are likely to work with the WDNR in the future. This positive indication among key landowners provides a platform for this agency to direct future outreach activities.

Data from the telephone survey also indicate that landowners are minimally involved in the CWGCA at this time. Landowners have heard about a Greater Prairie-Chicken festival and are familiar with the goals of CWGCA initiatives; however, invitations for landowners to participate, knowledge on how to participate effectively, and experience in being a part of the decision-making process are nominal to non-existent.

Another indicator of landowner involovment in the CWGCA coming from the survey is the fact that many landowners are not visiting the wildlife areas on the landscape. This finding of minimal visits coupled with landowners not attending festivals, not attending meetings, not seeing their input considered for management, and only 71 or 1,605 replying with a post card expressing interest clearly displays a lack of landowner involvement. Landowner connection to the landscape right in their backyards is a basic initiative that must be pursued to have a public that cares about their landscape. Having involved citizens is the key to real conservation, not the number of projects completed in the name of conservation, or, as Leopold once stated ". . . The acreage bought for public parks or forests is not the thing; what matters is whether private landowners regard their forests and their landscapes as a public trust." (Leopold 1937).

Land-use planning in the CWGCA for both the public and private entities must identify and build upon the shared values that are held. It is necessary to bring multiple stakeholders to the table in order to create a formalized and fair decision-making process that is necessary for the future of the CWGCA. Without a clear CWGCA governance structure in place, the discussions, meetings, and public input hearings are less than likely to yield the results necessary for the changes toward collaboration that are needed on this landscape. A priority for the CWGCA Partnership is to construct a governance system with a protocol for making decisions. When a protocol for decision-making is in place, final outcomes are more likely to be accepted even by those who are op-

posed, because those who opposed had an opportunity to voice their concerns and opinions.

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Osprey as seen by Dennis Connell

"From Field and Feeder"

This column appears from time to time when members send in stories of unusual bird behavior that they observe. This time there are two stories of wintering species that normally go much further south for the season.

Summer Tanager Winter

On 4 December 2012, a Summer Tanager was spotted at feeders in a rural Town of Cedarburg yard in Ozaukee County, Wisconsin. It was observed daily from that date through 20 March 2013. The following is an account by the host of that unusual winter visitor.

We have fed birds for many years, but rarely had cause to notice one individual bird, or feel that we had an ongoing relationship with any one of them. Usually there are many of one species, which makes it hard to single out an individual and its habits. That was, however, just what happened this winter when a very unusual bird showed up at our feeders on 4 December 2012. It was a smallish bird with an unusually large beak, a yellow breast, olive green back and wings, and irregular blotches of pink on its breast, back, and head. The undertail coverts were bright yellow orange. It was obviously not one of our Wisconsin regulars.

The bird was not shy, so we were able to take some pictures (Fig. 1) and sent them off to our local bird experts for identification. They identified it as a Summer Tanager. Some said it was a red morph female, others thought it was an immature male. As shown in the National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America, the first year male Summer Tanager looks a bit more brightly colored than our bird, and the red morph female a little less colorful. (The adult male is solid red). My vote is for female, but I doubt that we will ever know for sure.

The sighting caused some excitement among local birders. Sightings of Summer Tanagers are rare in Wisconsin and those that have been reported were seen mainly in the spring or summer. There is no record of one staying in Wisconsin all winter. We wonder if Hurricane Sandy might have blown her off course, causing her to spend her winter in a very different climate from Mexico, Central America, South America, or Cuba, her normal over-wintering sites.

The Tanager stayed around our yard eating sunflower seed and suet (Fig. 2). It seemed to be always eating. A parade of birders passed through to see it and rarely had to wait more than

15 minutes for a sighting. Since she was nearly always eating or resting on the feeder, she was easy to spot and photograph.

Days stretched into weeks and the bird eventually learned to associate us with food, especially after mealworms (Fig. 3) were introduced into her diet by birder and photographer, Bill Joers, who paid several visits. He also provided a special feeder with an infra red heat lamp (Fig. 4) that he had built for an immature Baltimore Oriole that had hung around his yard from 12 December 2012 to 11 January 2013.

Tanya (well, she had to have a name) took to the mealworms immediately and would eat what seemed to us to be amazing numbers of them, often 30 or more at a sitting. It took her longer to warm up to the heated feeder. After about three weeks of feeding her on the ground in front of the feeder, we eventually lured her into it with mealworms. For awhile she would land at our feet and accept mealworms we tossed one at a time, sometimes catching them on the fly, or at least on the first bounce. She eventually trained us to put them in the feeder while she waited overhead, then she would come down to eat after we stepped back a couple feet. We would usually stand behind the feeder for a few minutes to give her a chance to eat without being hassled by the juncos and squirrels.

She came in about every two to three hours for a feeding, from sunrise to a little before sunset. She averaged six feedings a day; and thirty worms a feeding, with a few bites of suet now and then. From 24 January through 20 March, I kept records of the times of her feedings and the number of worms she ate each time. Her first morning arrivals were usually just before sunrise and got earlier as the sun rose earlier. Her last meal of the day tended to be well before sunset (see chart).

After the switch to mealworms, she spent less time at the sunflower seed feeders, though she still occasionally ate a few sunflower seeds, especially in very cold weather. She ate more suet then, too. The worms must stick to the ribs longer than sunflower seed, which is far removed from her preferred diet of bees, wasps, and their larvae. On 28 November, a few days before we spotted her, she (or one looking very much like her) was photographed in a yard a few miles from us eating ornamental crab apples. We offered chopped apple, blueberry, and cranberry, all of which she ignored. She also showed no interest in freeze-dried mealworms or beetle larvae. In December we often saw her drinking from the heated bird bath, and a couple of times we saw her bathe. When it got colder, she no longer went to the bird bath. Perhaps the mealworms provided all of the moisture she needed, though I did see her eat snow once.

Because she was so easy to spot, we spent a lot of time watching her. We noticed that she was not particularly shy or flighty. She would sometimes sit in one spot for long periods, sometimes an hour or more, resting or basking in the sun. She fended off other birds, even as large as Northern Cardinals, and didn't give way to them at the feeder. She ignored challenges by juncos and finches. She would, however, defer to a Blue Jay, European Starling, or other larger bird. She seemed to ignore woodpeckers,

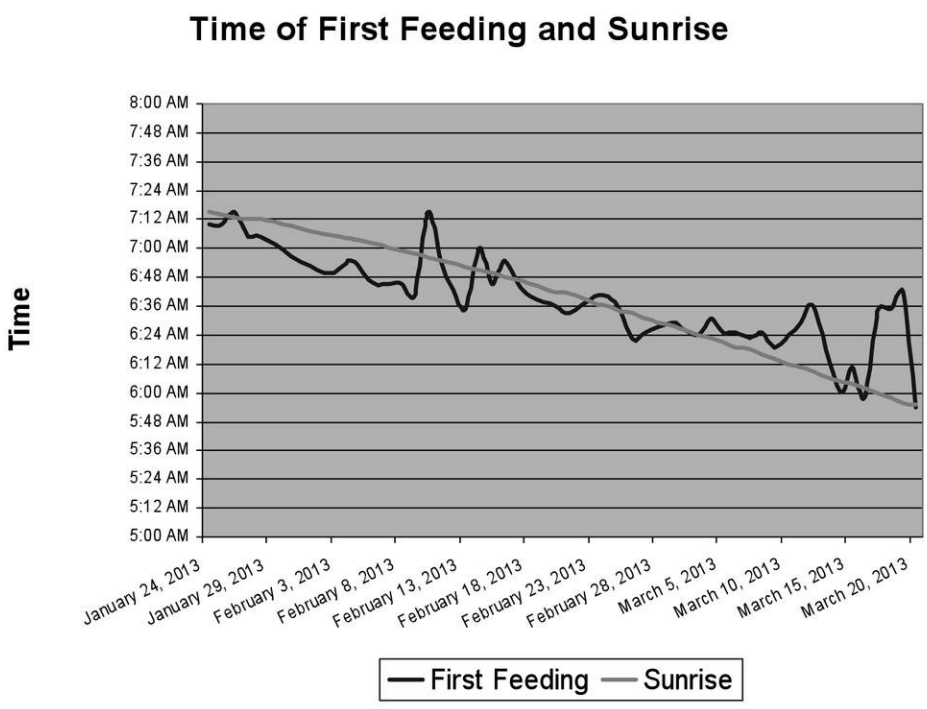

Chart showing Tanya's first morning feeding times compared to sunrise, 24 January to 20 March 2013.

even ones as large as the Hairy or Red-bellied. I once observed her fly at a female cardinal in a dispute over some seeds and suet on the ground and the cardinal gave way.

For the first few weeks, she did not fly off with the rest of the birds when they were startled. Eventually she seemed to become more tuned in to the others and seemed to know to lie low when there was a hawk around.

I only heard a couple of vocalizations from her. One was a short warning "tsk" when another bird was crowding her. Once I startled her when she was in her feeder/spa and she flew to a branch over my head and said "**Chip it, Chip it, Chip it, Chip it, Chip it!!!** very loudly. Properly chastised, I made sure that she saw me coming after that. Another time she made a similar cry, just one repetition, when a Cooper's Hawk was heading her way while she was waiting for me to put her worms in the feeder. She flew, and beat the hawk to the pine trees. Twenty minutes later, when the all clear had apparently sounded, the other birds came back and so did she.

She had a few favorite refuges that I knew of. In severe cold and windy weather, she went under our front porch, where she sat on the ground near the foundation. Our house is old and probably leaked enough heat to give her a little warmth and shelter from the wind. She also used the pine trees along the driveway and a thicket in front of the house for sheltering

and resting. I never learned where she spent the night.

The winter of 2012–13 was particularly harsh. There were several nights below zero and persistent snow into early April. Our bird was a loner, so she did not have the advantage of huddling with other birds during cold nights. I have no idea how she survived the nights when we had near zero temperatures or even a few with sub-zero temperatures with wind. I waited anxiously those mornings to see if she would reappear. There were other anxious mornings when she came in an hour or two late. Just when I'd about given up hope, there would be a flash of yellow and she would be back, either at the feeder or on a branch overhead.

The winter was not easy on her. In January we noticed that she was favoring her left foot. It got to the point that she was always keeping it tucked up in her feathers. We wondered if it was an injury or frostbite. After a few more weeks, I noticed her standing on the left foot and favoring the right. There were times when a foot was bothering her so much that she did not hop on the ground, but rather took little jumps more like short flights with much wing fluttering. She sometimes put a wing out to touch the ground or branch for balance. I worried that this behavior would catch the attention of a predator. Other times her feet did not seem to be bothering her. She quit using the wire suet feeder about the time I noticed the foot problem, so I started offering some finely chopped suet on the ground. She and the juncos, cardinals and Tree Sparrows appreciated it. So did the crows, starlings, Wild Turkeys, and squirrels.

Before the first predicted sub-zero nights, when her foot was already bothering her, we wondered if we should try to catch her and take her to a bird rehabilitator. The logistics of making a safe catch were worrying. We thought of asking a professional birdbander with a mist net to try to catch her, but worried about the safety of using a net in cold weather and the danger of catching other birds as well. In the end we decided to trust nature to handle the situation and to spare her the trauma and stress of attempts at capture. We had already intervened by feeding her and providing the heat lamp. She could choose to accept those measures or not. Captivity would be a different matter and might not have improved her chances even if we were successful at catching her without injuring her,

I was amazed at her endurance. Day after day and night after cold night, with all a Wisconsin winter could throw at her, and with sore feet; she endured for nearly four months. She avoided hawks, owls, and other predators in an environment she was never meant to experience. When she first arrived, we held our breath hoping she would stay until the Christmas Bird Count. She did. Then we hoped she would make it until after the first of the year. She did. We hoped she would survive the sub-zero nights and she did. We had hoped that she would make it until the weather warmed up in spring so she would be the first Summer Tanager ever observed to over-winter in southeast Wisconsin. Alas, that did not happen.

The last day we saw her was, ironically, the first day of spring—20 March 2013. On 19 March, she came in late and was not behaving normally.

She seemed agitated and confused, made a couple false passes at the feeder before going in, then left after a couple seconds, and did not eat. She was fluttering her wings a lot and seemed a bit off balance. She flew under the porch and huddled there for a couple hours, out of sight. She came back out on time for her next feeding, and ate 20 worms and some suet. She then stayed under her heat lamp for nearly three hours, which was unusual. Normally she didn't stay in there more than 20 minutes, if that long. She seemed to improve as the day went on, though she missed two feedings. The next morning, 20 March, she showed up a little early and ate 30 worms and some suet. She behaved and ate normally all day. She followed her usual feeding schedule and arrived and ate her usual 30 worms around 3 pm. She did not come in for her last feeding of the day and the next day she did not appear. We looked in all of her usual places and could find no trace of her. After 107 days, hundreds of sightings, and more than 10,000 mealworms, she was gone. We don't know if she left or succumbed to the weather, disease, or a predator. She did not say good-bye, left no forwarding address, and has sent no postcards.

It was a wonderful experience to observe and know an individual wild bird so well outside of captivity for that length of time. We became a lot more aware of the importance of the thickets and sheltered areas around our yard for winter birds. We had the added benefit of observing what goes on in our yard more closely than we usually do. We saw an immature Red-headed Woodpecker, which showed up about the same time the Tanager did, and spent the winter here. We noticed a pair of White-winged Crossbills at our feeders for a couple of weeks in February. We saw a Northern Shrike make a pass at a junco right outside our living room window. We might not have noticed these events if we weren't always looking out the windows for the tanager.

Whether Tanya made it or not, her presence was a consciousness raising experience and made our long winter a lot more interesting! She also set some state of Wisconsin records. There are no prior recorded reports of Summer Tanager sightings in southeast Wisconsin for January, February, or March so she will be remembered in the record books.

Special thanks to Bill Joers for loaning us the heated feeder he built and for providing a large batch of mealworms. He also took some wonderful photos of the tanager and other birds in our yard. The included photos are provided by and copyrighted by Bill Joers.—*Janet Beimborn, Town of Cedarburg.*

Figure 1. Summer Tanager in the snow at the home of Janet Beimborn, Town of Cedarburg, Ozaukee County.

Figure 2. Summer Tanager eating suet.

Figure 3. Summer Tanager snacking on mealworms that were added to its menu.

Figure 4. Summer Tanager, dubbed Tanya, checking out her new feeding shelter with heat lamp.

Sparky, the Wayward Baltimore Oriole.

The day began, like any other winter day. I went out, and checked my suet feeders, restocked the suet where needed, and placed enough seed in my feeders and feeding station. I must do this every morning because if I do not the deer and raccoons will empty my feeders during the night. On Aaron Rodgers Day (12 December 2012 or 12-12-12) I caught a flash at one of my feeders, a flash of orange of all things. At first I thought the sun was playing tricks on my ability to see the true color, it must be a house finch that the sun is lighting up to glow orange. I looked again, and went and grabbed my camera. I keep a small nylon blind set up in my yard to take photos of my birds. I took my camera and went to the blind and sat down. Sure enough there it was this cute little orange bird, could it really be a Balitmore Oriole? It did not have the dark head I knew it should have. I snapped several nice captures of it, and came into the house and looked to see if it was indeed a Balitmore Oriole. The wing bars looked good, but the head threw me. I am no pro, when it comes to juvenile bird identification. I posted the photo, and the instant answer was, yes, you have a juvenile Baltimore Oriole.

A Baltimore Oriole in my yard in winter, very strange. My yard is so heavily wooded with shagbark hickory, maples, oak, ash, and a mixed blend of other trees. It is so heavily wooded that most of my yard is lucky to get 3 or 4 hours of sunlight in the summer. Why had this bird chosen my yard to visit? It sure would not be the choice of this species in the summer. Would I see him tomorrow, or was this a one-time visit, a stopover to refuel before he headed south in a hurry? I left for work, with a lot of questions, and the knowledge that I, at least, had a documentary photo of this bird being in my yard. I posted to the Wisbirdn website about my bird, the next day, and then the next. I begin putting out oranges first thing in the morning and then again around noon. He would eat them if they were fresh (Figures 1 and 2), but would not touch them if they were frozen. After the third or forth day of posting that he was still showing up daily, I asked if I should keep posting daily or just post after he had finally departed. Peter Fissel said, "Post everyday if you wish, it's slow this time of year, plus people are really enjoying your posts."

And so the saga began. I began to get an email here and tere, and then a few a day, then several a day. Some offered suggestions on how to better provide for his dietary needs: mealworms, and other suggestions, too. Some including some friends from India who were now following the saga of this wayward bird suggested I build him a house. To my knowledge these birds did not use bird houses. I went to the internet, and looked for any information on a Baltimore Oriole ever using a bird house of any kind; I found none.

Some were suggesting heated bird baths, or a heat lamp. The heat lamp made some sense, but it would need to be set up in some sort of wind block or shelter for it to be effective, at least in my mind. I wrote to someone, whom I respected but never had spoken to or met—Helmut Mueller, a retired Professor of Biology at the University of North Carolina. I knew

of him and his work. He along with Dan Berger in 1950 founded the Cedar Grove Ornithological Station. I knew that he knew Wisconsin, and its winters as he has been spending 3 months each fall since 1995 in our state trapping and banding migrating hawks and owls. He was someone I could ask who would give me a straight answer. Would it be possible to build a shelter and provide infared heat via a lamp for this bird?

"Helmut, I have had a young male Baltimore Oriole coming to my feeding station now for the past 17 days. He is still here as of 28 December 2012. I am doing all I can to provide him with all the nutrition he will need to sustain himself over the winter. Food includes oranges, mealworms, suet (both store bought and homemade). Straight pieces of pork fat and beef fat are also there for other birds. I have peanuts, an assortment of mixed bird seed, and black oil sunflower seeds. I have pulled other live grubs out of decaying wood and also given him carpenter ants from decaying wood as well.

"My concern is for his shelter. I am fully aware that Baltimore Orioles do not use nesting boxes or bird houses. Would building a 3 sided shelter and placing an infrared heat source be advised, or am I crazy to think I could coax him to use it by placing his oranges there? As far as I can tell if he makes it to the first of the year, he would be only the 4th Baltimore Oriole to be documented past December in Wisconsin since 1958.

"Some have suggested I dust his mealworms with a powder of Vitamin D and calcium (found in pet stores for reptiles), to provide him with more calcium.

"Any thoughts you have to share to help me make this guy not only survive, but thrive, this winter would be greatly appreciated."

Helmut replied back, short and not so sweet "You are doing everything that is possible!" I got my answer, it was not what I wanted to hear for my oriole, who by now was being called Sparky, a name given him by a birder from Minnesota who was now following my daily posts to the Wisbirdn forum. That same day several hours later, I received another message from Helmut, it simply stated and I quote, "On second thought, a shelter with infrared might be worth trying at the feeder." A man of few words it appeared, but with that, I was off to building a shelter out of some cedar tongue-and-groove planks I had lying around the house. The only thing I needed to get was an infrared heat lamp. I built a simple leanto, modestly big, that could be used for a sheltered bird feeder should he not use it. I bought the heat lamp, finished the shelter, and set up the shelter and heat lamp on a portable circular wood table near the feeding station. I placed a small dish of mealworms inside slightly, and placed an orange slice both inside the structure and one slightly outside. I sat and waited, it was only a few hours later after it was set up, that he was inside (Fig. 3), not far inside it, but inside it by inches. A success, he was using the shelter. Mealworms, a heat lamp, and cutie mandarin oranges, some said I was crazy, some were impressed and very supportive. Some were so supportive that they offered their help, with food supplements for "Sparky."

Days passed, and the winter got cold and nasty fast, but every day without

Figures 1 and 2. Sparky eating the oranges.

Figure 3. Sparky just about to enter his new heated feeding shelter.

Figure 4. Sparky eating mealworms in his spa.

fail he was either there before I was sitting near the feeding station he used, waiting for me, or he would arrive within an hour of my placing his mealworms and fresh oranges. January came and he was still here, a week into January he was still here, and he now had had a few visitors who had come to document for themselves this bird named Sparky. Two people with their own cameras sat in a borrowed blind to get a capture or two of him. Sparky did not disappoint them, as he came in very shortly after they arrived. They were able to get his picture, and a few close-up photos of one of my Red-bellied Woodpeckers too. Sparky was doing well, through each and every cold snap; he was there, every day, using the heat lamp, eating his oranges and his mealworms (Fig. 4), and suet as needed. Then we got a warm spell, warm for January at least, 50 degree weather on 11 January with rain and fog. It was the last day I saw Sparky. He had come daily to my feeder for almost a month, and then on an unseasonably warm January day, along with 4 pairs of Northern Cardinals, he simply disappeared, never to be seen again. I suspect because the cardinals did not return after that date either, that the 9 of them decided to venture to a new location. I cannot say for sure, and can only hope that this little wayward bird, who brought me and my grandchildren and others so much joy, is doing well somewhere. If he returns, he will be welcome with fresh, not frozen, oranges.—*William (Bill) Joers, Colgate, Wisconsin.*

Convergent Tourists

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The junction of Wisconsin highway 57 and County highway Q in Door County might at first glance appear to be a quite ordinary place for hominid tourist traffic to intersect. There are no less than three art/antique businesses (mostly closed in winter except for the holiday season) and a country church clustered around the intersection, with further indications of hominid industry in both directions on both highways.

To one quite rare Canadian tourist, the locale (in the winter of 2012–2013, at least) might well have embodied something extraordinary, something such as several plant communities similar enough to the broken spruce forests of Northern Canada, in which it conducts its summer industry, to bring it to sojourn there in winter sabbatical for many weeks.

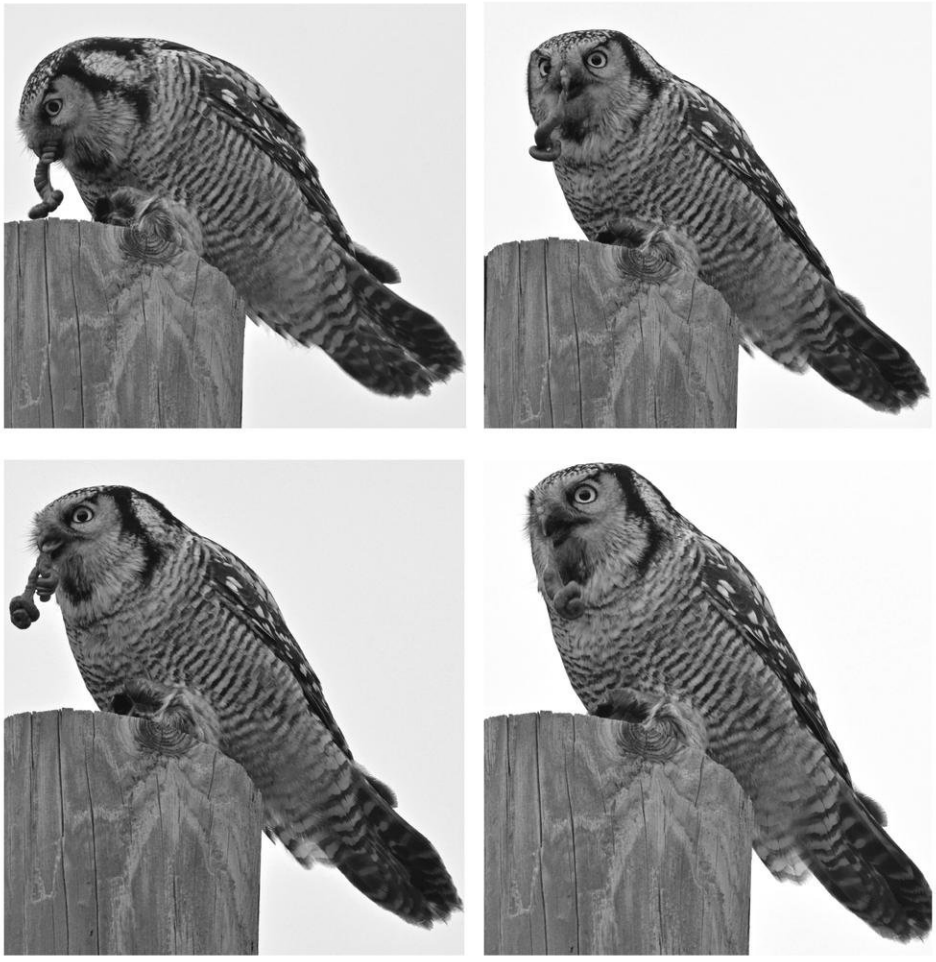
This solitary, scarce, winter visitor was not a Canadian Spruce logger, but rather a Northern Hawk Owl (Figures 1 and 2). One Wisconsin expert (Ryan Brady/wisbirdn post/18 January 2013) has opined that this bird is probably a juvenile, given its smooth uniform flight feathers that show little wear. Adults are more likely to show uneven, worn flight feathers. If gender determination be possible based on size and plumage characters, I am not aware of it.

A dense grove of eastern white pine, white cedar, and white spruce stands out in the NW quadrant, with grassland girding its perimeter. Large white pines, red pines, and spruce are clumped in the NE, SE, and SW quadrants, with some adjacent plots of grassland. The SW quadrant has a large expanse (a bit under 80 acres) of grass-forbs mix.

Is the supply of small mammal potential prey an inducement for staying that long? I strongly suspect so. It is written that they don't dally long in locales where prey are scarce. In seven trips to observe/photograph this Northern Hawk Owl, I personally saw it capture small mammals on five days. On one of those days, 8 January, I observed it catch three small mammals. The captures that I had a good look at, looked an awful lot like Meadow Voles, although I cannot document that in photographs. The one microtine lunch (Figures 3–9) that I was able to document on memory card was up high atop a power pole. It was not whole for very long. Northern Hawk Owls are known to eviscerate the soft organs from their prey first

Figures 1. and 2. This Northern Hawk Owl was a winter visitor in Door County, Wisconsin, near Sister Bay, for much of the winter of 2012–2013.

Figures 3. Time for lunch, probably a vole.



Figures 4–8. Lunch is eaten in typical Northern Hawk Owl fashion—guts first.

and consume the remainder headfirst if it is not too large. The skeleto-muscular remains of larger prey are often cached for later use. I believe that I witnessed that behavior more than once with meadow voles. Red squirrels and small snowshoe hares (summer) are important prey items in their native Canadian open spruce forests.

Is snow depth a factor in determining the length of their winter retreat? Tough question. It is reported that as snow depths increase, they often shift their diet towards ground-roosting birds (grouse and ptarmigan) in their native Canadian habitats. On one occasion, I witnessed a flock of about 12 Mourning Doves buzzing south out of the conifer grove in the NW quadrant with the Northern Hawk Owl in hot pursuit. It cut one individual out of the flock and followed for about 250 yards before giving up the chase. The Hawk Owl is (as its name might sug-

gest) a pretty swift flier, much suggestive of an *Accipiter* hawk. It has the long, pointed wings and longer tail which facilitate that rapid, maneuverable flight.

The same locale is apparently ecologically magnetic to some of the Northern Hawk Owl's summertime associates from the Canadian spruce-moose biome. I observed both White-winged Crossbills and Pine Grosbeaks working on pine and spruce cones in the area. They were also noted crowding and swooping at the Northern Hawk Owl with much clamorous vocalization. I observed the same type of intolerance by Blue Jays (Fig. 10), Red-breasted Nuthatches, American Crows, and waxwings. On one afternoon, a sizeable flock of about 50 waxwings circled the Hawk Owl at close range while it perched in the top of a very large white pine right at the highway intersection. I was unable to make certain visual identification of the species by looking for rusty under-tail feathers, but the flock call sounded a lot like the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology recording for Bohemian Waxwing. It seemed to have the lower pitch and choppier syllabification which might distinguish the two. Wishful deduction, perhaps.

The winter stay of this Candian "emigre" spawned a steady pilgrimmage of tourists to the locale who might otherwise have chosen the creature comforts of their home areas over the winter season in the Door Peninsula. (That description would be me except for my interest in photographing winter landscapes in the Door that has developed since my retirement.) The day trip adventurers came from as far away as Chicago to sandwich a day or two of high adventure in what might otherwise be a routinized work-a-day world.

Would a prudent conservationist drive that far to commune visually with such a rare bird? A perfectly prudent conservationist might by choice, tough it out in a bare-bones one room apartment, live on no-frills diet, consult a field guide for photographs of a Northern Hawk Owl, and call the spiritual journey completed. A somewhat less frugal conservationist might stay in the warm roominess and amenities of an ample (or more than roomy) abode, and consult the internet for a large sample of the photos, videos, and natural history information available on the Northern Hawk Owl while calling the aesthetic experience sufficient. Might this be the birding adventure of the future? Possibly. My crystal ball regarding the future has much fog in it. My spirit, however, yearns for a bit more.

This much-less-than-perfectly-prudent conservationist made seven one day trips between 27 November and 15 January to make eye, ear, and memory card contact with the Northern Hawk Owl at varying distances. Can I completely justify my expenditure of fossil fuels during those excursions? No. Do I feel fortunate to be able to navigate those journeys in a high MPG compact car? Yes. A much more prudent individual might bicycle that trip and tent camp nearby. In seven trips, I did not encounter any such hardy, spartan souls. I suspect that they are a regular occurrence in "the Door" during the warmer seasons. I tip my hat to them as a group.

The Northern Hawk Owl itself seems to appear in Wisconsin on rare occasions as a solitary visitor in winter. There is one record from 1963 (7

Figure 9. "Yummmm . . . that was great!"

Figure 10. Blue Jays are not as welcoming to the owl as birders were.

Figure 11. This intersection of heavy human activity was apparently a great place for hunting by our Canadian visitor.

Figure 12. "Thanks for the hospitality, maybe I'll see you next winter."

April-23 May) of a nesting Northern Hawk Owl in Douglas County where a first nest fledged two young and a second nest with five eggs was lost to predation (Robert C. Domagalski. 2006. Appendix VII, Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Wisconsin. Editors Noel J. Cutright, Bettie R. Harriman, and Robert W. Howe). Its regular nesting range in North America stretches from Newfoundland to eastern Alaska and strays into the northern U.S. only rarely. Even in its native Canadian haunts, its nesting territories are widely scattered in remote locations. Hence, its population nesting biology is difficult to study. Nests are most often built in the snag summits of larger broken-off spruce trees, from two to ten meters off the ground.

Given its low nesting densities in remote Canadian locations, its selection of a fairly busy Wisconsin intersection (Fig. 11) for a winter retreat (Fig. 12) and relative tolerance for the hubub thereabouts, is puzzling.

By some accounts, its indifference to the enthusiasm of human intruders was at times sorely tested. Whatever might be the reasons for its tolerance, I am much the richer for having been one of the pilgrims in this most extraordinary convergence of hominid and avian tourists.

50 Years Ago in *The Passenger Pigeon*

Thomas Nicholls reported his findings of a 5-week study of homing instincts in swallows during June and July of 1960 in Minnesota. Purple Martins, Cliff Swallows, Bank Swallows, and Chimney Swifts were captured, banded, and color-marked, and then released at various distances from their nests during daylight, darkness, and in many types of weather. For 45 Purple Martin tests, 39 returned; for 17 Cliff Swallows, 15 returned, for 7 adult Bank Swallows, 5 returned but only 3 of 10 fledglings returned, and for 4 Chimney Swifts, all returned. Most birds captured were either incubating or had young in their nests. Transportation distances ranged from 0.8 to 140 miles. Eight Purple Martins released either 110 or 140 miles from their nests showed an 80% return.

The 6 returning birds returned within at least 2 days. During transport birds were in complete darkness in covered carrying cages in the trunk of a car. Obviously it is easy to infer that landmarks were not the primary factors in orienting the birds for their return trip. At release as the birds gained altitude, there was a tendency for them to fly in circular patterns for several minutes, but they soon seemed to fly off with some purpose. Neither weather nor light conditions appeared to play a major role in limiting the birds from ultimately returning to their nests.

And finally from *By The Wayside*, have you searched for a month to catch a glimpse of a singing bird? What if you were certain it was a Golden-crowned Sparrow and as a couple, both of you were quite familiar with it from Alaska? Janet Kozlowski shares her frustrations in not seeing the bird that at one point seemed close enough to touch. It had to go down as a hypothetical record for Ashland.

Excerpt from Vol. 25(4), 1963 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.

Immature Bald Eagle from Stephen Fisher

Lessons From the Seasons: Winter 2012–2013

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Far and away the most exciting event of the winter was the invasion of northern owls. Not surprising, the most controversial event for birders was how listers, photographers, novice birders, and even reporters observed and reacted to how others "enjoyed" these birds. In a similar vein, this lesson may be the most challenging I have yet penned, because I can make everyone upset with me.

Chatter abounded and insinuations were launched when a You Tube clip of a few bird photographers luring a Great Gray Owl in Juneau County to land on or very near them went viral. This clip seemed to trigger deep passions for many that they had gone too far. Another Great Gray Owl sighting in Middleton brought many enthusiasts to "respectfully" see this bird. However, an article in the newspaper cautioned birders to stay a distance away, while showing a picture of a "researcher" in the same tree and a few feet away.

Owls have special significance with many human-attributed emotional qualities that nearly classify them as something different. They always evoke strong feelings that ofttimes lie between the physical world and myth. To some, they are scary conjurers of the unknown lurking in the darkness. Others seem to be fascinated by the human-like eyes and haunting gaze. Regardless the emotion, humans seem to be irresistibly drawn to them.

Most of our Wisconsin owl species are migratory—at least partially. Four are irruptive visitors from farther north (Great Gray, Northern Hawk, Boreal, and Snowy Owls). State breeders and short distance migrants (Short-eared, Long-eared, and Saw-whet Owls) are annual migrants, and the other three (Great Horned, Barred, and Screech-Owls) are locally nomadic moving toward food sources. Burrowing Owls are sometimes found [in Wisconsin], but usually in spring. The Barn Owl is a visitor from the south that can appear at nearly any time.

When winter food is in abundance, nearly all of these species will barely move. The shorter distance migrants move every year with less distance recorded in prey-abundant years. Poor food years can have all four far northern species showing up in the state. Many of the prey items for these

species have cyclical peaks of abundance and crashes, sometimes to very low numbers. These northern owl species are adapted to respond to the times of plenty and famine.

These stressors, especially in winter, can have a great effect on the survivability of an individual, but not as much on a population or the species as a whole. Over the ages, these owl species that feed primarily on highly fluctuating prey species have many hundreds, if not thousands, of individuals die during the low prey years. During years of prey abundance they produce much larger clutches than their cousins farther south and the population soars.

Conservation biology and population dynamics rarely enters the thought waves of a person enamored of owls. They are focused on an individual bird at a specific location. The primary purpose apparently is to appease some inner need. Owls seem to bring out the best or the worst in a person's ethics and can run the full gamut of emotion. "It's a life bird for me" is an often heard refrain, even though they may have heard the species, they must see it. "It may be the only opportunity I ever have to film one close-up" is another refrain, plus dozens of others.

When judging another's viewing ethics in proximity to an owl that simply wants to be left alone for a chance to survive, the owl's needs are scarcely considered. Viewers of the owl usually consider their reason for viewing paramount and all others secondary. I did not harm the bird, I stayed a distance away, or I may have been close, but I fed the starving bird, all may seem like sound ethical reasons for some. From the bird's point of view, the person who said I am not going to make the trip may have had the most ethical reason to give the bird its best chance at surviving.

Of course, we cannot simplify the message to this ultimate degree. These owls with ever expanding human population will continue to experience abnormal stressors for the foreseeable future. And furthermore, we birders and photographers can be the bird's best ally for conservation. We can and should educate others that human actions can lead to an owl's demise.

Constant flushing of a Burrowing Owl in northern Illinois was the initiator of a Cooper's Hawk kill to the horror of the listers and photographers. Numerous road kills of Great Gray Owls during irruptive years have been reported over the years. And yes, this author is guilty of mass murder by flushing a roost of Long-eared Owls while trying to get an exact count for a Christmas Bird Count in the early 1980s, then letting others know of the location. After one week, one bird was found dead and the rest never returned to that pine plantation.

Whether or not you agree, by just showing up you add some level of stress to that bird. A constant argument for observation at close range is the starving birds are being fed. These birds are in a state of fasting and their physiological functions have changed. Similar to famine-stricken children, if you feed them unlimited amounts of food immediately, their bodies cannot change at a rapid enough pace to accommodate the flush of food and this humanitarian action may actually kill them.

We cannot stop all stress on these prey deprived birds, but we can limit

the stressors to give them their best chance at survival. WSO does not have a policy to specifically address owl viewing. I propose we need to develop one. Other states and provincial organizations have policies in place that include items such as:

- Sleeping owls are happy; if you notice open eyes on species such as Long-eared, Saw-whet, Boreal, or Screech-Owls back away.
- If you notice these same species becoming slimmed down, looking skinny or branch-like, they are trying to hide—back off.
- Be a steward of a roost. Take care in whom you let know about the roost. Supply data to ebird after the roost is abandoned.
- Do your best to educate others about the stress that can affect owls.
- If you cause the owl to fly, do not pursue it.
- Do not bait owls with rodents.
- No flash photography.
- No sound devices.
- Stay on trails and road shoulders and ditches. Do not block traffic.
- Do not report owl sightings on the internet or bird hotlines.
- Speak in soft tones or whispers.
- Do not linger in front of an owl for more than a couple of minutes.
- Keep a minimum distance. It's best to observe with a scope.

Of course, the irruptive daytime owls will have the most pressure. The internal need to see and be close to the daytime owls will bring out hordes of persons without the conservation ethics of WSO birders. We, most importantly, can lead by example and education.

Dark-eyed Junco, Oregon subspecies, from Sunil Gopalan

The Winter Season: 2012–2013

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WEATHER

It was definitely a very different winter from last year. The beginning of December saw 2–3″ of snow cover in the northeastern portion of the state. Rains came through and melted all the snow only for it to come back again on 9 December. This was followed by a statewide snowstorm with 20″ in Madison, 12″ in the northeast, and 14″ in Dodge County. Daryl Tessen from the Appleton area commented about this winter season's weather: "What a contrast to last winter, when there was almost no snow. This year, December started mild—on the 3rd Appleton had 61°, while Green Bay was 62° (tying a record). However, by mid-December and thereafter, real winter arrived and remained for the duration." Late January saw some temperatures well below zero. Off and on cold and snow through February hid thoughts of spring.

DISCUSSION

A total of 178 species was reported this season. This number compares to 168, 170, 172, and 180 from the previous 4 seasons. Again this year all 10 of the uncommon species that we 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.

This was an absolutely incredible winter for birding in Wisconsin. The warmer start to December resulted in much more open water than in usual years. As a result, duck numbers were through the roof for Christmas Bird Counts. Multiple species of waterfowl broke the 1000 mark for CBCs, with Gadwall, American Wigeon, Northern Shoveler, Canvasback, and Long-tailed Duck being some of the more impressive CBC counts we have seen

for these species. A decent number of gulls was present, with the rarities of Slaty-backed and California to push the species number to double digits.

In addition to duck and gull numbers, we had our first major invasion of the northern owls since the ridiculous winter of 2004-2005. There were more reports of Boreal Owls than Great Grays and Northern Hawk Owls combined (6 to 1+3 respectively)! Moving down the taxonomic line brings us to hummingbirds. Five hummingbirds were present in December: 1 Ruby-throated, 2 Rufous, and 2 *Selasphorus* sp. (one of which put in a January 1st appearance!).

Finally, this brings us to passerines. Varied Thrushes seemed to be scattered throughout the northern counties and some were found as far south at Dane and Waukesha Counties. However, Varied Thrushes were not the only birds found further south than usual. This winter was a huge finch invasion year for the entire eastern United States, let alone Wisconsin. When there are Pine Siskins and

Red-breasted Nuthatches in central Florida and a Common Redpoll in Texas, there is a good chance that Wisconsin will be loaded too. That was certainly the case this year. Both species of crossbills were showing up at feeders all across the state. Common Redpoll was reported in every county except Menominee. Pine and Evening Grosbeaks were present in numbers we have not seen in years. However, the show-stopper had to be Hoary Redpoll. Because this species was reported from an unprecedented 34 counties, the Records Committee even eased documentation requirements for this species this season.

Statistics

Reports were received this season from all 72 counties and only Menominee County submitted fewer than 20 species. Dane (113), Milwaukee (110), Waukesha (105), and Racine (104) Counties topped 100 species. Species reports included Christmas Bird Count (CBC) data, approved eBird reports, single and multi-county reports, photographs, selected Wisbirdn reports, and WSO form documentations. Some rare species were reported, but not documented to the WSO and those reports are not included here. Please fill out a WSO documentation form for those species with asterisks next to their name or if it would be one of the top three record early or late entries. Please go to **www.wsobirds.org** and look under the "Records" tab.

Information in this report regarding the CBCs included only those more uncommon species that were found on 22 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 2012–28 February 2013)

Species marked with an "*" are on the review list and need documentation which is reviewed by the Record Committee to be valid records.

Greater White-fronted Goose—Reported in 18 counties, which is higher than last year's total of 10 counties. A high count of 18 individuals was found in Dane County on 18 February (Schwarz). In terms of CBCs, only one individual was found on the Madison CBC.

Snow Goose—Total number of 24 individuals on 7 CBCs. Reported in 12 counties, with a maximum of 12 individuals on 21 December, Monroe County (Jakoubek) and 18 February, Iowa County (Vos).

Ross's Goose—Reported in only 5 counties: 1 December-11 December, Door County (m. obs.); 16 and 17 February, Kewaunee County (Bridge, Prestby, Sinkula, and Swelstad); 7 December, Manitowoc County (Prestby); 21 February, Ozaukee County (Frank); and 12 and 13 February, Racine County (DeBoer, Fare, and Pugh).

Cackling Goose—Total number of 480 individuals on 16 CBCs. Reported in 20 counties, which is lower than last year's 26. Thiessen found the high of 65 on 10 December in Dane County. A flock of 50 was seen in Jefferson County on the same date (La Puma).

Canada Goose—Reported in 65 counties, which is higher than last year's 62 counties. A high of 4500 were found in Racine County on 30 December (Howe), with counts over 1000 in another 11 counties.

Barnacle Goose*—One individual was seen and photographed on 14 December, Crystal Lake, Dodge County (Maaser). Given the prevalence of this species in captivity, provenance is always a concern. As a potential first state record, the records committee reviewed this bird thoroughly. Please see WSO Records Committee Report: Winter 2012–2013 for more details.

Mute Swan—Total of 203 individuals on 11 CBCs, which is more individuals than last year. Reported in 12 counties, with a maximum number of 17 on 10 January at Lake Denoon, Waukesha County (DeBoer).

Trumpeter Swan—Total of 465 individuals on 19 CBCs. Reported in 27 counties with a high count of 235 on 26 January, St. Croix County (Cameron).

Tundra Swan—Total of 3338 individuals on 21 CBCs. Reported in 23 counties, with a maximum of 1000 individuals on 31 December, University Bay, Dane County (Martin).

Wood Duck—Total of 18 individuals on 13 CBCs. Reported in 18 counties, which is higher than last year's 10. February reports in 7 counties: Brown (Swelstad), Dane (Lindemer), Dodge (Bartholmai), Marquette (Christensen), Oneida (Haese-Lehman and Stone), Waushara (Tessen), and Winnebago (Ziebell).

Gadwall—Total of 2709 individuals on 22 CBCs. This is markedly higher than last year's 482 on 16 count circles. Reported in 24 counties, with a maximum of 170 found on 31 December (Schwarz) and 24 February (Evanson), both in Dane County.

American Wigeon—Total of 1095 individuals on 11 CBCs. This is over 1000 more individuals than last year's CBC! Reported in 10 counties with a maximum of 10 individuals in Buffalo County (Meyer).

American Black Duck—Reported in 38 counties with a maximum of 250 on 26 February, Brown County (Kavanaghs).

Mallard—Reported in 59 counties, with a maximum number of 2000 on 27 January, from Bay Beach Wildlife Sanctuary, Brown County (Nowak).

Blue-winged Teal—Total of 3 individuals on 2 CBCs: 2 on the Bridgeport CBC and one on the Fond du Lac CBC.

Northern Shoveler—Total of 1908 individuals on 12 CBCs. Like American Wigeon, this is over 1000 more individuals than reported on last year's CBC. Reported in 10 counties, with a high count of 750 individuals on 15 February, Lower Mud Lake, Dane County (Martin).

Northern Pintail—Total of 785 individuals on 13 CBCs. This is yet another duck species that vastly exceeded last year's count of 15 individuals. Reported in 15 counties, with a high count of 3 individuals on 7 December, Door County (Kavanaghs); 8 December, Door County (Prestby and Yoerger); and 12 February, Sheboygan County (Sinkula).

Green-winged Teal—Total of 162 individuals on 8 CBCs. This is a higher number of individuals than last year's 21. Reported in 9 counties with a high of 15 individuals in Fond du Lac County on 24 January (Tennis).

Canvasback—Total of 6428 individuals on 16 CBCs. This is substantially higher than last year's count of 813. Reported in 27 counties, with a high of 527 on 19 December in Vernon County (Hayes).

Redhead—Reported in 24 counties, with a maximum number of 183 on 18 February, Milwaukee County (Frank).

Ring-necked Duck—Total of 244 individuals on 17 CBCs. Reported in 20 counties, with a maximum number of 71 on 4 January, Lake Geneva, Walworth County (Boone and Fitzgerald).

Greater Scaup—Total of 15,653 individuals on 19 CBCs. Reported in 15 counties, with the bulk of individuals in Milwaukee County. Tessen found a huge raft of 17,000 in Kewaunee County on 17 February. There was another large raft of 9000 on 16 December in Kewaunee County (Prestby).

Lesser Scaup—Reported in 30 counties, with a maximum of 500 individuals on 5 January, Coast Guard Impoundment, Milwaukee County (Pierce and Swelstad).

Harlequin Duck—Reported from only 3 counties: 12 January–16 February, Buffalo County (Cameron, DeBoer, Geraghty, Hogseth, Hurlburt, Jackson, Lind, Mandel, and S. Meyer); 22 December and 27 January, Door County (Schilke and Puchalski respectively); 8 and 10 February, Milwaukee County (Frank and Wanger).

Figure 1. Red Phalarope reported from 6 December at the Manitowoc Impoundment, Manitowoc County and photographed by Chuck Sontag.

Surf Scoter—Total of 9 individuals on 1 CBC. Reported in 9 counties: Door County (M. Weber), Kenosha County (Mueller), Manitowoc County (Tessen), Milwaukee County (m. obs.), Ozaukee County (Frank, Jackson, Puchalsk, and Tessen), Racine County (M. Weber), Sheboygan County (Tessen), Washington County (Schaefer), and Waukesha County (Schaefer, Schneider, and Szymczak)

White-winged Scoter—Total of 14 individuals on 4 CBCs. Reported in 15 counties with a high count of 82 on 25 February at Harrington Beach State Park, Ozaukee County (Frank).

Black Scoter—Total of 6 individuals on 3 CBCs, which is two individuals and one CBC fewer than last year. Reported in 5 counties: Dane (Batterman, Cullum, Gopalan, Nechvatal, Warneke, and Yoerger), Milwaukee (m. obs.), Ozaukee (m. obs.), Racine (Dixon, E. Howe, Mueller, Wegner, and Wenzel), and Sheboygan (m. obs.).

Long-tailed Duck—Total of 1486 individuals on 11 CBCs. Still another species of duck that had over 1000 individuals more than last year. Reported in 14 counties, with a high count of 700 on 4 December, Sheboygan County (Tessen).

Bufflehead—Reported in 28 counties, which is higher than last year's 24 counties. The high count of 230 was reported from Milwaukee County on 2 December (Huf).

Common Goldeneye—Reported in 51 countes with a high of 5000 from Winnebago County on 3 February (Dunwiddle). This is more counties than last year's (44), but a lower high count (6600). There were four other counties with counts over 1000: Milwaukee (m. obs.), Manitowoc (Barrickman and Pendergast), Brown (Prestby), and Kewaunee (also Prestby).

Barrow's Goldeneye*—One individual reported on Superior CBC with one count week report on Lake Geneva CBC. Reported in 3 counties: 2 January, Douglas County (Williams); 4–8 January, Walworth County (Fitzgerald, Howe, and Wood); and 19 January, Milwaukee County (Wood). See "By the Wayside" and WSO Records Committee Report: Winter 2012–2013.

Hooded Merganser—Reported in 36 counties, with maximum number of 26 on 3 December on Odana Marsh, Dane County (Heikkinen) and 17 December on Monona Bay, Dane County (Holschuh).

Common Goldeneye/Hooded Merganser—One individual reported 17 December, Oconto County (Cook).

Common Merganser—Reported in 48 counties with a maximum of 2200 in Walworth County on 4 January (Boone and Fitzgerald). This is the same number of counties, but less than half the high count of last year.

Red-breasted Merganser—Reported in 22 counties, with a maximum number of 700 from Harrington Beach State Park, Ozaukee County (Malcolm), on 16 January.

Ruddy Duck—Total of 160 individuals on 13 CBCs. Reported in 14 counties, with a maximum number of 47 on 15 December, Lake Mendota, Dane County (Stutz).

Northern Bobwhite—Total of 12 individuals on 2 CBCs. Three individuals were reported on Ryan Radio Road in Kewaunee County on 30 December (Nabak).

Gray Partridge—Reported in 3 counties. All but four records, including Sinkula's high count of 14, are from Kewaunee (m. obs.), with two from Brown (Evanson and Gochfeld), and 2 from Shawano (Swelstad) Counties.

Ring-necked Pheasant—Reported in 51 counties, with a maximum number of 27 on 16 December, Polk County (Maercklein).

Ruffed Grouse—Reported in 38 counties, which is ten higher than last year. The maximum number of 18 was reported on 23 January, Forest County (Ward).

Figure 2. Black-legged Kittiwake found on the Fox River in Neenah (Winnebago County) on 17 February by S. Malcolm.

Spruce Grouse—One individual reported on Three Lakes CBC. Reported in only two counties: 1 December–10 February in Forest County (Cutright, G. Davis, J. Davis, DeBoer, Dixon, Gochfeld, Johnson, Kavanagh, Malcolm, Roach, Schroeder, Setzer, Tessen, Ward, and Whittle) and 16 December and 5 January in Oneida County (J. Davis and Peczynski).

Sharp-tailed Grouse—Total of 9 individuals on 2 CBCs. Only two individuals reported at Pershing State Wildlife Area, Taylor County on 23 February (Backus, Belter, and Sabatke).

Greater Prairie-Chicken—Total of 16 individuals reported on Arpin CBC. Reported in 3 counties: Adams (Pendergast), Portage (m. obs.), and Waushara (D. and G. Gesualdo). A high of 40 individuals recorded on 9 February (Stratton) and 13 February (Spencer), both from Buena Vista Grasslands in Portage County.

Wild Turkey—Reported in 69 counties, all but Menominee, Price, and Rusk. The maximum of 286 individuals was reported on 15 December in Portage County (Pendergast).

Red-throated Loon—Total of 6 individuals reported on 3 CBCs. Reported in 6 counties: Door County (Lukes and Peterson), Manitowoc County (Kavanaghs and Sontag), Milwaukee County (m. obs.), Ozaukee County (Malcolm, Schultz, Tessen, and Ward), Racine County (DeBoer, Fare, E. Howe, Mueller, Pugh, Wegner, and Wenzel), and Sheboygan County (Fissel, Otto, Szymczak, Tessen, Thiessen, and Wood).

Common Loon—Total of 31 individuals reported on 8 CBCs. Reported in 11 counties, with a high of 9 from Dane County on 13 December (Schneider). Last report 6 January from Racine County (Fitzgerald).

Pied-billed Grebe—Total of 19 individuals reported on 6 CBCs. Reported in 10 counties, with a high count of 8 on 4 December at Little Muskego Lake, Waukesha County (Gustafson).

Horned Grebe—Total of 41 individuals reported on 9 CBCs. Reported in 13 counties, with a maximum of 6 birds on 1 December, Door County (Belter and Sabatke).

Red-necked Grebe—Two individuals reported on Madison CBC. Reported in 2 counties, with a high count of two individuals at Frautschi Point, Dane County on 15 December

Figure 3. California Gull at Johnson Creek Landfill, Jefferson County from 19-22 December 2012 and photographed by Cynthia Bridge.

(Graham, Kreitinger, and Schneider). Other individuals were reported on 7 January from the Linn Road Boat Launch, Waukesha County (Bridge and DeBoer); 6 December on Lake Mendota, Dane County (Schwarz); 7 December on Lake Kegonsa, Dane County (Thiessen), 4 December, Walworth County (Tessen); and 15 January, Ozaukee County (Tessen).

Eared Grebe*—One individual reported on Hales Corners CBC. Reported only from Bayview Park, Milwaukee County, 15 December (Lubahn). See WSO Records Committee Report: Winter 2012–2013.

Western Grebe*—Only one report from Shoop Golf Course, Racine County on 7 December (Fare). See WSO Records Committee Report: Winter 2012–2013.

Double-crested Cormorant—Total of 357 individuals on 8 CBCs which is lower than last year's incredible 1030 individuals. Reported in 11 counties, with a high of 102 on 9 January at the De Pere Dam, Brown County (Swelstad).

American White Pelican—Total of 11 individuals on 2 CBCs, which is the same as last year. Reported in 3 counties, Brown (m. obs.), Grant (Thiele), and Fond du Lac (m. obs.), with Brown County holding the maximum number of 11 (Van Duyse).

Great Blue Heron—Total of 31 individuals on 20 CBCs, which is higher than last year's 23 individuals across 14 CBCs. Reported in 19 counties throughout the count period with no one seeing more than one at any given location.

Turkey Vulture—Total of 22 individuals on 4 CBCs which is the same number of individuals, but on fewer counts than last year. Reported in 9 counties, with a high count of 7 individuals at Scuppernong Prairie State Natural Area on 24 February (Baumann, Cutright, Hahn, and Setzer).

Osprey—Two individuals reported on Montello CBC on 14 December.

Figures 4. and 5. Slaty-backed Gull on 30 December 2012 at the Superior Entry, Douglas County, had its picture taken by Peder Svingen.

Bald Eagle—Reported in all 72 counties! The high count of 250 was reported on 4 December from Eagle Valley Nature Preserve, Grant County (Thiele). Buffalo (Geraghty), Outagamie (D. and T. Nowak and Tessen), and Pierce (Miller) Counties all had three-digit numbers reported.

Northern Harrier—Reported in 43 counties, with a high of 7 on 13 January, Shoop Park, Racine County (Veltman) and 20 January, Richard Bong State Recreational Area, Kenosha County (Goldberg). Northernmost reports recorded in Bayfield County (Brady), Burnett County (Java and Menge), Marinette County

Figure 6. This Slaty-backed Gull was visiting the Johnson Creek Landfill, Jefferson County, on 14 December 2012 when Cynthia Bridge photographed it.

(Campbell), Oconto County (Seefeldt), and Taylor County (Cameron).

Sharp-shinned Hawk—Reported in 49 counties with northernmost records in Ashland County (Brady), Bayfield County (still Brady), Clark County (Belter, Cameron, and Risch), Florence County (Kavanagh), Oneida County (Duchek), Polk County (Maercklein), and Vilas County (L. Howe, Toner, and J. Weber).

Cooper's Hawk—Reported in 54 counties, which is higher than last year's 45 counties. The high count of 5 individuals was reported in Jefferson County (Bridge and Stutz).

Northern Goshawk—Total of 13 individuals in 10 CBCs. Single individuals reported in 9 counties: Bayfield (Oksiuta), Clark (Lund), Douglas (L. and S. LaValley), Grant (McKay), Florence (Kavanaghs), Forest (m. obs.), Juneau (Tessen), Lincoln (Puchalski), and Marathon (Hoeft).

Red-shouldered Hawk—Total of 13 individuals in 9 CBCs. Reported in 18 counties with northernmost reports in Dunn County (Koch) and Polk (Christensen).

Red-tailed Hawk—Reported in 66 counties, all but Ashland, Bayfield, Iron, Menominee, Price, and Washburn. A high count of 50 individuals was reported from the Fremont CBC, Waushara County, on 16 December (Curtight and Setzer).

Rough-legged Hawk—Reported in 69 counties, all but Green Lake, Menominee, and Trempealeau. A maximum count of 30 individuals was reported on 1 February at Crex Meadows State Wildlife Refuge (Menge).

Golden Eagle—Total of 20 individuals reported across 8 CBCs, which is higher than last year's 11 individuals across 7 CBCs. Reported in 15 counties, with a high count of 18 in Buffalo County on 19 January (Geraghty).

Virginia Rail—Total of 9 individuals on 2 CBCs. Reported in two counties: Columbia (Yoerger) and Walworth (E. Howe).

American Coot—Reported in 26 counties, with a maximum number of 4000 on Lake Geneva, Walworth County on 19 and 23 December and 1 January (all Fitzgerald).

Sandhill Crane—Total of 1121 individuals on 15 CBCs, which is lower than last year's 5431. Reported in 21 counties, though no northern records. The high count of 3000 was on 21 December in Dane County (Paulios).

Killdeer—One individual reported from the Cedar Grove CBC and from the La Crosse CBC. Reported in 8 counties, with two individuals on 1 December at Wind Point, Racine County (E. Howe and Mooney). Other counties include: Grant (Thiele), Ozaukee (Bontly and Strelka), Rock (Boone), Vernon (Gorrill, Hayes, and Puchalski), Waukesha (Gustafson), and Winnebago (Bridge, Prestby, and Sinkula).

Purple Sandpiper*—Reported from only Wind Point Lighthouse, Racine County, 12, January (Tessen). See WSO Records Committee Report: Winter 2012–2013.

Wilson's Snipe—Total of 36 individuals on 14 CBCs. Reported in 12 counties, with a maximum of 14 on 8 December, at Yellowstone Lake State Park, Lafayette County (Nechvatal).

Red Phalarope*—Only one individual (Fig. 1) reported from 6 December, Manitowoc Impoundment, Manitowoc County (Domagalski and Sontag). See "By the Wayside" and WSO Records Committee Report: Winter 2012–2013.

Black-legged Kittiwake—One bird (Fig. 2) reported on the Fox River in Neenah (Winnebago County) on 17 February (Malcolm).

Bonaparte's Gull—Two individuals on the Sheboygan CBC. Reported in 3 counties: Outagamie (Reimer), Racine (Weber), and Walworth (Fitzgerald and Howe). Fitzgerald had 55 individuals on 14 December on Lake Geneva, Walworth County.

Ring-billed Gull—Reported in 44 counties with a maximum number of 4000 on 1 December at Korth Park, Jefferson County (Stutz).

California Gull*—Reported from only Johnson Creek Landfill, Jefferson County (Fig. 3) on 19–22 December (Bridge, Gustafson, and Mooney). See "By the Wayside" and WSO Records Committee Report: Winter 2012–2013.

Herring Gull—Reported from 41 counties, which is higher than last year's 33. The maximum of 4000 individuals (tying last year's high count) was reported from 18 February at Kimberly Point, Winnebago County (Bridge and Prestby).

Thayer's Gull—Total of 8 individuals on 5 CBCs. Reported in 14 counties, with a maximum of 9 on 30 December from the Superior Entry, Douglas County (Bardon).

Iceland Gull—One individual on the Hales Corner CBC and one individual on the Sauk City CBC. Reported in 14 counties, with a high count of 3 at Kimberly Point, Winnebago County on 18 February (Wood) and 26 February (Malcolm).

Lesser Black-backed Gull—Total of 5 individuals on 4 CBCs. Reported in 15 counties, with a maximum number of 6 on 21 December at Johnson Creek Landfill, Jefferson County (Prestby and Stutz). This is a large number of individuals for an interior record for this species, and it really helps to illustrate how much it is expanding its range.

Slaty-backed Gull*—Reported from only two counties: 30 December, Superior Entry (Figures 4 and 5), Douglas County (Svingen); and 14 and 17 December, Johnson Creek Landfill (Fig. 6), Jefferson County (Bridge, Keyel, Mooney, and Wood). See "By the Wayside" and WSO Records Committee Report: Winter 2012–2013.

Glaucous Gull—Total of 24 individuals on 10 CBCs. This is less than half of the number of individuals reported on the same number of CBCs last year. Reported in 13 counties with a high count of 16 individuals shared between the Superior Landfill, Douglas County on 25 December (Bardon) and the Manitowoc lakefront, Manitowoc County on 5 January (Sontag).

Great Black-backed Gull—Total 35 birds on 7 CBCs, which is 5 birds more but two circles fewer than last year. Reported in 10 counties, with a maximum number of 41 reported from Two Creeks, Manitowoc County on 8 January (B. and K. Kavanagh).

Rock Pigeon—Reported from all 72 counties.

Eurasian Collared-Dove—Total of 28 individuals on 5 CBCs, which is lower than last year's total of 45 individuals. Reported in 8 counties, with a high count of 29 individuals

Figure 7. Northern Hawk Owl on its favorite perch during the winter of 2012-2013 in Door County near Sister Bay, as pictured by Michael Huebschen.

Figure 8. Great Gray Owl at Mauston (Juneau County) on 27 February 2013 was captured in flight by Sunil Gopalan.

just north of Arlington, Columbia County (Fissel, Heikkinen, Pope, Schwarz, and Thiessen).

***Mourning Dove*—**Reported in all 72 counties!

***Eastern Screech-Owl*—**Reported in 25 counties, which is lower than last year's 30 counties. The northernmost report this winter was in St. Croix County (Maercklein).

***Great Horned Owl*—**Reported in 55 counties, which is nine more than last year. The maximum number of 6 individuals is shared across 3 counties: Burnett (Henschell and Prestby), Dane (La Puma), and Waukesha (Hahn).

***Snowy Owl*—**Total of 17 individuals on 9 CBCs. Reported in 20 counties, which is lower than last year's amazing 40, but higher than the previous years': 12, 16, 19 and 10.

***Northern Hawk Owl**—**Besides the individual (Fig. 7) continuing from the fall from Door County, only three reported individuals, all from Douglas County: 6 and 8 January, Poplar (Henschell and LaValley); 9 February, Hwy 35 south of Superior (Ripma); and 26 February, Maple (Bacon). See WSO Records Committee Report: Winter 2012–2013.

***Barred Owl*—**Reported from 46 counties, which is higher than last year's 33 counties. The maximum number of 4 was reported from Eagle Valley Nature Preserve on 28 February (Thiele).

***Great Gray Owl**—**One individual (Figures 8 and 9) reported just outside of Mauston, Juneau County, 25–28 February (McClintock, Keyel, and Wood). See "By the Wayside" and WSO Records Committee Report: Winter 2012–2013.

***Long-eared Owl*—**Total of 8 individuals on 6 CBCs. Reported in 7 counties with a maximum of 4 individuals on 1 January, Milwaukee County (Sparks).

***Short-eared Owl*—**Total of 11 individuals on 7 CBCs. Reported in 12 counties, with a high count of 10 on 27 December at Richard Bong State Recreational Area, Kenosha County (Durfee and Krerowicz).

***Boreal Owl**—**An irruptive year for this rare Wisconsin owl! Reported in 5 counties: 5 January (Fig. 10) and 9 February (Cover), Bayfield County (Brady and Toshner); 21 February (Fig. 11), Chippewa County (A. Gustafson); 17 February (Fig. 12), Douglas County (Oksiuta); 17 and 18 February (Fig. 13), Oneida County (Haese-Lehman and Rasmussen); and 10 January, Outagamie County (Fisher). See WSO Records Committee Report: Winter 2012–2013.

***Northern Saw-whet Owl*—**Total of 16 individuals on 11 CBCs. Reported 7 counties, which is lower than last year's 20 counties. One individual from each of the following counties: Ashland (Saari), Bayfield (Randell), Brown (Brebner), Columbia (Yoerger), Door (M. Weber), Oneida (Radtke), and Portage (Pendergast).

Ruby-throated Hummingbird—One individual (Fig. 14) reported on the Sheboygan CBC which was present BOP to 27 December in Howard's Grove (Zerger, Cutright, and Setzer). See WSO Records Committee Report: Winter 2012–2013.

***Rufous Hummingbird**—Two individuals, both present BOP, the individual in La Crosse (Fig. 15) staying until 23 December (Wardwell, Ewens, and Jackson); the other in Rio, Columbia County (Fig. 16) until 21 December (Lucke). These are the latest records for this species. See WSO Records Committee Report: Winter 2012–2013.

***Selasphorus sp**—**In addition to the other three hummingbirds, there were two more individuals that were identified as *Selasphorus* sp: one (Fig. 17) with the Rufous in La Crosse, 1–23 December (Wardwell, Ewens, and Jackson); and the other in Brookfield, Waukesha County (Fig. 18), 1 December–1 January (Newton). See WSO Records Committee Report: Winter 2012–2013.

***Belted Kingfisher*—**Reported from 43 counties with northernmost reports in Ashland (Brady), Barron (Carlsen and Pertile), and Polk (Maercklein).

***Red-headed Woodpecker*—**Total of 45 individuals reported on 19 CBCs. Reported in 27 counties, which is 8 more than last year. Reported from only three northern counties this year: Florence (K. Kavanagh), Marinette (Gregory-Paasch), and Shawano (Szymczak).

***Red-bellied Woodpecker*—**Reported in every county except Ashland, with a maximum of 27 on the Rosendale CBC, Fond du Lac County on 22 December (Setzer).

***Yellow-bellied Sapsucker*—**Total of 13 individuals reported on 9 CBCs. Reported in 10 counties with a high count of 2 individuals on 29 December, Columbia County (Yoerger).

Downy Woodpecker—Reported in all 72 counties!

Hairy Woodpecker—Reported in all 72 counties!

Black-backed Woodpecker—Reported in only Forest County (m. obs.) and Oneida County (Long).

Northern Flicker—Reported in 39 counties, with a maximum of 5 individuals on 16 February in La Crosse County (Paddy).

Pileated Woodpecker—Reported in 70 counties, all but Kenosha and Fond du Lac. Maximum number of 6 reported on 2 January, Wood County (Yoerger).

American Kestrel—Reported in 53 counties, with a maximum of 11 on 14 December, Grant County (Thiele and Yoerger).

Merlin—Total of 11 individuals on 10 CBCs. Reported in 23 counties, which is five fewer than last year. Maximum of 2 individuals on 2 December, Door County (Keyel), and 17 February, La Crosse (Puchalski).

Peregrine Falcon—Total of 15 individuals on 9 CBCs. Reported in 15 counties with northernmost report recorded in Brown County (m. obs.).

Eastern Phoebe—No individuals reported this winter.

Northern Shrike—Reported from 63 counties with maximum number of 8 on 27 December, Ashland County (Brady).

Gray Jay—Total of 22 individuals on 5 CBCs, which is lower than last year's 29 individuals in 6 CBCs. Reported in 8 counties: Ashland (Hayes and Wegner), Douglas (Anderson, D. and M. Crane, and Kumaranayagam), Forest (m. obs.), Marinette (Kavanagh), Oconto (Prestby), Oneida (Bridge and Duchek), Sawyer (Gold, Jackson, Pulchaski, and Stratton), and Vilas (Bridge, Dring, and Weber). Maximum number of 16 reported on 19 December, Armstrong Creek CBC, Forest County (Domagalski).

Blue Jay—Reported in all 72 counties.

American Crow—Reported from all 72 counties.

Common Raven—Reported in 42 counties, which is lower than last year's 45. Southernmost report from Marquette Count, 14 December (Doverspike).

Horned Lark—Reported in 57 counties with a maximum number of 250 on 4 February, Kenosha County (Sutton).

Black-capped Chickadee—Reported in 61 counties, which is quite a bit lower than last year's 71. The maximum count of 393 was reported from the Florence CBC on 18 December (Domagalski).

Boreal Chickadee—Total of 5 individuals on 3 CBCs. Reported in 4 counties: 24 January, Florence (Peczynski); 6 January–23 February, Forest (m. obs.); 27 January and 15 February, Oneida (Duchek and Hunter respectively); and 27 January, Vilas (Weber). The high count of 6 was reported from Sheltered Valley/Pine River Rd, Forest County on 24 January (Ward).

Tufted Titmouse—Reported in 45 counties, which is higher than last year's 35 counties. The high count of 40 was reported on 17 February from Washington County (Chapman).

Red-breasted Nuthatch—Reported in all 72 counties.

White-breasted Nuthatch—Reported in all 72 counties.

Brown Creeper—Reported in 56 counties, with a maximum number of 14 on 15 December, Eastern Lake Mendota, Dane County (Stutz).

Winter Wren—Total of 15 individuals on 10 CBCs. Reported in 12 counties with northernmost records from Chippewa County (Steger) and Door County (Nolan).

Marsh Wren—One individual reported from 1 December–3 January at Vernon Marsh, Waukesha County (Gustafson).

Carolina Wren—A total of 21 individuals reported on 18 CBCs. This number tops the previous high count of 20 individuals in 2005 on 17 CBCs. This hardy little southern specialty was reported in 22 counties this season. This number is an all-time high for the wren. One individual was reported for several weeks from mid-December to mid-January in Rhinelander in Oneida County (D. and D. Krejci). Although this individual braved the cold winter northern weather for several weeks, it wasn't the first ever to be reported in the far northern tier of Wisconsin. According to Sam Robbins "Wisconsin Birdlife," which includes records since 1960, a

Figure 9 (left). The Mauston Great Gray Owl in snow on 27 February 2013 by Sunil Gopalan.

Figure 10 (below). One of several Boreal Owls in Wisconsin this winter, this one was photographed by Ryan Brady in Washburn (Bayfield County) on the first day of January 2013.

Figure 11. This Boreal Owl was in Chippewa County, near Chippewa Falls on 21 February 2013 when Andrea Gustafson photographed it.

Figure 12. This Douglas County Boreal Owl was photographed on Moccasin Mike Road in Superior by Tim Oksiuta on 17 February 2013.

sighting was recorded in Vilas County. On a further note, a Carolina Wren has been present in Marquette, Michigan along the shores of Lake Superior from December through February this season. According to the homeowner it spends some time in an open garage and at her feeders (J. Carpenter). A second bird has been reported in Shelter (about 10 miles east of Marquette) sporadically this winter.

Golden-crowned Kinglet—Reported in 33 counties, which is lower than last year's 40 counties. The northernmost counties were: Ashland (Anich and Brady), Bayfield (Brady), Douglas (Eagle Optics Team Badger Irruption, L. and S. LaValley), Florence (Domagalski), Forest (m. obs.), Oneida (Haese-Lehman), Taylor (Offord), and Vilas (D. Meyer and Toner).

Ruby-crowned Kinglet—One individual reported on both the Brodhead and Richland Center CBCs. Two other individuals were also reported, one on 7 December from Wind Point, Racine County (Fare) and the other from 18 December, Rock County (Boone).

Eastern Bluebird—Reported in 24 counties, which is lower than last year's 32. The high count of 20 individuals was reported from Governor Dodge State Park, Iowa County on 28 December (Dadisman and Schneider). Unlike last year when there were reports from northern counties, this year the northernmost report was from Door County on 1 and 5 December (Belter, Peterson, Sabatke, and Wanger).

Townsend's Solitaire—One individual reported on each of the following CBCs: Appleton (Outagamie County), Ephraim (Door County), and Hales Corners (Milwaukee County). Reported—7 December–9 February, in Milwaukee County (m. obs.); and 18–30 December, Outagamie County (m. obs.). A maximum number of 2 individuals was reported on 2 January, Grant Park, Milwaukee County (DeBoer and D. Gustafson).

Hermit Thrush—Total of 10 individuals on 7 CBCs, which is one fewer individual across three more CBCs than last year. Maximum number of 2 reported on 5 February, Dane County (Senner) and 19 February, Milwaukee County (Vokoun).

American Robin—Reported in 48 counties, which is lower than last year's 58. Maximum number of 200 was reported from Sauk County on 14 February (McDonald).

Varied Thrush—Total of 4 individuals on 4 CBCs. An incredible Varied Thrush winter! Reported from 16 counties. Two individuals were coming in to a private residence feeder in Ashland County, 24 December–12 January (N. and P. Anich, and Team Eagle Optics Badger Invasion). [Fig. 19 from La Crosse County.]

Gray Catbird—No birds reported on CBCs this year. Four individuals were reported from four counties: 27 January, Brown County (Nowak); 1 December and 8 January, Green Lake County (Schultz); 8 December, Milwaukee County (Hagner), and 9 February, Washington County (Schaefer and Szymczak).

Brown Thrasher—One individual reported on both the Poynette and Riveredge CBCs. One individual was also present in Sawyer County from 14 January – 16 February (Wake).

European Starling—Reported in 70 counties, all but Menominee and Price. Maximum number of 5000 reported from the Johnson Creek Landfill on 18 December (La Puma) and 19 December (Prestby).

Bohemian Waxwing—Total of 469 individuals on 15 CBCs. Reported from 21 counties, which is higher than last year's 10 counties, but lower than the previous year's 28. Most of the reports were from December, then declining through the rest of the winter season. The high count of 251 individuals was reported on 29 December, Sister Bay, Door County (Schroeder).

Cedar Waxwing—Reported in 41 counties, which is 17 fewer than last year. The high count of 265 was reported from 17 February in Arena, Iowa County (Holshbach).

Lapland Longspur—Reported in 28 counties, with a maximum of 250 on 17 December, Iowa County (Block, Engel, and Winger).

Snow Bunting—Reported in 60 counties with a maximum number of 600 on 16 December, Waushara County (Cutright and Setzer).

Common Yellowthroat—One individual reported on both the Burlington and Waterloo CBCs. One additional individual was reported from Dane County on 6 December (Schneider).

Yellow-rumped Warbler—Total of 49 individuals on 13 CBCs. Reported in 16 counties, which is lower than last year's 20 counties, but still a fairly high year. Maximum of 7 individuals on 17 December, Sauk County (Holschbach).

Spotted Towhee*—Only one individual (Fig. 20) reported 18 January–19 February, Bloomer, Chippewa County (Blinkman). See WSO Records Committee Report: Winter 2012–2013.

Eastern Towhee—One individual reported on both the Bridgeport and Sauk City CBCs. Reported from three other counties: 17 February, Portage (Slavin); 19 February, Sawyer (Paquin); and 2 January–17 February, Vernon (Jackson and Puchalski).

American Tree Sparrow—Reported in 69 counties, with all but Menominee, Price, and Vilas. The high count of 287 was recorded on the Rosendale CBC, Fond du Lac County, on 22 December (Setzer).

Chipping Sparrow—Total of 4 individuals on 3 CBCs. Reported in 4 counties: 4 December, Jefferson (Hale); 8 December, Kenosha (Dixon); 23 December–1 January, Portage (Brocken); and 20 February, Vilas (L. Howe, D. Meyer, and Toner).

Field Sparrow—Two individuals reported on the Durand CBC. One additional individual was reported on 8 December in Milwaukee (Casper, Hunter, Seibel, Tan, Vokoun, Warneke, and Whillock).

Vesper Sparrow—One individual reported on the Hustisford CBC.

Savannah Sparrow—Total of 6 individuals on 4 CBCs. Reported in 12 counties, with the high count of 7 individuals being shared between 10 January, Jefferson County (Bridge) and 20 January, Milwaukee County (Schaefer and Szymczak).

Le Conte's Sparrow—One individual reported on the Hustisford CBC. One individual reported 23 December, Beaver Dam, Dodge County (Diehl). See WSO Records Committee Report: Winter 2012–2013.

Fox Sparrow—Total of 19 individuals on 14 CBCs. Reported from 12 counties. Maximum number of 3 reported on both 22 December, Waukesha County (Szymczak); and 29 December, Grant County (Ouren).

Song Sparrow—Reported in 29 counties with a high count of 9 individuals on 26 February, Grant County (O. and C. Kruse).

Lincoln Sparrow—Three reports; one from Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge, Buffalo County on 12 December (Nienhaus), one from 20 January–1 February, Rock County (Cullum), and one on 18 December, Manitowoc County (Wood).

Swamp Sparrow—Reported in 25 counties with a maximum number of 7 on 16 December, Green County (Yoerger).

White-throated Sparrow—Total of 138 individuals reported on 22 CBCs. Reported in 25 counties, with a high count of 8 individuals on 19 December and 3 January, Marquette University, Milwaukee County (Sommer).

Harris's Sparrow—One individual reported on the Durand CBC. An individual coming to a feeder in Florence County from 2 December–14 December (Hollenbeck, Cutright, and Kavanagh). One other individual was reported on 23 February from Darlington, Lafayette County (Yoerger).

White-crowned Sparrow—Total of 30 individuals on 13 CBCs. Reported in 25 counties, which is higher than last year's 11 counties. The high count of 8 individuals from 19 December and 3 January, Marquette University, Milwaukee County (Sommer).

Dark-eyed Junco—Reported from all 72 counties! Maximum number of 588 was reported from the Rosendale CBC, Fond du Lac County on 22 December (Setzer).

Summer Tanager—One individual (*See* "From Field and Feeder") reported on the Riveredge CBC. First reported from 5 December-EOP, Saukville, Ozaukee County (Beimborn). *See* WSO Records Committee Report: Winter 2012–2013.

Northern Cardinal—Reported from 70 counties, all but Menominee and Price.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak—One individual reported on the Riveredge CBC. An individual coming to a feeder in Florence County from 2 December–2 January (Hallenbeck).

Indigo Bunting—One individual reported from 12 December–13 January, in Hartford, Washington County (Schaefer). See WSO Records Committee Report: Winter 2012–2013.

Red-winged Blackbird—Reported in 21 counties with a maximum number of 200 on 24 December, Zeloski Marsh, Jefferson County (Hale).

Eastern Meadowlark—Two individuals on the Kewaunee CBC and one individual on

Figure 13. A Boreal Owl was pictured in Oneida County on 17 February 2013 by A. Rasmussen.

Figure 14. A Ruby-throated Hummingbird was in Howard's Grove (Sheboygan County) when it was photographed by Rebecca Sher and stayed most of December.

Figure 15. This Rufous Hummingbird visited La Crosse for much of December 2012 and was photographed by Sam Ewens.

Figure 16. Another Rufous Hummingbird spent most of December 2012 in Rio (Columbia County) at the home of Elizabeth Lucke, who took this picture on 17 Decmeber.

the Peshtigo CBC. Two additional individuals were found on 1 January in Portage County (Pendergast) and 31 December in Manitowoc County (Ristow). One other individual was reported from 18 February, Jefferson County (Klingberg).

Western Meadowlark—One individual reported on the Retreat CBC. Reported from 3 counties: 27 February, Adams County (Hurlburt and Pendergast); 19 December, Crawford County (Holschbach); and 2 January, Kewaunee County (Sinkula).

Rusty Blackbird—Total of 67 individuals on 5 CBCs. Reported in 7 counties: 12 and 15 December; Dane County (Heikkinen, Thiessen, and Willard); 15 February, Door County (Walsh); 16 December, Grant County (Ouren); 6 and 15 January, Jackson County (Schwenneker); 15 December, Portage County (Kozak and Zinda); 6 December, Waukesha County (Gustafson); and 1 December, Walworth County (Fitzgerald). Apparently Rusty Blackbirds have a fixation with the 15th of each month.

Brewer's Blackbird—Total of 31 individuals on 6 CBCs. Four additional reports from: 26 January, Brown County (Prestby and Schilke); 22 December, Marinette County (Kavanaghs); 31 December, Pepin County (Steger); and 20 individuals on 14 December, Dane County (Martin).

Common Grackle—Total of 45 individuals on 16 CBCs. Reported from 17 counties, with a maximum of 30 individuals on 15 February, Hidden Lakes, Waukesha County (Kingery).

Brown-headed Cowbird—Reported in 20 counties, with a maximum number of 600 on 15 December, Fitchburg, Dane County (Heikkinen).

Baltimore Oriole—One individual reported on the Montello CBC. The third latest individual was reported in Colgate, Washington County (*See* "From Field and Feeder") from 12 December–11 January (Joers). *See* WSO Records Committee Report: Winter 2012–2013.

Pine Grosbeak—An exceptional irruptive year for this finch. Reported in 36 counties and as far south as Ozaukee County (Bontly, Lubahn, and Sommer). High count of 150 individuals reported on 2 December, Ephraim, Door County (Keyel).

Purple Finch—Reported in 44 counties, which is eleven counties lower than last year. Maximum count of 40 individuals on 17 December, Grant County (Ouren).

House Finch—Reported in 63 counties. The high count of 192 individuals on 29 December as part of the Poynette CBC, Columbia County (Yoerger).

Red Crossbill—Reported in 49 counties, which compares to: 16, 6, 7 13, and 6 of the previous five seasons. An impressive number of crossbills was reported this season coming to feeders. Maximum count of 70 individuals on 1 December, Mud Lake State Wildlife Area, Door County (Wanger).

White-winged Crossbill—Reported in 49 counties, which is one lower than last year. As with the Red Crossbill, an impressive number of this species (Figures 21 and 22) was reported this season coming to feeders. The high count of 166 individuals was reported on 18 December along Patten Lake Rd, Florence County (Domagalski).

Common Redpoll—Reported from an amazing 71 counties, all but Menominee. This is higher than last year's great count of 64 counties. Maximum count of 500 individuals reported on 1 January, Dunn County (P. Campbell) and 4 January, Oconto County (Schilke).

Hoary Redpoll*—Total of 35 individuals reported on 22 CBCs. Reported and accepted throughout the state in a phenomenal 34 counties. The high count of 5 individuals was reported on 2 January, Superior, Douglas County (Bruhnke and Erickson). Due to the impressive showing this season of this finch, the records committee relaxed the normal rules requiring documentation. When ebirding this species if a short description was provided and accepted by the ebird team, this species was also accepted by the WSO records without further documentation.

Pine Siskin—Reported in 68 counties, all but: Ashland, Buffalo, Douglas, and Menominee. High count of 300 on 2 December, Door County (Keyel).

American Goldfinch—Reported in 71 counties, all but Menominee. Maximum count of 162 was reported on 16 February, Woodman, Grant County (Berge).

Evening Grosbeak—A total of 361 individuals reported on 15 CBCs. An exceptional irruptive year for this species with reports from 16 counties including as far south as Waukesha

(Szymczak). Although there are not numbers in the Passenger Pigeon for the Winter Season every year, there are numbers recorded for each CBC season. Evening Grosbeaks have been recorded on CBCs in every year since 1945–1946 with the exception of 1947 and 1950. Beginning in 1961 with a total of 2,849 individuals throughout 2001, total individuals reached above 1000 individuals in all but 6 seasons. Since 2002, there have never been over 1000 individuals up to, and including, this year. Since 2002 the high number of 771 was recorded in 2003 and low number of 63 individuals recorded in 2008. All time high numbers of 15,375 were recorded in 1989, with totals over 10,000 in 1980, 1981, 1983, and 1985. On a personal note, we have hosted a flock of these magnificent finches in SE Florence County throughout the season beginning in October 2012. Our peak number was 300 individuals with the EOP number around 100. What a thrill it has been to awaken every morning to the friendly chatter and beautiful colors of these birds.

House Sparrow—Reported in 62 Counties, with a maximum of 1972 on the Rosendale CBC, Fond du Lac County on 22 December (Setzer).

CONTRIBUTORS

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Figure 17. A *Selasphorus* hummingbird also spent December 2012 is La Crosse and was photographed by Sam Ewens.

Figure 18. Another *Selasphorus* hummingbird stayed in Briikfield (Waukesha County) from 1 December 2012 to 1 January 2013 and was photographed by John Newton.

Figure 19. Varied Thrush in La Crosse in January 2013 was photographed by Alan Stankevitz.

Figure 20. Spotted Towhee in Bloomer, Chippewa County, from 18 January to 19 February 2013 was pictured by A. Blinkman.

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Figure 21. Male White-winged Crossbill on the lawn at Forest Hill Cemetery in Madison eating spruce seeds on 28 January 2013 when it had a photo op with Sunil Gopalan.

Figure 22. Female White-winged Crossbill also enjoying spruce seeds at Forest Hill Cemetery in Madison on 28 January 2013 when Sunil Gopalan got her picture.

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Carlos Sanchez, Francesca Sanchez, Betsy Sander, Don Sanders, Jahn Sandman, Mike Sandstrom, Janet Santacroce, Carol Santulis, Kathi Sawall, Amanda Scalia, Maryann Schacht, Tom Schaefer, Matt Schaning, Joseph Schaufenbuel, Greg Schechter, Linda Schedel, Jackson Scheerer, Mike Scheidegger, Dan Scheiman, Samantha Scheiman, Jeanne Scherer, Emily Scheunemann, Paul Scheunemann, Thomas Scheuzger, Matt Schiestel, Darrell Schiffman, Tom Schilhabel, Paul Schilke, Tina Schimke, Isabel Schinke, Julie Schlender, Jane Schley, Gary Schlicht, Cindy Schlosser, Joan Schmidt, Lu Schmidt, Tanner Schmidt, Kristin Schmitt, Russ Schmude, Daniel Schneider, Petty Schneidmichael, Helen Schoebel, Jennifer Scholze, Herman School, Jeff Schramm, Brock Schreiber, Joan Schrinner, Carl Schroeder, Cheryl Schroeder, Karen Schroeder, Carla Schubert, Lori Schubring, Patti Schuknecht, Jo Schulte, Eric Schultz, Girard Schultz, Michael Schultz, Thomas Schultz, Jan Schumacher, Christel Schumann, Patti Schutte, Anne Schwab, Ray Schwabe, Elmer Schwalbach, Paul Schwalbe, Carl Schwartz, Jim Schwarz, Joy Schwarz, Chris Schwebs, Michelle Schwenneker, Joe Scott, Jim Sedoff, Michael Seebach, Harold Seefeldt, Wayne Seeger, Marcus Seevers, Dave & Kerry Sehloff, Josh Seibel, Brad Seidel, Jan Seiler, Lisa Seils, Gretchen Semler, Paul Senner, Rebecca Setzer, AJ Seu-

bert, Donald Severson, Gregg Severson, Rebecca Seymour, Rod Sharka, Esther Sharp, Janice Sharp, John Sharp, Gwen Shavalier, Hiram Shaw, Gerald Sheahan, Amy Sheldon, Kirk Shillinglaw, Armani Shlaux, Gretchen Shorthair, Charlotte Shover, Kay Shrader, Tyler Shunk, Don SIdlowski, Inge Siggelkow, Jan Silloway, Elizabeth Silverman, Jeanne Sima, Byron Simon, Brad Singer, Adam Sinkula, John Sippel, Daniel Sivek, Rose Siwula, Paul Skarivoda, John Skvarca, Susan Slapnick, Mike Slavin, LeAnn Sloviak, Anne Small, Richard Smallwood, Keith Smith, Kevin Smith, Rebecca Smith, Riley Smith, Ron Smith, Diane Smith-Wilson, Paul Smithson, John Smyser, Pat Snyder, Victoria Sokolowski, Ella Solin, Guy Somers, Joan Sommer, Charles Sontag, Bill Sonzogni, Jack Sorensen, Cameron Sorenson, Kari Sosnowski, Brian Southerland, Paul Sparks, Martha Spencer, Seth Spencer, David Spitzer, Dru Spitzer, John Splinter, E&P Spoon, Dan Sprader, Cari Sprague, Robin Squier, Marla Stack, Shirley Stadler, Bailee Stahl, Rowan Stamm, Chris Stamp, Cathy Stangl, Jerry Stanislawski, Alex Stark, Sandy Stark, Leslie Starr, Bambi Statz, Daniel Stauff, Allen Steeno, Eva Stefanski, Brad Steger, Bruce Steger, Spence Stehno, Neil Steiner, Ryan Steiner, Elizabeth Steinhoff, Nancy Steinhoff, Jolene Steinhorst, C Stelm, Gabe Stern, Pepi Stern, Kathleen Stetter, Art Stevenson, Cicero Stewart, Fred Stier, Kenneth Stoey, Melinda Stogsdill, Sarah Stokes, Elizabeth Stone, David Story, Douglas Stotz, Becky Strash, Mary Strasser, Doug Stratton, Sharyn Streicher, Jean Strelka, Tami Strom, Aaron Stutz, Dennis Sullivan, Meribeth Sullivan, Shana Summer, Colin Sumrall, Roger Sundell, Mary Jo Sundling, BA Suozzi, Sister Mary Supple, William Sutton, Zachary Sutton, Edward Svetich, Peder Svingen, Malcolm Mark Swan, Leonard & Mildred Swedlund, Paul Sweet, Jack Swelstad, Ann Swift, Deb Szarka, Andrea Szymczak, Tee Takro, Dan Tallman, Win Sim Tan, Elizabeth Tanner, Chris Tennis, Vickie Teresinski, Raymond Tervo, Daryl Tessen, Linda Thayer, Maddie and Ashley Theimer, Shirley Theisen, Mary Thibaudeau, Ashton Thiele Jason Thiele, Steve Thiessen, Bob/Pam Thomas, Linda Thomas, Hillary Thompson, Lynn Thurston, Cindy Thury Smith, David Tickler, Nancy Tikalsky, Ron Tikalsky, Sandie Tilque, Sherry Tischendorf, Marjie Tomter, Sarah Toner, Howard Towle, Sara Townsend, Kayla Traxler, Karin Trees, Mary Jo Tribe, Joel Trick, Patti Trick, Hillary Troeger, Jane Trotter, Barbara Truttmann, Robyn Tryggeseth, Beth Tubbs Fortner, Denison Tucker, Melissa Tumbleson, Gary Turk, Rebecca Turner, Tim Turnock, Tana Turonie, Tom Tustison, Kendra Tutsch, Rob Tyser, Brian Uher-Koch, Hannah Uher-Koch, Judy Ulery, Robert Ulrich, Gary Underwood, Nancy Unglaub, Delia Unson, Jacob Usinowicz, Anton Usowski, Paula Utphall, Tom Uttech, Diane Utzig, Ted Vaaler, Donald Van Duyse, Kris Van Laanen, Jim VanAllen, Raymond Vance, Harold Vanselow, Penny VanTassel, Tim Vargo, Barbara Vass, Daniel Veith, Jim Veltman, Tonissa Verhaagh, Elmer Verhasselt, Dan Versaw, Hannah Vicich, Janet Vinje, Jeff Virant, Andrew Vitolo, Kay Voelker, Kate Vogel, Elaine Vokoun, Lisa Vokoun, Eric Volden, Susan Vos, Kathy Wagenbach, Kim Wagenbach, Cheryl Wake, Rebecca Wakefield, Breanna

Waldron, Emily Walker, Sylvia Walker, Melody Walsh, Tim Walsh, Margaret Walz, Mike Wanger, Deb Ward, Todd Ward, Chris Warneke, Sarah Warner, Cindy Wartner, Barbara Watson, Jane Weber, Jasonn Weber, Magill Weber, Sheri Weber, Scott Weberpal, Jason Weckstein, Kristin Wegner, Todd Wegner, Dani Weins, Irene Weisensel, Isabella Weiss, Christine Welker, Jim Welnetz, Arno Wendler, Christine Wendler, Colleen Wenos, Rick Wenos, Lauren Wentz, Jodi Wenz, Jennifer Wenzel, Mary Ann Wenzel, Chris West, Susan M West, Richard Wetzel, Amy Whillock, Rand Whillock, Andy White, Jeffrey White, Jane Whitney, Karl Whitrock, Scott Whittle, Bob Wickman, Ginny Widrick, Gerald Wiedemeier, Linda Wiedenfeld, Cory Wiedenhoeft, G Wiedenhoeft, Gary Wiegel, Peg Wiggins, Kyle Wiktor, David Willard, List William, Dan Williams, Karen Williams, Kevin Williams, Rachel Williams, Marnee Willson-Broyles, Don Wilson, Julie Wilson, Katherine Wilson, Marilyn Wilson, Patrea Wilson, Peter Wilton, Samantha Wimmer, Ben Winesett, Ben Winger, Margie Winter, Marlyn Winter Don Winterland, John Winze, Gail Wirch, Sean Wisner, Max Witynski, Sharon Woelfel, Dan Wolande, Joy Wolf, Kathy Wollinger, Chris Wood, Eric Wood, Tom Wood, Susan Woodke, Julie Wortman, David Wrege, Sharon Wrege, Janis Wright, KA Yefchak, Quentin Yoerger, Zoe Yoerger, Eric Young, Jeff Yunke, Sandy Zahn, Denis Zalucha, Anne Zamora, John Zanetti, Erika Zar, Judy Zarnoth, JoAnn Zaumseil, Gary Zehms, Norma Zehner, Tom Ziebell, Dwight Ziegler, Rebecca Ziesmer, Barb Zimmerman, Carol Zimmerman, Christine Zimmerman, Haydee Zimmerman, Roy Zimmerman, Vince Zimmerman, Will Zimmerman, Brad Zinda, Kelly Zopfi, Geoffrey Zuelsdorf, Jeff Zuhlke, and Donna Zygarlicke.

"By the Wayside"—Winter 2012–2013

Some of the species documented with reports this season as rare or uncommon include: Barrow's Goldeneye, Red Phalarope, Black-legged Kittiwake, California Gull, Slaty-backed Gull, and Great Gray Owl. Below are selected descriptions.

BARROW'S GOLDENEYE (*Bucephala islandica*)

4 January 2013, Lake Geneva, Walworth County—Adult male bird. Extensive black scapular plumage with small white slash "window" marks showing through this larger region of black plumage; these white slash marks were relatively narrow and widely spaced. Noticeably more black scapular plumage than surrounding adult male Common Goldeneyes. This factor was the single factor that drew attention to this bird over the surrounding Common Goldeneyes. Specific extent of black shoulder spur (i.e., towards the upper breast region of the flank) not ascertained by our observation—in other words, the extent of this dark shoulder spur mark was not noted to extend to water level. More peaked head shape; this feature also stood out noticeably when compared with nearby Common Goldeneyes—steeper forehead slope. Crescent shaped facial spot obvious at distance viewed—viewed from ~150 meters for approximately 10 minutes. The top side of this facial spot obviously narrowed to a pointed shape, which extended above the eye. Was unable to ascertain head color relative to Common Goldeneye (bad lighting angle).—*Sean Fitzgerald, Burlington, Wisconsin.*

RED PHALAROPE (*Phalaropus fulicarius*)

6 December, 2012, Manitowoc Impoundment, Manitowoc County—A single bird actively feeding on the south edge of the impoundment. The top side of the bird was basically slate colored while the under side was a pale dingy white. The slate gray of the back was clean, with no hint of streaking. This slate color ran up the back side of the neck in a narrow line. The face was white except for a black patch over the eye that then bent down behind the eye to form an ear patch. I looked most at the bill. The bill was rather long—about the length of the head—but was somewhat thick and blunt. I noticed some of the bill had a yellow color. Several times the bird made short flights. At these times I

could see the rather bold white stripe in the wings.

Species eliminated: The other two phalaropes have much thinner and much more pointed bills. The Wilson's Pharlarope does not have a bold dark ear patch—it also does not have a white wing bar in flight. The Red-necked Phalarope would have white stripes or streaking on the back, which this bird lacked.—*Robert Domagalski, St. Nazianz, Wisconsin.*

Black-legged Kittiwake (*Rissa tridactyla*)

17 February, Fox River, Neenah, Winnebago County—While scanning through the large gull flock on the Fox River at Neenah (approx 600 Herring Gulls were the only other birds on the ice at the time, a Great Black-Backed Gull was swimming in the river nearby), I realised that there was a much smaller gull tucked in at the back of the flock. The bird was looking around and I noticed the dark bill and patch behind the eye. My initial expectations of Bonaparte's were quickly quashed when I realised there was no dark cap and I noticed the wing pattern suggesting Little Gull or Black-Legged Kittiwake. The dark neck collar and relatively vertical patch behind the eye together with the relatively long body meant it was a Black-legged Kittiwake rather than a Little Gull.—*Stuart Malcolm, Appleton, Wisconsin.*

California Gull (*Larus californicus*)

18 December, 2012, Johnson Creek Landfill, Jefferson County—Noting a darker mantled gull, I observed the following over a 3 or 4 minute period, before the gull took off. The mantle color first reminded me of a Mew Gull, but was a shade darker. The Lesser Black-backed Gull mantles were much darker than this. Size was distinctly smaller than Herring Gulls, but larger than Ring-billed Gulls (all seen in the same field of view). The yellow bill was slender and not as short as a Ring-billed Gull. There was both a red spot and a larger black spot near the tip (black closer to the tip). The eye was black, also making me first think of a Mew Gull. No extensive streaking was obvious on the head and neck. The white tertial crescent on the folded wing was fairly wide, more like Herring and Mew Gulls, not the more narrow white of Lesser Black-backed Gulls or Ring-billed Gulls. When it took flight, tiny white spots showed along the tips of the extensively black primaries. Only the outer two primaries showed larger white spots. The legs were never seen.—*Dennis Gustafson, Muskego, Wisconsin.*

Slaty-backed Gull (*Larus schistisagus*)

17 December, 2012, Johnson Creek Landfill, Jefferson County—Large gull, about the same length as a Herring Gull but much beefier in build. Mantle and wings deep charcoal gray. Scapular and tertial crescents broad and clean white. At rest, wingtips showed relatively large apical spots. Underparts and tail clean white. Head very heavily streaked with brown, most strongly on the face (where it formed a dark brown patch around the pale eye) and nape; throat and upper

breast also showed extensive streaking and blotching, but not as concentrated as on face. Bill was somewhat thinner and straighter than on a Herring Gull, with a small red gonydal spot. Bright pink foot noted when bird scratched its neck. When bird landed, and again a bit later when it stretched its wings, a row of white subterminal spots was seen on the underside of the wingtips, the classic "string of pearls" effect. Wingtips extended just barely beyond tail. This appeared to be an adult bird, based on the clean white tail and consistent slaty-gray coloring of the mantle.—*Jym Mooney, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.*

17 December 2012, Johnson Creek Landfill, Jefferson County—This gull was on the water among Herring, Ring-billed, Glaucous, Iceland, Thayer's, and Lesser Black-backed Gulls. I observed it from my vehicle with a window mounted spotting scope. It was similar in size to the Herring Gulls. I thought the bill was slightly shorter than those of the Herring Gulls, but I am unsure about that. It had a dark gray back which under overcast conditions seemed to be the same shade of gray as on the backs of the Lesser Black-backed Gulls. The head was densely streaked and a sooty patch surrounded the eye. The breast was densely mottled brown as was the nape. Passing over the finely streaked crown was a thinly streaked band which appeared lighter than the rest of the head (appearing somewhat like a pale headphone strap). The visible underparts below the breast were a clean white, as was the tail. The black wingtips extended beyond the tail about as much as on the Herring Gulls and they had 4 large white apical spots showing. The tertial crescent was white and very wide. There was a tiny white scapular crescent also showing. It was very difficult to see the upperwing because most of the time the bird was resting. When it opened its wing, outermost primary P10 had a very large white mirror showing. Towards the end of my observation the gull was acting aggressively toward Herring Gulls that were invading its comfort zone and opened its wing long enough for me to get a fractional second look at the broad white trailing edge of the wing and what appeared to be a subterminal spot. The bill was bright yellow with a red spot at the gonys. Several times this gull scratched its flank with its leg and I could see that the leg was dull pink.—*Thomas Wood, Menominee Falls, Wisconsin*

Great Gray Owl (*Strix nebulosa*)

28 February, outside of Mauston, Juneau County—This was a very large owl lacking "ear tufts." It had a gray face with concentric black circles surrounding the eyes and beak. The face was framed by a thicker black border which was very distinct at the bottom and top of the face, but weaker at the sides of the face. There was a thick black vertical line passing between the eyes which reached the top of the beak. The inside edges of the eye sockets had black patches. There was a verical black rectangular patch under the yellow bill, and on both sides of this patch were thick, short, white, horizontal lines, creating a bow-tie effect. The underparts were gray with thick, irregular black streaking. The upperparts were irregularly and intri-

cately barred with a complex pattern of brown, gray, and white. The eyes were yellow. Species eliminated: This owl is very distinctive and I doubt it could be mistaken for anything else. The only other large, "earless" owl with yellow eyes is the Snowy Owl, which is much whiter and does not have the gray face with the unique pattern described above.—*Thomas Wood, Menominee Falls, Wisconsin.*

Broad-winged Hawk in flight by Stephen Fisher

WSO Records Committee Report: Winter 2012–2013

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The WSO Records Committee reviewed 60 records of 23 species for the Winter 2012–13 season, accepting 46 of them (77%). Season highlights included a **potential** first state record Barnacle Goose (see details below); an irruption of northern owls that featured accepted documentation of 7 Boreal Owls, 4 Northern Hawk Owls, and a Great Gray Owl in Juneau County; a remarkable total of 4 Rufous/Allen's Hummingbirds; and several noteworthy gulls consisting of at least 2 Slaty-backeds, a California, and an inland Black-legged Kittiwake. Record or near-record late dates were established for Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Baltimore Oriole, Indigo Bunting, Le Conte's Sparrow, and Summer Tanager.

Accepted Records

Table 1 provides a list of records accepted by the WSO Records Committee during the Winter 2012–13 season. Information on each record, such as species, location, observer(s), and date(s), is accompanied by the tally of votes made by the five-person committee. Records with one or fewer dissenting votes are accepted into the state records.

Note that of four *Selasphorus* hummingbirds, two were accepted as adult male Rufous Hummingbird and two as Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird. These two female/immature birds were not trapped and banded for identification purposes, and photos did not provide the details necessary to determine the exact species with certainty.

Table 1. List of rare bird records accepted by the WSO Records Committee during the Winter 2012 season.

Year	Rec.#	Species	Date	Observer	Location	County	Photo?	Other?	Tally
2012	105	Eared Grebe	12/15	S. Lubahn	Bay View Park	Milwaukee			5-0
2012	114	Northern Hawk Owl	12/4	M. Huebschen	Ephraim - Sister Bay	Door	Yes		5-0
2012	114	Northern Hawk Owl	1/14	T. Wood	Ephraim - Sister Bay	Door			5-0
2012	143	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	12/1-27	T. Zerger	Howard's Gr.	Sheboygan	Yes	Late	5-0
2012	144	Rufous Hummingbird (Ad.M)	12/1-23	S. Ewens	La Crosse	La Crosse	Yes		5-0
2012	145	Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird	12/1-23	S. Ewens	La Crosse	La Crosse	Yes		5-0
2012	146	Rufous Hummingbird (Ad M)	12/1-21	E. Lucke	Rio	Columbia	Yes		5-0
2012	150	Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird	12/1-1/1/13	J. Newton	Brookfield	Waukesha	Yes		5-0
2012	153	Baltimore Oriole	12/12-1/11/13	B. Joers	Colgate	Washington	Yes	Late	5-0
2012	156	Barrow's Goldeneye	1/19	T. Wood	L. Michigan, Schlitz Audubon	Milwaukee			5-0
2012	157	Barrow's Goldeneye	1/4	S. Fitzgerald	Lake Geneva	Walworth	Yes		5-0
2012	157	Barrow's Goldeneye	1/6	E. Howe	Lake Geneva	Walworth	Yes		5-0
2012	157	Barrow's Goldeneye	1/8	T. Wood	Lake Geneva	Walworth			5-0
2012	158	Barrow's Goldeneye	1/2	D.B. Williams	Superior Entry, Wisconsin Point	Douglas			5-0
2012	159	Black-legged Kittiwake	2/17	S. Malcolm	Fox River Neenah	Winnebago	Yes		5-0
2012	159	Black-legged Kittiwake	2/18	D. Tessen	Fox River Neenah	Winnebago			5-0
2012	161	Boreal Owl	2/18	V. Haese-Lehman	Harshaw	Oneida			5-0
2012	161	Boreal Owl	02/17-18/13	P. Rasmussen	Harshaw	Oneida	Yes		5-0
2012	162	Boreal Owl	2/17	T. Oksiuta	Mocassin Mike Rd. - Superior	Douglas	Yes		5-0
2012	163	Boreal Owl	1/10	P. Fisher	New London	Outagamie	Yes	Dead	5-0
2012	164	Boreal Owl	2/9	P. Toshner	Town of Barnes	Bayfield	Yes		5-0
2012	165	Boreal Owl	1/5	R. Brady	Washburn	Bayfield	Yes		5-0
2012	166	Boreal Owl	2/21	A. Gustafson	West Hill, Chippewa Falls	Chippewa	Yes		5-0
2012	167	California Gull	12/18	D. Gustafson	Johnson Creek Landfill	Jefferson			5-0
2012	167	California Gull	12/21	C. Bridge	Johnson Creek Landfill	Jefferson	Yes		5-0
2012	167	California Gull	12/22	J. Mooney	Johnson Creek Landfill	Jefferson	Yes		5-0
2012	170	Great Gray Owl	2/25	D. McClintock	Mauston	Juneau	Yes		5-0
2012	170	Great Gray Owl	2/27	T. Keyel	Mauston	Juneau	Yes		5-0
2012	170	Great Gray Owl	2/28	T. Wood	Mauston	Juneau			5-0
2012	172	Indigo Bunting	12/12-1/13/13	T. Schaefer	Hartford	Washington	Yes	Late	5-0
2012	173	Le Conte's Sparrow	12/23	S. Diehl	Beaver Dam	Dodge		Late	5-0
2012	174	Northern Hawk Owl	1/6	M. Henschell	Bayfield/Wiehe Rds, Poplar	Douglas	Yes		5-0
2012	174	Northern Hawk Owl	1/8	S. LaValley	Bayfield/Wiehe Rds, Poplar	Douglas			5-0
2012	175	Northern Hawk Owl	2/9	E. Ripma	Hwy 35 south of Superior	Douglas	Yes		5-0
2012	177	Northern Hawk Owl	2/26	B. Bacon	Pellman/Jarvi Roads - Maple	Douglas	Yes	Trap & Band	5-0
2012	180	Purple Sandpiper	1/12	D. Tessen	Wind Point	Racine			5-0
2012	181	Red Phalarope	12/6	B. Domagalski	Manitowoc Impoundment	Manitowoc			5-0
2012	181	Red Phalarope	12/6	C. Sontag	Manitowoc Impoundment	Manitowoc	Yes		5-0
2012	182	Slaty-backed Gull	12/14	T. Keyel	Johnson Creek Landfill	Jefferson	Yes		5-0
2012	182	Slaty-backed Gull	12/14	C. Bridge	Johnson Creek Landfill	Jefferson	Yes		5-0
2012	182	Slaty-backed Gull	12/17	T. Wood	Johnson Creek Landfill	Jefferson			5-0
2012	182	Slaty-backed Gull	12/17	J. Mooney	Johnson Creek Landfill	Jefferson	Yes		5-0
2012	185	Slaty-backed Gull	12/30	P. Svingen	Superior Entry, Wisconsin Point	Douglas	Yes		5-0
2012	186	Spotted Towhee	1/18-2/19/13	A. Blinkman	Cooks Valley, Bloomer	Chippewa	Yes		5-0
2012	187	Summer Tanager	12/5/12-EOP	J. E. Beimborn	Saukville	Ozaukee	Yes	Late	5-0
2012	188	Western Grebe	12/7	R. Fare	L. Michigan, Shoops Golf Course	Racine			4-1

Records Not Accepted

In the header for each record, voting tallies are shown in parentheses. Votes to accept are listed first. Two or more dissenting votes from the five-person committee results in a Record Not Accepted.

Barn Owl—

#2012-154, High Cliff Golf Course, Calumet County, 2 December 2012 (photo; 1–4).

The photo showed a red-morph Eastern Screech-Owl peering out of a Wood Duck box. The bird was in profile with its ear tufts pinned back and face overexposed by sunshine, leading the observer to an incorrect identification.

Barrow's Goldeneye—

#2012-158, Superior Entry, Douglas County, 23 February 2013 (2–3).

Given a male Barrow's was present at this location during this winter season, the identification was likely correct. However, the documentation was brief and vague, indicating only the following field marks: "forward inclined forehead, triangular facial (cheek) patch, much darker barring on back." These do not adequately describe a Barrow's Goldeneye, especially in light of potential hybrids (with Common) also known to have occurred at this site.

Boreal Owl—

#2012-160, Wood River Township, Burnett County, 24 December 2012 (2–3).

A small owl was seen at dusk without the use of optics. Although possibly a Boreal given this winter's irruption, the report did not adequately eliminate the more common Northern Saw-whet, indicating only that this owl was darker, bigger, and more spotted than streaked below. Confirmation as Boreal would require mention of the pale bill color, more heavily spotted forehead, colder plumage tones, and black borders to the facial disk.

California Gull—

#2012-168, Johnson Creek Landfill, Jefferson County, 27 December 2012 (photos; 0–5).

Several photos (Fig. 1) of a perched, immature gull (not the adult California also seen at this location) were submitted with no accompanying written documentation. Immature gull identification is undoubtedly difficult but the committee felt this bird lacked the following features a California should demonstrate: long and slender bill, pale upper breast and face, dark anchor pattern on scapulars, double secondary bar, long primaries, less robust body shape, and less uniformly brown tones throughout the body plumage. Additional observations of the bird in flight or at least with outstretched wing may have helped. Several experienced birders who also saw the bird did not agree with the identification.

California Gull—

#2012-169, South Shore Yacht Club, Milwaukee County, 19 January 2013 (2-3, 1–4).

Two birders, birding together, submitted independent written documentations of an adult bird. Descriptions of mantle color were inconsistent, one described as "medium gray" and the other as "light gray," and neither sug-

Figure 1. Documented as a California Gull

gesting distinctly darker than adjacent Herring Gulls. Head shape, body structure, and wingtip pattern were not described. Some committee members felt there wasn't enough information to eliminate the expected Herring Gull, which show great variation in size, eye color, and bill markings.

Great Gray Owl—

#2012-171, Wisconsin Point, Douglas County, 23 February 2013 (1–4).

The identification may have been correct but the documentation was very brief, indicating only "a very large gray owl with a large facial disk and no ear tufts . . . and the typical flat face of a great gray." There was no mention of how the common Barred Owl was eliminated as a possible ID. The observer also indicated, "There is no other bird that can be confused with a Great Gray Owl." Unfortunately, this author could share dozens of examples countering this statement from the past year alone!

Northern Hawk Owl—

#2012-176, Marengo area, Ashland County, 21 December 2012 (2–3).

Another case where the identification was likely correct given the irruption of northern owls this winter but the documentation falls short of conclusively describing the bird. This identification hinged on a long and pointed tail, white face with black border, and white spots on the scapulars. Other details on the body size, bill

and eye color, breast pattern, head shape, and overall coloration were all missing, leaving some committee members unsure if the identification was correct.

Prairie Falcon—

#2012-178, Madison area, Dane County, 21 December 2012 (1–4).

This was a brief documentation consisting of: "White underneath with noticeable black patches under armpits, and extending out from the body 2–3 inches in the center of the wing. Narrow body. Twisting flight reminiscent of nighthawk, but with much less twisting per second. Narrow, bent wings. . . . Agile, fast flight. Size of crow, but not stocky." As such, the description lacks the necessary detail for such a rare bird and places too much weight on the black axillaries (wingpits). The latter can be shown by many birds depending on light conditions. Moreover, seemingly as is the case with many Prairie Falcon reports, the bird was seen for only a few seconds without binoculars. More details on the upperparts, tail pattern, body plumage below, face pattern, etc. would helped separate this from American Kestrel, Merlin, and other more likely species.

Purple Sandpiper—

#2012-179, North Point, Sheboygan County, 10 December 2012 (2–3).

This description was limited to, "Slate grey head, light, buff-colored breast with streaking, yellow or orange legs, bill dark at end, yellow toward face, about 6 or 7 inches tall, did not have a well defined eye ring." The location and time of year suggest the identification was correct but the description lacks mention of the bird's size, chunky shape/structure, and mantle pattern. Only the head is listed as slate-colored and the breast as buffy, both inconsistent with Purple Sandpiper.

Slaty-backed Gull—

#2012-183, KK River, Milwaukee County, 23 February 2013 (photos; 2–3).

This third year gull was photographed (Fig. 2) at a distance of ~200 yards. Dissenting committee members felt the mantle color was problematic in not being significantly darker than adjacent Herring Gulls. The observer indicated the mantle was darker in real life but this photo artifact would be expected to carry over to other gulls in the same light in the same image, yet this was not the case. Leg color also appears similar to adjacent Herrings. Very importantly, the spread wingtips were never seen, which, in identification of gulls is often critical. The observer indicated that s/he considered a hybrid but did not subsequently indicate how the most common hybrid combinations (e.g. Herring × Great Black-backed, Herring × Lesser Black-backed) were eliminated from possible identification. However, the committee recognizes the difficulty of identifying third-year gulls, particularly Slaty-backeds, and welcomes counter opinions from other experienced observers.

Slaty-backed Gull—

#2012-184, Milwaukee Harbor, Milwaukee County, 25 February 2013 (photos; 2–3).

This adult gull was seen and photographed (Fig. 3) perched on ice

Figure 2. Documented as a Slaty-backed Gull

with Herring Gulls at a very long distance of ~1000 yards. Dissenting committee members thought the written description supported Slaty-backed but the accompanying images did not seem to reflect what was written. Most of the images show what looked to some of the committee to better fit the more expected Lesser Black-backed Gull, showing long primary projection, limited white apical spots, lighter gray mantle color, smaller white tertial crescent, and legs slightly more yellowish than adjacent Herrings. All of which contrasts the written report of a chunky bird with pink legs, broad white tertial crescent, dark gray mantle, etc. Again, distance precluded accurate assessment of the wingtip pattern, a key ID feature with this species. A second observer's set of images was more intriguing but too distant, lacking the detail necessary to confirm the identification. While the committee recognizes the increased occurrence of Slaty-backeds in the state, region, and lower 48, we caution observers that the bar for accepting records of this predominantly Asian species is still high.

Pacific Loon—

#2012-189, Wisconsin Point, Douglas County, 9 January 2013 (2–3).

This bird was described as "waaayyy out to the NE of the lighthouse…so far that I had to convince myself it wasn't an ice chunk." It was said to have a lot of white on it, though none near the eye; brown/white smooth transition line going up the neck,

Figure 3. Documented as a Slaty-backed Gull

brownish back tones, and silvery back of neck in strong light. The bird also looked small-billed and compact-bodied. While this description is decent for Pacific Loon, some of the committee thought the distance of observation precluded accurate assessment of field marks separating the very similar Common and Red-throated Loon. The bill shape/posture and Pacific's distinctive small-headed look also were not described.

Figure 4. Barnacle Goose seen and photographed on 14 December, Crystal Lake, Dodge County, by Troy Maaser.

Records Not Yet Decided

Barnacle Goose—

#2012-155, Crystal Lake Park, Beaver Dam, Dodge County, 14 December 2013 (photos).

A goose hunter was scouting Crystal Lake Park in Beaver Dam (<10 miles from Horicon Marsh) when he saw and photographed (Fig. 4) this bird as it flew overhead (but never landed) within a flock of 15–20 Canada/Cackling Geese. Unfortunately, it was never seen again by the original or other observers. While the identification is not in doubt, the provenance of

Barnacle Geese (wild vs. escapee) in the U.S. and Canada has been continually questioned as this species is commonly held in captivity and many escapees are known to occur throughout the continent. Many states and provinces have documented Barnacle Goose observations yet most, including Wisconsin, have not accepted these as wild and leave them off official state/provincial checklists. On the other hand, some states and provinces, particularly those in the Northeast, now accept some of these as wild having recently adopted a more liberal approach based on various factors, most prominently including an increasing global population of Barnacle Geese and several proven cases (via banding) of truly wild Old World Barnacles showing up on this side of the Atlantic. For a good overview, consult Sherony, D. F. 2008. Greenland Geese in North America. *Birding* 40(3): 46–56; available at http://www.aba.org/birding/archives.

At the time of this writing, the WSO Records Committee remains undecided on the Beaver Dam bird as we continue to research the issue by delving into literature, communicating with other rare bird records committees, and examining patterns of occurrence using eBird and other data sources. Based on the sight account and photos, we have no certain evidence of either a wild or captive origin for this individual. If we adopt a conservative approach, as do many other states and provinces outside of the Northeast, and posit that individuals of this species are escapees until proven wild, then clearly this record will not be accepted. However, a less conservative approach that considers the possibility of a wild Barnacle Goose in Wisconsin would shift this decision to one based on probability, i.e. likelihood of the bird being wild vs. escapee based on the evidence at hand. In that case, factors such as time of year, location, associated species, prevailing weather patterns, behavior, and physical evidence of captivity (e.g. pinioned wings, removed hallux, etc.) would be weighed against each other to assess the record. Finally, a most liberal approach would be one holding that a pattern of vagrancy in the U.S. has been sufficiently established for this species such that individuals are deemed to be wild until proven to have escaped from captivity.

Will the Barnacle Goose be added as the latest new species to the official Wisconsin state checklist? Look for a thorough overview of this topic and the committee's ultimate decision on this bird in the next issue of the Passenger Pigeon.

Red-headed Woodpecker arriving at its nest hole by Dennis Connell

WSO Awards—2013

The Board of Directors of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology made some changes to the method of presentation of the WSO awards in 2013. It was decided that the announcement of the award recipients would now be made some weeks prior to the convention and actual presentation of the awards. This will allow family and friends of recipients to attend the ceremony and allow WSO to create more publicity around the event.

The number and type of awards given have not been altered. For 2013, the Board of Directors of WSO was pleased to present four awards; one each of Green, Bronze, Silver, and Golden Passenger Pigeon Awards.

Green Passenger Pigeon Award

The Green Passenger Pigeon Award is given for outstanding contributions to and excellent work in conservation on behalf of birds in Wisconsin. As noted by Noel Cutright, presenter of this award, "To me, this photo (Fig. 1) says it all. You can just see the love in Marge's face as she lovingly holds a species she has worked with a lot."

Marge Gibson was born and lived in Antigo until after college when she moved to California where she lived for 28 years until returning to Antigo. Her family was very important to her and she describes her father as knowing everything about everything. In his youth he had been a lumberjack, and her mom was a camp cook. Her older sister taught Marge how to read at a very early age and stressed poetry and other forms of mental gymnastics. You might be able to guess her first word, yes, "Birdy," not "Mommy" or "Daddy." She loved her grandparents' chickens and her first chicken, Henny Penny, pretty much lived in the house full time. She wore doll clothes and was very comfortable being pushed along the sidewalk in a doll buggy. Henny Penny laid her first egg in a diaper her mother had fashioned for her. Marge received the huge and heavy "Birds of America" from an aunt on her 8th birthday and simply devoured it. Marge gave her first presentation at age 11; she talked about the birds she had cared for before the Langlade County Audubon Society. She describes herself as being nerdy in high school, more interested in catching moths to feed her nighthawk than partaking of usual high school activities.

She started working as a field biologist in the early 1970s and then moved to California where she married Don, a pathologist, who has played a tremendously large and invaluable role in Marge's work. They raised three children and lots of feathered critters. Marge worked as a Medical Technologist, where combining her knowledge of birds, especially raptors, with medical knowledge suited her quite well and laid the foundation for the future ahead of her.

She started the Orange County Birds of Prey Center, a rehab facility,

Marge Gibson

to take care of the birds she came across in her field work. The Center still exists today. She worked with the California Condor Recovery Team, bringing important medical and raptor skills to the Team. The L. A. Times in the 1989-1990 time frame is filled with stories about Marge's rehab work and her work on oil spills in Alaska and California. After the Exxon Valdez spill she lived in Alaska, capturing and treating oil-soaked eagles. She is proud of her record while treating oil-soaked birds at a Huntington Beach, CA facility—of 452 birds treated there, only 3 died.

The pull to return to Wisconsin became too strong and with a few years of traveling with lecture tours in front of her, the time seemed right to make the move. Don flew back, took his Wisconsin medical boards, interviewed for a job, and bought land for a house all within a period of a week. In June 1990 they packed the kids and parrots, including a macaw that suffered serious motion sickness in their cars, and were on their way to Antigo. While they never intended to start a wildlife center in Antigo, it just kind of happened, and the Raptor Education Group Inc., or REGI, was founded. REGI treats everything from hummingbirds to swans and cares for more eagles at any given time than anyplace else in the country. Because of Marge's belief in the importance of education, she wanted education included in the organization's name,

and it remains a major component of REGI's work.

Now a striking complex, REGI has attained fame worldwide. During her rehab career, she has dealt with a Turkey Vulture shot up with drugs, a gay alcoholic Trumpeter Swan, a Great Horned Owl with both feet cut off and much, much more. Remember the fake video that circulated recently of the Golden Eagle swooping down in a park and carrying away a baby? Marge and other wildlife rehabilitators had to suffer the consequences because it was followed by a rash of eagle shootings in Wisconsin, and Marge has even encountered disturbing comments about this video from students when giving school programs.

Whether it is treating a very sick Bald Eagle or tube-feeding a Snowy Owl, or treating and successfully releasing Wisconsin's oldest Bald Eagle or feeding minnows to grebes in a bathtub, or training another how to treat an Osprey, Marge is always there treating her patients with respect and always talking to them in a way they seem to understand.

Treating a lead-poisoned bird, such as a swan, is a difficult and very costly endeavor but has been an area of work that has become very important to Marge. Serving on the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative's (WBCI) Issue team, she was a driving force in its preparation of a Lead Poisoning Issue Paper, and she is now serving as a member of WBCI's Steering Committee. For several years she has worked on a campaign to eliminate lead from all fishing tackle.

Marge teaches wildlife rehabilitation in Turkey, Greece, and Bulgaria. She helped open Turkey's first wildlife rehabilitation center in Bursa, and will be back in Turkey this fall at the Kafkas University Vet School to teach and consult on their new rehab center near Kars, Turkey. She was honored with an award by the Vet School at the University of Istanbul for her work with their students in 2011.

Taking every opportunity to work with youth, Marge tries to teach them to love with their whole heart and to care, really care. She believes that you can't be too kind or too nice. She tells them to error on the side of kindness and be gentle. You can't kill something being too gentle. Being rough and arrogant doesn't have a place in life.

Last fall Appleton hosted an international meeting for rehabers, and Marge was involved with many of the sessions, and on a wide diversity of topics. She also hosted a field trip for the group to visit REGI.

Marge is at her best when readying an eagle to be released or actually releasing a rehabilitated eagle to the skies of Wisconsin. Hundreds, if not thousands, have been inspired watching and learning from these experiences. It can be simply a Red-tailed Hawk or Red-necked Grebe being released. But of course, not all can be released, so REGI becomes home to a 14-year-old Turkey Vulture burned in a fire, a Snowy Owl found entangled in barbed wire, a Red-tailed Hawk shot in the back, and a Bald Eagle with a broken wing who surprisingly bonded with a rat that found its way into her pen, sharing her food with the rodent.

And one last story. Marge treated a young raven with a wing fracture for over a year, and the bird picked up

some simple words such as "Hi," "Hello," "Hey, you," and "How are you?" After Marge released the bird, it occasionally returned to the clinic grounds, and when she flew over visitors she'd call out her favorite phrases. The raven raised chicks and occasionally brought her fledglings over, and Marge heard them first babbling baby talk, "hello" came out as "hawoo," and "Hey" was "Haaaya," but by summer's end they were doing almost as good a job of speaking English as their mother.

You may think I've told you everything there is to know about Marge, but I've only scratched the surface. After all, I've mentioned nothing about her life as a fashion model, or when she was invited by the parents of a boy from school and when dinner was served announced that they had cooked her goose, a former rehab patient of Marge's, or the many obstacles and challenges she had to overcome in a man's world.

WSO is most honored and pleased to present its Green Passenger Pigeon Award for 2013 to Marge Gibson.

Bronze Passenger Pigeon Award

The Bronze Passenger Pigeon was created to honor individuals who have made exceptional contributions to the study and appreciation of birds outside of activities with WSO and who have promoted the cause of birds and birding to the general public.

The 2013 Bronze Passenger Pigeon was presented to Professor Dick Verch (Fig. 2), of Northland College, by one of his students, turned birder/ornithologist, Ryan Brady, at the WSO annual convention in Ashland.

Dick was born and raised near Wakefield, Michigan, and considers himself still a "Yooper" as he and his wife maintain the homestead where Dick grew up as a weekend retreat and a bird feeding station.

Dick graduated from Wakefield High School in 1955 and received an Associate degree in Forestry from North Dakota School of Forestry. He obtained his Bachelor of Science degree with a major in Biology from Northland College, his Master's in Biology from Northern Michigan University, and his Doctorate in aquatic biology from the University of North Dakota.

After four years in the US Air Force (1955-1559), Dick taught two years of high school biology and math, three years teaching various biology courses at Bay de Noc Community College, and then taught Introductory Biology, Non-majors Biology, Genetics, Botany, Dendrology and Field Ornithology at Northland College for 31 years, retiring from full time teaching in 2001. While at Northland College Dick developed a Field Ornithology course which he taught for 31 years.

Dick has been involved over the years in many other bird projects and activities: he helped start the Ashland Christmas Bird Count (1971) and served as compiler for 40 years; initiated and conducted a May Count as part of the Field Ornithology course; initiated and conducted an International Migratory Bird Day Count; ran the Iron River Breeding Bird Survey route for 15 plus years; conducted American Woodcock surveys for 10 plus years; conducted fall waterfowl surveys on Chequamegon Bay, in cooperation with the Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission, for 20+

Dick Verch

years; contributed information to several editions of *Wisconsin's Favorite Bird Haunts*; served as regional coordinator and species author for *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Wisconsin*; served as vice-president and president of WSO and on the WSO Record's Committee; wrote bird related articles for the local newspaper for two years; served as leader on many local field trips and has given many bird related talks in the northern area of Wisconsin. He served as WSO Convention Chairman when the convention was held in Ashland for the first time and was also very involved when the second convention was held here.

Dick has been THE authority on Ashland-Bayfield County birds since the early 1970s and wrote and self-published a booklet on Chequamegon Bay Birds.

Dick and Mary have been married for 46 years and have two children (Christopher and Matthew) and two grandchildren (Alexander and Nicholas).

Over his years of academic teaching and community involvement, he has mentored hundreds, if not thousands, of individuals in the study of birds and natural resources. He has taken many bird-inclined students under his wing (pun intended!), including yours truly (Ryan Brady). You'd be hard-pressed to find a better person. Humble, unassuming, passionate, unselfish, kind, and knowledgeable are a few words that come to mind.

It is with great pleasure and honor that WSO's Board of Directors bestows the 2013 Bronze Passenger Pigeon Award on Dick Verch.

Silver Passenger Pigeon Award

The WSO Silver Passenger Pigeon Award is given to individuals who have

Barbara Duerksen

served the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology in an outstanding and dedicated manner—both in quality and length of service to the Society.

The WSO Silver Passenger Pigeon for 2013 was awarded to Barbara Duerksen (Fig. 3) and presented by her good friend Karen Etter Hale.

Barbara first became fascinated with birds and their habitats as a child growing up on the family farm in Kansas where she observed Scissor-tailed Flycatchers nesting in a small tree along the lane between the pasture and the wheat field. Her favorite bird song is still the Western Meadowlark.

Barbara joined WSO and began attending conventions in 1975, missing only two since then (which amounts to nearly half of all conventions ever held). In 1998, using a WSO youth grant, she began a 3-year Chimney Swift roost count project with 4th and 5th grade students at Rockbridge Elementary School. This led to her being the WSO Youth Education Coordinator from 2001–2012, which, in turn, led to her joining the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative (WBCI) Education Committee in 2003 and developing (along with Ron Windingstad and Steve Kupcho) and running the statewide Bird Mentor program for 10 years. By 2012, there were 40 kits in place at nature centers, Audubon societies, bird clubs, and schools, with one going to Puerto Rico with a teacher exchange group from UW - Stevens Point. Each kit contains 15 pairs of binoculars, one spotting scope with tripod, 5 field guides, posters, a CD identifying common birds found in Wisconsin, and an educator's guide.

Barbara served on the statewide Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas committee and was the Regional Coordinator for Richland County. She also did the actual field work for much of that county and a few others. She's now looking forward to the next one!

She introduced many of us to our first taste of Richland County during the 2007 WSO Convention, for which she was the major local organizer. Barb Duerksen, knows more about birds and birding in Richland County than anyone else. She's been the Sandhill Crane Count Coordinator there since 1982, organizes the Richland County Big Sit with the Kickapoo Valley Bird Club, conducts bird classes at the local College for Kids and Continuing Education, is a bird conservation presenter for the Richland County Conservation Field Days for county sixth graders, and is a bird surveyor and educator at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve. Barb's done federal Breeding Bird Surveys in the area since 1982. *And* she knows more about Northern Bobwhites than almost anyone else in Wisconsin, as she spent years conducting Bobwhite Quail surveys for the DNR.

Barb and I met at the 1981 WSO convention in Beloit, becoming fast friends immediately. We've attended every convention together ever since. It's my great pleasure to present the 2013 Silver Passenger Pigeon award to my good friend Barbara Duerksen, who says, "The world of birds is so fascinating—from bird song to migration to individual life histories to the people who love birds and care about their future. Bird song hooked me into that world, and I never left it." And there are many younger birders in our state who never will either, thanks to Barb.

Golden Passenger Pigeon Award

The Golden Passenger Pigeon Award is presented to individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the field of ornithology, such as recognized published research or major book. This award carries with it a lifetime membership in WSO. Previous awardees include Chandler and Sam Robbins, Stanley Temple, and Thomas Schultz.

The 2013 Golden Passenger Pigeon was awarded to Dr. Thomas Nicholls (Fig 4.) and presented by Joan Elias.

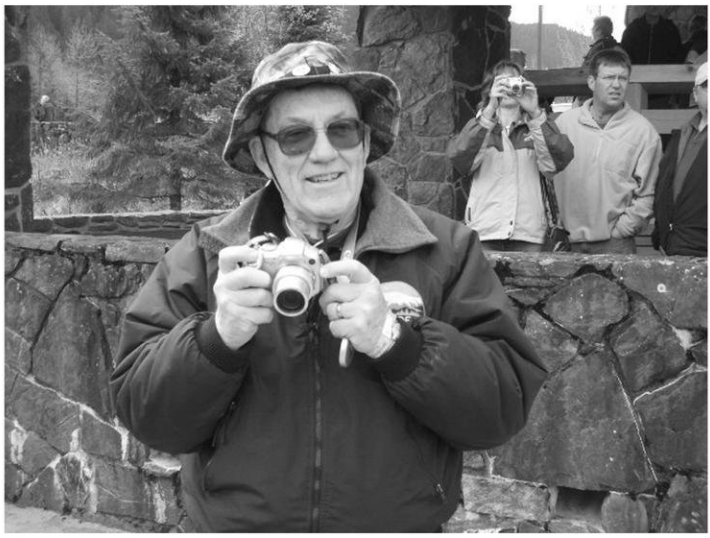
Tom Nicholls has had a lifelong passion for birds and the field of ornithology, which led to his career as a disease pathologist and wildlife program leader for the North Central Research Station. But Tom has not simply made the study of birds his career—he has made it a way of life. Tom shares his love and knowledge of birds with scores of people every year through programs at his nature center and at public events such as the Ashland Nature Festival and WSO's bandathon. Tom's ornithological contributions have extended beyond Wisconsin and Minnesota to other states and internationally, as a trip leader and conservation activist in Africa.

Dr. Nicholls is a retired Project Leader, research wildlife biologist, and forest pathologist from the USDA Forest Service, North Central Research Station, St. Paul, MN. He continues working as a Forest Service Volunteer, holds a Federal master bird banding permit, and is a wildlife safari leader who has been to East Africa more than fifteen times since 1988.

Tom is a natural-born teacher, sharing his knowledge with others at every opportunity. He is an extraordinary naturalist with a life-long passion for birds, who has designed studies to answer his questions and expand his knowledge. He has been a mentor to the five who nominated him for this award and many others, teaching us the details of bird banding, experimental design, data collection, and much more.

Tom first demonstrated his keen interest in birds when he began banding birds and participated in a Christmas Bird Count in Madison during his senior year in high school back in 1956. Tom conducted his Ph.D. research on habitat use by Barred Owls. As an early pioneer in the use of radiotelemetry on birds, his work was truly ground-breaking. He constructed the harness equipment that for the first time was used on owls. The lessons he learned and the equipment he designed were taught in college courses.

As a scientist and program director for the North Central Research Station (NCRS), Tom dedicated his ca-



Dr. Thomas Nicholls

reer to study the relationship between forest health and wildlife habitat, and specifically how this affects bird populations. In Fraser, Colorado, Tom used radio-tagged birds to show the relationship of Gray Jay home range, its dispersal, and the implications to the spread of mistletoe. What began as a study of the role of Gray Jays as vectors of dwarf mistletoe turned into a longevity study on Gray Jays. He caught the oldest Gray Jay ever recorded in the U.S.—first captured in 1985 and recaptured in 2002, at 17 years and 2 months old, it holds the longevity record to date.

Tom connected birds to forest health again by partnering with disease pathologists at the research station to explain the role of tree pathogens in creating snags, downed logs, and other wildlife habitat features. These results were shared widely at meetings and conferences with a broad audience of researchers and land managers. His influence has surely caused many forest managers to broaden their perspective to not only consider birds but to see the forest as an ecosystem rather than solely a source of products.

One of Tom's concerns has been the importance of stop-over habitat for Neotropical migratory birds during migration. Tom's research on the habitat preferences of birds during migration through Fifield, Wisconsin confirmed the importance of shrubby wetlands to birds as feeding and resting areas. Tom has shared these results with land managers and scientists through presentations in Wisconsin and Minnesota, Forest Service reports, and in *The Passenger Pigeon* (Songbird Migration Habitat Relationships in a North-Central Wisconsin Forest During Spring and Fall. The Passenger Pigeon. 63(3): 157–178. 2001).

A second component of the migration study entailed teaming up with Dr. Kurt Reed and graduate student, Eric Larson, to conduct a study on the

role of birds in spreading the tick-borne disease, granulocytic erlichiosis (Migratory Birds as Disseminators and Potential Reservoirs for the Agents of Granulocytic Ehrlichiosis, MS Thesis). The project entailed collecting ticks and blood samples from birds at the Fifield study site to analyze for the disease. This study yielded the first reported evidence of granulocytic erlichiosis being carried by passerine birds and rabbit ticks and suggests the role migratory birds have in spreading the disease.

An important aspect of every study is publishing results. Tom consistently writes up his results to share with the scientific community as well as the public. This sharing of knowledge gained is an often-neglected part of collecting data and conducting research. Tom has numerous publications in peer-reviewed journals and scores of unpublished reports.

For over 55 years (including 2012), Tom has been a significant contributor to the Audubon Christmas Bird Counts. He began with counts in Madison from 1956 to 1964, and for the past 48 years, he and his wife, Mary Lou, have led the Fifield count. Because Tom understands the importance of education and spreading the word, he always issues a press release for the local paper with results and highlights of the year's CBC.

Tom and Mary Lou, started the Fifield Nature Education Center on Mary Lou's family property in 1999. A partner of the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative, the Center is based upon The Leopold Education Project and strives "to teach the student to see the land, to understand what s/he sees, and to enjoy what s/he understands." The Center's key education message is to THINK HABITAT and the need to protect and conserve habitats that provide essential food, water, shelter, and space needed by all living organisms to successfully carry out their life cycles.

Tom loves talking about habitat almost as much as he loves talking about birds. He has always made an extra effort to connect researchers with land managers so his research results lead to positive actions for birds on the ground. Together, Tom and Mary Lou have landscaped their 200+ acre property to benefit wildlife. Several ponds were constructed, creating new habitat for turtles, frogs, herons, and other waterbirds. An array of feeders, largely built by the late Dave Ahlgren, attracts a wide variety of birds, and natural features like brush piles and logs are arranged to provide cover. Over 50 nest boxes have been installed and are in use mainly by Eastern Bluebirds, Tree Swallows, House Wrens, Hooded Mergansers, and Black-capped Chickadees. Tom checks all of the nest boxes, collecting ever more data. Mary Lou, a master gardener, planted and maintains flower gardens for butterflies and shrubs for bird food and cover, all of which have become part of the teaching opportunities Tom incorporates while leading hikes on their property.

Tom and Mary Lou have hosted countless groups, from grade school children through college students. Tom maintains the Nature Education Center as an active official U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service bird banding station and uses it to study bird habitat relationships, site fidelity, longevity, refueling habitats for Neotropical migratory birds, and birds as vectors of tick-borne diseases. Tom's visitors

have a chance to learn about mist-netting, cell trapping, banding, point counts, transects, radio telemetry, as well as forest diseases and forest management. He gives bird banding and telemetry demonstrations and teaches about what has been learned about birds through banding. He hands out dip nets to his visitors, and gives them hands-on experiences to see what kinds of life exist in ponds. Over the years, Tom has shared photos of some of the visiting kids with a bird in their hands. The delight on their faces is obvious! Doubtless, he has touched the lives of many children and probably changed some lives.

Tom also takes his show on the road, filling his SUV with bird feeders, bird houses, books, and literature for public demonstrations at nature and birding festivals around the state. After such demonstrations, he summarizes his involvement for the organizers of the event, including important feedback that assists organizers in planning their next event.

Always generous with his time, Tom volunteers for many bird-related events and assists students with short-term research projects for classes. He volunteered his time to help the Boy Scouts of America with a woodcock study in Phillips, where they caught and banded woodcock at night.

Tom has also assisted other birding enthusiasts to take their interests to scientific levels. For example, when A. Wick (one of the nominators for this award) approached Tom with her ideas, Tom helped her elevate her Eastern Bluebird monitoring trail in Dane County into a scientific study to increase our knowledge of bluebird ecology, productivity, longevity, and site fidelity. In 2012, their study saw its 17th year of data collection and the banding of nearly 10,000 Eastern Bluebirds.

Tom began traveling to Africa with avian veterinarians from the Raptor Rehabilitation Center at the University of Minnesota. Throughout the years they became involved in research there, raised money to purchase equipment for projects, stayed on as volunteers, helped with some of the radio tracking aspects, and eventually wrote some papers. Since his early trips, Tom has teamed up with others to lead more than 15 wildlife viewing safaris in east Africa. Many people have experienced Africa at profound and life changing levels in part due to Tom's pre-trip education and information sharing efforts, which he does with his usual detail and enthusiasm. Because Tom has led trips to this part of the world for so long, he has developed a strong connection with people of the country and has spearheaded efforts to help with the schooling and education of many of Tanzania's students. In particular, he helped raise funds to support the wildlife education training of his early guide, Hashim, to become a full-fledged Tanzanian endorsed guide. Tom also helped to raise funds to bring Hashim and another guide to the U.S. to do a Yellowstone safari. One of the big parts of Tom's safari trips has been a school visit to encourage learning about the Friends of Tanzanian schools. On each trip to Africa, Tom and his co-leaders bring school supplies and other items to improve the learning environment for the young, bright African kids who are the future of their developing country.

Collecting data is almost a compul-

sion for Tom, and he doesn't have to travel to far-away places in order to conduct research—he sees opportunities all around him. After the ponds were created at the Nature Education Center, he started measuring the flow of water out of the ponds into the stream and he began catching turtles and painting numbers on their shells to measure growth rates and longevity. On his many miles of walking trails, he keeps track of individual downed logs, recording how many years each log is used by grouse as drumming logs (think habitat!). He records his observations of nesting waterfowl on his ponds, noting that in some years a single nest box is used by two or more Hooded Merganser females. He erected exclosures around plantings of white pine to study the effects of deer and hare on forest regeneration. Travel with him and his ever present tally counter and you'll hear the 'click-click' of Tom counting anything and everything—whether it be hawks per mile, or lightning in an hour. He even keeps a log of the species of mice he catches in the basement! His curiosity truly knows no limits.

Conducting research, especially research on birds, and sharing his knowledge about what he learns, are a way of life for Tom. His never-ending curiosity, boundless energy (try keeping up with his long stride sometime!), love of teaching, and genuine enthusiasm are infectious. It was all of these traits that drew the five of us to him as students. He gave generously of his time, helping us with our schooling, our careers, and the development of our own passion for birds.

Tom is a humble person who does not brag of his accomplishments. He just keeps on doing. The WSO Board of Directors is deeply honored to present the 2013 Golden Passenger Pigeon Award to Thomas H. Nicholls.

Below is a small sampling of wildlife-related publications of Tom Nicholls:

Nicholls, T. H. and G. W. Warner. 1966. Biotelemetry—a valuable tool in bird study. The Passenger Pigeon 28: 127–131.

Ostry, M. E. and T. H. Nicholls. 1976. How to identify and control sapsucker injury on trees. USDA Forest Service. 5 pp.

Ostry, M.E. and T. H. Nicholls. 1979. Bird vectors of black spruce dwarf mistletoe. The Loon 51: 15–19.

Ostry, M.E., T. H. Nicholls, and D. W. French. 1983. Animal vectors of eastern dwarf mistletoe of black spruce. Research Paper NC-232. St. Paul, MN: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, North Central Forest Experiment Station. 16 pp.

Nicholls, T. H., F. G. Hawksworth, and L. M. Merrill. 1984. Animal vectors of dwarf mistletoe, with special reference to *Arceuthobium americanum* on lodgepole pine. In: Hawksworth, F. G.; Scharpf, R. F., technical coordinators. Biology of dwarf mistletoes: proceedings of the symposium; 1984 August 8; Fort Collins, CO. Gen. Tech. Rep. RM-111. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experimental Station, pp. 154–156.

Nicholls, T. H., F. G. Hawksworth, and L. Egeland. 1987. Animal vectors of *Arceuthobium americanum* on lodgepole pine. In: Cooley, S. J. comp. Proceedings, 34th Annual Western

International Forest Disease Work Conference 1986 September 8–12, Juneau, AK. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Forest Pest Management, Portland, OR.

Nicholls, T. H. L. Egeland, and F. G. Hawksworth. 1989. Birds of the Fraser Experimental Forest, Colorado, and their role in dispersing lodgepole pine dwarf mistletoe. Colorado Birds 23: 3–12.

Ostry, M.E. and T. H. Nicholls. 1998. The forest beyond the trees: beneficial roles of diseases in forest health. In: Proceedings of the 1997 Society of American Foresters National Convention, October 4–8 Memphis, TN, pp. 167–172. (Many bird habitat examples illustrated)

Nicholls, T. H. and M. E. Ostry. 2003. Dead trees bring life to forest critters. Minnesota Better Forests 7: 14–15.

Female Eastern Bluebird by Dennis Connell

Report of the Annual Meeting 25 May 2013

WSO President Carl Schwartz called the 2013 Annual Meeting of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology to order at noon on 25 May 2013 at the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center in Ashland, Wisconsin.

Schwartz asks for volunteers to be the reader committee for this years' annual meeting. Marlyn Bontly (mbontly@wi.rr.com), Chuck Heikkinen (quetzal65@gmail.com), and Jane Dennis (jadennis@wisc.edu) volunteered.

Reports of Officers

Christine Reel—Financial Report: Comparison was noted between income and expenses. This year there is an excess. Many of the 2013 dues were paid in 2012, which may be in part the reason for this excess. No discussion of dues increase was mentioned.

PayPal is now an option for WSO membership payments and donations and has been very successful.

All WSO donations are going directly where they are intended (i.e. specific donations are going for their intended use and not going into the general operating expenses).

Total assets as of December approximately $500,000.

Financial summary—discussion of breakdown of 2011, 2012 expenses and revenue. Full report in Annual Report document.

Balance sheet—land and buildings includes the purchase price of land and buildings during 2011-2012.

Sam Robbins Shorebird Endowment Fund and Important Bird Areas Fund are options for assets held by other organizations.

Carl Schwartz—President: Schwartz thanks WSO volunteers who have stepped down from their roles in the last year and welcomes their successors.

[He stated that] strategic planning is well underway; conservation committee and communications committee are working hard (see written report). Other new social media options are being initiated (i.e., Facebook); money spent on new grants has been increased to fund 13 projects; WSO is involved in the launch of the next breeding bird atlas with work slated to begin in 2015; WSO has also worked with the DNR, National Park Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to sponsor successful field trips to see two of Wisconsin's rare bird species (i.e. Piping Plover and Kirtland's Warbler trips).

Kim Kreitinger—Vice President: Kim is working to increase the transparency of the organization, build membership, and strengthen various WSO committees. She is also working on

the Strategic Planning Committee as well as other committees. Kreitinger is helping to recruit new members this year to help with WSO committees. New research chair will be David Drake (after approval of board), with hopes of developing a committee. Kreitinger is also working on: adding content to website with help of Paul Jakoubek; helping invite speakers for this year's convention; developing Sandhill Crane hunt issue paper with Noel Cutright and Bill Mueller; and, starting a research symposium.

Christine Reel—Treasurer: See written report as submitted.

Jenny Wenzel—Secretary: Jenny noted she is happy to be involved with WSO.

Bettie Harriman—Co-Editor of Passenger Pigeon: stated she had nothing to add to the submitted written report.

Report of Committee Chairs

Mary Uttech—Editor of the Badger Birder: noted completion of 11 issues of the newsletter for the year.

Joe Schaufenbuel—Bird Reports Coordinator: had nothing to add to written report as submitted.

Penny Fish—Bookstore: in 2012 there were 6 items in the inventory of the bookstore. Total sales for 2012 were 139 orders with $6,700 in sales. More copies of Breeding Bird Atlas have been sold. Field Checklists were updated in May, 2,350 were sold. All 53 copies of the kestrel prints were sold this year.

Rebecca Setzer—Communications: New WSO Facebook page has been increasing in popularity; she is working with the web team to get timely information out via WisBirdNet and the WSO website.

Michael John Jaeger—Conservation: nothing to add to written report submitted.

Bill Mueller—Education: Bill was not present-recently finished his Long Walk for Birds walk across the state to raise money for the Natural Resources Foundation . . . raised at least $8,400. Written report submitted.

Jeff Baughman and Tom Schultz—Field Trips: Kirtland's Warbler trip was successful, $450 raised to support that project to support their interns; Jeff and Jesse Peterson are leading an Ecuador trip this summer; next spring there will be a 13 day field trip to Costa Rica, at a different location along the Pacific coast.

Noel Cutright—Historian: nothing to add to written report submitted.

Levi Wood—Honey Creek: Update-in May, Quercus Land Stewardship Services/Jim Elleson crew continued garlic mustard control. Kreitinger has put together a planning committee for Honey Creek—with many plans for improving Honey Creek, i.e. putting up a new sign, looking into land acquisitions adjacent to the property.

Jesse Peterson—Membership: not present-written report submitted. Noted increase in membership in 2013.

Ryan Brady—Records: high acceptance rate of records, 85%; no new species in the state last year; trying to make it clear what needs to be documented for bird sightings; updating website resources.

Maureen Leonard, Research: retiring; anticipate she will be succeeded by David Drake; written report submitted.

Steve Brick—Scholarships and Grants: 12 grants given, a substantial increase from previous years, total awarded $6,000. Written report submitted.

Paul Jakoubek—Website: recent year

has been a big year of growth for the website; e-Alerts are sent out to members highlighting updates to the website; new web page entitled "Learn About Birds" with videos from Bird TV; web team developed with Kim Kreitinger, Becca Setzer, and David LaPuma as members; this year there will be a new version of the website launched; updated articles are frequently being posted onto the website home page

Barbara Duerksen and Ed Hahn—Youth Education: Youth grants-two accepted-one for a K-4 program with a week long study of birds, second for home schooled children relating to wood duck boxes; next youth grant application is due in fall, Hahn encourages members to get youth to apply for the grant online; Bird Kits—Hahn wants to learn about how kits are being used and would like members to submit information to him relating to how they are being used; young birders—target areas are elementary children as well as 20-30 year age range. Hahn wants to find out more information about this age group to get their ideas to share with the board to help WSO.

Christine Zimmerman and Kim Kreitinger—Convention Committee Chair—Next year will be the 75th anniversary of the WSO convention (also the 100th anniversary of the death of the last Passenger Pigeon); 75th anniversary celebration/convention will be in Prairie du Chien, where the Passenger Pigeon monument is located.

Peter McKeever moved that next year's convention be at Prairie du Chien, motion seconded and passed unanimously.

15-18 May 2014 will be the dates for the convention at The Barn in Prairie du Chien.

Old Business: none.

New Business:

Randy Hoffman—Report from Strategic Planning Committee—Because of concerns a few years ago that membership in WSO was decreasing, Strategic Planning Committee was formed. WSO sent out inquiries to other states and found a similar trend of membership loss. Goals: determine what members like about the organization; survey submitted RESULTS OF SURVEY—planning committee still gathering information; highest age group of members 56-70 years old; 61% of members do not use Facebook; members like-publications, field trips, records committee work, annual convention; importance for the future—bird conservation (including study of birds), publications, web page, field trips; message from members—bird conservation is very important, more focus is needed on young birders, keep improving the web page, maintain high quality publications, and maintain high quality field trips; encourage members to submit suggestion forms while at the convention; upcoming—another survey will be submitted to members with a focus on the bird conservation issue; Committee plans to keep membership informed on the survey process and results.

Rebecca Setzer—Nominating Committee Chair—Annual Election: Slate of officers is as follow: Editors of Pigeon—Bettie and Neil Harriman; Treasurer—Mickey O'Connor (introduction-zookeeper at Milwaukee County Zoo, worked in wildlife rehab prior and has traveled internationally. Mickey thanks Christine for her assistance in the transition process; Secretary—

Jennifer Wenzel: Vice President—Kim Kreitinger: and President— Carl Schwartz.

Motion to approve the slate by Randy Hoffman, seconded by Paul Bowman, and passed unanimously.

Thanks to the convention planning committee.

Business meeting of the WSO 2013 Annual Convention was adjourned at 1 pm. Respectfully submitted—Jennifer Wenzel, WSO Secretary.

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 2012 is as follows:

Pigeon—	
Expenses for 2012 (4 issues) (not including color printing)	$19,918
Birder—	
Expenses for 2012 (11 issues)	$4,089
Total publication costs	$24,007
Membership expenses	$1,561
Total cost of membership services	**$25,568**

Membership dues received (not including Life/Patron payments, which go directly into WSO's Endowment Fund)	$30,135
Library subscriptions/ back issues	$930
Total membership-related income	**$31,065**

With thanks to the nearly 600 members who receive electronic delivery of *The Badger Birder* (and with thanks to Mary Uttech and Jesse Peterson for doing the preparation and distribution of the file), our membership income has exceeded the cost of membership services again. However, because many members renewed early and dues payments were up some $3,700 over 2011, it is anticipated that membership income may lag behind expenses when the 2013 income and expense numbers are compared. So, next year please remember the grand overage for 2012.

Your generous support of WSO continues, and donations during 2012 amounted to nearly $27,000, including some $8,300 in support of WSO's Harold and Carla Kruse Honey Creek Nature Preserve in the Baraboo Hills (thanks go to Carl Schwartz, who works hard to keep the Honey Creek Birdathon/Bandathon fresh and in your face, and Levi Wood, who works diligently to minimize expenditures while making sure necessary upkeep gets done).

In October 2011, WSO began accepting payments via PayPal. That program has been a resounding success. After a careful beginning, with only membership payments and donations available online, Paul Jakoubek, Penny Fish, and Christine Zimmerman and fellow Convention Committee members worked to expand the system to include WSO Bookstore late in 2011 and convention in 2012. Total receipts via PayPal during 2012 were $22,668.

Of course, PayPal charges WSO a fee for each transaction, whether the WSO member uses a credit card or PayPal account. Fees charged during

2012 amounted to $628, or 2.8% of the total. Know, though, that when you renew your membership, make a donation, register for convention, or make a WSO Bookstore purchase online, 100% of your payment is applied to the appropriate area; fees are paid from WSO's general operating funds. Online payment availability via PayPal has been a popular vehicle, and the Board is pleased to offer it.

Of the total assets as of 31 December 2012 ($504,405—see **III. WSO Balance Sheet as of 31 December**), the amount available to cover general operating expenses is $83,123, and it is that amount that indicates WSO's financial position is solid. 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 and cannot be spent on general operating expenses. WSO is fortunate indeed to have a large number of faithful and generous members—THANK YOU!

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

I. WSO Statement of Revenue and Expenses, 2011 and 2012

Unrestricted Revenue	**2012**	**2011**
Birder Adv/Back Issues	380	400
Donations-Unrestricted	5,820	2,580
Wisconsin eBird Portal*	4,250	1,430
Interest/Dividends	80	134
Membership Dues	30,135	26,415
Pigeon-Subscr/Back Issues	930	1,004
Color Fund*	1,165	1,350
WSO Pubs/Bookstore	1,211	1,601
Miscellaneous**	3,670	4,476
Total Unrestricted Revenue	**47,641**	**39,390**

* Unrestricted revenue includes some amounts that are actually restricted as to use (i.e., donations for Wisconsin eBird portal 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 2012:

- Convention profits, $2,000, and return of advance, $1,500.
- Miscellaneous small receipts, $170.

Expenses (Unrestr Rev)	**2012**	**2011**
Administration	2,874	2,761
Awards	346	194
Bird Reports Coord	199	193
Birder	4,089	5,063
Communications	159	112
Conservation	100	
Hotline	188	450
Membership	1,561	855
Brochure		720
Pigeon	19,918	20,554
Color Printing	4,949	3,086
Schol/Grants	3,000	1,892
Website	572	3,101

WSO Pubs/Bookstore	278	294
Printing	268	1,265
Miscellaneous*	1,993	1,730
Total Expenses (Unrestr Rev)	**40,494**	**42,270**

* Miscellaneous unrestricted expenses during 2012:
- Wisconsin eBird portal, $1,500.
- Strategic planning, $370.
- Miscellaneous small expenses, $123.

Restricted Revenue	**2012**	**2011**
Convention	16,575	11,235
Duck Stamps	977	1,147
Endowment-Donations	55	16
Interest/Div/Cap Gains	847	1,326
Life/Patron Memberships	2,725	1,575
Field Trip-Costa Rica 2012	-650	38,571
Honey Creek-Donations	11,326	9,870
Schol/Grants-Donations	550	521
Interest/Dividends	21	25
WSO Pubs-Atlas/Haunts Sales	4,423	5,313
Youth Fund Donations	130	301
Miscellaneous*	304	323
Total Restricted Revenue	**37,283**	**70,223**

* Miscellaneous restricted revenue during 2012:
- Sales tax transferred from convention and bookstore.

Expenses (Restr Rev)	**2012**	**2011**
Convention	17,997	11,334
Duck Stamps	948	1,159
Field Trip Costa Rica 2012	27,254	10,667
Honey Creek	9,489	14,999
WSO Pubs-Atlas/Haunts Sales	686	682
WGLBBO	5,000	5,000
Youth Fund	4,887	395
Miscellaneous*	311	333
Total Expenses (Restr Rev)	**66,572**	**44,569**

* Miscellaneous restricted expenses during 2012:
- Sales tax on convention T-shirts and bookstore sales.

II. Grants Administered by WSO and Other Non-budget Projects, 2011–2012

Grants	**2012**	**2011**
Atlas Mgment Income	12	13
Atlas Mgment Expenses	0	0
Bird Kits Inc	1,025	4,371
Bird Kits Exp	–1,356	–2,848
Fly WILD/1 Bird 2 Habs Inc	180	945
Fly WILD/1 Bird 2 Habs Exp	–779	–775
SRSEF Inc	2,637	300
SRSEF Exp	0	0
WBCI Outreach Inc	1,200	5,700
WBCI Outreach Exp	–1,200	–5,700
Misc Inc*		29,284
Misc Exp*		–35,556

* Miscellaneous administered grants income and expenses during 2011 were from projects that were not active during 2012.

III. WSO Balance Sheet as of 31 December 2012

	2012	2011
General Accounts (Checking)	6,424	7,890
Savings and Temp Cash Invs	404,380	424,686
Inventories for Sale	35,498	42,227
Land and Buildings*	31,895	31,895
Mutual Fund Investment	15,457	13,584
Assets Held by Another Org**	10,751	9,767
Total Assets	**504,405**	**530,049**

* Land and Buildings carried at original cost:
- Prairie-Chicken land, 60 acres in Portage County, $1,491 (leased in 1962 to WDNR for 99 years).
- Honey Creek land, 264 acres in Sauk County, $21,476.
- Honey Creek buildings, $8,928.

** Assets held by another organization:
- Important Bird Areas Fund, an endowed fund held by the Natural Resources Foundation since 2007.

Annual Reports of Officers

President—Carl Schwartz—

As someone who's lucky enough to serve as president of one of the nation's most robust state ornithological societies—a half-million-dollar all-volunteer NGO—the first thing I need to do in my annual report is to say THANK YOU to all of those who make it possible for WSO to serve our nearly 1,400 members.

The list of volunteers on that thank-you list begins with our Board of Directors, especially Vice President Kim Kreitinger, Treasurer Christine Reel, Secretary Jenny Wenzel and *Passenger Pigeon* Editors Bettie and Neil Harriman, along with all of the committee chairs and committee members who handle the communication, field trips, bird records, convention, bookstore, website, *Badger Birder*, grants, conservation policy, educational outreach, and research initiatives that help carry out WSO's overall mission. Read on in this report and they will offer you an update on their specific areas.

I also want to say a special thank-you to those volunteers who have stepped down from their roles in the last year *and* to acknowledge and introduce their successors:

Longtime Board Secretary Jane Dennis, who retired last May and was succeeded by Jenny Wenzel;

Daryl Tessen, who retired after more than a decade as Awards Chair and was recently succeeded by Andy Paulios;

Publicity Chair Sandy Peterson, who resigned and was replaced by Communications Chair Rebecca Setzer;

Youth Education Chair Barbara Duerksen, who's been succeeded by Ed Hahn;

Bill Mueller, who left as Conservation Chair to fill the Education post vacated a year earlier by Mariette Nowak;

Michael John Jaeger, who left Scholarships and Grants to take over the Conservation Chair and was succeeded by Stephen Brick;

Dennis Malueg, who stepped down as *Pigeon* art editor and was succeeded by Michael J. Huebschen; and,

Spring Field Notes Compiler Andrea Szymczak, being succeeded for

2014 by David La Puma, and Winter Compiler Kay Kavanagh, already succeeded by Ted Keyel.

While I'm at it, let me also single out others involved in compiling a record of the state's avian life each year, starting with Records Committee Chair Ryan Brady and Bird Reports Coordinator Joe Schaufenbuel, along with our other seasonal compilers, Randy Hoffman and Bob Domagalski. Randy also writes "Lessons From the Seasons" and chairs the Strategic Planning Committee. Bob additionally compiles the annual Wisconsin Christmas Bird Count summary, a task greatly complicated this year by National Audubon's laudable decision to eliminate counter fees and thus allow many more Wisconsin counts to be entered into its CBC database.

Then there is the increasingly vital Wisconsin eBird Team—the people who review flagged records, make the eBird filters, manage hotspots, and run the eBird portal supported by WSO. Take time to go to http://ebird.org/content/wi/about/who-is-the-wisconsin-ebird-team and read more about Nick Anich, Dan Belter, Murray Berner, Owen Boyle, Ryan Brady, Tom Prestby, Cynthia Bridge, Sean Fitzgerald, David La Puma, Robin Maercklein, Andy Paulios, and Aaron Stutz.

And now let me briefly highlight just a few of the things your Society has accomplished since our last annual meeting:

Strategic Planning Effort—Our Strategic Planning Committee undertook surveys of members and non-members. Not only were we thrilled by the overall response rate but we got some clear direction for our work going forward. Priorities that stood out: "Address important bird conservation issues" and "Promote scientific study of birds." WSO's website, field trips, conventions, and publications also rank as of significant importance to our members. So we plan to use another survey in June to drill down on the conservation issue and ask our members to narrow the focus on issues and strategies. Make sure to offer your input when asked.

Wisconsin Bird Education Summit—WSO helped fund the Wisconsin Bird Education Summit as part of the 2013 WBCI Annual Meeting. Almost 100 people registered to attend and 15 people were trained in Flying WILD. There was high interest among partners on all three summit tracks: diversity, citizen science, and festivals. A number of Bird Cities turned out and were heavily engaged in discussions on how WBCI can help the Bird Cities engage their audiences through festivals, IMBD events and citizen science efforts.

Conservation—We issued a major issue paper on a Sandhill Crane hunt; got out word on the Wisconsin Conservation Congress Spring Hearings and highlighted two ballot questions of particular interest to Wisconsin Birders—hunting/trapping in state parks and a test ban on lead fishing tackle in three northern lakes; provided comments on DNR's rulemaking to modify the endangered and threatened species list; and weighed in on the master planning process for the Sauk Prairie Recreation Area, arguing for low impact recreation and ecological restoration.

Communications—We have made major upgrades to our website and launched WSO into the world of social media (you can and should *like us*

on Facebook now). We have established communications and web teams and you can see the results on Facebook, our expanded http://wsobirds.org website, in our eAlerts, and on Wisbirdn and the Wisconsin Birding Network. Some 60% of this year's conventioneers registered online, and the vast majority of our members now receive *The Badger Birder* as an email file.

Financial support—WSO responded to a surge in small-grant proposals from both amateur and professional ornithologists by more than doubling its budget in 2013 to $6,500 to help fund 13 projects. The Youth Education Committee also has stepped up its efforts to distribute—at half our cost—Bird Monitoring Kits developed to help educators teach bird identification and habitat conservation issues to students. Kits include 15 pairs binoculars, spotting scope with tripod, 5 field guides, posters, a CD of common Wisconsin birds, and an educator's guide with activities to use with the kit.

WBBA2—WSO has joined with the Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory to launch scoping meetings for a second edition of the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas, with field work slated to begin in 2015. Major fundraising challenges lie ahead. See the President's Statement in the fall *Pigeon* for more details.

Kirtland's Warbler/Piping Plover trips—We worked with the WDNR, the National Park Service, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to offer WSO members a chance to visit the nesting areas of these two rare species.

2014—It's an even bigger year and planning is already underway for the centenary of the Passenger Pigeon extinction, which is being marked by the Passenger Pigeon Project http://passengerpigeon.org/ and will be the focus of WSO's 2014 convention in Prairie du Chien (if approved at this annual meeting) and an article in each issue of WSO's quarterly journal, *The Passenger Pigeon*. The year also marks WSO's 75th anniversary, which also will be marked in each issue of the *Pigeon* and at the convention. If you have other suggestions for our diamond jubilee, email me at cschwartz3@wi.rr.com.

Vice President—Kim Kreitinger—

Much of the work that I have done over the last year has been to increase the transparency of the organization, build membership, and strengthen the standing committees and board. I have worked with the Communications Committee and served on the Web Team to better publicize WSO events through social media, improve the functionality of our website, add content to our website, and develop ways to attract new members to our media sites, such as monthly bird audio quizzes. I have helped to build several WSO committees, including the WSO Web Team, and Honey Creek Committee, and also have helped the WSO President fill several board vacancies. I am currently serving on the Strategic Planning Committee, the Sam Robbins Shorebird Endowment Fund advisory committee, and the Convention Committee.

I worked with Ryan Brady to invite speakers for the Saturday afternoon session of the Ashland convention, and have helped organized other logistics for the 2013 convention. I worked with the WSO President to secure a facility for the 2014 annual convention, which will be focused on the

100th anniversary of the Passenger Pigeon extinction. The convention is tentatively scheduled for 15-18 May 2014, at The Barn Restaurant in Prairie du Chien. As part of this anniversary, WSO is working with UW Professor Emeritus Stan Temple to restore the Passenger Pigeon monument at Wyalusing State Park, and organize a rededication ceremony at the 2014 convention.

I worked with Bill Mueller and several other WSO Board members to write an issue paper for a proposed Sandhill Crane hunt. This issue paper is intended to provide both WSO members and non-members an objective source of information regarding the ramifications of a Sandhill Crane hunting season in Wisconsin. This paper was publicized widely when it was released in January, and has received much positive feedback.

Treasurer—Christine Reel—

See Financial Report.

A year ago I announced my intention to retire from my position as Treasurer as of the 2013 Annual Meeting. The year has passed and it is, indeed, time for me to step down. I will ever be grateful to the members of WSO for your faith in my efforts on behalf of the finances of your organization.

With a very short break, I have been a member of the Board of Directors since 1996, when Don and I became WSO Bookstore Managers. We are amazed to think of the 81 boxes of items for sale we brought home from that convention in Superior—in a rented cargo van! Back then WSO was one of the few sources for items about birds, the environment, and other things in nature, and the Bookstore was an important part of conventions and symposia. The internet changed all that, and by the time we gave up the Bookstore in 2002, we had transitioned it back to its original purpose: distribution of WSO-published materials.

Shortly after we retired from Bookstore management, long-time WSO Treasurer Alex Kailing died unexpectedly, and I was fortunate to be able to take on a part of the work he did for "the Society" (one of Alex's favorite terms for WSO). It has been my absolute pleasure to hold the Treasurer's position for 10½ years. I have done other things during that time—served on the convention committee, planned symposia, etc.—but it is the Treasurer's job that has been my constant involvement, and the Treasurer's job that has made me feel I have made a definite contribution to this dynamic organization.

Something to note: the value of WSO's financial holdings has nearly doubled during my tenure. At the end of 2002, the balance sheet totaled nearly $272,000; at the end of 2012 it totaled over $504,000.

I'll see you in the field—now more than ever, since I will have a ton of time on my hands.

Secretary—Jennifer Wenzel—

No written report.

***Editors*, The Passenger Pigeon—**
Bettie and Neil Harriman—

All four issues of Volume 74 of *The Passenger Pigeon* appeared in 2012. Once again, the personnel who help these Editors compile the journal did not change during 2012. Please thank Joe Schaufenbuel, Bird Reports Coordinator; Dennis Malueg, Assistant Edi-

tor for Art; Andrea Szymczak, Spring Field Note Compiler; Randy Hoffman, Summer Field Note Compiler and author for Lessons From the Seasons; Robert C. Domagalski, Fall Field Note Compiler and author of the annual Christmas Bird Count report; and Kay L. Kavanagh, Winter Field Note Compiler. (There have been some changes since the beginning of 2013—watch each issue of the journal for those.)

As eBird has grown with each passing season, the Field Note Compilers have had an ever increasing number of bird reports to manage. All four Field Note Compilers did another remarkable job in 2012.

Each issue of the journal also contains a brief look back at previous contents of *The Passenger Pigeon* in the *50 Years Ago* column written by the Society Historian, Noel J. Cutright. Noel finds some amazing tidbits to share with us—some that show how much has changed, but many that reveal little change at all. There are lessons to be learned from our past.

This past year saw the supply of wonderful color photos of birds constantly increasing. The Editors hope you enjoy them and can find a few dollars to contribute to the Color Fund in order to keep these beautiful pictures appearing in the journal.

The membership survey taken in 2012 told us that a good majority of you are very pleased with what you receive as a Society journal four times per year. Thank you. We also heard some of you request more about conservation and ornithological research to be included. Your Editors are always looking for more articles on these two subjects and appreciate hearing from all of you doing work in these areas. Send us your articles, please.

And finally, a big thanks to all who contributed articles and photos to the 2012 issues of *The Passenger Pigeon*—keep sending them.

Annual Reports of Committee Chairs

The Badger Birder Editor—Mary Uttech—

Completed 11 issues of the newsletter.

Bird Reports Coordinator—Joe Schaufenbuel—

My third year as Bird Reports Coordinator unfolded with two untimely resignations of *Passenger Pigeon* Seasonal Compiler/Editors. Andrea Szymczak decided to finish up her fifth year then move on after the 2014 Spring Report. After some searching I got lucky and David A. La Puma of Madison was open to the adventure to replace Andrea in 2014. These are infamously difficult positions to fill, needing knowledgeable, thorough, and doggedly experienced Wisconsin writers. So with Winter Compiler Kay Kavanagh's resignation coming soon after Andrea's in early spring 2013, there was a scramble to formulate a list of potential candidates. After several misses, Ted Keyel felt moved to accept the challenge and will take over for Kay effective immediately.

As 2012 wound down, Wisconsin bird news to pass along to *North American Birds* in my quarterly reports included record late Rufous and Ruby-throated Hummingbirds into December; a major irruption of just about every conceivable northern species this past winter with the first

flight of Evening Grosbeaks in almost a generation; and Great Gray Owl, Boreal Owl, and Northern Hawk Owls also appeared in a flight reminiscent of fabled winters of years ago. There was also a smattering of other rarities with my favorite being the ironic first over-wintering Summer Tanager in a long, cold, and snowy Wisconsin season.

eBird's growth slowed somewhat this year but has grown to be the repository of choice by nearly 99% of all bird reports forwarded by citizen scientists. In other news I look to rewrite the Job Description of the Bird Reports Coordinator with the WSO Board's approval. A writing of how birds reports are handled as they come to the awareness of WSO Compilers, *Bird Reports: Going with the Flow*, was published first in *The Passenger Pigeon* and will soon be put on the WSO website to aid in understanding this behind-the-scenes operation.

Bookstore—Penny Fish—

The WSO 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. Our inventory for the year 2012 consisted of six items:

1. *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Wisconsin* (hardbound book);
2. *Wisconsin's Favorite Bird Haunts* (spiral-bound book);
3. *"Bluebooks"—Wisconsin Birds: A Checklist with Migration Graphs* (pamphlet);
4. *Wisconsin Birds—Field Checklist*;
5. "*Paired for Spring*" (kestrel prints); and,
6. *WSO cap*—featuring Barred Owl.

Total sales for 2012 were approximately $6,700, with 3,319 items sold via 139 orders. Some details: sales of the ***Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Wisconsin*** decreased over the previous year, with 24 books sold in 2012; we sold 191 copies of ***Wisconsin's Favorite Bird Haunts***; 686 ***Bluebooks*** were sold; our ***Field Checklist*** was updated in May; we sold 2,350 checklists; all 53 copies of "***Paired for Spring***" kestrel prints were sold this year. Fifty of them were sold to Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory; and we sold 11 ***WSO caps***.

At the annual WSO Convention in Madison, WSO Bookstore sales totaled $450.24. Total sales to resale outlets were $1,977, with 13 orders filled, including four orders by Wisconsin Public Television totaling $1,011.

Communications—Rebecca Setzer—

The WSO Communications Committee is new in 2013: after the Publicity Committee Chair resigned, the Communications Committee was created by the WSO board to take the place of Publicity. Communications encompasses all duties from the Publicity Committee along with many new responsibilities.

As a new committee with new members, Communications has embraced this opportunity to learn about WSO and has worked closely with other board members and committees. Members of the Communications team have proudly participated in the following projects this year: worked with Convention Committee personnel and WSO Vice President on *Wisconsin's Favorite Bird Haunts* article revamped into a *Badger Birder* series entitled "Road to the Convention;" offered input to the Membership Committee Chair on reprinting the

Membership flyer; with help from the full WSO board revamped and reprinted WSO Birder Calling Cards for use at the 2013 Convention and beyond; worked closely with the Web Team on ongoing website revisions; updated the Wisconsin nature center list and Wisconsin bird club list, and currently working on developing a Google Map incorporating both these lists and more.

While participating in these projects the Communications Committee has also worked especially hard to bring our members and non-members alike more information from our organization. We have worked with the Field Trip Committee Chairs to develop a field trip publicity schedule, created a WSO Twitter account (@wsobirds) to be used this coming year, created a WSO YouTube channel to be used in the coming months, and livened up the WSO Facebook page (www.facebook.com/WisBirds). Communications has used primarily Facebook and Wisconsin Birding Network to communicate with more timely posts and more complete information. Facebook event invites to our various field trips and our board meetings have hopefully helped show our members how much we appreciate their input in our organization.

The WSO Communications Committee looks forward to continued work and improvement throughout the rest of 2013.

Conservation—Michael John Jaeger—

Worked on expanding how members learn of pending conservation issues by posting information on WSO's webpage and Facebook page. For example, provided information on the Wisconsin Conservation Congress Spring Hearings and highlighted two ballot questions of particular interest to Wisconsin Birders: hunting/trapping in state parks and a test ban on lead fishing tackle in three northern lakes to benefit waterbirds.

Provided comments on DNR's rulemaking to modify the Threatened and Endangered Species list. The proposal includes delisting Barn Owl, Bewick's Wren, and Snowy Egret, and adding Upland Sandpiper (to threatened), Black Tern (to endangered), and Kirtland's Warbler (to endangered).

Participated in the master planning process for the new Sauk Prairie Recreation Area. The DNR is acquiring thousands of acres of the former Badger ammunition plant in Sauk County to develop as a state recreation area. This appears to be shaping up to be a significant confrontation between different forms of recreational use and natural resource enhancement of the site. Provided comments to DNR on behalf of WSO regarding the Regional Property Analysis, an initial step in the Master Planning process.

Tracked proposed new legislation, DNR rulemaking dockets, additional DNR master planning initiatives and proposed DNR Incidental Take Permits for Threatened and Endangered Species to see what comes up that would be of interest to WSO members.

Convention—Christine Zimmerman—

The planning for the 2012 Convention at Holy Wisdom in Middleton started in summer 2011. WSO and the Madison Audubon Society worked together, adding to the success of the convention. The 2012 Convention was the highest attended convention in re-

cent history, with a total of 195 registrants, in comparison to an average of approximately 150 attendees over the last few years prior.

The 2012 Convention was the first opportunity for WSO members to register online and use PayPal to pay for their registrations. This was very well received by our membership—113 online registrations were made using PayPal versus 84 paper registrations. We also had seven walk in registrations.

We offered Thursday and Friday full-day field trips, one bus and two car caravans. There were 55 people on the bus trips and 83 on the two car caravans. We also offered half-day field trips on Saturday and Sunday mornings. Saturday trips were well attended, while as expected from years past, only one field trip on Sunday was attended.

The 2012 convention was the first year where we needed to pay a substantial facility use fee—$1,796. While this was very unnerving, since we try to make the convention as reasonably priced as possible, we felt that we would have a larger attendance with the location and addition of the Madison Audubon Society and could make up the fees with a slight increase of the registration fee from $20 to $25. The good news is that we were able to cover all of our costs with the large attendance and slight increase in the registration fee.

The 2012 Convention also had a very successful Silent Auction to benefit the Natural Resources Foundation. In total, we were able to donate $3,388 to the Foundation; included in this total is the donation of the drink sales during the social hour as well as the auction proceeds. We look forward to continuing this tradition, and at future conventions being able to donate to one or more worthy causes for the benefit of birds.

In summary, the 2012 convention was another successful one. The weather was perfect for the entire four days, making the experience that much more enjoyable. Other positive news is the convention registration gave WSO eight additional memberships. We were able to pay all of our costs for the convention, and in the end were able to add $1,999.51 to the WSO balance sheet.

Education—Bill Mueller—

As Education Chair of WSO, I attended WSO Board of Directors meetings throughout 2012–2013, to date. During the past year, I made a lateral move on the Board, moving from the Conservation Chair position (now filled by Michael John Jaeger) to Education Chair.

In fall of 2012, I assisted with inclusion of educational materials for the Society's website. I was a member of the Strategic Planning committee during this past year.

During winter of 2012–2013, I participated in coordination of the WBCI Bird Education Summit held in March 2013, at the Wisconsin Dells—Bird Education Flying High in Wisconsin. Friday morning began with keynote speaker John Robinson as he introduced the themes of the meeting. The attendees learned about what other bird conservation enthusiasts are doing by visiting the three conference tracts: Diversity and Underserved Audiences, Citizen Science, and Bird City and Bird Festivals. The afternoon session, described as the "WBCI Education Summit Social," displayed some

of the programs and innovations taking place throughout Wisconsin. On Saturday attendees learned "how to be a part of moving bird conservation forward in Wisconsin;" participants attended concurrent sessions and heard Ashley Dayer, keynote presenter. As WSO Education Chair and a member of the WBCI Education Committee, I handled reservations for this event: 101 people registered; 98 attended. WSO was key to the success of this event, providing funding and organizational details.

Field Trips—Jeff Baughman and Tom Schultz—

Organized and led a wide array of successful field trips. Offered a successful trip to see and learn about Kirtland's Warblers in Wisconsin, raising $475 for the Natural Resources Foundation's Bird Protection Fund. Two far-ranging field trips are planned, visiting Ecuador in summer 2013 and Costa Rica in spring 2014.

Historian—Noel Cutright—

Attended Board meetings and as I have since 1989, again prepared four *Fifty Years Ago in the Passenger Pigeon* articles. I continue to accumulate items and materials appropriate to maintain in the WSO Room at the UW-Green Bay Cofrin Center for Biodiversity. This includes WSO board-related materials, obituaries, newspaper clippings, etc. If any WSO member has materials pertaining to Wisconsin's birds that you believe should be retained in the Society's historical records, please contact me.

Honey Creek—Levi Wood—

Our major campaign to control garlic mustard (GM) continued throughout 2012. Both last spring in April and again in the fall, Quercus Land Stewardship Services, a Black Earth company that does land management on natural landscapes, worked on WSO's Honey Creek property north of Sky View Road to search for and spray GM. For four days in April 2012, Quercus crews of from four to six people with backpack sprays went after GM. For one day in October and two days in November Quercus crews of from four to eight people sprayed GM. Levi worked alongside these crews for one day both spring and fall. Both the spring bill of $4,520 and the fall bill of $2,450 were paid for from birdathon/bandathon funds., along with reimbursement from WDNR of some $3,050.

Quercus was invited back this spring to pursue GM. On 10 and 15 May 2013, crews of six, accompanied by Levi, managed to cover much of the WSO property north of Sky View Road with five-gallon sprayer backpacks. Most area had appreciably less GM than last year. Some areas had extensive patches of GM. After two days we concluded that most of the known GM areas had been treated. Considering we spent four full days trying to eradicate GM and did not cover as much of the 286 acres as back in 2011, we believe we are making progress. This spring's treatment should knock back the second year of this biennial plant that produces next year's seedlings. We may ask Quercus to return in the fall to further control GM when it is one of the few green plants among the fallen leaves and is more readily visible.

Eventually we hope that spring and fall volunteer work parties can control GM by pulling it and by individual spot spraying. This will depend upon

organizing groups of able-bodied volunteers willing to hike over the entire property with steep slopes and lots of deadfall, and push through prickly shrubs to find and remove GM.

Last October, after an appeal for volunteers in *The Badger Birder*, a work party was held to clear the main trail up Honey Creek. Thanks to the efforts of Dave Bernier and Wayne Palmer with chainsaws clearing a few fallen trees, Barbara Morford, who cleared all the boardwalks of accumulated wet leaves and debris, and Carl Schwartz and Levi, who trimmed back vegetation with loppers, the trail was in pretty good shape. It appears the trail may need an annual clearing of fallen trees and encroaching growth.

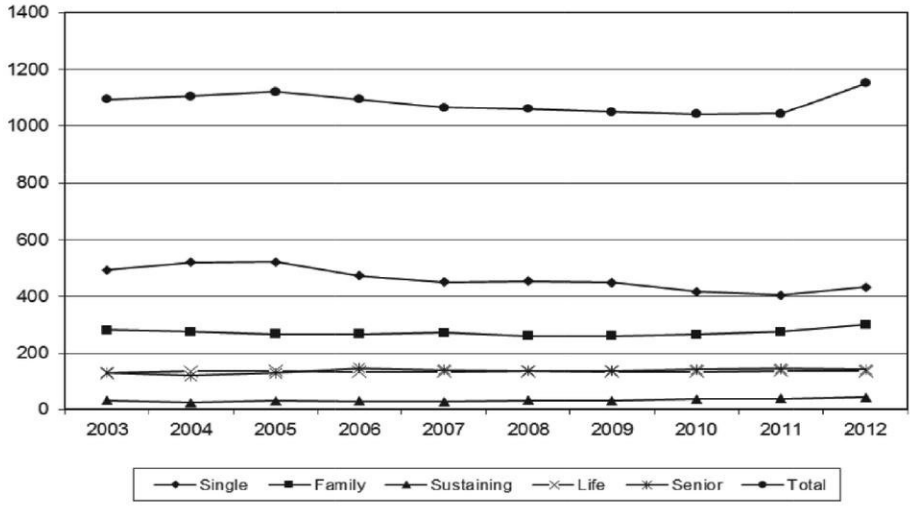
In early April 2013, Kim Kreitinger organized an initial meeting of a new Honey Creek Planning committee, which was attended by past and present Honey Creek chairs, Kim, and the TNC Baraboo Hills land steward. We discussed a wide range of possible tasks broadly categorized as land management, monitoring/inventory, and education/outreach. A few items considered and some being worked on are a Honey Creek brochure with a trail map and a bird checklist, developing nature center exhibits, and fence repairs and trail maintenance.

Following this meeting Kim organized a work party for 27 April, which attracted about a dozen volunteers. Half the group spent the afternoon cleaning up and clearing out the nature center. The other half cleared the main trail of two large downed trees and clipped back small branches and prickly brush. A half dozen small trail arrows were nailed to larger tree trunks to guide people up the main trail. Both the nature center and main trail were in pretty good shape for the birdathon/bandathon on 12 May.

Membership—Jesse Peterson—

In 2012, overall membership reached its highest point since 2002 due to the college student member drive generously sponsored by Michael John Jaeger as well as a more

MEMBERSHIP TRENDS 2003—2012:



Total Membership at 2012 Calendar Year End:

Category	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Single	494	520	521	473	450	454	449	417	405	434
Family	282	275	268	268	272	261	261	266	275	301
Sustaining	34	25	32	30	28	33	31	38	39	44
Life (1 of 4)	0	2	3	2	1	2	0	1	1	2
Life (2 of 4)	2	0	1	3	2	1	1	0	1	2
Life (3 of 4)	2	1	0	1	3	2	1	1	1	1
Life-Couple (1 of 4)	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Life-Couple (2 of 4)	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
Life-Couple (3 of 4)	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	1	1
Life	129	133	134	135	134	136	135	135	138	135
Life-Couple	1	3	3	10	10	10	13	13	13	13
Patron	7	8	8	7	7	7	6	6	6	6
Senior	131	120	129	147	141	137	137	142	145	143
Student	7	11	15	12	11	11	11	16	15	65
Honorary Life	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Board	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	1
Total	**1096**	**1106**	**1122**	**1095**	**1065**	**1060**	**1050**	**1041**	**1044**	**1151**
New Members	48	95	74	43	34	46	72	51	52	155

than doubling of the number of "organic" new members. The renewal rate has remained steady at approximately 90% in recent years.

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 a growing number of subscribers;
- Monitored and managed the publication exchange program; 26 current exchange partners;
- Managed the annual membership renewal activity via postal mail and email;
- Three renewal notices as required;
- Email reminders to try to minimize postal mail efforts and costs;
- Managed the new member "onboarding" activity including sending out a "Welcome" packet to each new member; and,
- Provided miscellaneous support to strategic planning activities.

Records—Ryan Brady—

The WSO Records Committee evaluated the following records by season:

Season	Reviewed	Accepted	Not Accepted
Winter 2011–12	53	43	10
Spring 2012	93	82	11
Summer 2012	38	33	5
Fall 2012	104	87	17
Total	**288**	**245**	**43**

*Overall acceptance rate = 85%

No species new to the state were found during this period, leaving the state list at 435 species. Committee members for most of the year were Ryan Brady (chair), Mark Korducki, Steve Lubahn, Jerry DeBoer, and Tom Prestby. However, Steve Lubahn resigned prior to voting on Fall season

records and was replaced by Aaron Stutz, who remains with the committee into 2013.

In addition to its regular voting and reporting functions, other committee work highlights included the following:

- Established a single Review List of species requiring documentation using an online Rare Bird Documentation Form. These have operated smoothly and received positive feedback from users.
- Objectified requirements for documenting record or near-record early/late observations by developing a "Top 5 Rule," meaning if the bird fell within the five earliest or latest sightings on record for that species, then documentation and approval by the committee was required.
- Maintained a strong presence in the birding community, particularly the Wisbirdn listserve and Wisconsin Birding Facebook group, to provide guidance and elevate transparency about WSO Records processes.
- Authored multiple articles on the WSO and Wisconsin eBird web pages to communicate Records issues. Among these were several identification pieces and others on the relationship between WSO Records and eBird, Hoary Redpoll documentation, rules for documenting early and late species, and more.
- Initiated an investigation into the occurrence of Dark-eyed Junco subspecies in Wisconsin by querying birders to submit images of birds thought to be western forms, such as Oregon, Pink-sided, etc. This project will culminate in 2013.

In the year ahead, the committee hopes to update the Review List, establish threshold dates for documenting record early/late birds, populate the WSO Records website with additional content, and continue with ongoing projects and tasks described above.

Research—Maureen Leonard—

The response to academic presentations at the last convention was not very enthusiastic, so the board elected to discontinue that practice. Discussion about organizing separate research symposia occurred and will likely be continued.

I have stepped down as Research Chair and a new chair is being sought. I have provided some recommendations to the board and the membership to allow for more successful and organized research and participation by the membership. These include preparing a research agenda with well-defined goals agreed upon by the organization.

Thanks for allowing me to serve!

Scholarships and Grants—Steve Brick—

WSO received 15 applications for scholarships and grants this year. This represents a continuing increase in requests for WSO support, resulting from the excellent work of Michael John Jaeger, outgoing committee chair.

Brick and Jaeger reviewed the 15 applications and determined that 13 met the criteria for support from WSO. Two applications that did not meet program criteria were declined.

The WSO board voted to allocate $6,500 for grants and scholarships, allowing the organization to fund all 13

applications that met program criteria. This is an increase over previous grant levels. Subsequent to board approval, one applicant declined the award due to changed plans; twelve awards totaling $6,000 were ultimately made. Brick will prepare a summary article on these awards for an upcoming issue of *The Passenger Pigeon.*

Grant Recipients—

WSO Grants, usually awarded to provide additional support for work that is being carried out and funded through, for example, a university graduate program or in conjunction with the state or federal government or other institutional sponsor, were awarded to:

- Zachary Bateson of Milwaukee for *MHC copy number variation in Greater Prairie-Chickens of Wisconsin*;
- Stephanie Beilke of Green Bay for *Functional Diversity of Migratory Passerines using a Great Lakes Coastal Stopover Site*;
- Amberleigh Henschen of Milwaukee for *Immune gene and male ornaments in the Common Yellowthroat*;
- Paul Schilke of Madison for *Spatial and temporal use of trees and shrubs for foraging by forest-breeding songbirds in Wisconsin*; and,
- Jana Viel of Whitefish Bay for *What Drives Occupancy of Common Nighthawks in Urban Areas in Wisconsin?.*

Steenbock Awards, intended for beginners, amateurs, and independent researchers, including graduate students and professionals, who are conducting bird-related personal projects, were awarded to:

- Daryl Christensen of Montello for *Experimental Forster's Tern Nestbox Placement*;
- Natasha Fetzer of Houghton, MI, for *Golden-winged Warbler Response to Tag Alder Management*;
- Janet Eschenbauch of Amherst Junction for *Central Wisconsin Kestrel Research Program*;
- Rachel T. Fukumoto of Mililani, HI, for *The Milwaukee BIOME Project*;
- Kathy Stahl and The Prairie Enthusiasts of Elk Mound for *Grassland Bird Monitoring in the Lower Chippewa Important Bird Area*;
- Mary Holleback and Riveredge Nature Center of Newburg for *Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship*; and,
- William E. Stout of Oconomowoc for *An Urban Cooper's Hawk Population and Nesting Study in the Metropolitan Milwaukee Area.*

Future Committee Efforts—

For the coming year, we plan to focus on several aspects of the grant and scholarship program:

• **Streamline and simplify the application procedure.** At present, many applications are quite long and contain more detail than is justified by the relatively modest size of our awards. We propose to develop a unified application form of about two pages in length that will both be easier to review and require less effort from potential applicants.

• **Review and update program guidelines**.

• **Participate in board discussion of providing scholarship support for attending the annual convention**, discussing whether and how WSO can

provide financial support to students wishing to attend convention.

Website—Paul Jakoubek—

This has been a year of growth in the WSO website—WSOBirds.org:

- Articles on the front page have been the mainstay of the website. There were 50 articles published this year (previous year had 25 articles). The articles cover field trips, monthly bird reports, convention articles and strategic planning, and they have recently included conservation alerts.
- We changed the front page to show more than one article.
- Learn About Birds web page was added to the website. It centralizes the aspects of WSO to help bird watchers learn about birds.
- Bird TV is a key part of the Learn About Birds web page. This series of videos by renowned video journalist Steve Betchkal has been in the works for several years. The first three videos have been completed and published. Seven more are planned for the coming years.
- The WSO website was moved to a new host—GoDaddy.com. The new web server gives WSO unlimited space for files, videos and photos.
- WSO eAlerts began in April 2013. This service sends out a monthly email to subscribers. The email highlights the articles that have appeared on the WSO website in the past month.
- Most importantly, the WSO Web Team was formed. The Web Team is Kim Kreitinger (WSO Vice President), Becca Setzer (WSO Communications Chair), David La Puma (a Postdoctoral Research Associate at UW Madison), and Paul Jakoubek (WSO Web Administrator). This team will guide the development of the website and also provide the labor needed to manage a website of this size and complexity.

In the coming year the WSO Web Team plans to have a new look for the WSO website. The front page of the WSO site has become overloaded with links and we need to reorganize it to make it more useable. A calendar of events is also planned.

Youth Education—Barbara Duerksen and Ed Hahn—

From Barbara Duerksen:

- attended WSO board meetings;
- attended education committee meetings of WBCI, the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative, with a focus on planning WBCI's Bird Education Summit, held in Wisconsin Dells, March 2013;
- spent a day with students at Urban Ecology's "I Spy Birds" day camp in Milwaukee, a project funded by WSO;
- 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. Kit number 40 went to the Urban Ecology Center.

***From Ed Hahn*:**

- attended the summer WSO board meeting as a guest;
- accepted the appointment as WSO Youth Education Coordinator;
- awarded two youth grants;
- attended the "Focus on Diversity" conference in Bloomington, MN;
- attended a fundraiser for the Urban Ecology Center in Milwaukee;
- began discussions on starting a Wisconsin Young Birders Club;
- contacted members of the young birders group from the Colfax, Eau Claire area;
- attended the fall WSO board meeting;

Fall 2012 Youth Grants—

One youth grant was awarded to McKenna Manley for $250 focused on bird education. She attends Story Book Kids 4-year-old Kindergarten in Mosinee. Under the guidance of her teacher her class planned on studying the birds near their school. Their plans included placing a bird feeder outside of their classroom window. They will purchase books about birds, study their calls, and learn about what foods they eat. They planned to focus their attention on cardinals, Blue Jays, and chickadees.

A second grant was awarded to Jesse and Jaelee Schwartz for $225 to do research on Wood Ducks. They live near Beaver Dam. Their family has noted a decline in the number of Wood Ducks in the area. They presented their plans to build some Wood Duck houses. They will put them out in the spring, monitor them, and keep records of the results. Jesse will do most of the construction of the boxes. Jaelee will take photos to document the construction and use of them. Together they will monitor them and record the results, which they will report to WSO.

Focus on Diversity Conference—

I attended the Second Annual Focus on Diversity Conference, which was held in Bloomington, MN, on October 13. It was organized to consider the birding community across the country and look for opportunities and methods to expand it. The goal is not just to increase the number of people birding. Rather, the goal is to reach out with the message that birding can be an enjoyable activity for individuals and families. Birdwatching can also lead to an awareness of the benefits of conservation of the world in which birds live.

It was noted that most birders are Caucasian males. So there was an emphasis on reaching out to other groups. We addressed overcoming the obstacles that make it difficult to reach out to others. We were all encouraged to look at ways reach out to the youth in our states. Certainly there are many women involved in our groups and clubs, but we could do more to reach out and create opportunities to involve more women. We were also encouraged to look for or create opportunities to involve minority groups. We were asked to reflect on our own experiences in our clubs and organizations. I hope each club, group, and organization in Wisconsin will consider creating activities with opportunities to welcome and involve these groups.

Urban Ecology Center in Milwaukee—

When I attended the fundraiser for the Urban Ecology Center I had the opportunity to meet some of its workers. I spent some time talking to Tim Vargo and Sarah Roe. We discussed the work they do and activities incorporated in their summer birding camps. They are again planning many activities including another summer bird camp in 2013. This is a very important group involved with the work of reaching out to those who live in the city. A big thank you to all who serve the Urban Ecology Center.

Bird Monitoring Kits—

I began to learn about the bird kits and the program sponsored by WBCI and WSO. I did not have any organization make a purchase through me in 2012, but have had some contacts that may lead to the purchase of these kits in the coming year.

Wisconsin Young Birders—

We know that many of our bird clubs have youth who participate in a variety of ways. WSO would like to assist groups in involving more youth in your activities. First, ask your members to consider inviting youth and their families to your meetings and club activities. Remember to look at what you do and consider whether those things would be interesting to the youth. Maybe you can organize activities specifically for the youth. The Horicon Marsh Educational Center hosts many activities throughout the year for grade school age children and for families. I know there are other centers and organizations who do similar things. I encourage your clubs to contact them for ideas and advice, or maybe volunteer to help them when they host such activities.

If you are involved in a club or organization take a moment to reflect on who usually attends your meetings and activities. When we look at the age of those involved we come to realize that a young birder may be twenty years old. That is one of the things we are considering. There is one group of young birders that, although relatively small, is well organized and active. This group in the Eau Claire/Colfax area is made up of young birders in the upper teens and low twenties. They have set up their own Facebook page, Wisconsin Young Birders Club, to share information with each other. They plan on hosting group outings and invite other young birders to join them. Their definition of a young birder is someone who is 25 or younger. If you are in this age group you may want to check them out. Try doing a search on Facebook for Wisconsin Young Birders Club.

If you have young birders in your group we'd like to hear from you. If you host outings or activity days for them we'd also like to hear what you are doing. We are looking at how we can best serve you and the young birdwatcher. One idea we are talking about is setting up a link on our WSO website as a place where we can post youth-oriented activities. If you have ideas or suggestions, or have young birder activities planned, please send them to me at ehahnbirding@gmail.com.

About the Artists

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 in their daily lives: feeding, nesting, courting, caring for the young, hunting, or whatever else 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

Stephen Fisher is a serious amateur photographer, enjoying both landscape and wildlife photography. He is a retired high school English teacher who worked as an environmental/wildlife educator and Education Director for the Raptor Education Group, Inc. (REGI) for seven years following his retirement from teaching in Wausau. He now serves on the Board of Directors and as a volunteer at REGI, rescuing and/or transporting sick and injured birds. He and his wife, Evelyn, have always enjoyed and respected the natural world, and he has a special appreciation for birds, particularly raptors. He also enjoys traveling, reading, hiking, snowshoeing, observing wildlife, spending time at his cabin in northern Vilas County, walking his dogs in the wonderful Wisconsin outdoors, and lifelong learning.

Sunil Gopalan moonlights as a nature photographer and birding enthusiast. His primary focus with wildlife photography is to capture nature in its raw form in the least intrusive manner possible. His other photography interests lie in macro and landscape imagery; as well as pictures of his family. He currently lives and works in the Madison area with his family and credits his wife Heidi for allowing this father the opportunity to indulge in his passion. His work from Wisconsin and beyond can be viewed at www.sunilsimages.com

Dave Lund is an amateur photographer who lives near Eau Claire. Following his retirement as a Mathematics Professor at UW-Eau Claire in 2000, he and his wife Judy now include birding and photography as part of all of their travels. Although many of his pictures are taken in Wisconsin, wintering in the southern US has provided many additional opportunities birding photography experiences. He has recently begun making presentations on birds and birding.

Cooper's Hawk by Stephen Fisher

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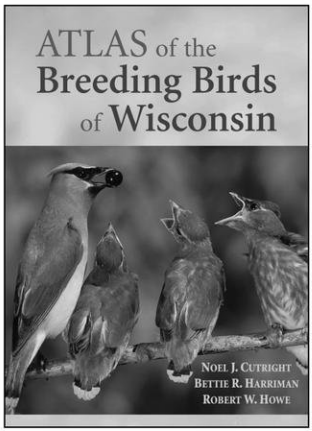
Lincoln Sparrow found by David Lund



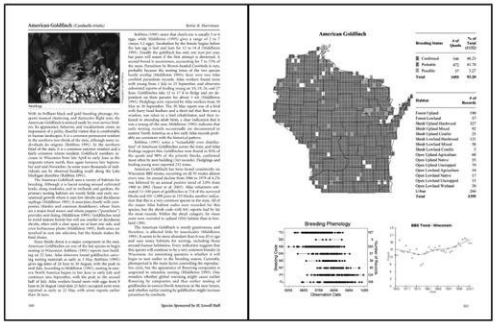
Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Wisconsin

- Features almost 1,400 photographs, distribution maps, and figures – **all in color**!
- Based on studies done by more than 1,600 field observers between 1995 and 2000.
- Edited by Noel J. Cutright, Bettie R. Harriman, and Robert W. Howe.

The largest natural history survey ever conducted in Wisconsin has resulted in this comprehensive guide to birds that breed in the state.

Hardcover, large format (9" x 11.25"), 624 pages. Copyright 2006. ISBN: 978-0-9774986-0-4.

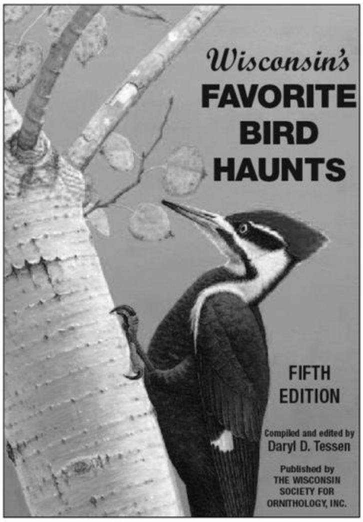
Published by The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Inc., with proceeds used for projects supported by the organization.



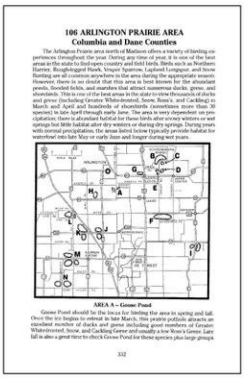
The two-page species accounts – 214 of them in all – provide a host of information on the state's breeding species, including their range, habitat preference, breeding biology, conservation concerns, and population trends. An additional 23 less-common species also are covered. Also included are chapters on Atlas methodology, results, history, habitats, and conservation.

Visit the WSO website, www.wsobirds.org, for an order form that includes price and ordering information, or contact the Bookstore Manager (see contact information on Inside Back Cover).

Bohemian Waxwing going for a berry by Stephen Fisher



Wisconsin's Favorite Bird Haunts, Fifth Edition (2009)



106 ARLINGTON PRAIRIE AREA
Columbia and Dane Counties

The Arlington Prairie area north of Madison offers a variety of birding experiences throughout the year. During any time of year, it is one of the best areas in the state to find open country and field birds. Birds such as Northern Harrier, Rough-legged Hawk, Vesper Sparrow, Lapland Longspur, and Snow Bunting are all common anywhere in the area during the appropriate season. However, there is no doubt that this area is best known for the abundant ponds, flooded fields, and marshes that attract numerous ducks, geese, and shorebirds. This is one of the best areas in the state to view thousands of ducks and geese (including Greater White-fronted, Snow, Ross's, and Cackling) in March and April and hundreds of shorebirds (sometimes more than 30 species) in late April through early June. The area is very dependent on precipitation; there is abundant habitat for these birds after snowy winters or wet springs but little habitat after dry winters or during dry springs. During years with normal precipitation, the areas listed below typically provide habitat for waterfowl into late May or early June and longer during wet years.

AREA A – Goose Pond

Goose Pond should be the focus for birding the area in spring and fall. Once the ice begins to retreat in late March, this prairie pothole attracts an excellent number of ducks and geese including good numbers of Greater White-fronted, Snow, and Cackling Geese and usually a few Ross's Geese. Late fall is also a great time to check Goose Pond for these species plus large groups

332

145 articles cover some 1,100 areas and include detailed maps.

This edition marks the fourth time this comprehensive bird-finding guide to Wisconsin has been compiled and edited by Daryl Tessen.

- New in this edition: An **annotated checklist** of 443 species and a **birding highlights** quick reference.
- Nearly 40 bird illustrations (many in color) by Wisconsin artists Thomas Schultz, David Kuecherer, Jeannie Perry, Tom Uttech, and Robbye Johnson.
- Contributions from birders throughout the state.

Designed for durability and functionality, this book is printed on heavy coated paper and has a spiral binding so it lies flat when open. 6" by 9", 556 pages. ISBN: 978-0-9774986-3-5.

Published by The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Inc., with proceeds used for projects supported by the organization.

Visit the WSO website, www.wsobirds.org, for an order form that includes price and ordering information, or contact the Bookstore Manager (see contact information on Inside Back Cover).

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15. Extent and Nature of Circulation			Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
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f. Total Distribution *(Sum of 15c and 15e)* ▶			985	1,005
g. Copies not Distributed *(See Instructions to Publishers #4 (page #3))* ▶			58	26
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i. Percent Paid *(15c divided by 15f times 100)* ▶			98.4%	98.4%

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17. Publication of Statement of Ownership
☒ If the publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed in the Winter 2013 issue of this publication. ☐ Publication not required.

18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner
Michelle O'Connor, Treasurer, The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Inc.
Michelle O'Connor — **Date:** 8-1-2013

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