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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: Kirtland's Warbler fledgling, Adams County, Wisconsin, 27 June 2008. Photo by Jennifer Goyette.

Wisconsin's Favorite Bird Haunts: 5th Edition

Extra! Extra! Read all about it! The 5th edition of *Wisconsin's Favorite Bird Haunts* is here!

It all began as a series of articles, the brainchild of Samuel D. Robbins, Jr., first appearing in The Passenger Pigeon in 1953. In 1961, Robbins compiled and edited the first edition of *Wisconsin's Favorite Bird Haunts*, using this series of 30 articles. This book became a "must" for anyone birding in Wisconsin.

Over the next 15 years, as birding became more popular, existing birding locales changed, and new birding sites were identified, it became clear that a revision of "Haunts" was needed. Daryl Tessen and many more individual contributors stepped in to take on the task of updating "Haunts." The second edition, covering 90 territories, was published in 1976.

Jump ahead to 1989: As then-WSO-President, John Idzikowski, wrote, an "ambitious effort of writing is beginning once again as Daryl Tessen gears up for the third edition of *Wisconsin's Favorite Bird Haunts*." In this edition, all 72 of Wisconsin's counties are covered for the first time.

In 1999, Daryl went to work compiling and editing the fourth edition of "Haunts." This version, published in 2000, contained 135 articles covering more than 1000 specific birding areas. This edition was the first to incorporate color artwork. An art show featuring the original art from all of the contributing artists was a highlight of the release of this edition.

Well, it is now 2009, and true to the pattern, it is time for another edition of "Haunts." This 5th edition has even more great content than previous versions. While still utilizing the great text and maps as in the past, even more color artwork is included along with an annotated checklist of the birds of Wisconsin and other enhancements. As with the first edition of "Haunts" published so long ago, this book remains a "must" for anyone birding in Wisconsin.

So, why am I writing about this? First, I want to make you all aware that this 5th edition is now available. Right at our fingertips, we have an up-to-date, easy-to-use reference book that we can use to guide our birding ventures anywhere in the state. Ordering information can be found at www.wsobirds.org/wso_bookstore.html.

Second, I want to bring to your attention the level of effort expended in the creation and updating of this book. Over the years, countless hours of writing, discussing, editing, chasing, and coordinating have been put in by the many contributors and, most notably, Daryl Tessen. You all deserve a resounding "Thank you" from all of us in WSO. Because of efforts like this, WSO stands out as one of the best state birding organizations in the country. We are blessed to have had the vision of Sam Robbins, the persistence of Daryl Tessen, and the energy of the many people who contributed to this book over the years.

Finally, since everything we do as an organization should somehow further

the cause of bird conservation, I wanted to show how this book highlights the need for conservation. One of the primary reasons that we have needed to update "Haunts" over the years is that the haunts covered in the book are changing or, worse, disappearing. If you compare the descriptions of birding locales from one edition to the next, it is easy to see the impact of "progress" on many of those areas. In the very first "Haunts" article, Sam Robbins wrote, "North and west of the village of Mazomanie in northwestern Dane County are extensive meadows and river bottomlands that have been a favorite haunt for ornithologists for many years." Since then, many of the meadow and river bottomland habitats referred to in this article are gone, as are many of the species described in the article. Obviously, this highlights the need to preserve the birding areas and habitat we have today. On a much more positive note, extensive tracts of habitat have been protected in this area and are available for us to bird today and in the future. Let us all strive to preserve and add to the bird habitat we currently have so we have great places to write about in future editions of *Wisconsin's Favorite Bird Haunts.*

President

Overview

This issue contains three articles to provide the reader with a comprehensive overview of the activities of the Kirtland's Warblers in Wisconsin in 2008—what the birds did and what the ornithologists/birders did. We hope the birds add even more activities to the story this summer.

Birders who wish to find uncommon and rare species of birds in our state really must read the Update by Jim Frank about why, what, and especially how to report to the WSO Records Committee when those rarities are found.

In 2007, Bill Mueller challenged birders to try new ways of birding to cut down on the use of fossils fuels for our hobby. Anita Carpenter was inspired by Bill's request and reports on her year of birding "under Anita power" in *A Walkabout Almanac.*

Readers will also find the report of the Big Days from 2008.

The final overview in this issue is a tribute to a long and happy life spent enjoying nature of all sorts, but especially birds, birding, and birders. Mary Donald, one of the major faces of WSO for many years, passed away in January 2009. Bettie: When I joined WSO, Mary Donald and Sam Robbins *meant* WSO to me. Sam left us in February 2000, but he is thought of often by all who knew him or read his books. Mary also will continue to be thought of by all who knew her as mentor, birder, supporter of WSO, and especially as friend. Roger Sundell has given *The Passenger Pigeon's* overview of Mary's life with love and humor, as only a true friend could do.

Bettie and Neil Harriman, Editors

Color band arrangement for Aluminum/Orange—Red/(light) Blue. Note the pale mask on this second-year Adams County male.

Examining plumage, especially primary coverts, to determine age of an Adams County Kirtland's Warbler. This is an after-second-year male.

The 2008 Nesting Season: First Documented Successful Nesting of Kirtland's Warbler (*Dendroica kirtlandii*) in Wisconsin

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INTRODUCTION

The first known nesting of the Kirtland's Warbler in Wisconsin occurred in 2007, when at least eight males and three females were found and three nest attempts were documented (Trick et al. 2008). Two of these nests were apparently parasitized by Brown-headed Cowbirds (*Molothrus ater*), and the outcome of the third nest is unknown. In this article we describe the actions implemented in 2008 in anticipation of Kirtland's Warblers returning to the 2007 nesting area and detail the results of those efforts.

BACKGROUND

The Kirtland's Warbler (*Dendroica kirtlandii*) is a federally-endangered songbird that was occasionally ob-

served in Wisconsin but never documented to nest in the state before 2007. The species has always been considered rare, and it breeds in a small area in northern Michigan and winters in the Bahamas and nearby islands (Radabaugh 1974). The Kirtland's Warbler nests on the ground and requires dense jack pine (*Pinus banksiana*) stands of approximately four to 20 years of age for nesting. For a more complete summary of the history and status of the species, see Trick et al. 2008.

The 2008 Nesting Season

Following the events of the 2007 nesting season, we decided to implement a number of actions in 2008 to increase the likelihood of successful nesting of Kirtland's Warblers and to conduct monitoring of the nesting area sufficient to determine the outcome of any nesting attempts. Joel Trick of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and Kim Grveles of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) worked together and in cooperation with other partners to plan for the 2008 nesting season. Our planning efforts resulted in the implementation of multiple actions that were designed to encourage the successful establishment of the warbler as a nesting species in the state. Each of those actions, and their outcomes, are described below.

Cowbird Trapping—

After having lost at least two of the three nesting attempts in 2007 to cowbird parasitism, we recognized that cowbirds were a potential impediment to the establishment of Kirtland's Warbler as a Wisconsin breeding species. The Michigan cowbird trapping program that has been in operation since 1972 has been highly successful in decreasing rates of nest parasitism and increasing the number of young Kirtland's Warbler produced (Kelly and DeCapita 1982). Because of the cowbird parasitism observed in Wisconsin in 2007, it was decided to implement cowbird control measures in 2008.

Planning efforts to use cowbird traps in the Wisconsin nesting areas began over the winter. Plum Creek Timber Company, the land owner where Kirtland's nested in 2007, was contacted and quickly agreed to allow cowbird trapping on their property. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services (USDA-WS), volunteered to fund the costs of materials and construction of three cowbird traps. The modified Australian Crow traps were 8 feet wide, 8 long, and six feet high (Fig. 1). Each trap was fitted with a predator apron made of wire mesh, once set up on site to prevent animals from digging under the trap. USDA-WS provided staffing to operate the traps, using additional funding that was received from the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin and the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program of FWS to offset the costs.

Based upon the observed range of trap effectiveness in Michigan, it was decided to deploy two traps, one in each of the two Adams County nesting areas which were located about one mile apart. A third trap was available if needed or if it was decided to expand our trapping efforts to additional areas. The operation of the cowbird traps commenced on 15 April, well be-

fore the expected arrival of warblers, and continued through 20 June. A scientific collecting permit was obtained from the USFWS to capture Brown-headed Cowbirds from Illinois and transport to Wisconsin and hold for the duration of the project. A total of 15 cowbirds were placed as decoys in one trap and 13 in the other. Brown-headed Cowbirds near the site of the two traps were attracted by the combination of the live cowbirds and excessive food and water availability in the trap.

Through the period of trap operation, a minimum number of 308 cowbirds was captured and euthanized. For this same period, only 10 non-target birds were captured, including Blue Jay, Red-winged Blackbird, Eastern Bluebird, and Sharp-shinned Hawk (caught multiple times). The trap was subsequently modified slightly to reduce the likelihood of future captures of Sharp-shinned Hawks. All non-targets were released unharmed with the exception of one adult bluebird that died of unknown causes (USDA-WS 2008). For comparison, during the 2008 nesting season in the primary Kirtland's Warbler nesting areas in Michigan, a total of 54 traps was operated, removing a total of 3135 cowbirds (USFWS 2008).

WSO Field Trip—

Following the discovery of nesting Kirtland's Warblers in 2007, we decided to discourage birders from visiting the site out of concern for adverse effects to nesting birds. The small numbers present and ground-nesting habit of the species made them especially vulnerable to disturbance, and we did not want to risk their successful establishment as a breeding species. At the same time, we recognized that numerous Wisconsin birders were eager to observe Kirtland's Warblers, so we considered ways to allow them the opportunity to add the species to their Wisconsin life list. In an effort to fulfill both of these objectives, we decided to organize a field trip for Wisconsin Society for Ornithology (WSO) members. This allowed us to balance our objectives by providing an opportunity to view Kirtland's Warblers, but under carefully controlled conditions to protect the birds from undue disturbance. We reasoned that by providing this outlet to view the species, we also could diminish the incentive for birders to otherwise visit the site on their own.

In planning the field trip in cooperation with WSO Field Trip Co-Chairs Tom Schultz and Jeff Baughman, we decided to limit the number of participants to a manageable number to minimize disturbance to the birds. We recognized that demand would likely exceed the number that we could accommodate, so decided to organize a lottery drawing to identify participants. We limited this lottery to WSO members, reasoning that any non-WSO member that wanted a chance to see Kirtland's Warblers could become a member. We originally had estimated that 50 participants were the limit that we could accommodate, but after further discussions we decided to increase this number to 72.

A notice announcing the trip and soliciting applications was published in the March 2008 *Badger Birder,* and the lucky 72 participants whose names were drawn by lottery were notified in late April. Each successful participant

Figure 1. Cowbird trap in operation in Kirtland's Warbler nesting area, Adams County, 29 May 2008. Photo by Joel Trick.

Figure 2. WSO Field Trip Co-Chair Jeff Baughman (foreground) and other WSO Field Trip participants view a singing male Kirtland's Warbler, 31 May 2008. Photo by Joel Trick.

Figure 3. Male Kirtland's Warbler in Adams County, 7 June 2008. This is the same male viewed by WSO Field Trip participants. Photo by Joel Trick.

Figure 4. Male Kirtland's Warbler in Adams County, 7 June 2008. This is the same male viewed by WSO Field Trip participants. Photo by Joel Trick.

paid a modest fee to offset the costs of transportation and administration of the event, which was held 31 May. Participants were divided into two groups of 36 each and instructed to meet at a gathering point near the site for 5:00 AM and 8:00 AM departures. Following transport to the site on a school bus arranged for that purpose, each group of 36 was further divided into three groups of 12 each.

During their visit to the site, each smaller group took turns at three separate activities organized as part of the field trip. At one station, they viewed a cowbird trap and learned about cowbird control from Jason Suckow, Wisconsin State Director of USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services. At a second station, the groups heard about forest management from Scott Henker and Todd Watson of Plum Creek Timber Company, and about Kirtland's Warbler ecology from Kim Grveles. Members of the third group were led to a nearby location where a male Kirtland's Warbler had staked out a territory and was consistently singing (Fig. 2). This individual was first recorded at the site only a few days before and had not been seen associating with a female. This male maintained its territory for 23 days before abandoning the site late in the season without having attracted a mate (Figures 3, 4, and 5).

Each of the groups was rotated through each activity, such that by the time the larger group was ready for departure, everyone had seen and heard the singing male Kirtland's Warbler. For many people, this was a life bird, or at least a life bird for their Wisconsin list. The weather cooperated for the field trip, with clear skies and winds that remained low until near the end of the event. Based upon the number of people we accommodated and the time it took to give everyone a good view of the bird, we had estimated well by limiting the trip to 72 participants. Subsequent comments received from participants offered glowing praise for the field trip, and we have made plans for another similar effort in 2009.

Monitoring—

After the events of 2007, we decided that we wanted to closely monitor any birds that returned to the nesting area in 2008. Specifically, we hoped to have sufficient monitoring of the Adams County nesting area to determine the number and locations of any Kirtland's Warblers returning to the site and to document any nesting attempts and their outcomes. The DNR hired a full-time monitor to be stationed in Adams County and monitor the site throughout the nesting season. Jennifer Goyette began work on 19 May and continued field work through 9 July; she also provided important support for the WSO field trip on 31 May and was a member of the banding team.

Kirtland's Warbler field observations began on 14 May, when the Adams County sites were visited by Wisconsin DNR biologist Jon Robaidek. On that date he detected at least one singing male present at each of the two locations. When Goyette began work on 19 May, she confirmed the presence of two males and at least one female. Within the first two days of field work, she was able to document the presence of at least 4 singing males, including one bird that had previously been banded in the Ba-

hamas on 20 March 2008. A fifth bird was observed beginning 23 May, and two additional birds had arrived by 29 May. Documenting the territories of each of the males was made easier after each was captured and color banded. We managed to capture 6 males including the previously banded bird on 9 June, and banded another male here on 19 June. An additional male that was observed at the site on 25 and 26 June was never banded. Thus, we were able to document a minimum of 8 separate males at this site in 2008.

The first female was observed at the site on the first day of intensive field observations on 19 May, and additional females were found as the season progressed. Through the course of patient observations in the territory of each male, at least five females were confirmed as of 11 June, and each built a nest and laid eggs. In an effort to prevent nest losses, no nests were approached closely to prevent disturbing the incubating females and to avoid leading predators to the nest. Incubation at the first nest found had begun by 28 May (Fig. 6), and hatching was determined to have occurred by 11 June, when the adults were seen carrying food to the nest site. When the young departed from this nest on 23 June, it was determined that the fledglings being fed by the attending parents were cowbirds. At that point, we conferred with the Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team, and they recommended that we inspect each of the remaining nests to determine whether cowbirds had parasitized those nests as well.

The four remaining nests were carefully examined on 25 and 26 June to determine their contents. Three nests were found to contain nestlings, and one nest held 5 Kirtland's Warbler eggs and no cowbird eggs (Fig. 7). Of those nests containing nestlings, two of the three had five nestlings each, all apparently Kirtland's Warblers. In the third nest, only three nestlings could be easily seen without causing excessive disturbance, and these also appeared to be warblers.

Monitoring of all nests continued for the remainder of the nesting season. The nest that contained 5 eggs on 26 June was lost to predation prior to hatching. Of the remaining nests, one was apparently predated approximately one week after hatching, and the remaining two nests each fledged five young (Fig. 8). As a certain percentage of all nests fail in nature, we cannot say whether our close approach of the nests contributed to the loss of those that failed. The observations we made did have great value, however, as we were able to confirm that our cowbird trapping efforts had been successful, resulting in only one of the 5 nests being parasitized by cowbirds.

Based upon the final observations at each nest, a minimum of 10 Kirtland's Warblers fledged out of the five known nests. This represents the first known successful nesting of the species in Wisconsin. Observations were continued after the fledglings left the nests, and feeding of young birds by adults was observed as late as 7 July (Figures 9 and 10). Regular field observations were discontinued after 9 July due to a lack of additional nesting activity and the difficulty of detecting any remaining young still being fed by the adults.

In Marinette County, single male

Figure 5. Male Kirtland's Warbler in Adams County, 7 June 2008. This is the same male viewed by WSO Field Trip participants. Photo by Joel Trick.

Figure 6. Female Kirtland's Warbler incubating on nest 1, 29 May 2008. This nest was parasitized by Brown-headed Cowbirds and fledged no Kirtland's Warblers. Photo by Jennifer Goyette.

Figure 7. Kirtland's Warbler nest with 5 eggs, 26 June 2008. Photo by Joel Trick.

Figure 8. Kirtland's Warbler fledgling, Adams County, 2 July 2008. Photo by Jennifer Goyette.

Kirtland's Warblers were discovered at two separate locations. On 8 June, volunteer surveyors Jon and Anne Motquin heard three birds and observed one bird at close range. When the site was visited by Trick and Ron Refsnider on 10 June, we were able to capture and band one male Kirtland's Warbler. We then surveyed the entire stand using broadcast calls, but no additional birds were found. On 14 June, volunteer surveyor Dr. Jack Swelstad found a single singing male Kirtland's Warbler at another Marinette County site about 20 miles from the first location. Trick and Refsnider visited this site on 19 June and successfully captured and banded a single male warbler.

Swelstad continued to make observations of the male at this second site for several weeks, and was eventually joined in this effort by Dr. John Probst, U.S. Forest Service Researcher and Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team member. On 30 June, Probst observed what appeared to be a female Kirtland's Warbler, and he confirmed this identification on 4 July. Both Probst and Swelstad continued to visit the site, but were unable to confirm nesting. The female was not seen again after 4 July although the male continued to sing until at least 9 July. Several fledgling warblers were observed at this site on 21 and 22 July which appeared to be Kirtland's, but their identity was never confirmed.

Banding—

In early June of 2008 we organized an effort to capture and place color bands and a numbered aluminum band on all male Kirtland's Warblers found in Wisconsin. This action was undertaken to allow us to track the movements of individual birds within and between nesting areas, to shed further light on the process of pioneering of new sites, and assist in determining the rate of return to sites in subsequent years. Having individually marked birds also greatly facilitated our Adams County monitoring efforts by allowing for accurate delineation of each bird's territory.

Our banding efforts were headed by Ron Refsnider, retired FWS endangered species biologist and master bird bander, who had extensive experience in banding passerines and had previously banded Kirtland's Warblers in Michigan. He was assisted by Trick and Goyette. Eight male Kirtland's Warblers were successfully captured in Adams County and two in Marinette County. One of the Adams County males had previously been captured and color-banded in the Bahamas. The other nine males were color-banded by the banding team. All captured birds were released unharmed and without apparent adverse impacts. Additional details of the banding program and the color band combinations of the individual males can be found in a separate article in this issue of the *The Passenger Pigeon* (Refsnider et al. 2009).

Statewide Surveys—

A statewide survey of potentially suitable Kirtland's Warbler habitat was organized by Grveles, utilizing volunteers to conduct surveys at multiple locations in Wisconsin. Volunteers from this survey effort were responsible for the discovery of the two Kirtland's Warblers in Marinette County, and an additional single male confirmed in

Douglas County. There were also additional, unconfirmed reports of birds in several other counties. For a more detailed description of this survey effort, see the accompanying article in this issue of *The Passenger Pigeon* (Grveles 2009).

Summary of Statewide Observations

In 2008, eight male and five female Kirtland's Warblers were documented at the Adams County site, and additional birds were confirmed at several other locations. As described above, two different males were found at separate Marinette County sites, and subsequently captured and banded. These two Marinette County birds were discovered by volunteer surveyors, as part of the statewide survey effort organized by the Wisconsin DNR. On 9 July, another volunteer observed a single bird that responded to a broadcast call in Douglas County, and its identity was confirmed through close observation.

On 24 June, a male Kirtland's Warbler responded to a tape during a separate survey conducted on the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest in Bayfield County (L. Parker, pers. comm.). This bird was observed at close range and was closely associating with another bird that appeared to be a female Kirtland's Warbler. The person conducting this search was hired by the U.S. Forest Service specifically to search for Kirtland's Warblers. Repeated subsequent visits to this site failed to result in any additional observations.

The seven males in Adams County and the two males in Marinette County that were observed during the official Michigan census period of 6-15 June were reported to Michigan for inclusion in the totals for the annual Kirtland's Warbler census. Michigan counted another all-time record number of Kirtland's Warblers in 2008, with 1791 males found in Michigan alone (Michigan DNR 2008). Breeding was also confirmed for the second year in a row in Ontario, where three males and at least one female were found and one nest fledged four young (Canadian Forces Base Petawawa 2008)

In addition to the 9 males observed during the official census period, we were also able to document one additional male at the Adams County site after the census period, for a minimum number of 10 male Kirtland's Warblers known to occur in Wisconsin in 2008. As noted above, additional birds were also confirmed after the census period in Bayfield County on 24 June and in Douglas County on 9 July. While it seems likely that these represent additional Kirtland's Warblers, we cannot say with absolute certainty that these were not the same unbanded individual seen at the Adams County site on 25 and 26 June.

Plans for the 2009 Season

Based upon our observations in Wisconsin in 2008, we anticipate that Kirtland's Warblers will again return to the Adams County nesting area and attempt to breed. We also are optimistic that birds will again be found in Marinette County. Our planning efforts for 2009 began soon after the 2008 nesting season, and we have already set in motion several actions to

Figure 9. Female Kirtland's Warbler with food near nest site, Adams County, 26 June 2008. Photo by Joel Trick.

Figure 10. Female Kirtland's Warbler with food near nest site, Adams County, 26 June 2008. Photo by Joel Trick.

monitor and protect nesting Kirtland's Warblers in Wisconsin.

- We plan to again deploy at least two and possibly three cowbird traps in the Adams County nesting area. This action has already been shown to have a beneficial effect on nesting success of the species, and we believe it is critical to the establishment and maintenance of this small pioneering population.
- Based upon the success of the first WSO Kirtland's Warbler field trip, we plan to repeat this field trip in spring 2009, and will continue to hold the event annually if possible.
- We will again hire a full-time monitor to make detailed observations throughout the nesting season at the Adams County sites. We will closely monitor at least one Marinette County site where breeding may have occurred in 2008 and hope to also employ an additional person to provide more intensive coverage at this site and other areas as needed.
- We will ask volunteers to conduct surveys for Kirtland's Warblers in selected areas of the state. Based upon results of the 2008 surveys, we have identified specific areas where we will focus these efforts, in Marinette, Vilas, Bayfield, Douglas, and Jackson Counties. Observations from 2008 suggest the possibility that breeding could occur in any of these areas.
- We plan to again make every effort to capture and band male Kirtland's Warblers as they are discovered. We hope some of the birds we banded in 2008 will return to Wisconsin in 2009, giving us a better understanding of site fidelity and movements among sites.

The advent of nesting Kirtland's Warblers in Wisconsin has created considerable excitement in the birding community and beyond. Our successes to date have motivated all of us to continue to work towards establishing a nesting population of this species in our state.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The success of our activities in Wisconsin in 2008 is the result of cooperative efforts by numerous participants. Plum Creek Timber Company allowed use of their lands for monitoring and cowbird trapping, and provided important support for the WSO Kirtland's Warbler Field Trip. The Wisconsin DNR funded a full-time monitor at the Adams County sites. The USDA-WS constructed and operated cowbird traps, and the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program provided funding assistance to help offset the costs of cowbird trap operation. The Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin also provided funding to organize and conduct statewide surveys. Numerous County Forest Administrators provided assistance in identifying suitable habitat to survey for Kirtland's Warblers, and the generous efforts of numerous enthusiastic birders allowed us to look for Kirtland's Warblers at many Wisconsin sites. Jason Suckow contributed important details to the section on cowbird trapping, and

Noel Cutright and Ron Refsnider provided helpful comments on an early version of the manuscript.

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2008 Capture and Banding of Kirtland's Warblers (*Dendroica kirtlandii*) in Wisconsin

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Kirtland's Warblers, listed as an endangered species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), were first documented nesting in Wisconsin in 2007. At that time, eight males, three females, and three nests were observed in Adams County. Two of the nests appeared to be parasitized by Brown-headed Cowbirds (*Molothrus ater*) and subsequently juvenile cowbirds were observed being fed by adult Kirtland's Warblers near those two nests (Trick et al. 2008). With the encouragement of the federal Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team, the USFWS and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) decided to attempt color-banding the adult male Kirtland's Warblers found in Wisconsin in 2008. Marking individual Wisconsin Kirtland's Warblers would allow for identification of birds that might be observed on the wintering grounds or that return to Wisconsin in future years, and may give insight into habitat use and the pio-

neering of new locations in Wisconsin. Other initiatives planned for 2008 included a cowbird control program similar to that successfully used in Michigan's Kirtland's Warbler nesting areas, a statewide survey of potentially suitable habitat for additional Kirtland's Warblers, and an on-site monitor to collect detailed behavioral and biological data and determine the outcome of any nesting attempts at the Adams County site. Being able to visually identify individual males would also greatly aid the on-site behavioral and biological monitoring.

Joel Trick, Endangered Species Biologist for the USFWS Green Bay Field Office, recruited Ron Refsnider, retired USFWS Region 3 Endangered Species Listing Coordinator, to do the banding. Refsnider has banded passerines in Minnesota since 1986. Additionally, Refsnider worked in the Kirtland's Warbler recovery program in Michigan, including color-banding Michigan Kirtland's Warblers in the mid-90s. The federal Recovery Team supported his role in banding the Wisconsin Kirtland's Warblers. Jennifer Goyette, the third member of the banding team, was monitoring Kirtland's Warbler activity daily for the USFWS and the WDNR in two adjacent sections in Adams County where Kirtland's Warblers had been documented in 2007. The capturing and banding were conducted under a USFWS endangered species subpermit issued to the USFWS Green Bay Field Office and a bird banding permit from the U.S. Geological Survey Bird Banding Laboratory (BBL) issued to Refsnider. Verbal approval was obtained from the WDNR; a state endangered species permit was not needed because Kirtland's Warblers are not yet on the Wisconsin endangered and threatened species list. Verbal approvals were also obtained from landowners. The USFWS Region 3 Division of Endangered Species, Ft. Snelling, Minnesota, provided field communication equipment, and Necedah National Wildlife Refuge provided lodging for Refsnider during this work.

Capture and Banding Protocol

A modified version of the 1997 netting and banding protocol developed for use in Michigan, and approved by the Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team, was used in Wisconsin. The banding team set up a 4-shelf, 12-meter long by 2.6 meter high black nylon mist net (36 mm stretched mesh size) within the territory of each male Kirtland's Warbler. The net was erected within the male's defended territory based on song perches used by the bird. If a female was present and a nest location could be estimated, the net was placed between male song perches and the presumed nest location, but sufficiently far from the nest to reduce the chance of capturing a female involved in nest-building or incubation. A decoy Kirtland's Warbler (a stuffed yellow fabric "bird" with hand-drawn black mask and wing feathers and a tail of trimmed cockatiel [*Nymphicus hollandicus*] feathers) was placed in the third shelf near the center of the net. Songs and chip notes from a "stranger" Kirtland's Warbler (mp3 files provided by Robert Reitsma, Smithsonian Institution) were played through two speakers placed on the ground or suspended low in the vegetation adja-

cent to the center of the net and the decoy. Song/chip note files were 0.5 or 1.0 minutes in duration and were separated by 0.5, 1.0, 2.0, or 3.0 minutes of silence to resemble the irregular timing of normal Kirtland's Warbler vocalizations. After the net and audio equipment were set up, the banding team retreated 7 to 10 meters beyond the end of the net to observe activity while the songs were played.

Refsnider immediately removed captured Kirtland's Warblers from the net and carried out the banding process. Goyette and Trick removed the non-target species that were captured (two Yellow-rumped Warblers [*D. coronata*], two Chipping Sparrows [*Spizella passerina*], one Dark-eyed Junco [*Junco hyemalis*], and one Clay-colored Sparrow [*S. pallida*]), took digital photos, and filled out data sheets for each Kirtland's Warbler captured. Unbanded Kirtland's Warblers were given a USGS size 1 numbered aluminum band (issued by BBL to Refsnider) and 3 celluloid color bands (*see page 100*). The color bands and color combinations were provided by Carol Bocetti (Leader of the Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team) using color combinations not yet used by other Kirtland's Warbler banders in the US, Canada, or the Bahamas. Color bands were carefully sealed with a drop of acetone to enhance their retention. The birds were sexed and aged using characteristics described by Pyle (1997). Sex was determined by the presence/absence of black facial mask, brightness of yellow plumage, and the presence of a cloacal protuberance or brood patch. Aging was based mainly on shape of the retrices and the color, edging, and shape of the primary coverts (*see page 100*).

The Initial Banding Effort

On the morning of 9 June 2008 Refsnider and Trick met Goyette at the Adams County Kirtland's Warbler site to initiate banding. At that time Goyette was certain that 6—and possibly 8—Kirtland's Warbler males, 4 females, and 2 nests were present on the site. The team was hoping to band several of the males that day, and planned to band the rest over the next day or two. Goyette led the team to the vicinity of the most advanced nest and selected a net location that was about 50 meters from the nest site to avoid capture of the brooding female, yet be in a area that would be vigorously defended by her mate. This Kirtland's Warbler territory was chosen as the first target to ensure that this male would not be disturbed later, perhaps after he had commenced feeding nestlings.

Goyette had observed two males, one of which was already color-banded, frequenting this area, and she was uncertain which of the males was paired with the nesting female. After 10 minutes of song and chip note playback a male Kirtland's Warbler became entangled in the net. The team's first capture was a color-banded male (color band combination Y/A-I/Y; refer to Table 1 for BBL band numbers and color band combinations) who had been banded on the island of Eleuthera in the Bahamas on 20 March 2008 (David Ewert, pers. comm.).

Over the course of the first day the team successfully captured and color-banded five additional Kirtland's Warbler males at the Adams County site. None of these five additional males had been banded previously. The abil-

Table 1. Band Numbers & Color Combinations of Kirtland's Warblers Captured in Wisconsin in 2008. Color Band Order: upper left leg/lower left leg—upper right leg/lower right leg; Color Codes: A=Aluminum, B=Blue (light blue), G=Green, I=Indigo (dark blue), J=Jet (black), O=Orange, P=Purple, R=red, Y=Yellow.

USGS Band Number	Color Combination	Date Captured	Wisconsin County
2221-09191*	Y/A—I/Y	9 June 2008	Adams
2021-91891	A/O—J/G	9 June 2008	Adams
2021-91892	A/O—I/B	9 June 2008	Adams
2021-91893	A/O—B/Y	9 June 2008	Adams
2021-91894	A/O—R/B	9 June 2008	Adams
2021-91895	A/J—P/G	9 June 2008	Adams
2021-91896	A/J—O/I	10 June 2008	Marinette
2021-91897	A/I—G/P	19 June 2008	Adams
2021-91898	A/I—P/B	19 June 2008	Marinette

*Banded on the island of Eleuthera, Bahamas, 20 March 2008

ity to readily capture all six of the Adams Kirtland's Warbler males known to be present was due in large part to Goyette's detailed knowledge of the song perches and two nest locations of those six males.

A few days earlier a participant in the statewide survey had notified Trick of one to three Kirtland's Warbler males believed to be singing in Marinette County. On 10 June Refsnider and Trick traveled to Marinette County. There they heard, caught, and banded a single Kirtland's Warbler (A/J-O/I). Song playbacks did not elicit responses from additional Kirtland's Warblers. At that time no other Kirtland's Warbler males were known in Wisconsin, so banding operations ceased after capturing six males in Adams County and one male in Marinette County.

The Second Banding Effort

On 12 June Goyette confirmed the presence of an unbanded Kirtland's Warbler male less than 20 meters from where the team had initially placed a net on 9 June to capture male A/O-R/B. However, no male had responded on 9 June to songs at that net site during 30 minutes of playback, so the net was moved about 100 meters over a small ridge to be closer to where the male (A/O-R/B) was singing. He had been quickly caught there. Goyette had suspected the existence of a second male in that area, but she had been unable to conclusively distinguish it from neighboring males until one had been color banded.

On 16 June Trick received a report of another Kirtland's Warbler male in Marinette County about 20 miles north of banded male A/J-O/I. With the finding of this second unbanded Kirtland's Warbler male in the state, we decided to resume banding efforts.

On 19 June Refsnider and Goyette easily netted and color-banded the seventh Adams County Kirtland's Warbler male (A/I-G/P) that Goyette had confirmed on 12 June. For the previous week he had been the only unbanded male in that area, allowing Goyette to locate his specific song perches and select an optimal location for the net.

Refsnider then traveled to Marinette County where Trick had been observing the movements of the unbanded Marinette County male. Trick had observed the male singing from several perches, two of which were on opposite sides of an old logging road through older jack pines. We chose to take advantage of the natural net lane provided by the logging road. However, during 44 minutes of playback from that site the male sang only four times and remained in an adjacent stand of younger jack pines. After we moved the net to that stand, 15–20 meters from where he seemed to be singing, we caught him in 9 minutes.

At that time no other male Kirtland's Warblers had been confirmed in the state, so banding was terminated for the year. The team had captured nine Kirtland's Warbler males in Wisconsin and banded the eight not previously banded.

Goyette subsequently confirmed an eighth (unbanded) Kirtland's Warbler male at the Adams County site. Other reports of sightings in Marinette, Jackson, and Bayfield Counties sounded credible but attempts to confirm these sightings were unsuccessful. At that time (approaching the end of June) we were faced with a diminishing ability to capture males, due to a reduction in their territorial defense, and the increased likelihood of disturbing fledglings. Given this altered benefit to risk situation we decided to forgo additional banding efforts in 2008.

Miscellaneous Observations

Six of the nine Kirtland's Warblers were captured within the first 15 minutes of song playback. One was netted in less than a minute, and two others were captured in less than five minutes. Two of the three exceptions to the generally quick capture seem to indicate the importance of net location.

The first exception was A/O-R/B, mentioned above, who sang occasionally, but did not move toward the net during the 30 minutes we left the net at its first location. However, after moving the net over a low ridge and closer to the singing male, we caught him in 10 minutes.

The second exception was the late afternoon effort to capture A/J-P/G. Playback began at 3:57 p.m. During 53 minutes of playback he moved approximately 270 degrees around the net and bounced off the net several times toward the end of this period before finally becoming entangled. Just prior to his capture the team had discussed ending netting efforts for that day and returning to this bird later in the week. Time of day may have been a factor in this slow capture.

The third exception was A/I-P/B, the second Marinette County bird. This was a mid-afternoon capture effort, with playback initiated at 1:18 p.m. Playback lasted 44 minutes at the first net site in older jack pines and 9 minutes at the second net site in younger jack pines.

Counting the top net shelf as #1, four Kirtland's Warbler males were caught in shelf #2, four were caught in shelf #3, and one was caught in shelf #4. No Kirtland's Warblers were captured in shelf #1. All birds were safely extracted from the nets by Refsnider. We estimate that extraction time was less than 2 minutes for all but one

Table 2. Sex, Age, & Measurements of Kirtland's Warblers Captured in Wisconsin in 2008. Age Codes: AHY=after hatch year, ASY=after second year, SY=second year. Fat Scores: 0=fat absent from furculum depression, 1=trace of fat in furculum, 2= thin layer of fat in furculum.

Color Bands	Sex	Age	Mass (g)	Wing Chord (mm)	Tail (mm)	Fat Score
Y/A—I/Y	M	ASY	14.8	71	59	0
A/O—J/G	M	SY	13.6	70	58	0
A/O—I/B	M	ASY	14.7	74	60	1
A/O—B/Y	M	SY	14.7	73	59	1
A/O—R/B	M	SY	14.0	69	59	1
A/J—P/G	M	AHY	14.8	70	58	2
A/J—O/I	M	AHY	13.9	70	60	1
A/I—G/P	M	AHY	13.7	71	56	0
A/I—P/B	M	SY	14.3	69	59	1

bird which was entangled in two net shelves. All birds were released in apparent healthy condition after processing. Several sang within two to three minutes of release; others were seen preening nearby. Processing time from capture to release ranged from 11 to 22 minutes per bird; median processing time was 14 minutes. All seven Adams County males were observed exhibiting normal behavior by Goyette over the next two to four weeks. One of the Marinette banded males was observed as late as two weeks after banding (John Probst pers. comm.).

Data collected from each Kirtland's Warbler included mass, wing chord length, tail length, fat score, and plumage notes. Table 2 provides most of these data. Photos were taken of the head, spread right wing, spread tail, a dorsal view, a lateral view, and the bands. GPS coordinates were noted for each net location, but are not included in this report to protect these sites from disturbance due to potentially excessive human visits. Researchers who need precise location information should contact Trick.

These were not the first Kirtland's Warblers to be banded in Wisconsin. During the late 1980s and 1990s Wes Jones—a retired USFWS biologist, bird bander, and former Kirtland's Recovery Team member—banded five adult males in the state (Danny Bystrak, BBL, pers. comm.). Those captures occurred in Douglas (1 male), Jackson (2), Vilas (1), and Washburn (1) Counties. All of those males were color-banded (Carol Bocetti pers. comm.).

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Ron Refsnider retired in 2007 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service where he had worked as an endangered species biologist for 23 years and was the Midwest Regional Endangered Species Listing Coordinator. During his career he worked to protect and recover a broad range of rare species, including northern monkshood

(Aconitum), cave snails, Kirtland's Warblers, and gray wolves. He currently conducts bird banding programs at several nature centers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area.

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Rose-breasted Grosbeak *by Gary Krogman*

The First Annual Census of the Kirtland's Warbler (*Dendroica kirtlandii*) in Wisconsin

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INTRODUCTION

A federally endangered bird, the Kirtland's Warbler (*Dendroica kirtlandii*) was found nesting in Wisconsin for the first time in June 2007 (Trick et al. 2008). Prior to this event, the breeding range of this species was confined to a few counties of Michigan's Lower and Upper Peninsulas. The recent dispersal of Kirtland's Warbler from Michigan into Wisconsin (and also into southern Ontario) is considered a direct result of an active conservation and management strategy enacted by the Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team in Michigan. Because of the unique requirement of this bird for breeding in 5 to 20 year-old jack pine stands, dispersal of offspring is limited to the narrow band of jack pine habitat that occurs across the northern Great Lakes states and southern Ontario.

Range expansion into Wisconsin may be critical for the long-term survival of the Kirtland's Warbler because additional breeding sites in new locations could alleviate the species' vulnerability to catastrophic events on its narrow breeding range in Michigan. For new breeding populations to become established in the State, management issues at the new sites need to be addressed in a timely manner (Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team, 1976). These issues include control of the Brown-headed Cowbird (hereafter referred to as cowbird), a nest parasite that reduces reproductive success of the Kirtland's Warbler, and regeneration of jack pine so that habitat of the appropriate age and size will continuously be available in a given landscape. Before these management strategies can be implemented, however, new or potential breeding sites must first be located.

This project has established an annual volunteer census in Wisconsin in an attempt to locate existing and/or potential breeding sites of Kirtland's Warblers and to obtain a population estimate for the state. This effort is an extension of the Michigan census and results were reported to the Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team for inclusion in the global population estimate.

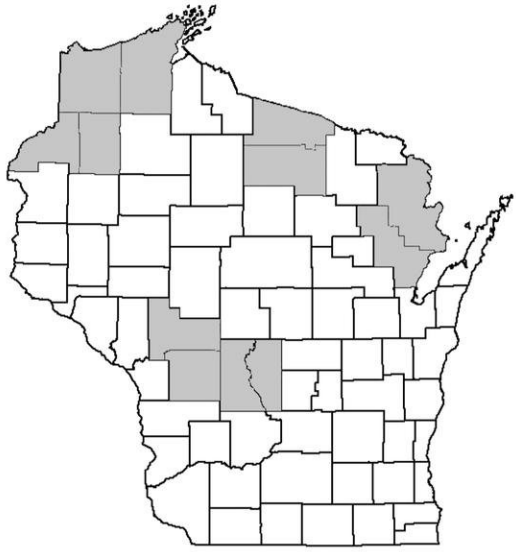

Figure 1. Map of Wisconsin counties. Sites in shaded counties were surveyed during the 2008 Kirtland's Warbler Census.

Methods

Sites in twelve counties (see Fig. 1) were chosen for survey using the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) WisFIRS database (WDNR 2007), GIS digital spatial data layers of forest compartments and stands, and paper maps of jack pine stands on public and private lands.

Volunteers were recruited from bird clubs and through newsletter articles during 2007 and early 2008. Survey orientations were held regionally in April and May 2008 and included a presentation on Kirtland's Warbler life history and ecology, distribution of survey packets, and assignment of survey sites.

Sites were surveyed beginning at dawn and continuing up to four hours post dawn beginning on 6 June and ending on 15 June. Surveys were not conducted on windy days or in periods of heavy rain, but were allowed in light rain conditions. Volunteers walked through jack pine stands stopping every 200 m to listen for singing males for 1–3 minutes. Use of playback recording following the passive listening period was optional. If playbacks were used, recording was played for 30 seconds followed by a 30-second passive listening period. Playbacks were shut down immediately if a response was heard.

Numbers of singing males, males observed not singing, females, and cowbirds were recorded along with an associated bird species list. Habitat characteristics were also noted. Volunteers were instructed to immediately report observations of Kirtland's Warblers to agency staff (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and/or WDNR) by phone or email. Verification by staff during follow-up visits was required for a sighting to be confirmed. Follow-

up visits took place within two days after the volunteer report was received.

Results

Of 314 Wisconsin sites identified as having at least 50 acres of jack pine cover type of a suitable age, 89 were surveyed by 41 volunteers. These sites were located in Burnett, Douglas, Washburn, Bayfield, Vilas, Oneida, Marinette, Oconto, Adams, Juneau, Monroe, and Jackson Counties. Confirmed observations of singing males were made at two sites in Marinette County and at one site in Adams County between 6 and 15 June. Marinette sites had one singing male each while the Adams site had seven confirmed males. Five females and five nests were also confirmed at the Adams sites (see Trick et al. [2009] for details).

Reports of singing Kirtland's Warbler males came from eight additional sites: Vilas (3 sites), Jackson (3 sites), and Marinette (2 sites). These observations, however, could not be confirmed by agency staff.

Due to heavy rain that disrupted surveys on several days during the two-week survey period, volunteers were permitted to continue with surveys beyond 15 June if they so desired. (However, observations made after 15 June were not included in the official population estimate reported to the Recovery Team.) A male without leg bands was seen at the Adams site on 25 and 26 June. Because all males observed prior to 25 June at the Adams site had been banded (Refsnider et al. 2009), this was the tenth bird to be counted in the state. Other confirmed reports in the post-census period included a singing male observed by a participant in Douglas County on 9 July and a male found in Bayfield County during an independent survey conducted by the U.S. Forest Service (see Trick et al., 2009 for a description of this sighting). Because these additional observations could have been of the same individual as the un-banded male seen at the Adams site, they were not included in the final count. For 2008, at least 10 Kirtland's Warbler males were documented in Wisconsin, while 9 singing males were reported as the official state census record.

To assess sites for habitat suitability, volunteers were asked to provide the following information for each site visited: dominant tree species, secondary tree species, presence of jack pine with branches close to ground, understory species, presence of open grassy areas, approximate canopy height, and soil conditions (e.g., sandy, wet or dry, etc.). Based on this information as noted by volunteers on the data sheets, 61% of the 89 sites surveyed were categorized as suitable, 19% were unsuitable, and 24% were marginal. Another 6% of these sites did not have sufficient comments on habitat conditions to determine suitability. "Suitable" was defined as a site dominated by conifers including jack pine with lower hanging branches on dry, sandy soils, having some openings between trees, and a canopy height of less than 18 ft. Sites not meeting these criteria were considered unsuitable unless they were described as having suitable vegetation composition and structure, canopy height, etc. but with wet soils. Because heavy rainfall during the survey period could have saturated upland soils at sites that are

Table 1. Number of Brown-headed Cowbirds counted at 2008 Kirtland's Warbler Census sites per Wisconsin County.

County	No. Cowbirds
Adams	4*
Bayfield	9
Jackson	54
Juneau	6
Marinette	2
Vilas	0

*Tally is from surveys on private land near the Adams breeding site and does not include cowbirds caught in traps at the breeding site (see Trick et al. 2009).

typically dry, these sites were considered to be "marginal" and will be included for survey again in 2009.

Tallies of cowbirds were recorded for six of the twelve counties and these appear in Table 1. A total of 73 cowbirds were counted not including the 300+ cowbirds caught in traps at the Adams breeding site as reported by USDA-APHIS-WS (2008). The remaining six counties were omitted from the tallies because no number or indication of presence/absence was recorded on the data sheets.

In addition to cowbirds, 68 associated bird species were reported from seven counties. Table 2 shows the distribution of these species by county.

Discussion

The first annual census of Kirtland's Warblers in Wisconsin was suc-

Table 2. List of associated bird species recorded during the 2008 Kirtland's Warbler Census listed by property names: BCNF=(Bayfield County) National Forest, BRSF=Black River State Forest, JCF=Jackson County Forest, JUCF=Juneau County Forest, MCF=Marinette County Forest, NHSF=Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest, VCNF=(Vilas County) National Forest, VCF=Vilas County Forest. XF denotes flyovers.

Bird Species	BCNF	BRSF	JCF	JUCF	MCF	NHSF	VCNF	VCF
Canada Goose					X			
Ruffed Grouse	X	X			X		X	
Spruce Grouse					X			
Wild Turkey			X		X			X
Common Loon					X^F			
Osprey					X			
Northern Goshawk					X			
Broad-winged Hawk		X	X					
Sandhill Crane			X^F		X			
Mourning Dove	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Black-billed Cuckoo			X		X			
Yellow-billed Cuckoo		X	X					
Common Nighthawk		X			X			
Ruby-thr. Hummingbird					X			
Red-bellied Woodpecker		X			X			
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	X	X					X	
Downy Woodpecker	X						X	
Hairy Woodpecker					X			
Pileated Woodpecker		X			X			
Eastern Wood-Pewee		X			X			
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher						X		
Willow Flycatcher								X
Least Flycatcher						X		
Great Crested Flycatcher		X			X			
Eastern Phoebe		X						

(Continued next page)

Table 2. Continued.

Bird Species	BCNF	BRSF	JCF	JUCF	MCF	NHSF	VCNF	VCF
Eastern Kingbird		X						
Yellow-throated Vireo		X						
Warbling Vireo					X			
Red-eyed Vireo	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Blue Jay	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
American Crow	X	X			X	X	X	X
Common Raven	X	X	X		X		X	
Barn Swallow			X					
Tree Swallow		X						
Black-capped Chickadee	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Red-breasted Nuthatch		X			X	X		
House Wren		X						
Winter Wren								X
Golden-crowned Kinglet								X
Eastern Bluebird		X						
Veery	X	X	X				X	
Hermit Thrush	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Wood Thrush			X			X		X
American Robin	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Gray Catbird		X	X	X				X
Brown Thrasher	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Cedar Waxwing					X			
Blue-winged Warbler		X				X		
Golden-winged Warbler		X	X	X				
Nashville Warbler	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Yellow Warbler		X			X			X
Chestnut-sided Warbler	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Cape May Warbler					X			
Black-thr. Blue Warbler					X			X
Yellow-rumped Warbler	X	X			X		X	X
Black-thr. Green Warbler		X						
Pine Warbler		X	X		X			
Black-and-white Warbler	X	X			X		X	
American Redstart	X						X	X
Ovenbird	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Connecticut Warbler			X					
Mourning Warbler			X					
Common Yellowthroat		X	X	X				
Canada Warbler	X						X	
Scarlet Tanager	X	X			X		X	
Eastern Towhee	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Chipping Sparrow	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Clay-colored Sparrow	X		X	X	X	X	X	
Field Sparrow		X	X	X	X			
Vesper Sparrow		X			X			
Lark Sparrow				X				
Song Sparrow		X	X	X	X			X
White-throated Sparrow	X	X			X	X		X
Dark-eyed Junco					X	X		X
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	X	X	X		X		X	
Indigo Bunting		X			X			
Red-winged Blackbird			X					
Common Grackle					X			
Brown-headed Cowbird	X	X	X	X	X			
Baltimore Oriole			X		X			
Purple Finch	X						X	
American Goldfinch	X	X	X		X		X	X

cessful in meeting its objective to locate additional sites with singing males. Consistent presence of singing males at sites in Marinette County until early July indicates that Kirtland's Warblers may be attempting to nest at those sites. Indeed, nesting may have occurred on at least one site as an immature warbler was observed in the vicinity of the singing male (J. Probst, personal communication). Unfortunately, a positive identification of the juvenile could not be made.

Jackson County is another area that may have breeding Kirtland's Warblers. Two individuals were heard at one site and a third individual was spotted at a second site in the Black River State Forest. Although these observations could not be confirmed, the first site was a large site with good jack pine habitat of appropriate age for nesting and will be targeted for survey again in 2009.

Kirtland's Warblers may also be nesting in northern Wisconsin. At least one confirmed male was found in Douglas County and three sites with possible singing males were reported for Vilas County. Furthermore, a female may have been present in association with the confirmed Bayfield County male on National Forest land (L. Parker, personal communication).

Sites that were determined to have suitable habitat will be included for survey in 2009. Sites classified as marginal may actually have suitable habitat, but inclement weather during the census period may have precluded proper assessment of soil conditions. These sites together with new sites drawn from the pool of sites that were identified as appropriate through the WisFIRS database (WDNR 2007) will be added to the list of survey sites for 2009. Special survey emphasis will be needed in Adams, Marinette, Douglas, Bayfield, Jackson, and Vilas Counties where males were either confirmed or suspected. Locating appropriate habitat near the breeding site in Adams County is of particular concern because habitat at the breeding site is over twelve years old and because 2008 fledglings may disperse to nearby sites in 2009 (Trick et al. 2009). Although the number of participants is expected to increase in 2009, the amount of sites that can be visited will fall short of the total potential sites in need of survey. Therefore, prioritizing sites based on appropriate habitat characteristics, on presence of bird species typically associated with Kirtland's Warblers, and on Kirtland's Warbler sightings may help to direct survey efforts to the most likely places to find this species in future years.

Despite the fact that not all volunteers recorded cowbirds, the high cowbird tallies of Jackson and Bayfield Counties indicate that cowbirds may be problematic at these locations and that trapping of cowbirds may be needed if and/or when breeding Kirtland's Warblers are discovered. Conversely, no cowbirds were found on any of the Vilas County sites and only two individuals were counted at one site in Marinette County. These low numbers may mean that cowbirds will not be enough of a problem to implement trapping. Although cowbirds are present at Kirtland's Warbler breeding sites in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, their numbers are not sufficient to make trapping worthwhile (M. DeCapita, personal communication). In order to improve knowledge of cowbird presence at potential breeding

sites, data collection techniques should be emphasized at future training workshops.

Concluding Remarks

This first census of Kirtland's Warblers in Wisconsin has increased our knowledge of the state population and how it may be distributed. Immediate reporting of singing male observations and follow-up staff visits made it possible to band two males in Wisconsin outside of the existing breeding site. Although attempts to confirm nesting at the Marinette sites were not successful, future monitoring of these sites may clarify whether females are present and if nesting is occurring.

Other important aspects of the census included collection of habitat and cowbird data. Habitat descriptions recorded by volunteers were useful for determining if sites should be included in future surveys. Cowbird tallies provided an indication of potential cowbird trapping needs for some locations which will be of benefit for financial and other project-related planning in the event breeding pairs become established at those sites.

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Caspian Terns *by Dennis Kuecherer*

WSO Records Committee Update—2009 Documenting Birds: Why and How?

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The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology established a Records Committee on 15 April 1978 with the intention of "evaluating the validity of aberrant or unusual records of bird sightings." This action followed the lead of a number of other state ornithological organizations around the country during the 1970s. A need to catalog the growing number of unusual bird sightings around the country without relying on "scientific collection" precipitated these committees. Photographic evidence for some of these records was available, but photographic equipment did not have anywhere near the sophistication of 21st century technology. Even with today's incredible photographic potential, many records aren't possible to photograph due to habitat, distance, and the limited percentage of birders investing in today's equipment. In addition, photographs can only present a two-dimensional view of a bird. Many times the angle presented does not capture the necessary information to identify some species. The latter half of the 20th century found the growing number of amateur birders surpassing the number of professional ornithologists with a resultant deluge of potential data on the biogeographical distribution, migratory patterns, and field identification of birds. In order to attempt to standardize the collection of this ornithological information, written documentation was adopted as an acceptable method of accumulating this data.

The purposes of the WSO Records Committee stated in its Procedural Rules are:

A) Validate records of birds found in the state of Wisconsin;
B) Maintain permanently the original bird records and all committee votes and comments for use by future bird students;
C) Publish at least minimal data on all records receiving a decision;
D) Provide a means by which sight records can gain universal acceptance as valuable scientific data;
E) Establish standards of observation and reporting against

which field observers may compare their own techniques; and,

F) Maintain the official Wisconsin State List.

In more realistic terms, species asterisked on the WSO Seasonal Report Forms, those species absent from the forms, and species sighted outside of their normal dates should be "documented" on the WSO Rare Bird Report Form and submitted to the Bird Report Coordinator of the *Passenger Pigeon* with the Seasonal Reports. These documentations are then copied and submitted, along with any available photographic information, to the five Records Committee members for evaluation. Drawing on their own field experience, numerous reference books and articles, or on occasion, other personal contacts and experts around the country, each member votes independently to accept or not accept the record as written and/or photographed. Reasons for an individual committee member's skepticism and non-acceptance are then circulated on questionable records. Most receive one round of analysis, but in some instances, a second round of voting occurs based on new information from a committee member or observer. A 4–1 or 5–0 vote is required for acceptance of an unusual record into the state ornithological record.

Following final voting, observers of accepted records are notified by postcard or e-mail of the committee's decision. In the cases of records not accepted, the observer receives a letter explaining the reasons the report was not considered sufficient for identifying the species in question. Finally, the seasonal report of the Records Committee's deliberations is published in the *Passenger Pigeon*. In this seasonal report, the committee attempts not just to publish the accepted records, but to summarize the pertinent field marks on which the decisions were based. In the instances of non-acceptance of a report, reasons are also supplied as to why that report may not have completely separated the species in question from other similar species. These summaries are an attempt to keep all Wisconsin observers aware of appropriate field marks for rarer/unfamiliar species. When significant identification articles are in print, reference is made to further educate interested birders.

If the report of an accepted species is not previously found on the State List, it requires two or more independent observations/documentations of the bird, a photograph, or a skin specimen for addition to the State List. Single observer or collaborative group sightings of birds not yet on the State List, if accepted, are placed on the Hypothetical List for the State. The Hypothetical List thus comprises birds having strong, but not conclusive, evidence of occurrence in Wisconsin. Once a species is added to the State List, any previous hypothetical records for that species are moved from the Hypothetical List to the State List as well.

Committee Membership

Five-year terms of Records Committee membership are extended to interested birders based on two factors. Birders sought for membership are generally very "field experienced." Not only do they have experience in

identifying a broad spectrum of species, but also through that time they have probably witnessed the perilous deception distance has on the size of a bird and the alteration in color that various degrees and angles of sunlight have on a bird's plumage. In other words, they have an appreciation of the pitfalls of field identification. In addition to that field experience, these birders have demonstrated an understanding of the importance of documenting rare birds through their own thoughtful submissions to the committee.

In 1979, the Records Committee became operational under the guidance of chair Bill Hilsenhoff and committee members Bill Foster, Joe Hickey, Sam Robbins, and Daryl Tessen. Since 1979, other WSO members who have served an average of five-year terms on the committee include John Bielefeldt, (chair), Fred Lesher (chair), Eric Epstein, Roger Sundell, John Idzikowski, (chair), Charles Sontag, Dick Verch, Janine Polk (chair), Al Shea, Tom Schultz, Mark Peterson, Robbye Johnson, Randy Hoffman, Jeff Baughman, Dennis Gustafson, Scott Baughman, Dan Belter, and Bob Domagalski. The 2009 Records Committee consists of Mark Korducki, Bill Cowart, Karl David, Ryan Brady, and Jim Frank (chair).

Evaluating Documentations

The committee evaluates these documentations from the standpoint of a future WSO member doing a retrospective look at the state's ornithological record. The committee lays aside the name/field skills of the observer and accepts each documentation as a statement of facts, reading it for accuracy in the identification of the species and **completeness**.

During the past four years the Records Committee has reviewed approximately 750 documentations of rare birds. Roughly 600 have been accepted for an 80% acceptance rate. Of those not accepted, at least half of those are judged more than likely to be accurate identifications, but the documentation is extremely sketchy, leaving the committee to **assume** certain field marks must have been seen—which it cannot do. Even experienced observers may miss a field mark, not have a long enough look to see the pertinent field marks, or not know all of the necessary field marks. Just as the committee accepts each documentation as an accurate representation of the event, it must accept any events/field marks not reported as not occurring/not observed. Most birders would agree that an out-of-focus photograph doesn't usually identify a bird, just as an "out-of-focus" or **incompletely** written documentation would not necessarily identify that bird either.

Another reason for a few records to not be officially accepted involves the suspected origin of the bird in question. A bird can be accurately identified, but if there is strong suspicion that the bird is an escape or release from captivity, it isn't accepted. In Wisconsin, the Records Committee will assume that reports of psittacine birds (parrots) are escapees because they are commonly kept as caged birds with no known wild breeding populations in the state. European Goldfinches and Great Tits are among a number of species also presumed to be escapees. There are known releases

of legally imported captive and possibly wild caught European birds occurring in northeastern Illinois during the early 2000s in quantities that may number hundreds if not thousands of individuals. The distinction between wild and captive becomes more blurred when it comes to waterfowl. Numerous species, both North American as well Old World are legally held by collectors. Wild waterfowl are also notoriously strong flyers and subject to wandering far enough to be potential vagrants here in Wisconsin. There are times that it can be established that a waterfowl collector lost an individual of rare status shortly before a "wild" sighting. This makes it easier to presume a captive origin. If the bird survives for a year in the wild, tracing its escaped origin becomes much more difficult. In such instances, records committees are faced with literally guessing which source seems most plausible. Cases can be legitimately made for either status. Species such as Eurasian Wigeon, White-cheeked Pintail, and Smew fall into this category. At times, as the history of vagrancy or captive prevalence develops over time, committees do rescind previous decisions, adding or removing species from the state lists. Another group of birds presenting a similar dilemma are raptors. Falconers are known to lose their captive birds on occasion. Records committees are then faced with deciding on the possibility of a Gyrfalcon or Harris's Hawk being of captive origin. Once again, the answers are not clear cut. A final source of captive origin birds that must be considered is deliberate release, as in the case of the Whooping Crane introduction project. Until the flock is reproducing successfully on its own and thus sustaining if not increasing its numbers, the species is not considered a wild bird. Although there are species that have questionable origins, documenting them creates data that could be valuable in the future should they establish a viable wild population.

There are, of course, some observations in which the bird is inaccurately identified, often because the observer lacks the experience to have considered all of the other possible species that might have the characteristics reported. Another possible pitfall includes not having immature or female plumages represented in the field guide consulted, deceiving the observer to believe the bird is a more unusual species. Check your field guide for the 1st year male Rose-breasted Grosbeak's plumage. In many books it isn't depicted, but a female Black-headed Grosbeak is. Without the suggestion that there is a second, more likely species to consider, the misidentification potential should be evident. Does the field guide show what a male Ruby-throated Hummingbird gorget looks like when the light isn't at a reflective angle? The depictions lead one to believe only Black-chinned Hummingbirds have black gorgets. Unexpectedly to many observers, there is variation within a species that cannot always be shown in field guides. A few eastern Slate-colored Juncos have white wingbars, suggesting White-winged Juncos, a separate, western subspecies. A few Black-legged Kittiwakes have pink legs!

This leads to a final pitfall in misidentifications, focusing on one characteristic instead of examining the entire bird. When witnessing a yellowish tanager with black wings, re-

porting only that it had pale yellow wingbars will not clinch the identification as a Western Tanager. After indicating that the size of the bird eliminates a goldfinch from consideration, the bill shape needs to be checked to rule out the oriole family. The color of the back needs to be noted because a few Scarlet Tanagers can have a line of yellow along the median coverts. If the back is streaked, it would now draw a Flame-colored Tanager into consideration. One characteristic can be the major identification mark, but secondary, supportive characteristics are essential to convincingly document a bird. These secondary traits minimize the chance of the bird just being an aberrant form of a another species. Leucistic or "partial albino" birds pop up with more frequency than observers realize. Those areas of unexpected white on a bird should not be as confusing if the rest of the bird's characteristics are examined.

Submitting Documentations

In an effort to encourage all observers to document their rare sightings for the ornithological record, a synopsis of documentation techniques follows.

When possible, submission on the Exceptional Record Documentation Form is suggested. The use of this form is more for the observer's benefit than anything else because it asks for specific information in an organized manner. There is less likelihood of overlooking pertinent information although in some instances that obviously still occurs.

Initial Impressions—

Note the general family or species of the bird based on the first fleeting glimpses of it. What size, shape, or color characteristics led you to that assumption? If you stayed with the initial identification, proceed to describe the bird more completely. If you didn't stay with the initial impression, what changed your mind? For instance, if your attention is drawn to an all white gull flying toward you, your mind has a probability factor in Wisconsin that initially expects a Glaucous Gull. As it gets nearer, or as a Herring Gull approaches it, you then realize it is smaller than that Herring Gull. Now you are perhaps thinking it is an Iceland Gull. As it wheels around to land on the beach 50 yards from you, the black specks on the flight feathers and coverts along with the black dusting on the face tell you it's an Ivory Gull. You then note the bill and leg color, etc. The initial impressions convey the reason your attention was initially drawn to the bird. They do not mean you misidentified the bird or that you lacked common birding skills. They were logical based on the information limitations at given moments. All identifications progress in that manner, some more rapidly than others. An all white gull has a probability of being a Glaucous Gull, but unless more definitive information is provided, the description could fit several species, although they might be quite unexpected possibilities. Identifications are not based on probabilities, but on accurate, complete descriptions.

Comparison to Similar Species—

There is nothing in a documentation that better defines an identifica-

tion than comparison to familiar species. In citing the initial impression, this process is already begun. You have compared the bird in question with more familiar data you have accumulated from other observations and demonstrated how this bird didn't fall into the usual categories. In particular families of birds, such as gulls, shorebirds, and waterfowl, observations are only infrequently made of solitary birds. Make use of adjacent "known species" to continue the comparison. To identify and document many rare gulls, using the size, head shape, mantle color shade, etc. in comparison to the immediately adjacent Herring or Ring-billed Gulls is essential. The use of seemingly inexact terms "bigger than" or "slightly smaller than," are much more believable and accurate than specifying the bird to be "10 inches long," unless the bird is in hand of course. How many times have you observed a solitary bird, such as a loon, at a distance and assumed it to be of a certain size, only to have a "known quantity" swim up next to it and greatly change your initial assumption of its size? Those events help you realize how deceiving distance can be when estimating size. Comparison is imperative in such observations and documentations. Similar comparative data should be noted in shorebirds regarding bill length and shape, leg length, body length, etc. The same technique can be used for sparrows under your winter bird feeder. If you are glancing at the birds, your attention could be drawn to a sparrow with a heavily streaked breast and central breast spot because the rest of the birds are "clean-breasted" House Sparrows and Juncos. After that initial impression, you might be thinking it is a Song Sparrow until you realize it is noticeably smaller than these two species present for comparison and its tail is proportionately shorter than the Juncos. Perhaps Savannah Sparrow comes to mind, but the yellowish superciliary coloration isn't present; it is instead gray. The yellowish wash to the breast and the fineness of the breast streaking tell you it must be a very out of place Lincoln's Sparrow. Being able to compare the bird to other similar appearing birds was helpful in your ultimate identification and would make your documentation very believable. You obviously know what a Lincoln's Sparrow is, but your mind had a different set of expectations in January and it would be very legitimate to admit the circumstances temporarily took you a different direction until you **compared** the bird. This demonstrates that you considered other possibilities during the observation and that you discarded them for specific reasons.

Thorough Description—

At this point in the documentation, there is some tendency to assume that one or two points of identification are all that is necessary. Perhaps there aren't too many birds to confuse a male Painted Bunting with, but there aren't many birds that don't have something that they need to be differentiated from. The description should include a systematic comment on as many aspects of the bird as you looked at; head, eye, eyeline, supercilium, crown, lores, throat, neck, back, rump, wing coverts, wings, wingbars, tail, breast, flanks, belly, undertail coverts, bill, legs, and feet. This

should include colors as well as relative size, shape, and length to more familiar species even if that species isn't present at the time of observation. Again the usefulness of the terms longer than, more curved, darker than, and browner than cannot be overemphasized. A reminder should also be made to observers not to fall into the habit of using terminology "the characteristic color of" or "the characteristic pattern of." You must state what that color or pattern is. The "characteristic facial color pattern" of a Yellow-crowned Night-Heron may seem obvious to most birders, but what exactly is it? The head and face are black with a white cheek patch, forehead, and crown. The hind crown has white plumes trailing down from it. Additional information about flight patterns, foraging habits, or aggressiveness can also be helpful in describing a species.

Sometimes an observer will see something about a bird that is not mentioned in standard field guides or is inconsistent with what is depicted. There is a tendency to ignore or fail to supply those facts. There are several good reasons not to overlook this information. First, the field guides cannot show all plumages of a species. Many species have a juvenile and an immature plumage in the first year before reaching something close to adult plumage. Others will have less colorful adult plumage in the first breeding season. Of course gulls maximize the dilemma for birders, some taking 4 years with several transitional plumages each year to reach adult patterns. There are also numerous subspecies of many species with slight, noticeable variation from what we may be accustomed to seeing here in Wisconsin. Providing those "inconsistent with the field guide" characteristics may prove the bird to be of a more western or tropical subspecies. Of surprise to some birders is that some field guides have occasional significant inaccuracies in their depictions. In addition, there are always refinements in our understanding of bird identification, so information in them may become outdated. The bottom line is, the apparent inconsistency you saw is there for a reason. Report it, as it may be significant to the accuracy/consistency of the sighting. It may even shed new light on unknown characteristics.

Additional Documentation Evidence—

The old adage "a picture is worth a thousand words" is worth mention here. Of course observers who can photograph an unusual bird should make every effort to do so. Even a distant photo could be of value. This doesn't preclude supplying written description because only so much can be seen on field photographs given distance and angle considerations. There are several circumstances in recent years in which even with photographs a consensus identification couldn't be reached by the Records Committee.

Documentation of "Heard Only" Birds—

There are circumstances where this is the only evidence available on a given bird identification. There is every reason to submit this and for it to be accepted—if it is tackled with the same attention to detail and comparison as visual documentation. It is admittedly more difficult for people

to express audible observations. For example, simply stating that the bird's call went "will's-widow" doesn't separate the call from "whip-poor-will." Both calls have 3 notes. The report should include the number of syllables, any rising or falling patterns to the notes, accents or increased volume on any of the syllables, and slurring, buzzing, or clarity of the notes. In the case of the Whip-poor-will, the accents are on "whip" and "will," but for a Chuck-will's-widow, the accent is on "wid." If you are close enough to hear the faint first note of a Chuck-will's-widow, that is of course an important point to note. Again, **comparison** of an unusual song to familiar songs can be very useful.

Some cautionary notes about songs should be made because it greatly influences the acceptability of many "heard only" identifications. First, that old nemesis distance can alter our perceptions of song. Second, hearing a song or call once is similar to getting a visual glimpse of a bird while you are driving down the highway. It needs to be heard repeatedly to analyze its qualities accurately. There also is considerable variation in song patterns within species as well as surprising overlap of songs across species. Birders are well aware of the mimicry ability of mockingbirds, catbirds, thrashers, and starlings. They may be less cognizant of the overlap in songs across species within the warbler family.

Timing of the Documentation—

Finally, remember to document your sightings as soon after the event as possible. Some observers have developed the good habit of taking notes during or immediately after the observation. This assists them in taking a thorough look at the bird because they take another look or two to fill in other details they did not initially notice. It also helps them not to forget pertinent information between the sighting and the writing of the documentation. For all of the times you have observed a Blue Jay, could you describe all of the plumage patterns, relative shades of blue of different areas, and location of the black stripes and marks? If time hasn't etched that information into your head, it is difficult to imagine accurately recalling the details of one sighting of a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper three months before.

Sample Documentation

In an effort to demonstrate the pitfalls of a weak documentation, suppose you have been asked to document your report of an American White Pelican on the Horicon Christmas Bird Count. As many birders would react, it may seem like a waste of time to be required to document such an obvious sighting. The following is representative of some of the weaknesses in abbreviated documentations.

Species: American White Pelican
Date: 16 December 2008
Time: early morning
Length of Observation: very brief
Location: Horicon NWR
Distance to bird: I'm not good at estimating distance
Optics used: None, seen while driving
Weather and light condition: clear skies
Description: I saw a large white bird

with black wingtips while I was driving down Hwy 49. The bill looked yellow.
Vocalization: none
Bird's behavior: flying
Specific habitat: wildlife refuge
How were similar species eliminated:
Nothing looks like a pelican
Previous experience with this species:
I am quite familiar with pelicans
Name: Lee Z. Burder

Mr. Burder's 25 words or less approach to the project and sometimes vague answers to a number of questions can leave the person assessing the documentation with a number of questions. Granted, an American White Pelican is unique, but does this documentation make that evident?

When reading this report, the first concern would be the brevity of the sighting. A bird seen while you are driving raises questions about how well it could be seen, particularly when no estimation or a vague estimation of distance is given. The **assumption** the reader would be left with is: if the distance was hard to estimate, it must have been quite far. The lack of specificity in the time of "early morning" for the observation could mean anything from before the sun came up to mid-morning. A very early time could preclude decent light for the observation. Under light and weather conditions, the lack of an indication of whether the observer was looking east into the sun also creates concern about how well the bird was seen.

The description while probably true, leaves a number of possibilities unaddressed. "Large" can mean quite a range of things. Compared to a sparrow, many birds are large. A "large white bird with black wingtips" could bring to mind a Snow Goose, White Ibis, Whooping Crane, a Ring-billed Gull, even a Rock Pigeon, or the underside of a male Harrier. The bill size and shape weren't addressed and the light and distance issue was a concern so it is difficult to know how much to eliminate because the bill was "yellow". The pelican and gull have yellow bills, the pinker bill of the goose and ibis might just look light or yellowish depending on observation conditions. The crane's bill could have a glint of sunlight catch it to make it look light in color. Remember this was a brief, perhaps distant, "no binoculars look" at this bird.

When asked to compare this bird to other species, Mr. Burder chose to take affront to the question, by suggesting it was impossible to mis-identify this species. Under "previous experience" he is asserting that he knew what a pelican was. If he was visiting Wisconsin from Vermont, saw a couple of pelicans 20 years ago on a trip to the Everglades, and has seen a lot of photographs and field guide representations, he may feel familiar with pelicans, but in actuality that isn't very much "real world" experience. If he were to state similar "familiarity" with jaegers based on that level of experience, most birders would question if that was anywhere near enough experience with the "real thing."

The bottom line is the words in this description do not accurately describe an American White Pelican. Other species can fit the "word picture" and no effort was made in the "similar species" section to suggest any consideration of any of them. Little in the rest of the information leads us to think the bird was seen under good observation conditions. To accept this documenta-

tion, a number of assumptions would need to be made, and they may or may not be correct assumptions. With a little more thought, effort, and time, this documentation can be improved without writing a thesis.

Species: American White Pelican
Date: 16 December 2008
Time: Approximately 8:30 a.m.
Length of observation: A minute or two
Location: north side of Highway 49 in Horicon NWR
Distance to bird: Perhaps a hundred yards or so
Optics used: None, seen while driving
Weather and Light Conditions: Sunny morning, I was driving west along Highway 49, with this bird flying in the same direction as I was for a couple minutes
Description: From quite a distance away, I noted a large white bird flying away from me along the north side of Hwy 49. My initial thought was a swan because this bird was huge, noticeably larger than a small flock of Canada Geese nearby. As I approached the bird a bit closer, I noted the black wingtips. At that point I was admittedly confused, this was a Christmas Count after all, not mid- summer. As I pulled even with the bird, the long yellow-orange bill with a slight suggestion of a pouch along the lower side became apparent. The disproportionately large head was tucked back over its neck as it flew.
Comparison to similar species: The size, much larger than the Canada Geese, eliminates other white birds with black wing tips such as Snow Goose, gulls, and White Ibis. The black wing tips eliminate other large white birds such as the three swan species. The only other large white bird with black wingtips would be a Whooping Crane, but the bill size, shape, and color did not fit a crane. In addition, I did not see any legs trailing behind the bird and the neck was not outstretched in flight.
Familiarity with the species: I have seen White Pelicans this past summer at Horicon, and on trips to North Dakota 4 years ago, and a winter trip to Texas 7–8 years ago. My previous 12 years of birding in upstate New York didn't offer many opportunities to see White Pelicans, of course.
Name: Joe Burder

This documentation isn't very extensive, but it supplies us with information indicating the bird was seen at a reasonably close distance for a large bird like a pelican, in good lighting (looking northwest on a sunny morning), and thus even though it was a "drive-by," the observation sounds credible. The observer indicated initial, though incorrect first impressions about the bird, but demonstrated why they changed. The distance to the bird improved, allowing other characteristics to be seen. The similar species discussion addressed the **comparisons** to other species that had to be considered and eliminated based on the same characteristics noted in the first, abbreviated documentation. The observer also admitted a limited number of observations of the species under "experience," but also suggested a significant amount of time in general birding activity. This documentation would be accepted without a problem because the questions were answered

thoughtfully and yet briefly, supplying the reader with the information the questions were designed to extract from the observer.

Summary

Documentation is not meant to be an English composition challenge. Write phrases, sentences—whatever is comfortable. It is also not a contest to describe a bird in 25 words or less. Take the little extra time to do it completely. Make the effort to do it soon after the observation while the excitement is still there to give it relevance and the memory is there to give it accuracy.

DO IT!! Unfortunately too often the other birders observing the same bird **assume** someone else will do the documentation and it doesn't get done.

COMPARE, COMPARE, COMPARE!! This is essential for accurate field identification skills and well substantiated documentation. Written documentation is essential to expanding the ornithological record unless we want to return to relying on skin collections for our ornithological history.

Wisconsin State List—2009

The Wisconsin State List stood at 392 species in 1988, 398 in 1993, and with a seeming increase in vagrancy patterns in the bird population in general, the list in 2003 reached 422 species. As of 2009, the Wisconsin State List stands at 431 species. Additions in the past twenty years are:

1989—

393. Fulvous Whistling-Duck, 3 July 1989, Columbia Co.

1990—

394. Anna's Hummingbird, late August 1990, Waukesha Co.

1991—

395. California Gull, 29 November 1991, Sheboygan Co.

1992—

1993—

396. Swainson's Warbler, 9 May 1976, Dane Co.
397. Phainopepla, 31 October 1993, Milwaukee Co.
398. Townsend's Warbler, 5 December 1993, Milwaukee Co.

1994—

399. Brambling, 17 January 1994, Winnebago Co.
400. Harris's Hawk, 25 October 1994, Sheboygan Co.

1995—

401. Bullock's Oriole, (added due to splitting of Baltimore Oriole)
402. Spotted Towhee, (added due to splitting of Rufous-sided Towhee)
403. Scott's Oriole, late November 1995, Adams Co.

1996—

404. Glaucous-winged Gull, 1 January 1996, Ozaukee Co.
405. Western Wood-Pewee, 17 September 1996, Oconto Co.
406. Dusky Flycatcher, 8 October 1998, Oconto Co.

1997—

1998—

407. Streak-backed Oriole, early January 1998, Iron Co.
408. Eurasian Collared-Dove, 20 May 1998, Ozaukee Co.
409. Green Violetear, 22 September 1998, La Crosse Co.

1999—

410. Black-bellied Whistling Duck, 19 October 1999, Trempealeau Co.

2000—

411. Smew, 24 March 2000, Douglas Co.
412. MacGillivray's Warbler, 10 May 2000, Waukesha Co.
413. White-winged Dove, 15 June 2000. Portage Co.
414. Broad-billed Hummingbird, 20 October 2000, Dodge Co.
415. Ash-throated Flycatcher, 30 October 2000, Kewaunee Co.
416. Rufous-crowned Sparrow, 25 November 2000, Waukesha Co.

2001—

417. Vermilion Flycatcher, 10 November 2001, Jefferson Co.
418. Ross's Gull, 6 December 2001, Bayfield Co.

2002—

419. Black Rail, 4 May 2002, Milwaukee Co.
418. White-cheeked Pintail, (retraction of 1929 record from Winnebago Co. due to questions of origin.)
419. Thick-billed Murre, December 1896, Milwaukee Co.
420. White Ibis, 10 September 2002, Burnett Co.
421. Band-tailed Pigeon, 24 October 2002, Waushara Co. .

2003—

422. Black-tailed Gull, 12 June 2003. Racine Co.

2004—

423. Wilson's Plover, 9 May 2004, Douglas Co.
424. Cackling Goose, (added due to split of Canada Goose)
425. Hooded Oriole, 15 December 2004, La Crosse Co.
426. Slaty-backed Gull, 13 November 2001, Milwaukee Co.

2005—

425. Streak-backed Oriole, (1998 record displaced to questionable origin list)

2006—

426. Cave Swallow, 13 November 2006, Milwaukee Co.

2007—

427. Great-tailed Grackle, 31 January 2007, Dodge Co.
428. Rock Wren, 1 May 2007, Milwaukee Co.
429. Green-breasted Mango, 18 September 2007, Rock Co.

2008—

2009—

430. Streak-backed Oriole, early January 1998, Iron Co. (returned from questionable origin list).
431. Pyrrhuloxia, 22 October 2005, Milwaukee Co. (added from questionable origin list).

RECORDS COMMITTEE REVIEW LIST—JANUARY 2009

(H) = Hypothetical records—(12 species)

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck
Fulvous Whistling-Duck
Brant
Eurasian Wigeon
Cinnamon Teal
Common Eider
King Eider
Smew
Masked Duck
Willow Ptarmigan
Pacific Loon
Clark's Grebe (H)
Brown Pelican
Anhinga
Magnificent Frigatebird
Tricolored Heron
White Ibis
Glossy Ibis
White-faced Ibis
Roseate Spoonbill
Wood Stork
Black Vulture
Swallow-tailed Kite
White-tailed Kite
Mississippi Kite
Harris's Hawk
Swainson's Hawk
Ferruginous Hawk
Gyrfalcon
Prairie Falcon (H)
Black Rail
Purple Gallinule
Whooping Crane
Snowy Plover
Wilson's Plover
Black-necked Stilt
Spotted Redshank (H)
Eskimo Curlew
Long-billed Curlew
Black Turnstone
Western Sandpiper
Purple Sandpiper
Curlew Sandpiper
Ruff
Red Phalarope
Black-legged Kittiwake
Ivory Gull
Sabine's Gull
Black-headed Gull
Little Gull (away from Lake Michigan)
Ross's Gull
Laughing Gull (immature plumages)
Black-tailed Gull
Mew Gull
California Gull
Slaty-backed Gull
Glaucous-winged Gull
Sooty Tern
Least Tern
White-winged Tern
Roseate Tern (H)
Arctic Tern
Royal Tern
Pomarine Jaeger
Long-tailed Jaeger
Dovekie
Thick-billed Murre
Long-billed Murrelet (H)
Ancient Murrelet
Band-tailed Pigeon
White-winged Dove
Common Ground-Dove
Groove-billed Ani
Barn Owl
Northern Hawk Owl
Burrowing Owl
Great Gray Owl (southern two-thirds of state)
Boreal Owl
Chuck-will's-widow
Green Violetear
Green-breasted Mango
Broad-billed Hummingbird
Anna's Hummingbird

Rufous Hummingbird
Lewis's Woodpecker
American Three-toed Woodpecker
Western Wood-Pewee
Dusky Flycatcher
Say's Phoebe
Vermilion Flycatcher
Cassin's Kingbird (H)
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher
Fork-tailed Flycatcher
Gray Vireo
Clark's Nutcracker
Black-billed Magpie
Cave Swallow
Brown-headed Nuthatch
Rock Wren
Bewick's Wren
Yellow-browed Warbler (H)
Northern Wheatear (H)
Mountain Bluebird
Sage Thrasher
Curve-billed Thrasher
Sprague's Pipit (H)
Phainopepla
Virginia's Warbler (H)
Black-throated Gray Warbler
Townsend's Warbler
Hermit Warbler
Kirtland's Warbler
Swainson's Warbler
MacGillivray's Warbler
Painted Redstart (H)
Western Tanager
Green-tailed Towhee
Spotted Towhee
Black-throated Sparrow
Lark Bunting
Baird's Sparrow
Golden-crowned Sparrow
Smith's Longspur
Chestnut-collared Longspur
Pyrrhuloxia
Black-headed Grosbeak
Blue Grosbeak
Lazuli Bunting
Painted Bunting
Great-tailed Grackle
Hooded Oriole
Streak-backed Oriole
Bullock's Oriole
Scott's Oriole
Brambling
Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch
Hoary Redpoll
Lesser Goldfinch (H)
Eurasian Tree Sparrow
(Any species not on the Wisconsin State List)
(Any regular species found outside its normal days of occurrence in Wisconsin)

Questionable Origin List

Barnacle Goose—Manitowoc Co., 23 October 1977; Dodge Co., 26 October 1985
Common Teal—Vernon Co., 29 November 1998
White-cheeked Pintail—Winnebago Co., ? September 1929
Harris's Hawk—Columbia Co., 1 September 1969 (2 birds)
Whooping Crane—all sightings of 2000 or after
Ringed Turtle-Dove—Numerous sightings
Gray-breasted (Mexican) Jay—Waukesha Co., 11 December 1981–8 January 1982
Great Tit—Racine Co., October-December 2001; Ozaukee Co., 17 December 2004; Door Co., 1–22 April 2005, 15 November 2005; Waukesha Co., 14 October 2005
Blue Tit—Dunn Co., 15 May 2005

Red-crested Cardinal—Barron Co., 5 September 1974–April, 1975; Washington Co., fall 1980

Yellowhammer—Milwaukee Co., 29 April 2005

Eurasian Siskin—Outagamie Co., 23 May 2004; Iron Co., 10 January 2006

European Goldfinch—Milwaukee Co., 12 May 1935; Ozaukee Co., 5 May 1956; Langlade Co., 15 April 1988; Waupaca Co., 1–28 February 1989; Walworth Co., 12 April 1998; Dane Co., 14 December 2002; Waukesha Co., 25 January 2003; Vernon Co., May 2003; Kenosha Co., May 2005; Iowa Co., 14–29 January 2005

Orange Bishop—Waukesha Co., 23–27 September 2003

Eurasian Tree Sparrow—Oconto Co., 23 May 2005; Kenosha Co., 17, 18 February 2006

Cattle Egret *by Dennis Kuecherer*

A Walkabout Almanac

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Before the advent of automobiles, binoculars, and birding hotlines, early naturalists and birdwatchers honed their skills in their backyards and neighborhoods, often by themselves.

The limit of their birding world was dictated by how far they could walk or bicycle, or perhaps, hop a train or trolley for distant places. With no field guides to capture the nuances of every bird or good binoculars or telescopes to see distant birds, their yearly bird lists, if they kept them, recorded sightings from a very limited area. By today's standards, the list probably would be very short. Only a bit of luck from wayward birds could add a new species to their list. With the absence of mass communication and a network of birders, a rareity, even on the other side of town, could be missed.

My how times have changed! Today with many birdwatchers scattered about the state, toting excellent binoculars and scopes, and connected by cell phones for instant communication, no bird goes unreported. If a rareity shows up, we know instantly. We jump into our cars, travel countless miles to add another check mark on our yearly list or add a "state" or "life" bird. We regularly check out distant habitats such as Necedah, Horicon, and Trempeauleau National Wildlife Refuges, Wisconsin Point, Crex Meadows, Goose Pond, Lake Michigan, Nine Springs, and the Wisconsin and Mississippi Rivers searching for that elusive bird. There is nothing wrong with this.

However, in 2008 I decided to return to a simpler time and keep another yearly bird list which I called my "birding on foot" or "walk" list. Like the early birdwatchers, my birding world would be limited by how far I would walk or bicycle. That is, I would not rely on gas-consumptive transportation to take me to where the birds were. I allowed myself the use of binoculars but not a telescope. My goal was to see 100 species.

The center point of my "birding on foot" neighborhood is midtown Oshkosh, an old residential neighborhood where manicured lawns and sculpted bushes are not high priorities. I refer to my neighborhood as having shaggy yards where overgrown evergreens and sprawling bushes hide houses but also provide excellent cover for migrating and nesting birds. Numerous, scattered tall trees with cavities and dead branches provide homes for squirrels, owls, and woodpeckers. I do

Figure 1. Dark-eyed Junco taken by Scott Franke.

not live near any nature centers but I'm within a fifteen minute walk west to the Fox River and east to Menominee Park, Miller's Bay, and Lake Winnebago. I'm out almost every day as I walk five miles roundtrip (including along Miller's Bay), which allows me the opportunity to observe the changing seasons and birds.

January 2008

My birdfeeders have been exceptionally busy this winter. Would the birds grace me with their presence on the first day of my new challenge?

1 January—A Dark-eyed Junco (Fig. 1) is the first bird to show up. Soon I have House Finch, American Goldfinch, Downy Woodpecker, White-breasted Nuthatch, and Mourning Dove. Can't forget House Sparrows, they count too. Where are the chickadees, cardinals, and Hairy Woodpecker? At the end of day one, I have seen 9 species. A good start.

2 January—Black-capped Chickadees and Northern Cardinals appear. A Cooper's Hawk flies through the yard, scattering the birds.

10 January—January is cold. I'm not seeing much on my walks to work. Today I finally see Rock Pigeons.

12 January—I walk to the Fox River and see a majestic Bald Eagle perched in a big cottonwood tree and a few Mallards in the open water. I hear a Blue Jay calling. Finally I see my first

European Starling. They seem to have disappeared this winter.

19 January—The Hairy Woodpecker which had been a regular visitor to my feeder in December 2007 finally reappears.

January total: 18 species. Total yearly count: 18.

February

A month of snow and more snow and then more snow.

2 February—I'm out shoveling, again, but this time about 9 p.m.. This is a beautiful time to be outside with the peace and quiet when I hear the distant tremulo call of an Eastern Screech-Owl. What a magical sound this lovely evening. I pause in my work to enjoy. If it hadn't snowed, I would not have been outdoors and I may have missed the screech-owl.

6 February—A Red-tailed Hawk circles overhead. The regular birds are brightening my feeder and walks to work but nothing new is appearing. Days are noticeably longer.

28 February—I discover about 50 Cedar Waxwings dining on red berries on an ornamental tree I'm unfamiliar with. I see these birds several days in a row as they methodically strip the two trees. No Bohemian Waxwings among them.

29 February—Leap year. Three inches of new snow. Today I see my first American Robin.

February total: 4 new species. Total yearly count: 22.

March

Snow is deep. Snow piles are high which reminds me of the "good old days." Temperatures are slow to rise. I must keep an eye on Miller's Bay as to when it opens because this bay attracts many ducks.

10 March—It's already 10 March. Where are the blackbirds? When I started walking to work 35 years ago, I figured the blackbirds, robins, Killdeer, and grackles usually returned between 10–15 March. In recent years, they've been regularly showing up a week to 10 days earlier. With some unusually warm springs even earlier than that. Now it is 10 March. Snow is still piled on the ground. Lakes are frozen. No birds.

12 March—Finally my first Canada Goose.

13 March—Sandhill Cranes fly over. I hope they'll be able to find food.

14 March—First male Red-winged Blackbirds arrive. One is singing along the railroad tracks. The call of the first red-wing tells me winter is behind me and spring is really coming—sometime. As it turns out, these red-wings are really early scouts. It will be the end of March before the major push arrives, which is extremely late. First Ring-billed Gull today.

19 March—I've been regularly walking to the Fox River which has been frozen for an extended period. Today it's open on the far side. With binoculars, I see Common Goldeneyes, Lesser Scaup, and, are those really, yes, they are, Hooded Mergansers. Males have their crests up in nuptial splendor. I'm always thrilled to see Hooded Mergansers.

I miss the last week of March with a week-long trip to Florida. This is not a good time to leave Wisconsin. Miller's Bay is opening upon my return.

March total: 9 new species. Total yearly count: 31.

Figure 2. Killdeer by Rich Phalin.

April

The anticipation of what April may bring puts bounce in my step.

2 April—Double-crested Cormorant flies overhead. The usual March migrants are finally showing up—at least in my little world.

3 April—Song Sparrow singing.

4 April—Killdeer (Fig. 2).

6 April—Common Grackle.

9 April—Miller's Bay is open and waterfowl are present. Today I'm able to spend extended time birdwatching and find mostly diving ducks: Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead, Red-breasted Merganser, and American Coot. Except for Mal-

lards, puddle ducks are scarce although today I find American Wigeon and Gadwall. Pied-billed Grebes dive near the shore and Horned Grebes, an unanticipated species, also are here. American White Pelicans soar overhead. On the walk home, I discover a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker.

13 April—Turkey Vulture and Osprey migrate overhead. Also find Brown-headed Cowbird and Hermit Thrush.

14 April—My walk to work yields two opposite-sized species—Common Mergansers in Miller's Bay and a Ruby-crowned Kinglet.

15 April—It's a woodpecker day. I find Northern Flicker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, and Red-breasted Nuthatch.

18 April—Chipping Sparrows arrived overnight and are singing everywhere today. White-throated Sparrow in yard.

20 April—A walk to the Oregon Street bridge over the Fox River yields Cliff and Barn Swallows.

21 April—Tree Swallows and Northern Rough-winged Swallows flit overhead.

22 April—One singing Eastern Phoebe calls from atop a maple tree. Totally unexpected as I have never seen one before on my walks. Was he singing just to be noticed and included on the list? He was gone the next day.

24 April—House Wrens arrived last night. They're singing everywhere. First Chimney Swift overhead.

25 April—Caspian Terns squawking over Miller's Bay. Surprisingly, I will see Caspian Terns almost daily into late August.

April Total: 35 new species. Total yearly count: 66.

May

April was a fun month and I look forward to May and its potential.

3 May—Good migrating winds yield a Sharp-shinned Hawk and a Broad-winged Hawk drifting north. A Blue-headed Vireo in my yard is a surprise yard bird.

4 May—A Black-throated Green Warbler sings in the neighborhood. No other warblers.

6 May—Gray Catbird calling on walk to work.

7 May—Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Nashville and Northern Parula warblers observed in neighborhood.

8 May—Several Spotted Sandpipers probe along the shore of Miller's Bay. They are here only one day. I was fortunate to find them for my "walk" list.

13 May—Brown Thrasher in yard. Least Flycatchers and Tennessee Warblers calling on my walk to work. Yet where are the bigger numbers of warblers and other neotropical migrants? Very quiet migration through Oshkosh.

22 May—Eastern Kingbirds seen along Miller's Bay. Four pair will nest in flowering crabapple trees along the bay.

25 May—Red-eyed Vireos calling on walk to work.

26 May—The itch to bicycle again finally persuades me to purchase a new bicycle. This allows me the opportunity to expand my "walk list" territory. The Wiouwash recreational trail winds from Oshkosh north along Lake Butte des Morts, through marshes and farm country. Thus new habitats are opened up to my birding. I ride my maiden trek today and find Yellow-headed Blackbirds, Forster's Tern, In-

digo Bunting, American Redstart, Yellow Warbler, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Marsh Wren, Warbling Vireo, Baltimore Oriole, Blackpoll Warbler, and Ruby-throated Hummingbird. A Black-crowned Night-Heron almost hidden in the cattails is a delight to find. A family of Great Horned Owls with youngsters attempting to fly is fun to watch. A successful and enjoyable first bike ride. I saw 14 marsh-dwelling species that I would not have encountered anywhere else. Later today Common Nighthawks are migrating north as a cold front comes in.

29 May—Eastern Wood-Pewee calling on walk to work. Great Egret in rookery at Miller's Bay along with hundreds of Double-crested Cormorants.

30 May—Purple Martins finally seen, along with a Ruddy Turnstone, a species that at one time Oshkosh and Menominee Park were known for but now is not easy to find. A few Bonaparte's Gulls rest alongside Ring-billed Gulls on the park's athletic field.

31 May—Finally a little wave of warblers in yard—Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Blackburnian, and Wilson's.

May Total: 37 new species. Total yearly count: 103. I've surpassed my goal. The most productive birding is now behind me. How far will I go above my goal? I press on.

June

Resident birds keep my interest in my "walk" list challenge but new species are difficult to find.

19 June—A Great Crested Flycatcher calls on my way to work. Seems to be a late migrant.

June Total: 1 new species. Total yearly count: 104.

July

4 July—A bike ride on the Wiouwash trail yields Swamp Sparrow, Common Yellowthroat, and Belted Kingfisher. Farther along the trail into farm country I find what is probably the biggest surprise of the year—a Dickcissel (Fig. 3). Never did see meadowlarks, Bobolinks, or Upland Sandpiper but I got a Dickcissel! Totally unexpected. Astounding.

July Total: 4 new species. Total yearly count: 108.

August

Birding is really slowing down and getting tougher. Daily count of Caspian Terns continues to pique my interest.

August Total: No new species. Total yearly count: 108.

September

Autumn is coming.

14 September—One lone white morph Snow Goose stands out among the many Canada Geese on Menominee Park's athletic fields. Last year (2007) I discovered a few Cackling Geese among the Canadas and this year I looked for them every day. No Cackling Geese in 2008.

September Total: 1 new species. Total yearly count: 109.

October

5 October—I can't belive it. Finally, I see my first Yellow-rumped Warbler of

Figure 3. Dickcissel photographed by Delia Unson and Chuck Heikkinen.

the year! Hallelujah. They're usually so numerous and everywhere except this year for my challenge.

10 October—I bike along Lake Winnebago through Menominee Park. As a long shot I scan Lake Winnebago for possible scoters, Long-tailed Ducks, loons, or any other surprises but nothing is found. The ride through the park yields a tiny flock of warblers. I pause to watch and can't belive my good fortune when I discover a Connecticut Warbler. I have never, ever seen one in migration in Oshkosh before. Amazing.

29 October—I bicycle through the park. It's cold and blustery and I'm cold. I'm about to turn around when about 50 Snow Buntings fly up, circle, and resettle on the point at Miller's Bay. I press on for a closer look at these winter wanderers. They're a pleasure to see. I hadn't expected to

add this species to my list. Another Surprise.

October Total: 3 new species. Total yearly count: 112.

November

It's getting colder. Late migrating ducks and coots gather and linger in Miller's Bay.

11 November—Ruddy Ducks appear. Only new duck species added to list this fall.

18 November—A small flock of Tundra Swans flies over heading east. They're right on schedule and I've been watching for them, I missed them this spring so I'm pleased to see them on their return trip.

19 November—Most of the 1500 American Coots in Miller's Bay have left. Common Mergansers arrive. When they arrive, I know Miller's Bay will soon ice up.

22 November—Miller's Bay freezes over.

November Total: 2 new species. Total yearly count: 114.

December

It snows all December. Oshkosh receives a record 39.5 inches of the white stuff. I listen and search for Pine Siskins, redpolls, Evening Grosbeaks, crossbills, and Snowy Owls but with no luck. The only northern species I'm seeing are the many juncos at my feeder.

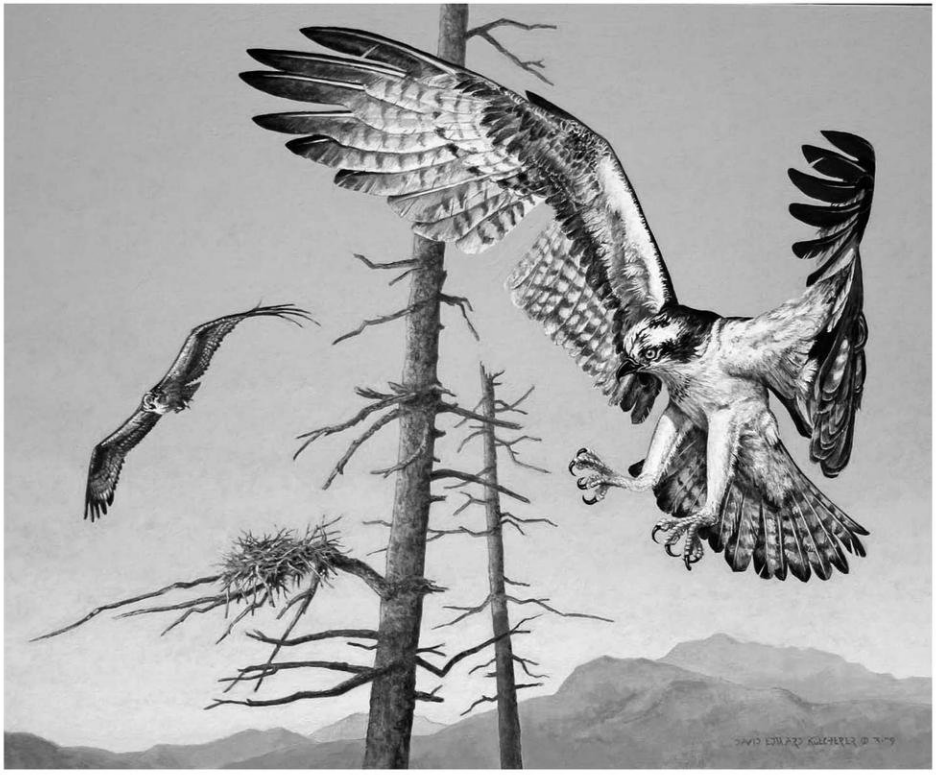
December Total: 0 new species. Yearly Total Count: 114.

I reached my goal and I'm pleased. It was fun. Some observations about the 2008 season. The warbler migration through Oshkosh this year was very poor. I usually hear warblers as I walk to work but this year was unusually quiet. I missed many warblers, Scarlet Tanager, and thrushes. There were other missing birds which I thought I might see including American Tree Sparrows, Golden-crowned Kinglet, American Kestrel, Brown Creeper, Common Loon, and puddle ducks. Yet, this year also presented some incredible surprises including Dickcissel, Connecticut Warbler, Spotted Sandpipers, and Snow Buntings.

I'm inspired to do it all again in 2009. With one year in the "book," I now have new strategies for 2009. Since I now have a bicycle for the entire year, I'll get on the Wiouwash trail earlier and may see puddle ducks during migration in the marshes along Lake Butte des Morts. I also discovered what could be a productive warbler habitat behind Riverside Cemetery along the bike trail and lake. Construction of the new Wisconsin Avenue bridge is now complete which will make it easier for me to get to the other side of the Fox River to the pond by the sewage treatment plant where puddle ducks gather. Yet I realize my success and yearly total really depends on the whims of the birds I'm trying to see. I also need a little bit of luck to be in the right spot at the right time. Already in 2009, I've seen redpolls, Pine Siskins, and a Merlin. I hope this portends a good year.

This was a fun challenge and I encourage others to try to do the same. Totals will depend on habitats visited and the vagaries of migration but the most important thing to remember is to just enjoy the birds and have fun. I know I did.

Anita A. Carpenter is a naturalist, writer, photographer, quilter, and pharmacist who has spent most of her life in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. She has a BS in Pharmacy from UW-Madison and a MS in Biology from UW-Oshkosh. Her love and enjoyment of the natural world have led her to write about it in the Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine and for Winnebago Audubon Society, and to give many slide presentations, particularly of birds and butterflies. She also enjoys spending time in nature on her travels in the United States and this led to the creation of quilts in her own designs to share her views of the natural world with others. You may find her anywhere in Wisconsin examining any aspect of the natural world and then sharing what she learns through her writing, photos, and quilts.



Oregon Osprey *by David Kuecherer.*

Wisconsin Big Day Counts: 2008

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Perhaps it was the relatively wet spring or a preoccupation with politics. More likely it was the price of gasoline being above $4 per gallon. Whatever the cause, participation in Wisconsin Big Days was down during the 2008 season. Only 12 reports were submitted by 6 different teams. Teams consisted of Daryl Tessen (8 reports), Fawn and John Shillinglaw (1 report), Aaron Stutz, Nancy Weiss, and Peter and Cynthia Bridge (1 report), Tom Prestby, Quentin Yoerger, and Paul Schilke (1 report), and Joe Schaufenbuel and Edward Keyel (1 report).

Summary

Data from twelve Big Day counts were submitted and all counts occurred in May. The team of Tom Prestby, Quentin Yoerger, and Paul Schilke had the highest species count of 176. Numerous bird species were common and widespread throughout all of the counts, including Great Blue Heron, Mallard, Red-tailed Hawk, and Blue Jay. Forty-five species were recorded only on one count. Many of these are either rare to Wisconsin such as Cinnamon Teal, Swainson's Hawk, and Blue Grosbeak or are extremely local in the state such as Yellow Rail, Yellow-throated Warbler, and Sharp-tailed Grouse.

The Counts

Tom Prestby, Quentin Yoerger, and Paul Schilke, *176 species*, 18 May, the Hoffman Route. ***Highlights:*** Despite intermittent high winds and few Neotropical migrants, this team tallied the highest count total (176) and the highest number of shorebirds (22) for the 2008 Big Days. In addition to the expected shorebird species, this team also observed five shorebirds not recorded on any other count: American Golden-Plover, American Avocet, Willet, Stilt Sandpiper, and Red-necked Phalarope. Other highlights included 2–3 Yellow Rails at Comstock Bog, Ruffed Grouse, Golden-crowned Kinglets, and Golden-winged Warblers at Ball Road and the surrounding cranberry bogs, a Short-eared Owl at Buena Vista Grasslands, and Red-necked Grebe, Least Bittern, and Common Moorhen in Columbia County.

Joe Schaufenbuel and Edward Keyel, *137 species*, 10 May, Portage County. ***Highlights:*** Lacking a strong overnight movement of birds, this team was forced to work very hard for species that should otherwise be com-

mon. Many species recorded on this count were represented by lone or small numbers of individuals and some were missed altogether, such as Indigo Bunting, Scarlet Tanager, and Cedar Waxwing. Nevertheless, this team still had the second highest count total for the 2008 Big Days. Highlights from this count included three Rough-legged Hawks at Buena Vista Grasslands, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Merlin, and Orchard Oriole.

Daryl Tessen, *135 species*, 15 May, Turtle Valley Wildlife Area, Natureland Park, Cook Arboretum, Avon area, Carroll Road, Nelson Road, and Cadiz Springs State Park. ***Highlights:*** A single Blue Grosbeak was a nice find on this count since it is considered to be a rare spring migrant to southern Wisconsin. This route produced the highest number of woodpecker and vireo species. In addition to the expected Yellow-throated, Blue-headed, Warbling, and Red-eyed Vireos, Daryl also recorded the less expected White-eyed and Bell's Vireos. Daryl observed 21 species of warblers, including the only Bay-breasted Warblers seen during the 2008 Big Days. This also was the only count to record Carolina Wren and Le Conte's Sparrow.

Daryl Tessen, *135 species*; 27 May, Breezy Point—A&W ponds, Schoenberg Marsh, Harvey/DM pond, Goose Pond, Baxter's Hollow, PF Prairie, Spring Green Preserve, Governor Dodge State Park, and Wyalusing State Park. ***Highlights:*** Daryl observed many of the state's rare and localized species on this count, such as Yellow-throated Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, and Lark Sparrow. This was the only route to record these species as well as Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Dickcissel. Other highlights included Red-shouldered Hawk, Hudsonian Godwit, Tufted Titmouse, Cerulean Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Henslow's Sparrow, and Western Meadowlark.

Aaron Stutz, Nancy Weiss, Peter Bridge, and Cynthia Bridge, *133 species*, 10 May, Jefferson County. ***Highlights:*** Beginning at 4:00 am, this team was able to record the only Long-eared Owl and Whip-poor-wills of the 2008 counts. Great Horned Owls, Barred Owls, and American Woodcocks also were tallied before sunrise. The Kettle Moraine area proved to be a good stop for warbler species such as Hooded, Cerulean, Northern Parula, Black-throated Green, and Chestnut-sided. They also observed a good diversity of waterfowl at Zeloski Marsh, including a pair of Northern Pintail, Redheads, Blue-winged and Green-winged Teals, Gadwall, Bufflehead, and Ruddy Ducks.

Daryl Tessen, *131 species*, 21 May, Crex Meadows Wildlife Area, Fish Lake Wildlife Area, Solon Springs State Natural Area, Stone's Bridge, and Wisconsin Point. ***Highlights:*** Daryl detected the most shorebirds of any count (16 species) on this route, including one species that was not recorded on any other count—Upland Sandpiper. It also was the only count to record Trumpeter Swan, Black Scoter, Sharp-tailed Grouse, and Common Raven. This was one of the few counts to record Red-throated Loon, Common Loon, Red-necked Grebe, and Ring-necked Duck.

Daryl Tessen, *127 species*, 10 May, Horicon Marsh, 6-Mile Road, Harrington Beach State Park, Sheboygan, Cleveland, F Pond (Manitowoc Co.), and B Pond (Calumet Co.). ***Highlights:***

Daryl recorded 16 species of waterfowl on this route, the highest of any count in 2008. Diving ducks were well-represented and included several species that were missed on most other Big Day counts—Canvasback, Redhead, Greater Scaup, Bufflehead, and Hooded Merganser. Other highlights included Common Moorhen, Sanderling, Common Tern, Brown Creeper, Mourning Warbler, and Lapland Longspur.

Daryl Tessen, *120 species*, 9 May, Horicon Marsh. ***Highlights:*** Daryl recorded an impressive diversity of species at this single site, including 9 species of waterbirds, 11 species of waterfowl, and 8 species of shorebirds. This was one of the few counts to record Green Heron, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Swainson's Thrush, and American Pipit.

Fawn and John Shillinglaw, *119 species*, 25 May, Collins Marsh Wildlife Area, Silva Lake, Manitowoc North P., Sheboygan, Hika Bay, Fisher Park, Killsnake Wildlife Area. ***Highlights:*** Fawn and John recorded the highest number of flycatchers (8 species) of any route, including the only sighting of Yellow-bellied Flycatcher for the 2008 Big Days. This also was the only route to record Ruddy Turnstone, Great Black-backed Gull, Fox Sparrow, and Pine Siskin. Other highlights included Common Nighthawk, Black-billed Cuckoo, Canada Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, and Connecticut Warbler.

Daryl Tessen, *118 species*, 7 May, Bay Beach Wildlife Sanctuary, Heckrodt Wetland Reserve, B Pond (Calumet Co.), Tessen property. ***Highlights:*** Daryl observed 22 species of warblers on this route, the highest of any count in 2008. This was the second route to record Golden-winged Warbler and one of the few routes to record Pine, Black-throated Blue, Cape May, and Magnolia Warblers. This also was the only count for American Black Duck and Gray-cheeked Thrush.

Daryl Tessen, *117 species*, 3 May, White River Marsh Wildlife Area, Lake Puckaway, Grand River Marsh Wildlife Area, Lakes Marie/Emily, A&W ponds. ***Highlights:*** Daryl recorded a single Swainson's Hawk on this route, which is considered a rare migrant to Wisconsin. This was the only route to record this species as well as Surf Scoter, Long-billed Dowitcher, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Common Merganser, and American Woodcock. Other highlights included Red-necked Grebe, Broad-winged Hawk, Brown Creeper, and Grasshopper Sparrow.

Daryl Tessen, *112 species*, 2 May, Heckrodt Wetland Reserve, High Cliff State Park, B and Marx ponds (Calumet Co.), Black Creek, New London, Hortonville, Rat River. **Highlights:** Daryl observed a male Cinnamon Teal on this route, probably the rarest species recorded during the 2008 Big Days. The Cinnamon Teal was associating with Blue-winged and Green-winged Teals in a flooded field on Marx Road (Calumet Co.). This species is considered a rare spring migrant, which typically occurs between mid-April and late May. Other highlights for this route included Pectoral Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Wilson's Snipe, Hermit Thrush, and Brewer's Blackbird.

Big Day Rules

For all who wish to participate in future Big Day counts, please remember these rules and guidelines:

- The count must be taken within a 24-hour calendar day (midnight to midnight).
- The count must be taken within the state boundaries, but it may cover as many parts of Wisconsin as birders can reach in the time limit.
- All participants must be within direct conversational contact at all times during the birding and traveling periods. This excludes meal and rest stops if birding is not conducted during those times. This limits the number of parties involved to one, and participants to the number safely and comfortably seated in one vehicle.
- Areas can be revisited during the day.
- The same areas may be covered on different Big Day counts.
- No fees are involved in conducting the counts.
- Be sure to drive safely. Sleep deprivation is characteristic of those engaging in Big Days, and drivers and passengers alike are urged to use great caution while driving.
- Counting individual birds is optional.
- Please note that there is no special Big Day form. Standard checklists, such as WSO's ***Wisconsin Birds—Field Checklist***, may be used.
- It is critical that all unusual species—whether they are early or late sightings, or rare species—be completely documented. Reports of rarities are subject to review by the WSO Records Committee.
- Completed Big Day results should be sent directly to Randy Hoffman, WSO Bird Reports Coordinator [see inside front cover of this issue for address], and clearly marked as a Big Day report. All 2009 Big Day reports must reach Randy Hoffman no later than 15 January 2010 to be included in *The Passenger Pigeon* report on Big Days 2009.

Kim Kreitinger is currently living in San Francisco where her resident yard birds consist of California Towhees, Pygmy Nuthatches, and Lesser Goldfinches. However, she and her husband plan to return to the Dairy State in the near future. Kim formerly worked for the Department of Natural Resources in Wisconsin and PRBO Conservation Science in California.

50 Years Ago in *The Passenger Pigeon*

I'm guessing that most WSO members are aware that the Society owns almost 300 acres at Honey Creek in Sauk County, but how many know that the Society also owns 60 acres of prairie-chicken habitat in the Buena Vista Grasslands in Portage County? In the lead article in this issue entitled *Our Investment in the Prairie Chicken*, Dan Thompson discusses WSO's involvement with the Greater Prairie-Chicken. The 20- and 40-acre parcels continue to be managed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The article concludes with the following sentence, "We have had to be content with erecting a monument to the Passenger Pigeon—let us lose no time in creating a living memorial to the magnificent wildlife heritage embodied in the Prairie Chicken."

The Fall Season report for 1958 prepared by Charles Kemper noted these rarities: (American) White Pelicans at Madison, a (Greater) White-fronted Goose at Horicon, a Swainson's Hawk at Cedar Grove, 3 Parasitic Jaegers at Superior, a Glaucous Gull at Port Washington, a (Northern) Mockingbird banded at Chippewa Falls, and a Hooded Warbler in Madison.

Sam Robbins authored a paper entitled *Fun With Fall Warblers* where he covered: When to look for them, Where to look for them, How to approach them, How to identify them, and Call notes are helpful. He concluded the paper with, "But if one is sufficiently enterprising in his pursuit of fall warblers, and honest enough to let pass as question-marks birds that are imperfectly seen, he can enter whole-heartedly into one of the most exciting and challenging phases of bird-watching!"

Excerpt from Vol. 21(2), 1959 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.

Ring-billed Gull *by Delia Unson and Chuck Heikkinen*

Lessons for the Seasons: Summer 2008

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Dateline: FLOODS

Several locations in southern Wisconsin experienced unprecedented floods in 2008. Compared to other flood events in Columbia County, roads that were raised due to the floods of 1993 had higher water and were again impassable. Structures like the boardwalk at Parfrey's Glen—built to withstand 1993 type flood events—were totally destroyed and turned into a mangled mess miles downstream.

My assigned breeding bird survey route did not happen for the first time ever. I made a fateful choice on 1 June. The day was perfect for conducting a breeding bird survey, calm winds and clear skies, but the migration lingered excessively late this year and I was concerned too many migrants would be still moving through. I rationalized that I had plenty of time. The next few weeks had near uninterrupted rain with amounts in the double digits. The first thirteen stops on my route were under water and would remain that way for three straight weeks. When the road finally became passable, high winds prevented me from conducting the survey.

A minor inconvenience for me, but many persons had flooded homes and fields with their livelihood at stake. A great human tragedy was unfolding. Birders responded thoughtfully with compassion for those affected, and also with concern regarding the fate of the birds. Comments on chat lines question the impacts the flood events would have on bird populations. Several bloggers tossed out numbers like millions of nests were lost. Those numbers were high, but were they anywhere near accurate?

Obviously, if the flood pulse at Parfrey's Glen ripped out boardwalks, the streamside nests of Louisiana Waterthrush were totally destroyed. The water level where the Baraboo River entered the Wisconsin River flowed over the interstate highway. Only the tallest shrubs remained above the water line. Any nest on the ground or low shrubs was lost. Low spots in fields and normally dry depressions filled to become lakes. Birds attempting to nest in these locales were unsuccessful unless their nest floated.

The list of bird species that probably had extremely poor nesting success in southern Wisconsin is indeed long. Moist grassland species such as Henslow's Sparrow, Eastern Mead-

owlark, and Sedge Wren must have had very poor productivity. Likewise shrub-nesting species, especially those along streams, such as Song Sparrow, Gray Catbird, Common Yellowthroat, and Yellow Warbler probably experienced a similar fate. Floodplain forest species that nest on or near the ground had poor prospects. Even species with floating nests, such a Forster's Tern, experienced total nest failure due to wave action.

These anecdotal observations still do not get at the question of how many. To do so, we must first get an idea of how much habitat is involved. The Wisconsin DNR has a wetland inventory that can be used to get relative good approximations of the habitat acres of different wetland types. By looking at the data from a sample of the most heavily affected counties—Marquette, Green Lake, Fond du Lac, Columbia, Dodge, Dane, and Jefferson—about 66,800 acres of narrow leaved persistent vegetation with water present much of the growing season is found. This long-winded definition is a close surrogate for cattail marsh and some types of sedge meadow.

Next, we must get an idea of how many birds utilize the habitat. To get a picture of the effects of the past summer's flood, I chose three species very closely tied to the aforementioned habitat for further examination.

Marsh Wren: This species is almost a cattail specialist, but also is found in dense bulrush stands. Fortunately, we have great local data from Horicon Marsh (Manci and Rusch, 1988). Their studies found an estimated 13,000 singing males in the federal portion of the marsh. The mean density was 2.2 males per acre in the wetter portions of the marsh. Marsh Wrens are well known for the polygamous breeding strategy. Many males will have more than one female, whereas others will end up being bachelors. Regardless of the numbers of females each male has, the estimated population is close to being equally divided between male and female.

Nests are most often constructed 1 to 1.5 meters above the sediments. In nearly every case, the floodwaters of 2008 were well above 1.5 meters above the sediments. However, in some case the cattail mats have the propensity to float with the rising waters. No one has an estimate of how many acres of the cattail habitat actually floated in 2008. To be very conservative in estimates and surmising that the number of acres that floated was relatively low <25% of the 66,800 acres of habitat, figuring an average clutch size of 4.2 eggs per nest, and the 2.2 birds per acre, a total of 494,000 eggs most likely were lost.

Sora: This species is almost a wetland specialist, but also is found in drier portions of the wetland spectrum. Again, we have great local data from Horicon Marsh (Manci and Rusch, 1988) and from nearby Iowa (Tanner and Hendrickson, 1956). The Horicon study found a minimum of 4000 one year and 5000 the next in the federal portion of the marsh. The Iowa study found a mean of .58 birds per acre in the study site.

Nests are most often loosely woven structures found just above the water. In probably more cases than Marsh Wren, the floodwaters of 2008 would have inundated almost all of the Sora nests, especially since they utilize the drier portions that most assuredly

would not float. No one has an estimate of how many acres of Sora habitat actually floated in 2008. Surmising that the number of acres that floated was even lower than for Marsh Wren maybe 10% of the 66,800 acres of habitat, figuring an average clutch size of 9.4 eggs per nest, and the 0.29 female birds per acre, approximately 161,000 eggs most likely were lost.

Swamp Sparrow: This species is found in very dense numbers in cattail, but also is found in sedge meadows, bulrush stands, and occasionally in reed canary grass monocultures. From data found in Mowbray (1997), we have data mean densities of .42 males per acre in the wetter portions of the marsh. Swamp sparrows are known for multiple breeding attempts per year with an average of 2.9 nesting attempts per female.

Nests are most often constructed anywhere from near the ground to 30 to 60 centimeters below the canopy. In nearly every case, the floodwaters of 2008 were well within the canopy and many times they completely covered all above-ground vegetation. Similar to Marsh Wrens, nests were in floating cattails. Again, no one has an estimate of how many acres of the cattail habitat actually floated in 2008. Surmising that the number of acres was relatively low <25% of the 66,800 acres of habitat, figuring an average clutch size of 3.9 eggs per nest, 0.42 birds per acre, and 2.9 nesting attempts per season, a total of 238,000 eggs most likely were lost.

Using published data on just three of the species affected by the floods of 2008 over 800,000 lost eggs could be reasonably estimated. The ballpark estimate of millions of lost eggs is not an exaggeration. The impacts may be felt for years. Virtually no recruitment combined with annual mortality should result in many fewer wetland breeders in 2009. Or, will movement from more marginal habitats into unoccupied south central wetlands make up the difference? Birders are encouraged to participate in wetland bird surveys this coming year to help answer the mysteries.

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Summer Tanager *by Dennis Kuecherer*

The Summer Season: 2008

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Few observers included comments about the summer's weather in their reports. Most likely they were still repairing sandbags to keep the flood waters at bay. Karen Etter Hale's description of the effects of the June deluge conveys the agony many southern Wisconsin birders encountered. "Madison Audubon's Faville Grove Sanctuary is in the Crawfish River floodplain above Milford. The flood crested 13.5 feet above flood stage about 16 June. Most of the native and restored prairies were under water for three weeks, killing the above-ground vegetation that wasn't above the water. Tree Swallow boxes were above the water, all other nests were wiped out." Daryl Tessen reported above-normal precipitation from Appleton with 7″ in June and 6″ in July. Farther north incidental observations indicate below-normal rainfall in the far northwest.

Observers recorded 265 species during the season. The account that follows gives details on 162 of them. An additional 95 species that are not mentioned were common and widespread enough to be reported from more than 25 counties. The remaining eight species, generally noted in 10–25 counties, are listed here, along with the number of counties in which each was recorded: Northern Shoveller (18), Green-winged Teal (15), Virginia Rail (17), Herring Gull (23), Whip-poor-will (19), Brown Creeper (19), Yellow-headed Blackbird (19), and Brewer's Blackbird (22).

Rarities

Observers located several rarities during the season. Among these, five species are worthy of special note. The first was Wisconsin's third Lewis's Woodpecker, which spent a few weeks in the City of Superior's Municipal Forest. This bird obligingly perched on the tip-top of the same spruce for several minutes each day. Second, another rare hummingbird, a Green Violetear stayed for four days at a feeder in Richland county. Third, Kirtland's Warblers were documented fledging young in Wisconsin for the first time in recorded history. Fourth, the Chuck-will's-widow returned to the same location for the fourth consecutive year. And finally, the flooded fields in Sauk County provided suitable habitat for a wandering Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (Figures 1 and 2).

Although less rare, a number of additional species, some out of season, helped to make this an interesting

Figures 1 and 2. Black-bellied Whistling Duck found in flooded field in Sauk County on 28 July 2008 by Dan Jackson.

summer season: Western Grebe, Snowy Egret, White-faced Ibis, Mississippi Kite, King Rail, nesting Black-necked Stilts, American Avocet, Willet, Whimbrel, Hudsonian Godwit, Marbled Godwit, Red-necked Phalarope, Laughing, Little, and Lesser Black-backed Gulls, Black-backed Woodpecker, Loggerhead Shrike, White-eyed Vireo, Northern Mockingbird, Yellow-throated, Bay-breasted, and Worm-eating Warblers, and Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow.

Other Features of the Season

The season's obvious event was the unprecedented flooding in southern Wisconsin. The effect of the weather displaced thousand of wetland nesting birds. Juxtaposed to the massive human loss of property, livelihood, and shelter was the development of shallow marsh or mudflat habitat in places where none had been recorded for decades, if ever. Conflicting emotions ran through birders' minds while observing thousands of shorebirds near Spring Green with permanently ruined houses in the background. To most birders' credit, the chatter on the hotlines regarding rare bird sightings was almost always placed in the somber context of the events that affected so many human lives.

Efforts by an individual and a group foray provided exceptional insights into breeding bird populations. Andrea Szymczak walked fifteen different survey locations in the Southern Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest. She walked 41 miles of trail and documented the number of singing males. The results were eye-popping with these totals from the highest single visit count: Acadian Flycatcher (61), Blue-headed Vireo (24), Chestnut-sided Warbler (27), Black-throated Green Warbler (27), Blackburnian Warbler (1), Cerulean Warbler (10), Kentucky Warbler (1), and Hooded Warbler (167). Another phenomenal count was done in one day. The birding "smackdown," an event developed by Craig Thompson, brings together several birders for an intense survey of a property in one morning. This year's event was held on 800 acres of private land in Crawford County. These results were similarly eye-popping: Warbling Vireo (52), Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (62), Gray Catbird (76), American Redstart (146), Rose-breasted Grosbeak (67), and Orchard Oriole (8).

County Coverage

The "Contributors and Cited Observers" section keeps expanding every year due to expanded use of the data submitted to ebird. This summer's list contains 134 names, which was much above the average for the past few decades. With respect to this year's single- and multiple-county reporting forms and the data submitted to ebird, every county had at least forty species recorded. Tom Soulen, past summer season editor, articulated the value in providing summer reports and bemoaned the paucity of reports from certain counties. This year every county has at least one report.

Do these data mean we collectively are adequately covering the breeding bird populations of the state? I concur with Tom's past sentiment that "we should be careful not to produce a

very short list of non-reporting counties, lest that assertion mislead readers to think that we in fact have legitimate claim that we do a great job of providing pretty comprehensive coverage of most of our counties." I further propose that even in the best-covered county, we are still barely scratching the surface of our knowledge regarding breeding birds. As exemplified by the intense surveys presented earlier, we can do a much better job of understanding our breeding bird populations.

Until we have data, such as many European countries, which reveal the population of a species in the country within small statistical errors, we cannot do acceptable bird conservation. The paradigm stills holds that for the most part people bird ten months of the year for fun and they bird in June and July for conservation. Everyone is encouraged to participate in single or group counts. Furthermore, if you are a landowner, it should be your moral obligation to know the breeding bird populations on your land.

REPORTS
(1 June–31 July 2008)

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck—First reported from Sauk County on 28 July (Jackson, Kavanagh, Prestby, and Schilke) the bird remained through 30 July (Gustafson and Heikinnen). See "*By the Wayside*" for a sample of the accepted reports.

Trumpeter Swan—Reported from 10 counties with highest numbers from Burnett 6 June (Persico) with 12 birds and 5 June from Polk (Maercklein) with 11 birds.

Gadwall—Up to 10 were in Dodge County 17 July (Frank). Also noted in Columbia (West), Dane (Bucci), Fond du Lac (Tessen), Manitowoc (Sontag), Marathon (West), Ozaukee (Frank), Sauk (Prestby), and Walworth (Moretti) Counties.

American Wigeon—Observed only in these counties: Bayfield (Oksiuta), Burnett (Camerson), Dodge (Schilke), Racine (Szymczak), and Sauk (Kavanagh).

American Black Duck—Observers reported this species from 7 counties: Ashland, Dodge, Fond du Lac, Florence, Milwaukee, Sauk, and Sheboygan.

Northern Pintail—Reported from 6 counties: Columbia, Dane, Douglas, Jefferson, Sheboygan, and Walworth.

Canvasback—These 3 counties provided the season's only observations: Brown (Rickaby), Fond du Lac (Graham), and Ozaukee (Frank).

Redhead—At least 40 birds were recorded 11 July Dodge County (Paulios). Additional observations were from nine counties.

Ring-necked Duck—At least 21 birds were recorded 6 June Burnett County (Persico). Additional observations were from 13 counties.

Greater Scaup—Observers found late migrants 5 June Milwaukee (Mooney), 13 June Manitowoc (Prestby), and 19 June Kewaunee (Schilke) Counties.

Lesser Scaup—Five June records with the latest being 25 June Douglas County (Svingen). Additional sightings came from Ashland (Rickaby), Columbia (Betchkal), Kewaunee (Schilke), and Marinette (Campbell) Counties.

Bufflehead—After no reports in 2007, June birds were reported from Columbia, Kewaunee, Lafayette, Marathon, Oconto, and Trempealeau Counties.

Common Goldeneye—Found in Ashland/Bayfield (Brady), Door (the Lukes; a brood), Manitowoc (Sontag), Racine (Gustafson), Sawyer (Polk; a brood), and Sheboygan (Evanson) Counties.

Common Merganser—Reported only from Douglas County 2 June (Svingen), and Ashland County 28 July (Paulios).

Red-breasted Merganser—At least 20 birds were reported 2 June Milwaukee County (Huf). Additional observations came from 7 counties.

Ruddy Duck—A tremendous increase in reports over 2007 with observations in 19 counties including more than 100 seen in Fond du Lac County 26 July (Schiffman).

Gray Partridge—Reported 6 June Grant (Mueller), 8 June through 19 July Manitowoc (Sontag), and 26 July Columbia (Hoffman) Counties.

Ruffed Grouse—Nearing the peak of the population cycle this species was reported from 34 counties this year as compared to 11 in 2007.

Spruce Grouse—No reports this year.

Sharp-tailed Grouse—Reported only from Burnett County (Haseleu, Paulios).

Greater Prairie-Chicken— No reports this year.

Northern Bobwhite—The five reporting counties are down significantly from recent years. Reported from Dane (A. Hoschbach), Iowa (Duerksen), Kenosha (Willard), Rock (Yoerger), and Sauk (A. Holschbach) Counties.

Common Loon—Paulios observed 3 birds on Lake Monona (Dane County) 15 July and Tessen has an individual 29 July in Columbia County. None of the remaining 23 reporting counties were unusual.

Red-necked Grebe—Ziebell counted 11 on 22 June in Winnebago County. Other reports came from these counties: Burnett (Haseleu), Columbia (Hoffman), Dodge (Graham), and Florence (Kavanagh).

Western Grebe—Romano found an individual 6 June in Dane County.

American White Pelican—With the record flooding in southern Wisconsin and especially at Horicon Marsh, the pelicans appeared to scatter after failed nesting attempts. The number of reporting counties rose (19 this season). Prestby reported 150 at Horicon Marsh 23 July, Cameron reported 150 at Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge 7 June, and Betchkal reported 250 at Grand River Marsh (Green Lake/Marquette).

Double-crested Cormorant—Ziebell estimated no less than 5000 to be present in Winnebago County on 30 June. This species was reported from 28 additional counties.

Least Bittern—Noted in 10 counties this season; a report from 26 July in Buffalo County (Hoffman) was the farthest north.

Great Egret—Reported from somewhat more counties (27) than in recent years. Ziebell estimated 210 birds in Winnebago 22 June and Schilke estimated 200 birds at Horicon NWR on 22 July.

Snowy Egret—Tessen first reported a bird in Fond du Lac County 14 July, and it was subsequently seen by many others until last observed 27 July by Wood and Webb.

Cattle Egret—Two reports with at least fifteen in Winnebago County (Ziebell and Kavanagh) and 3 in Columbia County 7 June (Betchkal).

Black-crowned Night-Heron—Ziebell tallied 700 in Winnebago County on 22 June. Up to 20 birds were noted in Dodge County on 22 July (Schilke). Observed in 11 counties in all.

White-faced Ibis—An exceptional year with two different sightings. The first sighting was at the Wind Lake Sod Farms 16 and 17 June (Winze, Szymczak, and Gustafson). The second sighting of a group of up to five birds was first reported by Mueller and Schilke and subsequently seen by dozens of other birders. The identification first came in as both Glossy and White-faced Ibis; however, through thorough photographic examination the species identification was best determined to be White-faced and Plegadis sp. (possibly a hybrid). See "*By the Wayside*" for descriptive details of the Wind Lake bird.

Mississippi Kite—On the 8th of July Temple had a bird coursing the lowlands along the Wisconsin River in Sauk County. See "*By the Wayside*" for a description of this sighting.

Sharp-shinned Hawk—Reported only from a higher than normal 18 counties.

Northern Goshawk—Noted from 11 counties; a Jackson County record 14 June (West) was the farthest south.

Red-shouldered Hawk—The reports were up over previous years with birder sightings from 21 counties.

Merlin—Observed in these 8 counties: Ashland, Door, Douglas, Florence, Oconto, Shawano, Vilas, and Washburn.

Peregrine Falcon—Reported from Buffalo, Dane, Dodge, Fond du Lac, Grant, Jefferson, Manitowoc, Milwaukee, Racine, Sauk, and Sheboygan Counties.

Yellow Rail—No sightings reported this year.

King Rail—Matteson reports a DNR sponsored marsh bird survey had 7 individuals in 6 counties (Dodge, Columbia, Green Lake, Monroe, Racine, and Wood) recorded before 8 June and not after the flood events. Additional reports came from early June in Columbia and Wood Counties, and a 23 July report from Manitowoc County (Sontag).

Common Moorhen—Noted in four counties: 9 birds 24 July Dodge (Forchione), 12 birds 26 July Fond du Lac (Schiffman), 2 birds 3 July Jefferson (Kollath), and 4 birds 14 June Walworth (Howe).

American Coot—Mueller estimated 500 birds in Dodge County 19 July. Additional reports came from 32 counties.

Black-bellied Plover—Three June departures noted: 1 June Fond du Lac (Martin), 2 June Dane (Paulios), and 17 June Douglas (Brady) Counties.

American Golden Plover—Three early June birds reported: 1 June Columbia (Prestby, and Fissel), 1 June Fond du Lac (Martin), and 2 June Columbia (Paulios) Counties.

Semipalmated Plover—Lingering spring birds were noted in nine counties with the latest being 11 June Marathon County (West). Some returning birds began to appear in several areas as early as 6 July Manitowoc County (Scheiman), with other arrivals stretching over the next 1–2 weeks. As often is the case, there are birds difficult to classify as coming or going, including a bird in Brown County 30 June (Mead).

Piping Plover—A summering bird noted 3 June Marinette County (Campbell). Matteson documented six nests in Ashland and Marinette Counties that produced 11 young, a slight decrease over 2007. A returning bird spent 11 July in Sauk County (Prestby, A. Holschbach, and Schilke).

Black-necked Stilt—An incredible successful nesting at Horicon Marsh along the Main Dike Road (Dodge County). Four birds, two adults and two young, were seen by dozens of birders 20 July to the end of the period (many observers). Another bird documented, see "*By the Wayside,*" by Gustafson 7 July at Vernon Marsh, Waukesha County.

American Avocet—More reports than usual, including late spring and early returning birds from these counties: 2 June saw a movement with birds in Burnett (Haseleu), Racine (Fare), and Columbia (Romano) Counties. The first fall migrants were 8 July Sauk (A, Holschbach), 15 July Fond du Lac (Leasa), and 25 July Dodge (Huf) Counties.

Solitary Sandpiper—Extensive mudflats along recently flooded rivers provided excellent habitat this year with reports coming from 24 counties including 27 birds seen along the Bark River, Jefferson County (Graham).

Greater Yellowlegs—The high count for returning birds was 35 on a mudflat in Columbia County 26 July (Hoffman).

Willet—Two tardy spring migrants were reported; one 2 June Ashland (Evanson) and the other 13 June Manitowoc (Prestby) Counties.

Lesser Yellowlegs—An exceptional summer migration with highs of 650 birds estimated 29 July Richland County (Tessen) and a carefully counted 448 birds also in Richland 26 July (Kavanagh).

Upland Sandpiper—Reported from 13 counties nearly statewide in distribution. A maximum of 3 birds was the highest number reported.

Whimbrel—The last two spring migrants were found 1 June at the Harvey/DM Ponds in Columbia County (Fissel, Thiessen, Doyle).

Hudsonian Godwit—Three birds seen 1 June Fond du Lac County (Kavanaghs, Heikkinen, and Martin).

Marbled Godwit—The last spring migrant was found 2 June at the Harvey/DM Ponds Columbia County (Romano, Paulios).

Ruddy Turnstone—Seven counties held birds 1 and 2 June. The last spring bird was seen 11 June Winnebago County (Ziebell). The first fall bird was seen 6 July Manitowoc County (Scheiman). Also seen 31 July in Waukesha County (Gustafson).

Sanderling—Several birds seen on the big lakes 1–3 June. More unusual were early fall birds arriving 15 July Manitowoc (Sontag), 18 July Milwaukee (Epstein), and even more unusual an "inland' sighting 26 July Columbia (Hoffman) Counties.

Semipalmated Sandpiper—The latest spring departures were noted 7 June Columbia County (Betchkal). The largest concentration was 75 birds seen 1 June in Fond du Lac County (Kavanagh). Dozens of counties reported small numbers of fall migrants.

Least Sandpiper—The largest concentration was 40 birds on 5 July, Dodge County (Tessen).

White-rumped Sandpiper—The late-departing birds were 7 June Columbia (Betchkal), 8 June Manitowoc (Sontag), and 9 June at another spot in Columbia (Schilke) Counties.

Baird's Sandpiper—Only one late spring report 1 June Fond du Lac County (Martin). Seen in fall migration in Columbia (Hoffman), Iowa (A. Holschbach), Portage (Kavanagh), Richland, Sauk (A. Holschbach), and Waukesha (Gustafson) Counties.

Pectoral Sandpiper—A mediocre fall movement with only one large flock, 125 birds, 29 July Richland County (Tessen) being reported.

Dunlin—The last spring report: 13 June Marinette County (Prestby).

Stilt Sandpiper—A phenomenal fall migration with reports from 11 counties, but more important were the numbers of birds reported. The high count was 26 July Columbia County with 48 birds sighted by Hoffman.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper—Early migrants were seen 29 July in Richland (Tessen and Romano), and 31 July had birds in Iowa (A. Holschbach) and Waukesha (Gustafson) Counties.

Short-billed Dowitcher—The last spring migrant was seen 2 June in Columbia County (Paulios). The first birds of the fall season appeared in several southern counties during the first week of July. Birds were observed in 9 coun-

ties overall. The highest number of individuals reported from one location was 100, in Dodge County on 23 July (Prestby).

Wilson's Snipe—Observed in 24 counties with 10 individuals seen 27 July in Dodge County (Frank).

American Woodcock—Reported from 34 counties, which is well above the long-term average.

Wilson's Phalarope—Reported from 11 counties and most interesting was a description from Horicon Marsh of recently fledged or young birds with juvenal plumage patterns still evident in early July.

Red-necked Phalarope—The one bird present near the stilts was observed by dozens of birders 26–31 July, Dodge County.

Bonaparte's Gull—Present throughout the season along Lake Michigan. The highest estimate was 400 individuals 26 June Kewaunee County (Schilke). One report came from the north on 4 June in Iron County (Brandt).

Little Gull—Only a single bird reported 26–29 June Kewaunee County (Schilke and Wood). See "*By the Wayside.*"

Laughing Gull—Sontag and Prestby saw a bird in Manitowoc County 13 June. See "*By the Wayside*" for a detailed description of the sighting.

Franklin's Gull—A remarkable 11 birds were tallied 7 June in Dane County (Yoerger). Additional summer records came from Jefferson (Yoerger), Manitowoc (Martin), and Racine (Syzmczak and Gustafson?) Counties.

Lesser Black-backed Gull—Reported 2 June in Manitowoc (Sontag) and 13 June in Sheboygan (Prestby) Counties.

Glaucous Gull—A wayward bird summered in Manitowoc County (Sontag).

Great Black-backed Gull—The only report was from 13 June in Sheboygan County (Prestby).

Caspian Tern—Present through most or all of the entire season in 16 counties with 168 individuals reported at Europe Bay in Door County 8 July (Epstein).

Black Tern—Several observers reported numbers of this species in places where they have not been seen before. Was this pattern instigated by the June floods?

Common Tern—Reported from 16 counties, including many inland reports. Paulios observed 50 in Ashland County on 28 July.

Forster's Tern—Present through the season in Manitowoc (J. Holschbach) and Winnebago (Ziebell) Counties. Matteson reported nearly all nesting failed. Other reports came from these counties: Ashland, Columbia, Dodge, Fond du Lac, Grant, Jefferson, Kenosha, Marathon, Marquette, Sheboygan, Walworth, and Waukesha.

Eurasian Collared-Dove—Observed in Grant County 1 June, in the Patch Grove area (Kavanaghs) and Arlington in Columbia County (Tessen and Yoerger) where this species has been found previously.

Barn Owl—Reported in Winnebago County 1 July (fide Schultz).

Eastern Screech-Owl—Only reports came from Columbia, Dane, Waupaca, and Rock (where Yoerger reported 5 individuals) Counties.

Long-eared Owl—the only report came from the Tom Lawin Wildlife Area in Chippewa County 12 June (Cameron).

Short-eared Owl—No reports this season!

Northern Saw-whet Owl—June observations came from Ashland (Hoffman), Bayfield (Paulios), and Iron (Hoffman) Counties.

Common Nighthawk—This year's 19 reporting counties is remarkably average compared to an annual 18-20+ since 2000. Ten individuals reported 31 July in Jefferson County may have been early migrants (Graham).

Chuck-will's-widow—For the fourth straight year the chuck has made its appearance near the correctional facility in eastern Jackson County. Jackson described well one that he heard in Jackson County on 6 July. See "*By the Wayside.*" The last auditory response was 4 July (Otto).

Green Violetear—A stunning male visited the Forcione feeder in Vernon County 7–10 July. Photographs through the screen were still identifiable.

Lewis's Woodpecker—Wisconsin's third record spent many days in the same area of the Superior City Forest (Douglas County), often

Figure 3. Scissor-tailed Flycatcher that visited the home of Ron Klunk near Plymouth in Sheboygan County from 4–7 July 2008.

perching on top of the same tree. Several observers provided excellent descriptions, see "*By the Wayside.*"

Black-backed Woodpecker—Birds were found in Florence (Atwater), Forest (Prestby and Schilke), Iron (Hoffman), and Vilas (Peczynski) Counties.

Olive-sided Flycatcher—Reported from 10 southern counties in early June, indicating a good migration in the first few days of the month. The last southern report was 12 June Racine County (Kennedy). Mid- to late June breeding season records came from 11 northern counties. Intriguing is a 22 July report from Chippewa County (Cameron) that could have been a southern edge-of-range breeder or an early southbound migrant.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher—Seven southern counties reported birds 1–2 June. Thirteen northern counties had probable breeding activity including a phenomenal 25 tallied along Sheltered Valley Road 13 June in Forest County (Prestby).

Acadian Flycatcher—Reported from 20 counties north to Marinette. Sixteen individuals were tallied 30 June Waukesha County (Szymczak).

Alder Flycatcher—As is usual, most of the 42 reporting counties were northern. The highest tallies of individuals were 16 individuals 13 June in Forest (Prestby), and 15 more, also on 13 June, in Vilas (Prestby) Counties.

Willow Flycatcher—Reported from 27 counties, including these northern ones: Florence (Atwater), Marathon (West), and St. Croix (Yoergers).

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher—Photographed (Fig. 3) 6 July near Plymouth, Sheboygan County (Klunk).

Loggerhead Shrike—Two reports, the first was 5 July Rock County (Yoerger), and the second (Figures 4 and 5) seen by dozens of birders was first reported 25 July in Richland County (West).

White-eyed Vireo—Two reports, the first from the Albany Wildlife Area in Green County was seen 7 June through 20 July (Mooney, Evanson, and Yoerger). The second bird was found in Grant County 19 June (Mueller).

Bell's Vireo—Seen and/or heard by at least 14 observers in these counties: Dane, Green, Iowa, La Crosse, Richland, and Winnebago.

Yellow-throated Vireo—Among the 38 reporting counties, the most northern ones were Florence and Vilas. A concentrated birding "smackdown" near Barnum in Crawford County reported 19 birds (fide Thompson).

Blue-headed Vireo—Six birds in Waukesha County 30 June were unusual (Szymczak). The 16 other reporting counties were all northern ones. Especially significant was a tally of 14

Figure 4. This immature Loggerhead Shrike in Richland County was photographed by Alan Stankevitz on 28 July 2008.

Figure 5. The adult Loggerhead Shrike was also photographed by Alan Stankevitz on 28 July 2008 at the same location on Dillon Road in Richland County.

birds, made while conducting a breeding bird survey in old-growth hemlock hardwood forest in Iron County 26 June (Hoffman).

Philadelphia Vireo—A late migrant was seen 11 June at the Ken Euers Wildlife Area in Brown County (Atwater).

Gray Jay—Three reports: 2 June in Langlade (Richmond), 15 June in Iron (Brady), and 18 June in Forest (Peczynski) Counties.

Carolina Wren—Reported from 6 locations in four counties: Adams (Helland), three in Dane (Martin, Kavanagh, and Evanson), Dodge (Klein), and Grant (Mueller).

Winter Wren—Among the 27 reporting counties were two separate locations in Sauk County (Heikkinen and Pfeiffer).

Marsh Wren—Ziebell found 780 in Winnebago County 22 June. Reported from 28 counties in all.

Golden-crowned Kinglet—Noted in 14 counties within normal range.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet—Reported only from five counties: A southern edge of the summer range sighting 31 July in Langlade County (Richmond) was not hard to explain, but a 16 July bird at Havenwoods in Milwaukee (Vargo) is well beyond any known summer range in the state. Also reported in more typical locations: Ashland, Douglas, and Iron Counties.

Eastern Bluebird—We tend not to get from observers information that lets us track with any confidence how well this species is doing. The number of reporting counties varies for multiple reasons. This year's number is 37, not far from the average of recent years.

Swainson's Thrush—Five late migrants were reported from southern Wisconsin in early June with the latest being 8 June Sheboygan County (Turley). Reports from normal breeding range came from Ashland (Hoffman), Douglas (Hoffman), Forest (Kavanagh and

Peczynski), and Iron (Brandt) Counties. During a bird survey in an old-growth stand in Iron County 26 June Hoffman found 7 singing males.

Wood Thrush—Reported from 34 counties, including as far north as Bayfield County (Brady).

Northern Mockingbird—Reported from four counties: Bayfield (Brady), Monroe (E. Wood), Ozaukee (Frank), and Walworth (Moretti).

Blue-winged Warbler—Of the 36 reporting counties, Burnett (Persico) and Oconto (Szymczak) were the most northern. An amazing 29 birds were recorded on the 4 June "smackdown' in Crawford County (fide Thompson).

Golden-winged Warbler—Of the 26 reporting counties, Sauk (Pfeiffer) and Jackson (Prestby) were the most southern. No reports from anywhere in the Kettle Moraine, where they formerly bred in abundance.

Tennessee Warbler—Lingered until 1 June in Door (the Lukes), Ozaukee (Uttech), Pierce (Persico). Rock (Matney), and Sauk (Fenske) Counties. Another bird seen 4 June in Monroe County (E. Wood) and the last spring migrant was 9 June Columbia County (Dischler). A 2 July bird in Bayfield County was too early for a fall migrant and may have summered.

Nashville Warbler—High estimates came from Prestby on a northern swing where he recorded 50 birds each on 13 June in Forest and Vilas Counties.

Northern Parula—Reported from 16 counties with most being the more obvious northern ones. A late bird was observed from the Crawford County survey 4 June and another 13 June Milwaukee County (Bontly). A high count of 18 territorial males was recorded 26 June during a survey of an old-growth stand in Iron County (Hoffman).

Chestnut-sided Warbler—Reported from 49 counties. While the majority of the reports came from northern counties, there was a good representation from more southern locations, such as Racine (Kennedy), Walworth (Szymczak), and Milwaukee (Bontly) Counties.

Magnolia Warbler—This season's records came from 20 counties with apparent late migrants in the southeast in early June as exemplified by 1–2 June reports from Ozaukee (Uttech), Racine (Kennedy), and Waukesha (Gustafson) Counties.

Cape May Warbler—The only observations were in Ashland, Florence, Forest, Iron, Langlade, Marinette, Oneida, and Vilas Counties.

Black-throated Blue Warbler—Reported from these counties: Florence (Kavanagh), Forest (Schilke), Iron (Hoffman), Langlade (Richmond), Marinette (Kavanagh), Menominee (Hoffman), and Oconto (Szymczak).

Yellow-rumped Warbler—Reported from 28 central and northern counties with the farthest south 7 June at Point Beach State Forest Manitowoc County (Rice).

Black-throated Green Warbler—Most reports came from 29 central and northern counties; however, significant numbers were found throughout the breeding season in Walworth and Waukesha Counties (Szymczak).

Blackburnian Warbler—Reported in 21 counties with a 14 June sighting in Waukesha County (Szymczak) obviously the farthest south. The highest daily survey total was 48, which came from the old-growth stand in Iron County (Hoffman).

Yellow-throated Warbler—Reported only in June from Wyalusing State Park in Grant County (Kavanagh and A. Holschbach).

Pine Warbler—Present through the season in 27 counties, with the highest total of individuals being 44 on 24 June in Vilas County (Baughman).

Kirtland's Warbler—Intense volunteer surveys recorded 20 birds in six counties with 12 sightings confirmed by USF&WS personnel. The effort resulted in documenting five nests that had two nests fledge ten Kirtland's juveniles, two were predated, and one raising a cowbird chick (Trick).

Prairie Warbler—For the first summer in over a decade—no reports!

Palm Warbler—Reported from these more typical counties: Douglas, Florence, Forest, Iron, Oneida, and Vilas. Late migrants were recorded 1 June in Ozaukee (Frank) and Rock (Matney) Counties. An apparently early fall lost and wandering bird was found 20 July Manitowoc County (J. Holschbach)

Bay-breasted Warbler—Evanson found the apparent last migrant in Ashland County on 3 June.

Blackpoll Warbler—Late migrants through 5 June were found in these counties: Ashland (Oksiuta), Bayfield (Evanson), Florence (Kavanagh), and Milwaukee (Frank).

Cerulean Warbler—The farthest north were several birds 16 July in Pepin (Hoffman). Other reports came from 13 additional counties.

Black-and-white Warbler—Reported from 42 counties overall.

Prothonotary Warbler—Observed in 10 counties: Buffalo, Crawford, Dane, Dodge, Grant, Green, La Crosse, and Sauk. Surveys along the Sugar River in Rock County 1 June produced 22 singing males (Jakoubek, Matney, and Yoerger).

Worm-eating Warbler—Two reports this season: the first a 7 June sighting in Baxter's Hollow (Sauk County), the day before the deluge (Bucci), and second an intriguing sighting of an adult feeding a fledged bird 16 July Pepin County (Hoffman).

Northern Waterthrush—Sixteen counties reported this season, well above average.

Louisiana Waterthrush—All reports came from Burnett, Dane, Fond du Lac, Grant, Iowa, Portage, Sauk, and St.Croix Counties. An interesting hypothesis is to estimate the nesting success in light of this year's floods.

Kentucky Warbler—There were reports from 5 counties: Crawford, Dane, Grant, Iowa, and Waukesha.

Connecticut Warbler—Apparently nested in Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, and Vilas Counties. A bird 1 June in Milwaukee County (Golden-McNeal) was a good candidate as a late migrant. Another bird heard 6 June in Wood County (Hoffman) may have been heading north or staying.

Hooded Warbler—Reported from 19 counties. A systematic survey of the Southern Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest in June by Szymczak recorded 167 birds. Compared to the 1970s when a bird in summer would be found in "By the Wayside," the increase in Hooded Warbler numbers has been no less than phenomenal.

Wilson's Warbler—Continuing the pattern of late migrating warblers, this species was seen in the following counties 1 - 6 June: Bayfield, Burnett, Door, Milwaukee, and Ozaukee.

Canada Warbler—Noted in 22 counties with several apparent late migrants found 1–6 June in Dane (Bub), Milwaukee (Mooney), Ozaukee (Boyle), and Waukesha (Gustafson) Counties.

Yellow-breasted Chat—Five individuals reported from 4 counties; Dane (Matney), Grant (Kavanagh and Mueller), Green (Paulios), and Walworth (Szymczak).

Field Sparrow—Among the 38 counties from which these were reported, the highest number of individuals was 21 on 23 July in Dane County (Schoenwetter).

Lark Sparrow—A. Holschbach found 11 on 11 July at the Spring Green Preserve in Sauk County. Other county reports came from: Burnett, Dane, Iowa, Jackson, LaCrosse, Marathon, Monroe, and Pepin Counties.

Grasshopper Sparrow—Among the 25 reporting counties, the highest number of individuals was 27 from the Wazee Tailings Area in Jackson County 29 June (Hoffman).

Henslow's Sparrow—Noted in 21 mostly southern counties. The highest number of individuals reported was 20 in Iowa County on 1 July (Prestby).

Le Conte's Sparrow—Reported from 8 mostly northern counties: Bayfield (Paulios), Burnett (Prestby), Douglas (the Kavanaghs and Cameron), Jackson (Hoffman), Oneida (Kavanagh), Rusk and Taylor (Betchkal), and 8 birds on 14 June in Wood (West).

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow—The only report came from Burnett County (Haseleu, Paulios, and Prestby).

Lincoln's Sparrow—Reported from 12 northern counties and one southern county, 6 June in Fond du Lac County (Betchkal).

White-crowned Sparrow—Present at the Lion's Den Ozaukee County 1 June (Frank), Schlitz Audubon Center Milwaukee County 2 June (Huf), and Monroe County 14 June (Epstein).

Dark-eyed Junco—Noted only in these counties: Ashland, Douglas, Eau Claire, Marinette, Menominee, Vilas, and Washburn.

Figure 6. This male Orchard Oriole visited the feeder at the home of Claire Romanak in Athens (Marathon County) Wisconsin where she took its picture on 10 July 2008.

Dickcissel—A good year, with reports coming from no less than 37 counties, among them such far northern ones as Bayfield and Oneida. Most places reported a few individuals with the exception being 28 birds tallied at the Wazee Tailings Area in Jackson County 29 June (Hoffman).

Eastern Meadowlark—Again this year, the number of counties in which birders found this species (35) was twice the number from which Western Meadowlarks were reported.

Western Meadowlark—Observers found this species in 17 counties this year, which is up from recent summers seasons. Most interesting are the reports from Florence County 5 June (Kavanagh) and Milwaukee County 19 June (Gustafson).

Orchard Oriole—Noted in 34 counties this season. This number is much higher than previous summer seasons (Fig. 6).

Purple Finch—Observed in 29 mostly northern counties. Less typical of previous summers were reports from Waukesha (Szymczak) and Waupaca (Uslabar) Counties.

Red Crossbill—Reported from these counties: Ashland, Bayfield, Douglas, Florence, Forest, Iron, Monroe, and Sauk.

White-winged Crossbill—Brady found a single bird 18 June in Douglas County, which turned out to be a precursor of good movement in July. These counties reported sightings: Ashland and Bayfield (Brady), Burnett (Paulios), Iron, (Brady), Jackson (Otto), and a significant southern sighting on 29 July in Waukesha (Didenko).

Pine Siskin—Reports from 10 counties, up slightly over the past few summers.

Evening Grosbeak—Reports from 10 counties, up by several counties over the past few summers.

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"By the Wayside"—Summer 2008

These reports of rare species include Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, White-faced Ibis, Mississippi Kite, Black-necked Stilt, Laughing Gull, Little Gull, Chuck-Will's-Widow, and Lewis's Woodpecker.

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*)

29 July 2008, in a flooded field just off Dyke Road, Sauk County—The bird was previously reported on WisBirdnet and I first noticed it due to its bright red bill. The bird was standing very upright and looked very tall compared to the nearby Mallards. The entire belly and undertail of the duck was black and the legs also looked to be reddish. The face of the duck was gray and the neck, chest, and back were brownish. When it was standing and swimming the bird's white wing stripe was easily seen, but the few times that the bird flapped its wings this white wing stripe was like a bright flash of light.—*Aaron Holschbach, Arena, WI.*

30 July 2008, in a flooded field just off Dyke Road, Sauk County—After over an hour of trying to locate the BBWD (Black-bellied Whistling-Duck) in the large group of Mallards, teal, and other ducks, a duck with a white horizontal stripe above its flanks was spotted. A few minutes later, it took flight and circled the end of the pond, landing close to where it started. Especially in flight, but later feeding and swimming, the following traits were observed. The neck was very long for a duck and the pink legs extended well beyond the tail in flight. The undersides were black from behind the breast to the tail tip. A long white stripe extended horizontally above the flanks (seen especially as a white, wide wing stripe in flight). The top, breast, and lower neck were chestnut, becoming more gray on the face. The bill was a bright salmon color. In flight, the wings were broad and rounded, three tone in color (chestnut fore edge, white median stripe, and black trailing edge). Because of lighting, the colors were somewhat muted, but still distinctive.—*Dennis Gustafson, Muskego, WI.*

WHITE-FACED IBIS (*Plegadis chihi*)

17 June 2008, South Wind Lake Road, Racine County—The Ibis was finally located in the midst of numer-

ous Mallards resting on a high area in a flooded corn field. Noted immediately was its long down-curved bill and heron-like body. At times when the light hit it just right, the rich chestnut coloring of the body and glossy greenish back and wings were clearly seen. The legs were usually hidden by topography or vegetation, but were some medium dark color. The white around the face was easily noted, even at a distance. It was a thick border, completely surrounding the face and eye. Because of the distance and lighting, facial color could not be determined, other than it was pale in color. The bill appeared a pale gray and was down-curved like a curlew, but thicker. Eye color could not be determined. Size was intermediate between a Green Heron and a Great Egret (both seen nearby).—*Dennis Gustafson, Muskego, WI.*

Mississippi Kite (*Ictinia mississippiensis*)

8 July 2008, on the Leopold Memorial Preserve, Sauk County—At first glance (while I was driving), the bird appeared to have a falcon-like silhouette (long pointed wings, relatively long square tail). After stopping the car and observing with binoculars, I noted the bird's size and plumage coloration. The bird had nearly all gray plumage. The bird showed wing and tail molt, and there was obvious blotchiness to the otherwise gray plumage, which would be consistent with a year-old bird completing its first molt. When it turned, I could see light-colored upper secondaries.—*Stanley Temple, Mazomanie, WI.*

Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*)

7 July 2008, at Vernon Marsh off Frog Alley, Waukesha County—These two birds were extremely long-legged and slim. They were black on the wings, back, back of neck, crown, and a loop which encircled the eye. The remaining parts were white. The bill was needlelike, longer than the head, black in color, and very straight. The very long thin legs were red and extended well beyond the short white tail in flight. A white "V" extended up the back like the smaller dowitchers (seen in flight). No nearby birds were directly available for a size comparison, but they were much larger than Killdeers seen later.—*Dennis Gustafson, Muskego, WI.*

26 July 2008, south of the Main Dike Road, Horicon Marsh, Dodge County—I used a 20–60×, 80mm spotting scope for this observation from about 250 yards. One adult was sitting on a nest and the other moved around the large pond throughout the day, affording great views. The two chicks were recently hatched, very tiny yellow fuzzballs that frequently disappeared in the grass near the nest.

The adults had black back, mantle, nape, and crown. The underparts, forehead, throat and the front of the face were white. The black on the face had a large white circular spot above the eye. I judged the bird on the nest to be less glossy black than the other adult, so this was probably the female. The legs were very long and pinkish-red. The bill was black, thin, and very long. When an ibis landed on the grassy spit holding the nest, both adults attacked and convinced the ibis

to leave.—*Tom Wood, Menomonee Falls, WI.*

Laughing Gull (*Leucophaeus atricilla*)

9–13 June 2008, Manitowoc Harbor Containment Area, Manitowoc County—During the time frame of 9 June to 13 June, at least two Laughing Gulls appeared in the Manitowoc Harbor/Containment area. One was an adult in summer plumage. The other was a first year subadult individual. Their (the Laughing Gull's) identity is fairly easy as they stand with Ring-billed Gulls and are slightly smaller. For some reason, the Franklins' Gull that also appears in the same area is most often found with the Bonaparte's Gulls, initialing the "ID by association." But, the Laughing Gull, like the Franklin's Gull, is secured in its identification by several critical field marks:

1. The posture of the bird. The Laughing Gull stands parallel with the ground and head/neck at right angles to the body;
2. The Laughing Gull is slightly smaller than the Ring-billed Gull not noticeably [smaller] like the Franklin's Gull;
3. The Laughing Gull's bill seems long and "drooped." The bill of the Franklin's Gull never gives that appearance. Instead it is much like an enlarged Bonaparte's Gull bill;
4. The primaries on the Laughing Gull are black above and below and are not marbled by white. Only the young subadult Franklin's Gull can have all black primaries but is less extensive;
5. The "cap" is different in its appearance in the subadult bird. The cap of the Laughing Gull is more complete with white on forehead and throat leading to a mottled area around the eye. The Franklin's Gull subadult has a distinct white forehead and throat open to the neck and breast.—*Charles Sontag, Manitowoc, WI.*

Little Gull (*Hydrocoloeus minutus*)

29 June 2008, Kewaunee Harbor, Kewaunee County—While [the bird was] resting on the water among Bonaparte's gulls, there was very little plumage difference to separate the first summer Little Gull from the first summer Bonaparte's Gulls. Similarities included pale gray backs, white underparts, a mottled partial black crown, white forehead, and dusky face with a prominent black spot behind the eye, black wing tips, without white spots on the primaries, and dark eyes and bill.

The Little Gull was easily spotted because of its smaller size. Additionally, the bill was shorter and petite in comparison. Closer study of the face revealed a thicker white orbital ring on the Bonaparte's, which made the face appear different between the two species.

Eventually, the Little Gull flew, and the dark carpal bar was more prominent than had been expected when viewed on the folded wing, noticeably thicker, and forming an "M" pattern that was not visible on the Bonaparte's Gulls.

The white tail had a black terminal band that was broken in the middle. The center of the underwings had a large black patch, indicating some sec-

ond year plumage was forming there.—*Tom Wood, Menomonee Falls, WI.*

Chuck-Will's-Widow (*Caprimulgus carolinensis*)

6 June 2008, near the intersection of Bartos and Kirch Roads, Jackson County—A single bird was heard on 6 June 2007 in Jackson County about 8 miles east of Black River Falls. The bird was located near the intersection of Bartos Road and Kirch Road, which is a mile or so north of Hwy. 54. At 9:30 PM on 6 June 2008, the bird was located about 100 yards southwest of this intersection. It called from that location for about 10 minutes before flying across Kirch Road and then calling from near the road to the southeast of the intersection. After another 5–10 minutes, it flew to the northwest of the intersection and flew directly over us.

This bird was identified by call but was also seen. We saw both this bird and a Common Nighthawk that flew by in the twilight after sunset. This bird was larger than the Common Nighthawk with broader wings and larger slightly tear drop shaped tail (the tip was rounded and broader than where the tail met the body).

In mnemonic terms, the call sounds like "chuck Weoo WEEooo" (and therefore like the bird's name). It also made a noise that sounded like a wing clap.—*Daniel Jackson, Chaseburg, WI.*

Lewis's Woodpecker (*Melanerpes lewis*)

8 June 2008, Billings Park, Superior, Douglas County—Got conclusive but rather non-satisfactory looks at the woodpecker. It was several hundred meters away atop a spruce tree, facing away, and in somewhat harsh contrasting light. This was a robin-sized (or just slightly larger) woodpecker with medium-length, heavy-ish black beak and solid black wings, back, and tail. Much of the head was black but the face was dark reddish (though this was barely discernible at the distance of observation) and the back of the neck sported a distinct gray collar. Unfortunately, I never saw the undersides of the bird as it was facing away the whole time. When the bird flew on several occasions, its broad wings and slow deliberate wingbeats gave it a crow-like appearance, as described in field guides, etc. It flew with slight but light undulations (unlike other woodpeckers), occasionally digressing to erratic flycatching on the wing. After only a few minutes it flew inland out of sight and could not be relocated.—*Ryan Brady, Ashland, WI.*

30 June 2008, Billings Park, Superior, Douglas County—[This was] a dark woodpecker, larger than a black-backed, but smaller than a Northern Flicker. Although the bird appeared black, a greenish hue could be seen reflecting from the full sun as the bird preened, stretching a wing. A white "collar" could easily be seen, showing a sharp contrast to the dark head and body. The bird also revealed a white "bib" as it turned its body while preening. When it flew from its perch, its wings appeared to be overly broad and wide for its body. All observations while [it was] perched were with a 60-power scope. Flight observation was with 10 × 42 binoculars. Also in flight, wingbeats were slower and steadier than those of other woodpeckers.—*Daryl Christensen, Montello, WI.*

WSO Records Committee Report Summer 2008

Jim Frank

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The WSO Records Committee reviewed 23 records of 11 species for the summer 2008 season, accepting 17 of them. An additional four records from summer of 2007, one from the winter of 2007-2008, and one from spring 2008 were reviewed and accepted. Included in these reports were Wisconsin's third record of a Lewis's Woodpecker and fifth Green Violetear record.

Accepted Records

Black-bellied Whistling Duck—
#2008-043 Sauk Co., 28 July 2008, D. Jackson; 29 July 2008, A. Holschbach; 30 July 2008, Gustafson.

This duck was as large as nearby Mallards, but longer-legged and longer-necked. In flight, it appeared longer-winged than proportional for a duck. Most striking was the black breast and belly contrasting with a chestnut-brown back and wings. This brown color extended across the upper breast and up the hindneck and crown as well. The face and ventral neck were gray-tan, but the chin and throat were almost whitish in color. An obvious white eye-ring was reported and the edge of the folded wing had a white stripe. The bright red-orange bill had a gray tip. Equally as striking were the bright pink legs. The overall shape of the head was described as triangular, similar to that of a Ring-necked Duck.

In flight, the chestnut brown back and leading portion of the wing contrasted with black primaries and secondaries because of a broad white patch through the base of the outer secondaries and inner primaries. Also noted were the long legs trailing beyond the tail.

Of importance in establishing this bird to be a wild rather than an escaped bird, one observer was able to discern that the hallux was present on the foot and no leg band was evident.

This is Wisconsin's fifth record.

Plegadis ibis (species?)—
#2008-045 Dodge Co., 26 July 2008, T. Wood.

This ibis had a green gloss to an otherwise chestnut body and wings. The head was indicated to be dull

brown with some light streaking on the head. The long, decurved bill was brown as were the legs. The distance precluded the determination of eye color and there was no evidence of any white border to the facial skin. Appropriately, the observer concluded species identification of this non-breeding bird was not possible.

White-faced Ibis—

#2008-046 Waukesha Co., 17 June 2008, Gustafson.

#2008-047 Dodge Co., 23 July 2008, S. Cutright (photo).

This small heron-sized bird was chestnut brown-bodied, with dark green gloss on the wings. The long, down-curved bill was grayish. The facial skin could be seen on the photograph to be very pale on the Waukesha Co. bird, but pinkish on the Dodge Co. bird. The eye of the photographed Dodge Co. bird was reddish. There was a relatively thick edging of white around the facial skin and eyes.

The photographed bird was also accompanied by a non-breeding plumaged ibis of uncertain species.

With only one brief report of a Glossy Ibis that would appear to more accurately describe an ibis not identifiable to species, there is no submitted evidence to substantiate the numerous reports of Glossy Ibis at Horicon NWR in late July. There were breeding plumaged White-faced Ibis present, but the non-breeding plumaged birds appear, at least in many cases, to have been presumed to be Glossy Ibises because they weren't breeding plumaged White-faced Ibises. Those non-breeding plumaged individuals would be more accurately left as Plegadis ibises of uncertain species. If there were in fact breeding plumaged Glossy Ibises present at the same time and exact pond as the White-faced Ibises, no photographic or written documentation to support those reports has been submitted. Further information would be welcome.

Mississippi Kite—

#2008-048 Sauk Co., 8 July 2008, Temple.

A falcon-like bird was noted in flight. It was felt to be larger than a Merlin, but smaller than a Peregrine. The long, pointed wings, long, squared-off tail, and overall gray plumage were noted. As it banked, the upper secondaries exhibited white patches.

Black-necked Stilt—

#2008-050 Waukesha Co., 7 July 2008, Gustafson.

#2008-051 Dodge Co., 22 July 2008, Tessen; 26 July 2008, T. Wood.

This tall, thin shorebird was as large as a Greater Yellowlegs with even longer legs. The top of the head, back of neck, back, and wings were black; the throat, front of neck, breast, and belly were white. The thin, straight bill was black; the long thin legs were pink.

Of note is the report on 26 July of two fuzz-ball chicks tended by the pair of Black-necked Stilts. This is Wisconsin's second reported nesting of this species, both in Dodge County.

Laughing Gull—

#2008-052 Manitowoc Co., 9–13 June 2008, Sontag.

These gulls stood out from the slightly larger Ring-billed Gulls because of their darker gray mantle, a

partial gray hood across the back of the head of the subadult bird, and the black hood of the adult bird. The primary tips were black and extended proportionately longer behind the body than those of the Ring-billed Gulls. Thin white eyelids were outlined by the partial gray hood or black head in each of the two birds. A black-reddish bill, relatively long compared to those of the Ring-billed Gulls was noted to down turn slightly at the tip.

The lack of white in the wing tips, the longer, drooped bill, and close to Ring-billed Gull size rule out a Franklin's Gull. Interestingly, the observer indicates a fairly consistent habit of species associations for Laughing and Franklin's Gulls. Almost invariably, the vagrant Laughing Gull will associate itself with Ring-bills when standing at rest, while the Franklin's Gulls will seek out the Bonaparte's Gulls.

Chuck-will's-widow—

#2008-053 Jackson Co., 6 June 2008, D. Jackson; 21 June 2008, T. Wood.

Heard in comparison to a Whip-poor-will, this bird had a four syllable call in contrast to the three note Whip-poor-will. The three note Whip-poor-will call is emphatic on the first and third notes. The Chuck-will's-widow call has a low first note, not heard at a distance, and an emphasis on the third note.

Green Violetear—

#2008-054 Vernon Co., 9, 10 July 2008, Forchione (photo).

This bird was photographed through a screen door, but there is enough evidence to show this was a fairly large hummingbird; green overall with dark blue evident on the side of the face and upper breast. The tail is wide and dark blue-green in color. Yellowish undertail coverts were demonstrated, separating this bird from other species such as Sparkling Violetear and Magnificent Hummingbird.

This is Wisconsin's fifth record.

Lewis's Woodpecker—

#2008-055 Douglas Co., 17 June 2008, R. Johnson (photo), 18 June 2008, Brady; 30 June 2008, Christensen.

This robin-sized woodpecker exhibited a black back, wings, and tail along with a heavy straight black bill. A greenish cast was evident to the black plumage in bright sunlight. Dark reddish color was evident on the flanks, a bit brighter red on the face, the breast was faintly grayish, and the hind collar was gray.

This is Wisconsin's third record.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher—

#2008-057 Sheboygan Co., 6 July 2008. Klunk (photo).

The pale gray body, the long, dark, forked tail, and pink patches by the axilla were all obvious in these close range photos.

Old Records Accepted

Black-necked Stilt—

#2007-022 Fond du Lac Co., 1, 21, 28, and 29 July 2007, T. Wood.

#2007-022 Dodge Co., 15 July 2007, T. Wood.

#2008-058 Green Lake Co., 30 May 2008, Patterson (photo).

These long-legged shorebirds were black on the crown, nape, mantle, and

wings, but white on the throat, foreneck, breast, and belly. A thin black bill and pink-red legs were also apparent.

Laughing Gull—

#2007-064 Dane Co., 1 June 2007, T. Wood.

This gull was slightly smaller than a Ring-billed Gull, but had a darker gray mantle, a complete black hood, and solid black primary tips extending beyond the tail. The upper and lower eyelids were white, the bill light red, and the legs red-brown. The characteristic long bill with drooping tip was also evident.

Black-legged Kittiwake—

#2007-020 Sheboygan Co., 2 June 2007, T. Wood.

This gull was a little smaller than a Ring-billed Gull. The light gray mantle was broken by a black carpal bar. The white head was broken by a black spot behind the eye and a yellow bill. The relatively short legs were black. A black terminal band on the white tail was noted.

Hoary Redpoll—

#2008-006 Ozaukee Co., 13 January 2008, S. Cutright.

Seen in a flock of Common Redpolls, this bird was slightly larger, very pale overall, with a white rump blending with the white back, and a seemingly white head. The streaking on the flanks was very thin, only one streak could be seen on the undertail coverts. The bill wasn't as small as expected for a Hoary Redpoll. The combination of larger size, and extreme paleness of this particular bird seemed to fit the Greenland race of Hoary Redpoll.

Records Not Accepted

Black-bellied Whistling Duck—

#2008-043 Sauk Co., 29 July 2008.

The brief report didn't suggest that this was even a duck and didn't indicate any size or shape distinctions about the bird's neck, legs, nor wings. It was reported that this bird had a black belly, red bill and legs, and white wing patches. This information could also be used to describe an Egyptian Goose.

Glossy Ibis—

#2008-044 Dodge Co., 22, 25 July 2008.

Again, a brief report indicated that 3 ibises were seen, two of them were discerned to have a reddish face and eyes with white feathers around these areas. The third bird was felt to have brown eyes and no white facial markings. No description of the rest of the birds' plumage was offered except an assertion that the suspected Glossy Ibis had a brown bill, the White-faced a gray bill.

The fairly distant observation of these ibises made accurate assessment of the eye color and facial markings difficult. The absence of red/pink eyes and facial skin and lack of any white edging to the facial skin and eye area is consistent with the immature or non-breeding plumages of both White-faced and Glossy Ibises. It would thus make these non-breeding plumaged birds best left as unidentifiable at the species level.

In spite of numerous reports of Glossy Ibises at Horicon NWR in late July, this report is the only information submitted in an effort to support those identifications. At this point, it appears that the ibises present in this time frame were breeding plumaged

White-faced Ibises and non-breeding ibises of uncertain species; however, the timing of the appearance of two rare species in the same flooded area of Horicon in association with each other seems to stretch the imagination. Without any photographic evidence to the contrary, it seems the most plausible that these were all White-faced Ibises. Further evidence is welcome.

White-faced Ibis—
#2008-047 Dodge Co., 22, 25 July 2008.

This brief report didn't describe the birds other than to indicate that they "seemed to have eyes" and a red "plate" around the eyes. The white around the facial skin wasn't indicated to go around the eyes as should be characteristic of a White-faced Ibis, only to go around the facial skin. The brevity of the report doesn't consistently describe one or the other species.

Purple Gallinule—
#2008-049 Walworth Co., 14 June 2008.

This bird was flushed from a ditch while [observer was] driving. It was indicated to be heavy-bodied, but small headed. It had a red bill of undetermined size, yellow legs and a "brilliant purple" body.

The color description for the body would have been expected to be a bright blue rather than a "brilliant purple." It doesn't exactly fit the dark gray of a Common Moorhen either, but a more exacting color would be helpful in pinning down this identification of a very briefly seen bird.

Western Sandpiper—
#2008-056 Dodge Co., 19 July 2008.

Identification was based on a small sandpiper that was "different from Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers in the area." Overall it was grayish but had rusty scapular markings and a long, black, droop-tipped bill along with black legs.

The size relative to the other peeps present was not indicated. Specific mention of any spotting on the breast, rufous crown, or auriculars was not made. If this individual was in non-breeding plumage at this early date, it would be difficult to distinguish it from Semipalmated Sandpipers of similar plumage status. In addition, White-rumped Sandpipers can present a similar appearance.

Lewis's Woodpecker—
#2008-055 Douglas Co., 21 June 2008.

The few points mentioned involved a bird slightly larger than a Robin, but no shape/family was indicated. The only color traits reported were a white neck and red belly. Unfortunately the abbreviated look was rather distant.

With the passing of this summer season, the Records Committee will be replacing Bob Domagalski after 10 years of service. He probably doesn't want to know that in those 10 years he has read a few thousand documentations, in addition to chasing down numerous reports from various observers for the committee, compiling an exhaustive list of rare bird reports across the Midwest, and keeping a tally of record early and late dates for most of Wisconsin's migrant birds. His careful deliberations and timely evaluations will definitely be missed. It doesn't seem an adequate response

for all of his efforts, but Thanks Bob!!! Your work will be missed. [Bob was given the 2008 Silver Passenger Pigeon for his service to WSO.]

The 2009 Records Committee will find Ryan Brady joining Mark Korducki, Bill Cowart, Karl David, and Jim Frank.

Canada Goose *by Delia Unson and Chuck Heikkinen*

Mary Donald
12 April 1914–25 January 2009

When Mary Donald passed away quietly at her home early this year, just two and a half months shy of her 95th birthday, we lost a remarkable woman—an independent, energetic, fun-loving, broadly knowledgeable, and outspoken person whom friends valued for her lively and engaging personality and generous spirit and whom birders will remember for her many decades of devoted, extraordinary work on behalf of birds, birding, and ornithology.

Mary was born in Chicago and lived briefly as a child in Milwaukee. While still a young girl, she moved with her parents—among the first residents of what is now the Village of Fox Point—to the home she lived in the rest of her life. She loved to recall early experiences that shaped her devotion to birds and birding. As a school girl, for example, she spent idyllic summers at her aunt's farm near Winneconne in central Wisconsin. There she found herself drawn to the freedom and pleasures of rural life and developed the fascination with farm animals, plants, and wildlife of all sorts that she never lost. She remembered with enthusiasm her extended visits "up North," in the resort areas of Three Lakes and Eagle River, where, still a young girl, she memorized every road and learned to love Wisconsin's national forests and their bird life. And when, as a senior at Milwaukee-Downer College, Mary encountered a biology professor who introduced her to the systematic study of birds and their behavior—to ornithology—her course was set. Mary was hooked. For the rest of her life, her energetic devotion to the world of birds largely defined her.

What some may not know, however, is that Mary also filled her long life with an amazing range of intense interests and activities other than birding. She owned and rode horses, attended Illinois harness races and, farther afield, Triple Crown events. When she could no longer travel to the Derby, the Preakness, or the Belmont Stakes, she studied the racing forms, learned the odds, and rooted for her favorite horse on television. The last of her many trips abroad was to Ireland, but not for birding; instead she traveled with friends to tour the towns and countryside of her heritage, attended horse shows and even visited a stud farm. She knew and loved horses, and she also loved everything Irish.

Mary enjoyed theater and musicals, she loved to sing, she loved to laugh. She never missed the Circus train's arrival from Baraboo or the Fourth of July Circus Parade that followed. She cheered for the Packers. She attended every Wisconsin State Fair she

Mary Donald in 1986

could—ever the enthusiastic booster for DNR and WSO exhibits, an informed witness during the judging of the Clydesdales, and a perpetual fan of "those cream puffs!" For years, she and close friend Lisa Decker rose at dawn to claim early numbers at area estate sales, seeking just the right new piece for her treasured collections of wildlife art, antique furniture, gemstones, and miniatures. Mary raised vegetables in her side yard, nurtured her flower gardens, selected new trees with care. She had strong opinions, whether raising cucumbers or positioning a pink-flowering chestnut tree. She would charge unannounced into a friend's home with a plant "you just have to have in your garden."

Mary was comfortable virtually anywhere. She could walk into a rural crossroads bar with confidence, shake and cast dice, down a beer, and chat with everyone. She could drop in unannounced on Owen Gromme or on the dedicated raptor-banders at the Cedar Grove Ornithological Research Station. She took great pleasure in haute cuisine and knew area high-profile chefs by name. And they knew Mary Donald. She didn't mince words, compromise her expectations, or fail to praise a particularly good culinary effort.

And her Westies. Until she became too frail, Mary was inseparable from Nachas, Katie, and Snuffy, a succession of beloved, companionable pets—loyal sidekicks and eager birding tripsters all, and happy co-consumers of the potato chips and Pepperidge Farm "emergency" Goldfish cookies Mary always kept in her car. It wasn't just her own dogs, though, but the neighbors' as well, and the neighbors' children, who could count on a treat from "Miss Mary" if they came to her door, which they did, right up until the end, when she was home all the time in the care of her nurses.

For eight decades and more, Mary Donald lived intensely, enlivened and challenged by her interests and by the various groups of friends who shared them. But, in fact, from her childhood on birds came first. Even toward the end, any new Wisconsin sighting readily engaged and entertained her. During her last months, she could usually respond to the latest bird news with a cogent observation or an appropriate personal memory or anecdote or inquiry. "Who found that bird?" she'd ask. "Where was it?" "Well, of course," she'd say. And "Oh, good." Or "How is John?" "What's Daryl up to?" "Have you seen Noel?" "Say 'hello' to Bettie for me, to Bill, to Marilyn, to Mark."

Mary's birding contacts meant the world to her. She spoke repeatedly and affectionately of her friendships with Sam Robbins, Karl Priebe, George Archibald, Fred and Fran Hamerstrom. She recalled with pleasure her extensive travels, often on Massachusetts Audubon birding tours led by Peter Alden. She toured East Africa, Morocco, Ecuador, Mexico, India, Nepal, New Zealand, Australia, and more. She described with great pleasure and much detail annual visits she made in the 1950s with her mother, Bessie, and Lisa or with others to south Texas, centering her birding on Rockport, reveling in spring migrants and rare vagrants and benefiting from her association with the venerable Connie Hagar. "Connie," she'd say, "like Fran, was a woman who could show a few male experts a thing or two about birds!"

All of these ventures and her contacts with people who shared her deepest interests nurtured Mary, and it was inevitable that she would reach out in support of the people she admired and the causes she believed in. She was a longtime member of the Zoological Society of Milwaukee, the Milwaukee Public Museum, Milwaukee Audubon Society, and the Schlitz Audubon Center as well as Riveredge Nature Center and Manitowoc's Woodland Dunes Nature Center. She connected early with George Archibald and Ron Sauey as they created and developed the International Crane Foundation near Baraboo. For years she strongly supported the Tympanuchus Cupido Pinnatus Society of Wisconsin. Every autumn she visited the banders at Cedar Grove. The walk back through the woods became more and more difficult but her pleasure and approval never diminished. Many of these organizations honored Mary at one point or another with certificates of appreciation, plaques, and other awards, often at banquets and public events that generated welcome attention for them and increased public awareness.

Mary deserves special recognition here as well for her devotion to the Milwaukee Audubon Society. She was an active member from 1933 through most of her life. She was honored in 1971 and again in 1978 for coordinating and compiling data for the National Audubon Society's Milwaukee Christmas Bird Counts, a job she managed with characteristic energy and good cheer for over four and a half decades.

Mary's accomplishments also include some other pretty impressive numbers. She reported a lifetime total of 377 species for the state of Wisconsin as well as a lifetime Milwaukee County total of 343, still the highest number reported by anyone for any Wisconsin county. For thirty-one years she was solely responsible for the annual US Fish and Wildlife Service Breeding Bird Survey route from Port Washington into Sheboygan County and for twenty-five consecutive years she also ran two more near Crandon and Eagle River. Mary played her part well in this important volunteer program, now administered by the US Geological Survey.

On a more personal but equally important level, Mary will be remembered for facilitating contacts among birders and as Wisconsin's long-time point person for general birding information and up-to-date sightings. She funded the state's first telephone birding hotline and for years housed it in her basement, kept track of the information and, thus, maintained a tangible extension of the role she played so long and so enthusiastically as our best-known source for birding news.

But among all of Mary's commitments to environmental and birding groups, her efforts on behalf of the WSO were preeminent. She held her membership for over fifty years. She served as Secretary from 1948–50, and in 1979 as President. For twenty-seven years, from the summer of 1964 through fall 1991, she edited the Society's monthly newsletter, The Badger Birder—an awesome achievement! No computers then. No Internet. No email.

During most of this time, Mary traveled the state to attend WSO Board meetings. And long before recycling became all the rage, she gathered aluminum cans from public parks, paths, woodlands, and roadsides, tossing

them into bags in her trunk and channeling the earnings to the WSO. Late in her life, she still lived for the next convention, sometimes planning and organizing, sometimes simply enjoying the birding and the socializing. She believed in the Society's mission and remained for decades a committed, energetic, and positive spokesperson for the WSO.

So it's no surprise that, over the years, the WSO honored Mary. In 1974, she received the Society's Silver Passenger Pigeon Award. A Certificate of Appreciation followed eleven years later. And in 2001, Mary Donald had the honor of being named the first recipient of the WSO's Samuel Robbins Lifetime Achievement Award, a distinction she cherished as particularly meaningful for her, partly for its association with one of her dearest friends and mentors and clearly because of her devotion to the WSO itself.

Mary left an impressive legacy of achievements, awards, lists, records, friendships, and memories. Those of us who knew her well, though, will remember her for the wonderfully spontaneous delight she experienced and shared as she encountered a rare bird following a tough search or as she rediscovered the beauty of something more familiar. She expressed such joy when greeting an old friend, or finding a new one, or describing a passion flower, a fledgling in a nest, or a race well run.

That lively, strong presence which engaged and benefited so many of us in the birding community is gone. But Mary's tenacious, generous, spirited response to so much of life remains a tribute to her and a lasting gift to us all.

Roger Sundell
Cedarburg, Wisconsin

Magnolia Warbler *by Sandy Pfotenhauer*

About the Artists

Gary Krogman has been digiscoping birds in western Wisconsin for several years. He finds butterflies another favorite subject for his camera.

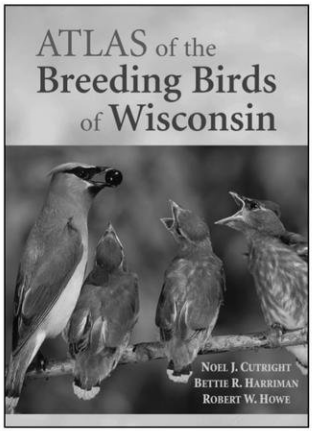
David Kuecherer, Art Editor for this publication, taught art at the high school level for 30 years and at UW-Oshkosh for several years. He currently combines his artistic talents with his love of birdwatching to paint birds. His work has been exhibited in "Bird in Art" and other shows in Wisconsin.

Major Dennis R. Kuecherer is retired from the US Army and from many years of doing field work for WDNR, the Department of Interior, and the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas. He has been an active birder most of his life, and enjoys drawing and photographing birds as well as counting them. He's an active member of the Riveredge Bird Club since he lives in Saukville.

Sandy Pfotenhauer grew up in the northern Kettle Moraine near Campbellsport and still calls that area home. She has been a member of WSO since 2000 and the Horicon Marsh Bird Club since 1995, serving on the club's board and as secretary. She is also a member of The Camera Clique in West Bend and enjoys combining her interests in photography and nature.

Delia Unson and Chuck Heikkinen have been birders for 15 years, and have been photographing birds since 2003. They live in Madison, birding and photographing both in and out of that city.

Black-necked Stilt *by Delia Unson and Chuck Heikkinen*



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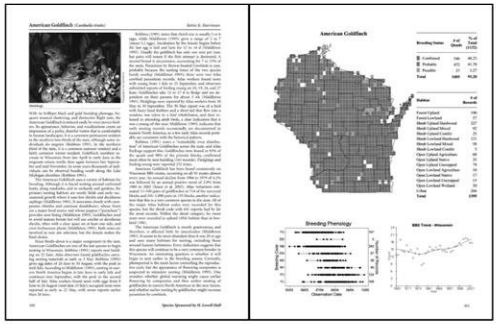

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