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# The *Passenger* PIGEON

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The  
*Passenger*  
PIGEON

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As a general guide to style, use issues after Vol. 60, No. 1, 1998.

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*Front Cover: For this issue's cover, Ryan Brady contributed his photo of a male Black-backed Woodpecker found near Clam Lake, Ashland County, in December.*

## **Advancing Research, One Project At A Time**

**O**ne year has passed since we approved our five-year strategic plan, which is intended to guide the work of WSO and provide a framework for accountability. At our July board meeting, we revisited our strategic plan to determine what we have accomplished thus far, and evaluate what our priorities are for the next year. It was a fascinating exercise and I was very pleased to see how well we are doing with achieving our objectives.

Research was identified as an important focus area during our strategic planning process, which should come as no surprise to most of our members. Research has been part of WSO's essence since its founding in 1939. Within our original governing documents, WSO's purpose is listed as: "... stimulate interest and promote the study of the birds of Wisconsin, especially in the field, and to bring together and permanently record accurate and authentic data relative thereto..." Although our mission has since expanded to include other worthy endeavors like conservation, outreach and more, research is still an important component of our work.

WSO contributes to ornithological research in many different ways. One way is to provide financial support through our Scholarships and Grants program. We sponsor several grants that support ornithological research by students and professionals, promote the study of birds by youth, enhance our knowledge of Wisconsin wetlands, and implement shorebird management activities. In just the last 5 years alone, WSO has awarded more than 50 grants!

In addition to our own grants program, we have provided financial and administrative support to several collaborative research projects. As you may remember, WSO funded two of the first transmitters for Project SNOWstorm. As part of this project, a team of researchers is deploying a series of cellular tracking devices on Snowy Owls from the Upper Midwest to the Atlantic coast to learn more about their winter activity and movements. In just two years time, they have gathered some fascinating data that will be useful for future conservation efforts.

We are major financial supporters of the second Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas. WSO spearheaded the first Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas in 1995, which represented the largest, coordinated field effort in the history of Wisconsin ornithology. For the second effort, WSO is working with Wisconsin DNR, Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory, Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative and other partners to assess the health of our breeding bird population. As of this writing, atlasers have already confirmed 211 breeding species, eight of which were not confirmed during the first atlas!

WSO also provided funding to train Wisconsin's first hummingbird bander - Mickey O'Connor. In 2014, Mickey banded 237 hummers to track their age, health and migration. Already her efforts have paid off as two of these hummingbirds have been recaptured. Last year, Wisconsin received notification of its

first Rufous Hummingbird recapture. An adult female was banded Oct. 19, 2014, in Ft. Atkinson and then recaptured in New Bern, North Carolina on Nov. 22, more than 1,000 miles away! In addition, a second Rufous Hummingbird that was banded in Mayville last August returned to the same homeowner's feeder this August! These data are helping us to better understand the status and migration routes of Rufous Hummingbirds in our state.

Much of this exciting research gets reported in this journal. Perhaps I am biased, but I believe *The Passenger Pigeon* journal to be one of the finest of its kind in the nation. It is becoming increasingly hard to find publications similar to ours that welcome contributions from professional and amateur researchers alike. With the launch of our peer review section, it is our hope that this journal will be even more attractive to representatives of the academic community, many of whom are restricted to publish only in peer-reviewed journals.

All of this leads me to introduce two new faces that will be helping us to strengthen our research initiatives. First, however, allow me to thank our former Research Chair David Drake, who served on our board from 2013–2015 and was instrumental in our 2014 research symposium. Also, a big thanks to Michael John Jaeger, former Scholarships and Grants Chair, who served in that role since 2010 and has decided to focus his efforts on the Vice President position (and upcoming Presidency).

I am pleased to introduce Matt Hayes as our new Research Chair and Aaron Greene as our new Scholarships and Grants Chair. Matt received his BS in Zoology from Eastern Illinois University in 1998. He started working with Sandhill Cranes as part of a long-term study at the International Crane Foundation in 2000. He completed his Master's of Science in Biology at the University of South Dakota in 2005. His MS thesis studied breeding biology of color-banded Sandhill Cranes in south-central Wisconsin by investigating long-term pair bond duration and separation and genetic relationships between an established pair and any offspring produced. He completed his Doctor of Philosophy in Animal Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2015. His PhD dissertation studied dispersal behavior of breeding and subadult Sandhill Cranes in south-central Wisconsin using radio telemetry and color band re-sightings and throughout the Eastern Population from Minnesota to Pennsylvania using genetic relationships among sample sites. Welcome, Matt!

Aaron Greene started birding when he was 10 years old and is still going strong. He participates in big days, breeding bird surveys, and particularly enjoys leading nature hikes when time permits. He earned his BS in Environmental Science with minors in chemistry and geography from Mansfield University in Mansfield, PA in 2001. In 2005, he acquired an MS in Environmental Science with a concentration in Applied Ecology from the School of Public and Environmental Affairs (SPEA) at Indiana University in Bloomington. Aaron worked as an ecologist at the Strawberry Plains Audubon Center in Holly Springs, Mississippi for two years where he led daily interpretive walks. He currently works as an Environmental Analyst and Review Specialist at the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin. Besides bird-watching, he enjoys fishing and nature study. Welcome, Aaron!

# 2014–2015 WGLBBO Waterbird Watch— Annual Summary Report

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## ABSTRACT

During the autumn of 2014 and spring of 2015, a technician from the Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory identified and counted migratory birds passing a location in Harrington Beach State Park on the Lake Michigan shoreline in Ozaukee County, Wisconsin. The species identified and counted are described herein.

## INTRODUCTION

The Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory (WGLBBO) began its lake watch on the Lake Michigan shoreline in Ozaukee County, Wisconsin, in 2012. A lake watch or sea watch is a traditional means of monitoring avian populations carried out by bird observatories around the world (Chambers 2005; Marchant 1977; Morss 2000; Sherony et al. 2000). We systematically monitored migratory bird species as

they passed our shoreline location at Harrington Beach State Park (HBSP). The following is a summary of observations and the data from the autumn 2014 and spring 2015 seasons. All birds seen from the watch location, six days per week, were identified and tallied.

## FALL 2014 SEASON

During the autumn season we conducted counts on 68 days between 2 September and 21 November. Each census began at, or just before, official sunrise and lasted for six hours. While the focus of the monitoring was on water bird species, all migrants observed were tallied in some fashion. Altogether 159,130 individuals of 173 species and other taxa were recorded with approximately 80 waterfowl and waterbird species represented in this total (see Table 1).

Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*—Figure 1) were on the move in Septem-

Table 1—Top Twenty Species Counted at WGLBBO Waterbird Watch (Fall 2014)

Species	Number Counted
Red-breasted Merganser	85,996
Double-crested Cormorant	23,630
Canada Goose	9,458
Ring-billed Gull	9,358
Greater Scaup	5,293
Herring Gull	3,689
Mallard	2,358
Lesser Scaup	1,606
Common Loon	1,261
Horned Grebe	1,155
Barn Swallow	1,098
Bufflehead	1,043
Yellow-rumped Warbler	991
Common Goldeneye	937
Ruddy Duck	894
Bonaparte’s Gull	821
Blue-winged Teal	807
Tundra Swan	756
Tree Swallow	743
Green-winged Teal	646

ber, with larger numbers not seen here later in the fall. In all, we recorded 9,458 individuals, approximately three-quarters of which were tallied during September. Nearby Horicon Marsh typically hosts large numbers of geese in the fall and may draw birds away from the lakeshore during migration. Our data support this, as the most common

flight pattern at Harrington Beach was flocks of geese coming off the lake and heading sharply inland. Still, there were many more geese recorded in fall compared to the spring census, perhaps due to the timing of the watch.

There was a smattering of Snow Goose (*Chen caerulescens*) and Cackling Goose (*Branta hutchinsii*) sightings during the watch; typically these birds were mixed in with flocks of Canada Geese. Beginning in early November there was a pulse of Tundra Swans (*Cygnus columbianus*), with almost all individuals heading east and southeast across the lake. Altogether we recorded 756 Tundra Swans.

Most dabbling ducks were seen in varying numbers throughout the fall and did not display sharply defined peaks in their migration. However, Blue-winged Teal (*Anas discors*) moved well during the early part of September with lesser numbers thereafter. Mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*—Figure 2) were seen throughout the fall and had their steadiest migration in late October and November, finishing the season within the top ten among all species (2,358 individuals). Though in much smaller numbers, Gadwall (*Anas*

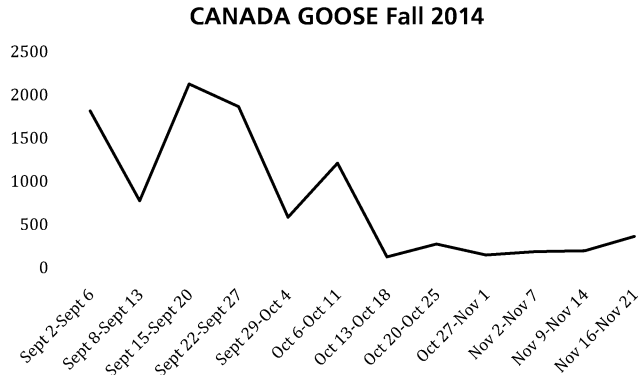


Figure 1. Temporal distribution of Canada Goose at HBSP (Fall 2014).

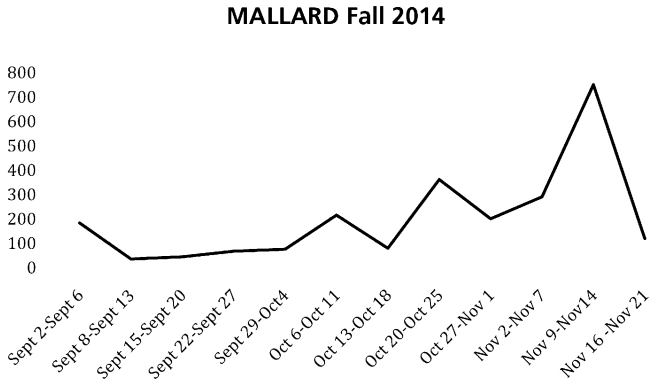


Figure 2. Temporal Distribution of Mallard at HBSP (Fall 2014)

*strepera*) movement was similarly timed, though peak migration was slightly more clustered in late October. Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca*) was the third most numerous dabbling species behind Mallard and Blue-winged Teal, but their migration followed the pattern of the group as a whole and lacked a sharp peak. Mallards were also the most numerous dabblers in spring 2014 but were seen in lesser numbers than in fall. Historically a much more common species in this part of its range, fewer than 100 American Black Ducks (*Anas rubripes*) were observed in fall.

As a group, diving ducks were not common until mid-October. As a whole, this group's migration was dominated by the massive passage of Red-breasted Mergansers (*Mergus serrator*—Figure 3) along the Lake Michigan shoreline from mid-September to the end of the watch,

Red-breasts were recorded on every count day, peaking at the end of October and the first week of November. The largest single day total was 11,378 on 5 November, and 20 days broke the 1,000-bird mark. The season total of 85,996 represents 54% of the overall

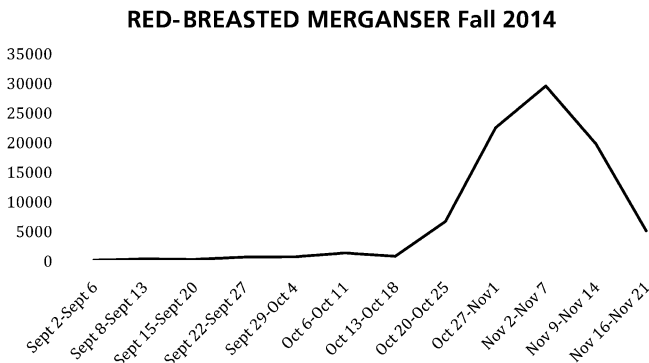


Figure 3. Temporal Distribution of Red-breasted Merganser at HBSP (Fall 2014)

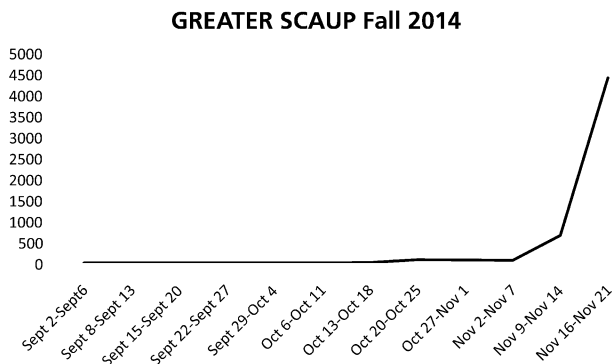


Figure 4. Temporal Distribution of Greater Scaup at HBSP (Fall 2014)

seasonal total. This tally is about three times that of the 2014 spring count. Interestingly, in spite of the lower spring numbers it was still the top migrant in that time frame as well.

Both Lesser Scaup (*Aythya affinis*) and Greater Scaup (*Aythya marila*—Figure 4) were well represented in the count as each finished in the top ten by season's end. The turnover in the numbers for the two species was evident with Lesser Scaup as the predominant scaup species in October and Greater Scaup dominating the last ten days of the count (mid-November). During the spring 2014 census Greater Scaup was the second most abundant migrant overall.

Perhaps the most dramatic fall-spring difference was observed in Long-tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*): we recorded over 11,000 individuals in spring 2014 followed by only a few hundred birds in fall 2014. This could be an effect of timing rather than a lack of detection as the bulk of Long-tailed Duck migration may have occurred after the completion of the watch on 21 November.

Horned Grebe (*Podiceps auritus*—Figure 5) was an abundant migrant this fall, totaling 1,155 individuals with a peak of

207 on 24 September. An Eared Grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*) also made an appearance during the first week of the count, one of the top highlights of the entire season. Nineteen Red-necked Grebes (*Podiceps grisegena*) were tallied as well.

While Common Loons (*Gavia immer*—Figure 6) were recorded throughout the fall, the bulk of their migration occurred from mid-October through the first week of November. The peak flight was 150 on 29 October and the season count closed at 1,261. There was also a trickle of Red-throated Loons (*Gavia stellata*) from early October onward, with the largest single day tally being eight birds on 11 October.

Much of the early part of the fall was dominated by a strong migratory movement of Double-crested Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax auritus*—Figure 7). This species moved steadily throughout September, peaking at mid-month, and continued in decent numbers into October before dwindling in the latter stages of the fall. The overall tally of 23,630 was the second highest total among all species. The largest single day count was 3,974 on 18 September.

Single American White Pelicans

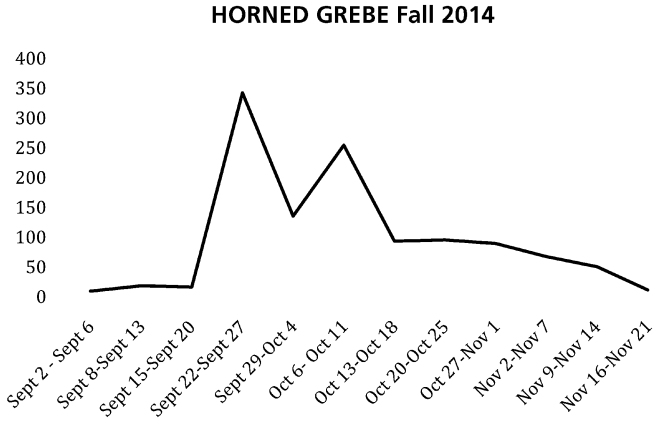


Figure 5. Temporal Distribution of Horned Grebe at HBSP (Fall 2014)

(*Pelicanus erythrorhynchos*) were noted on 16 September and 13 November. Just 16 herons of three species were observed: 12 Great Blue Herons (*Ardea herodias*), three Great Egrets (*Ardea alba*), and an American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*). There was a considerable movement of Sandhill Cranes (*Grus canadensis*) in the region during November but they were not well represented at the watch. Altogether the count total was 163, with most of those individuals tallied on 18 November.

Shorebirds were fairly well repre-

sented during the fall in terms of species diversity but not overall numbers. It may be that much of their migration took place before the start of the watch on 1 September. However, there were still some nice highlights, including two sightings of single Whimbrels (*Numenius phaeopus*) in early and mid-September, four sightings of American Golden-Plover (*Pluvialis dominica*), including six individuals in late September and early October, a single Purple Sandpiper (*Calidris maritima*) on 31 October, and four tardy American Avo-

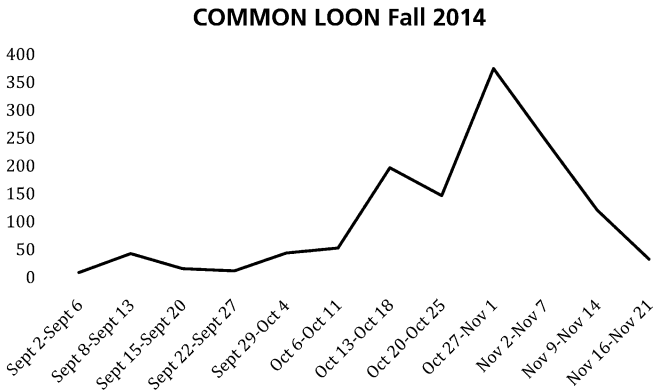


Figure 6. Temporal Distribution of Common Loon at HBSP (Fall 2014)

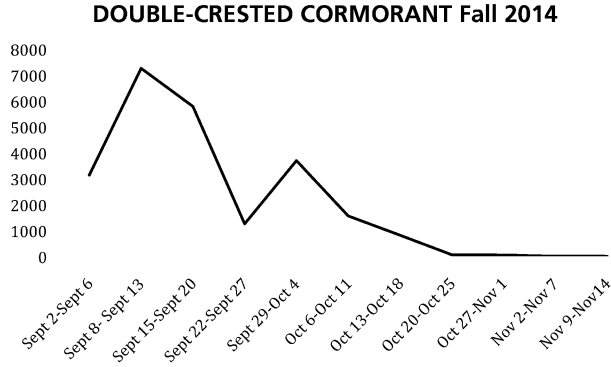


Figure 7. Temporal Distribution of Double-crested Cormorant at HBSP (Fall 2014)

cets (*Recurvirostra americana*) migrating well out over the lake on 4 November. Actively migrating American Woodcocks (*Scolopax minor*) were observed coming in off the lake on two dates: the individual seen 6 November was during the first hour of the count as might be expected, but the bird recorded on 22 October was seen at mid-morning after having presumably spent several hours flying over the lake during daylight. Sixteen species in all were recorded, with Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularius*) being the most numerous.

What may be surprising to many ob-

servers is the infrequent but detectable migration of jaegers that occurs along the west side of Lake Michigan. Ten Parasitic Jaegers (*Stercorarius parasiticus*) were recorded for the fall and generally were not very far offshore. Most of the sightings were in a stretch of damp, foggy weather with easterly winds during the second week of September. Wind direction may be the key element in the presence of these individuals so close to shore. Undoubtedly a fair number made the passage unobserved well out over the lake during fairer weather.

Seven gull and three tern species

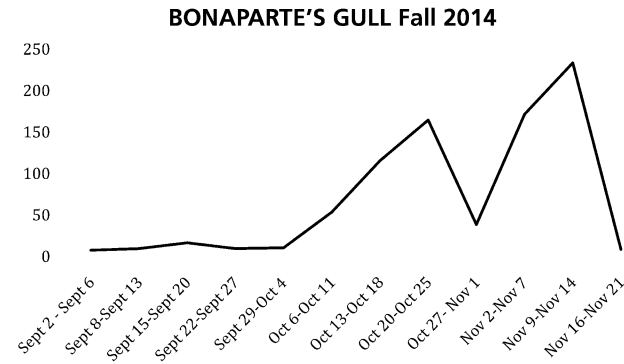


Figure 8. Temporal Distribution of Bonaparte’s Gull at HBSP (Fall 2014)

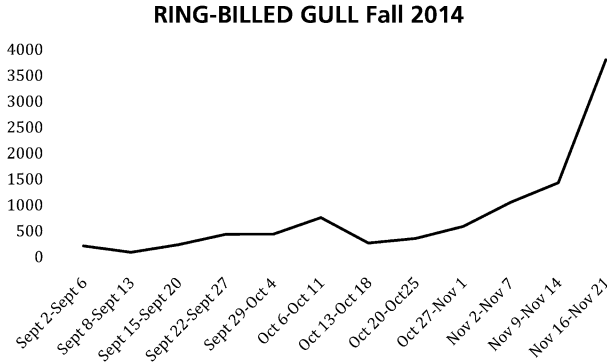


Figure 9. Temporal Distribution of Ring-billed Gull at HBSP (Fall 2014)

were noted during the fall watch. Bonaparte's Gull (*Chroicocephalus philadelphia*—Figure 8), the omnipresent Ring-billed Gulls (*Larus delawarensis*—Figure 9) and Herring Gulls (*Larus argentatus*—Figure 10) were of course found in considerable and distracting numbers throughout the fall. However, there was a definite increase in the number of migrants recorded for both species in November and a sharp drop-off in Ring-billed numbers in the last few days of the count. November provided the highest diversity and abundance for all species of gulls, with Glaucous (*Larus hyperboreus*) and Great

Black-backed Gulls (*Larus marinus*) encountered almost daily and a handful of Thayer's Gulls (*Larus thayeri*) also noted. The migration of Bonaparte's Gull was more inconsistent than expected: numbers varied greatly day-to-day from early October through the end of the watch. Fewer than 1,000 individuals total were seen this fall, which contrasted greatly with the numbers we find during spring migration.

Overall, terns are September migrants, with most species migrating past the count site by the first few days of October. Common Terns (*Sterna hirundo*) were present in the largest

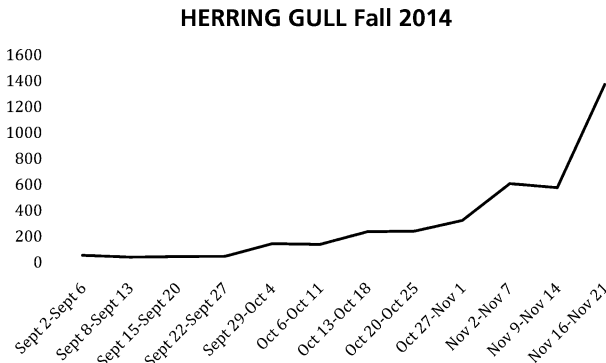


Figure 10. Temporal Distribution of Herring Gull at HBSP (Fall 2014)

numbers, but there were also a fair number of Forster's Terns (*Sterna forsteri*) and Caspian Terns (*Hydroprogne caspia*). In comparison, the spring passage of Caspian Terns was much more impressive with close to 1,000 tallied, quite the opposite of the fewer than 100 recorded in fall.

Landbird species were much more difficult to quantify and possibly were under-counted even though numbers and diversity were impressive on some days. Totals for diurnal migrants such as swallows, swifts, and raptors are likely more accurate representations of the numbers that were southbound past the watch location during the course of the fall. Altogether we recorded over 90 landbird species during the September 1–November 21 watch.

Only a few migrating raptor species were recorded in significant numbers; most pass us out of sight to the west. The watch location is positioned on the lakeshore, with forest to the west, which prevents us from seeing many migrants "behind" us. Merlins (*Falco columbarius*) were seen in somewhat steady numbers through September and the first half of October with a slight peak noted in early October. This species was often seen intercepting wayward landbirds out over the water and continuing southbound with their quarry. Bald Eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) were present throughout the entire count window with a peak in the last ten days of the watch. Highlights included one Rough-legged Hawk (*Buteo lagopus*) on 14 November and four sightings of Short-eared Owls (*Asio flammeus*) (on the 8<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 25<sup>th</sup> of October and the 14<sup>th</sup> of November). These owls were all single individuals seen well out over the lake between 6:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. on the listed dates.

Near-passerines were fairly well represented, although overall numbers were dominated by day-flying migrants like Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*) and Chimney Swift (*Chaetura pelagica*). Two Yellow-billed Cuckoos (*Coccyzus americanus*) were seen (19 September and 4 October) and there were three sightings of what appeared to be migrant Mourning Doves (*Zenaida macroura*) from late October to mid-November. In spite of the many late reports of hummingbirds in the state this fall, migrants from the watch were not noted past the last week of September. There were scattered sightings of Chimney Swifts that added up to a few dozen birds throughout the month of September; the last record was on 29 September. Only a few Common Nighthawks (*Chordeiles minor*) were seen. Nineteen woodpeckers were recorded as migrants, split fairly evenly between Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*) and Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*) with a single Red-bellied Woodpecker (*Melanerpes carolinus*) also tallied as a migrant. Most of the migrant woodpeckers were seen during the last week of September and the first week of October.

Seventy-one passerine species were recorded during the fall including 22 warblers, 10 sparrows, five swallows, and five thrush species. While these groups were well represented, others like flycatchers, mimics, and blackbirds were sparse in comparison. A number of songbirds flew in off the lake during the mid- and even late-morning hours, often having to run the gauntlet of gulls and other predators. Warblers, sparrows, and finches were the groups most often represented in these sightings but we also noted a number of non-passerines (e.g., woodpeckers and American

Woodcock) as well as the only meadowlark recorded during the watch.

Swallows were a dominant migrant among all species during the first half of September. Their swirling feeding masses were seen over the lake almost daily during this time frame, an activity that added to the difficulty of accurately accessing the movement of migrants. Barn Swallows (*Hirundo rustica*) made up the bulk of early swallow migration and the season total for the species wound up just outside the top ten for all species. Tree Swallows (*Tachycineta bicolor*) peaked later, with their largest passage recorded in early October. They finished among the top twenty most abundant migrants.

Among thrush species, Swainson's Thrushes (*Catharus ustulatus*) were seen in the greatest numbers and were a fairly steady migrant in the second half of September and early October. Notably, American Robins (*Turdus migratorius*) were not a significant migrant along the lakeshore, with only a few recorded over the course of the fall.

Twenty-two warbler species were sighted during the fall. The bulk of their activity was in September and sharply dropped off after 10 October. Many hundreds of birds were likely involved during the busiest migration days, but this is only an estimate as numbers were difficult to monitor accurately. We observed a couple notable peaks: during a three- or four-day span in mid-September and then again at the end of the month (the latter peak largely involved Yellow-rumped Warblers (*Setophaga coronata*)). Predictably, Yellow-rumps dominated the overall warbler numbers with just under 1,000 tallied for the fall (the thirteenth most abundant migrant overall). Interestingly, they were largely absent from the

first several weeks of September when overall warbler species diversity was the greatest, but their numbers peaked sharply during the last week of the month into early October. The largest single day total was 207 on 29 September but migration continued in lesser numbers throughout most of October with a late individual seen on 11 November. Blackpoll Warbler (*Setophaga striata*) and American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*) were the next most abundant warbler migrants. Redstarts moved well during the entire month of September, peaking at 32 individuals on 16 September. There were none recorded in October, but a late bird showed up at the watch on 14 November and remained in the area for four days. Blackpolls were recorded in varying numbers until the middle of October and peaked at 19 on 4 October.

Overall, sparrows were not particularly abundant as a migrant group at any time during the fall, perhaps due to the tree-dominated nature of the site. The numbers for the ten species recorded consisted of primarily two species: White-throated Sparrow (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) and Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*). As a group, migration began in the last week of September and continued throughout October before dwindling in November.

Blackbirds were largely absent from the watch, represented only by a few small groups of Bobolinks (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*) in September and the aforementioned Eastern Meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*) that flew in off the lake in early October. Particularly striking is that Red-winged Blackbirds (*Agelaius phoeniceus*), one of the top twenty most abundant migrants during the previous spring watch, were not recorded in fall.

Finches were nicely represented in

the fall count, especially during the last couple of weeks. Pine Siskins (*Spinus pinus*) were seen sporadically from the last week of September onward but were recorded daily over the last ten days of the watch. A few Common Redpolls (*Acanthis flammea*) were also recorded during this time. Purple Finch (*Haemorhous purpureus*) sightings were somewhat scattered and infrequent, but most of these occurred in November as well. There were several days in November when flocks of Pine Siskin and American Goldfinch (*Spinus tristis*) came off the lake in numbers that were hard to quantify. As a result, the recorded totals for these species are conservative estimates at best.

Table 2. Most abundant species encountered at HBSP (Spring 2015)

Long-tailed Duck	42,053
Red-breasted Merganser	33,138
Bonaparte’s Gull	17,498
Double-crested Cormorant	16,409
Greater Scaup	12,990
Herring Gull	9,428
Ring-billed Gull	7,935
Common Tern	4,992
Caspian Tern	4,830
Mallard	4,425
Lesser Scaup	3,738
Canada Goose	2,314
Green-winged Teal	1,955
Common Grackle	1,931
Common Loon	1,883
Common Goldeneye	1,786
Red-winged Blackbird	1,654
Barn Swallow	1,412
Redhead	1,359
Tree Swallow	1,180

SPRING 2015

In spring we conducted counts on 68 days between 1 March and 21 May. Daily surveys began on or just before official sunrise, lasting for six hours thereafter. Altogether 186,266 migrants of 190 species and other taxa were recorded (most abundant species are represented in Table 2). While the bulk of these were waterbirds, landbirds were also tallied when time and opportunity afforded.

With a frigid start to the count this

spring (daytime high temperatures ranged from 15°F to 32°F the first week of March), diving ducks, most notably Long-tailed Ducks (Figure 11), were already on the move in early March. This species was tallied in numbers throughout the month and even into April before tapering off (Figure 1), ending up as the most numerous species during spring. An impressive peak flight of 10,018 individuals was recorded 12 March and the count broke 1,000 birds on many days in March. Interestingly,

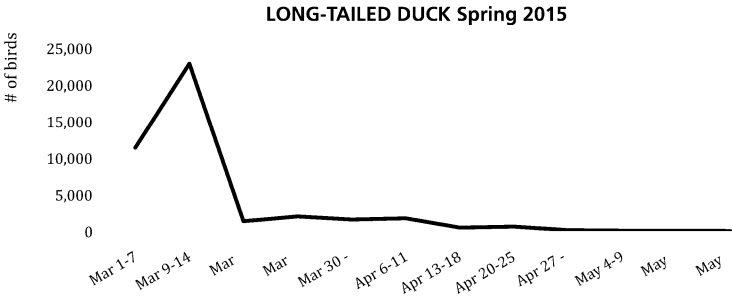


Figure 11. Temporal distribution of Long-tailed Ducks at HBSP (Spring 2015)

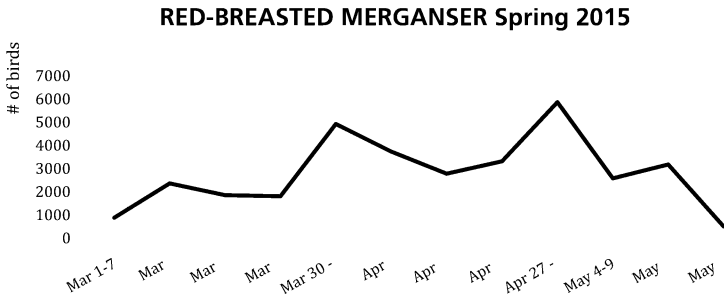


Figure 12. Temporal distribution of Red-breasted Merganser at HBSP (Spring 2015)

observers familiar with the movements of this species in Lake Michigan indicate that Long-tails remain in the northern part of the lake well into the spring. They have been seen staging in very large numbers at locations such as off Peninsula Point in Michigan's Upper Peninsula well into May before making the jump to the Arctic (Skye Haas, pers. comm.).

Red-breasted Mergansers (Figure 12) were the next most numerous duck species and the second most numerous migrant overall. Unlike the other divers that peaked during the earlier portions of the spring, their movements were steady throughout the entire period with consistent day-to-day movement from late April into early May (Figure 2). Incidentally, we tallied Red-breasted

Mergansers on every single day of the watch with a peak of 1,685 on 2 May.

Both scaup species (Figure 13) were well represented. Greater Scaup were recorded in much larger numbers and peaked earlier than Lessers (Figure 2), topping out at 1,630 individuals on 16 March. The steadiest movement of Lesser Scaup was in late March into mid-April with a peak flight of 316 that did not occur until 29 April.

Although their migration was somewhat inconsistent throughout spring, Redheads (*Aythya americana*) and Common Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*) were recorded in good numbers and placed in the top-twenty for all species. While the relative abundance of most diving and dabbling ducks was similar in spring and fall, there was a sharp difference noted for Ruddy Ducks (*Oxyura*

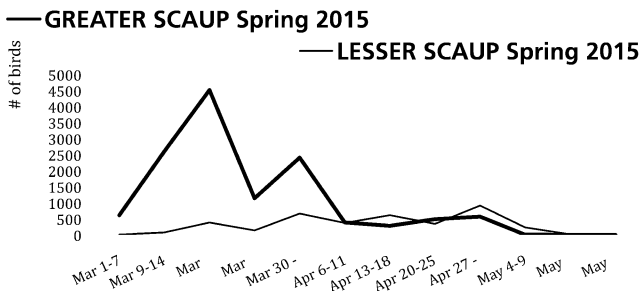


Figure 13. Temporal distribution of scaup species at HBSP (Spring 2015)

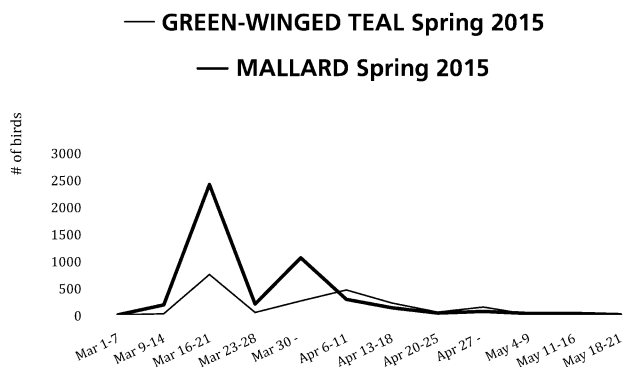


Figure 14. Temporal distribution of Mallard and Green-winged Teal at HBSP (Spring 2015)

*jamaicensis*) which were much more numerous during the fall migration. Most unexpected was the female Common Eider (*Somateria mollissima*) that was seen traveling with a group of Red-breasted Mergansers on 24 March.

Dabblers were largely absent from the first two weeks of the count but that changed on 16 March. Several thousand ducks were counted on that day and several species saw their peak flights, including Mallard (2,050), Green-winged Teal (725) (both represented for comparison in Figure 14), Northern Pintail (*Anas acuta*, 218), and American Wigeon (*Anas americana*, 74). In fact, almost half of all the Mallards and more than a third of the Green-wings tallied for the spring were seen on that day. Both of these species placed well inside the top-twenty for all migrants, with Mallard being the tenth most common species.

Overall, dabbling duck migration was very good throughout the month of April into early May when it dropped off sharply. Peak migration was seen during April for Gadwall and Northern Shoveler, with 116 on 13 April and 111 on 28 April, respective high counts for

those species. A top tally of 110 on 4 May was recorded for Blue-winged Teal. All three of these species managed to place just outside the top-twenty for all migrants recorded during 2015. Northern Shoveler and Blue-winged Teal, however, were in the top-twenty in spring 2014.

Canada Geese and Tundra Swans were both seen in much smaller numbers than during fall migration, although the former still placed within the top-twenty for all species during the spring passage.

Double-crested Cormorant (Figure 15), the fourth most numerous migrant of the spring, was recorded from the first of April through to the end of the period (Figure 5). The peak time frame was late April into early May with the largest flight being 3,495 individuals on 29 April.

Common Loons were numerous and were seen almost daily from the last week of March until the end of the watch (Figure 6). Counts broke the 100-bird mark on several occasions, including 151 on 21 April and 163 on 7 May. This species placed well within the top-twenty for all migrants. Red-

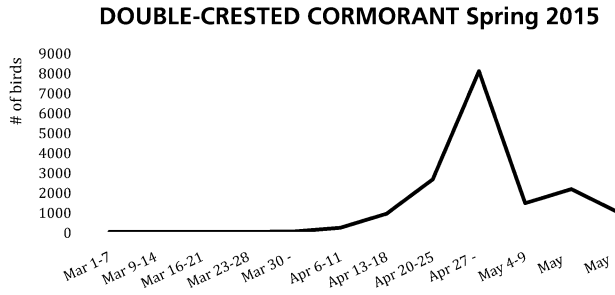


Figure 15. Temporal distribution of Double-crested Cormorant at HBSP (Spring 2015)

throated Loons were much less common than their bigger cousins but were still seen much more often than in fall (both loon species represented in Figure 16). The reverse could be said for Horned Grebes, which had a much more impressive fall migration at this site.

Heron migration consisted mainly of Great Blues, with 48 individuals of that species tallied between late March and the end of the watch. Seven Great Egrets were noted during the spring along with a single Green Heron (*Butorides virescens*). Gulls and terns were numerous in

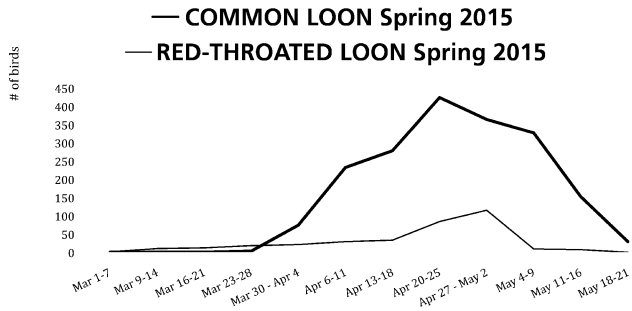


Figure 16. Temporal distribution of loon species at HBSP (Spring 2015)

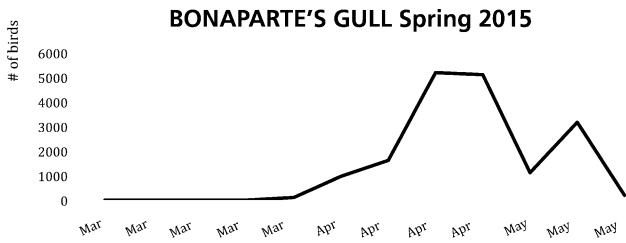


Figure 17. Temporal distribution of Bonaparte's Gulls at HBSP (Spring 2015)

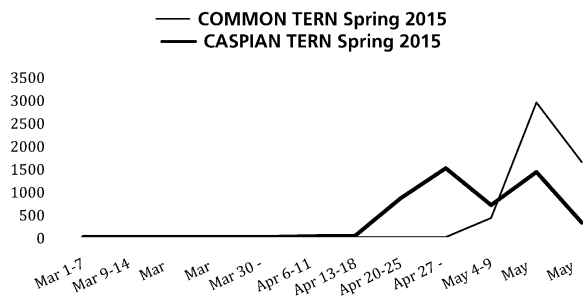


Figure 18. Temporal distribution of Common Terns and Caspian Terns at HBSP (Spring 2015)

the spring both in terms of abundance and diversity: we recorded eight species of gulls and four species of terns. In addition to the all-pervading Herring and Ring-billed Gulls, Bonaparte's Gulls (Figure 17) were seen in abundance starting the second week of April through the end of the period (Figure 7). Ranking third among all species, peak numbers were recorded in late April into early May with the largest single flight being 3,299 individuals on 21 April.

Perhaps most surprising was the frequency with which white-winged gulls were seen throughout the spring. Glaucous Gull sightings dropped off during May but Thayer's and Iceland Gulls (*Larus glaucooides*) remained in the area well into the month.

Terns dominated the later stages of the watch (Figure 18), starting with Caspians in mid-April, supplemented by large numbers of Commons during May (Figure 8). Peak flights were 470 individuals on 14 May and 1,258 on 21 May for Caspian and Common Terns, respectively. Both species were among the ten most abundant migrants for the season. Five Black Terns (*Chlidonias niger*) were noted during May, all associated with large movements of Common Tern.

Shorebirds will probably never be abundant as a migratory group of birds along this stretch of Lake Michigan, but among the fourteen species observed this spring were some nice highlights. Two Marbled Godwits (*Limosa fedoa*) were seen 21 April with five Whimbrels noted 16 May. Willets (*Tringa semipalmata*) were seen on three occasions: 35 on 4 May, eight on 5 May, and one on 21 May. Three American Avocets were also observed on 21 May.

Altogether we recorded 120 land-based migrants during the spring watch. While warblers led diversity with 26 species, blackbirds and swallows were by far were the most abundant groups. Specifically, Barn Swallow, Tree Swallow, Red-winged Blackbird, and Common Grackle (*Quiscalus quiscula*) all placed within the top-twenty of all migrants. As might be expected, Yellow-rumped Warbler was the most common warbler, a species that placed within the top-twenty in spring 2014 as well as during the fall migration. A single Prothonotary Warbler (*Protonotaria citrea*) was a nice highlight among this group.

Other well represented groups were sparrows with 13 species, thrushes (seven), flycatchers (six), and vireos and finches (five each). The most common species from these groups were

White-throated Sparrow, American Robin, Eastern Phoebe (*Sayornis phoebe*), Red-eyed Vireo, and American Goldfinch. There were several sightings of at least two individuals of Common Raven (*Corvus corax*), both in March (two seen flying together 14 March).

Of the eleven raptor species seen, the most noteworthy was a Rough-legged Hawk recorded on the rather tardy date of 2 May. Inexplicably, not a single Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) was observed. Two owl species were seen: the expected Short-eared (three sightings) and a Snowy Owl (*Bubo scandiaca*) that flew along the shoreline on 3 April.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to the James E. Dutton Foundation for funding the WGLBBO Waterbird Watch, and to our previous

technicians for setting a high standard for our work: Seth Cutright, and Jonathan Stein. We also are grateful for the memory of Dr. Noel Cutright, founder of WGLBBO, whose vision for the Watch is continually there for us as inspiration.

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Mary Anne Pfitzinger captured a Taylor County Snowy Owl in January as it was "Catching the Wind."

# The Winter Season: 2014–2015

*Ted Keyel*

## WEATHER

This winter was much milder overall than last winter. While there were some colder temperatures, especially up north, they were not as intense or as long-lasting as last year. Snowfall for the winter was also much reduced from the previous winter.

Daryl Tessen writes: “Thankfully this winter was not like last year. There were periods of warm weather and snowfall was way below last year. November had 10–12 inches of snow and it was very cold—both unusual. December by contrast started cold and quickly warmed up and remained so for the rest of the month. It was more like March, with lots of fog, 2 inches of rain(!), and very little snow (few inches). January started cold but warmed up midmonth until late in the month. Again very little snow. However February was very cold for the entire month! There were only a few single days of warmer temps. Most of the time we were below zero overnight. Bitter wind chills (15–35 below) with “highs” only single digits or teens. Snowfall was again very low. For Dec–Feb only about 20 inches fell, very below normal. There was limited open water due to the cold spells.”

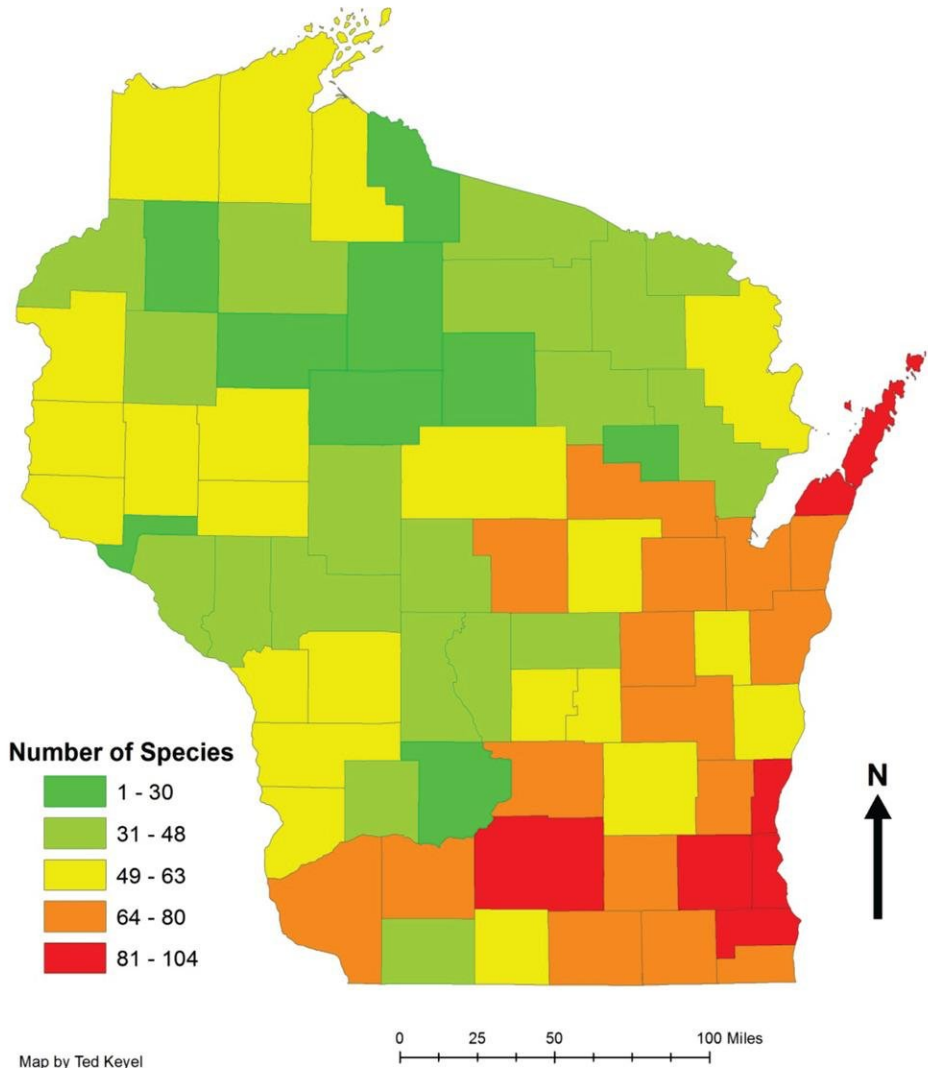
## DISCUSSION

This season, 164 species were reported. This total compares to 167, 178, 168, 170, and 172 from the previous 5 seasons. Similar to last year, only nine out of the ten uncommon species that we have been following were reported: Surf, White-winged, and Black Scoter, Red-throated Loon, American White Pelican, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Carolina Wren, and Northern Mockingbird. There were no records of Barrow’s Goldeneye this year. Some other species that were absent this season but present in previous years include: Gray Partridge, Osprey, Bonaparte’s Gull, Great Gray Owl, hummingbirds, Common Yellowthroat, and Indigo Bunting.

There were many birding highlights this winter season. Species that top the list included: Brambling (3<sup>rd</sup> state record), Common Eider (6<sup>th</sup> state record), American Three-toed Woodpecker, two Black-billed Magpies, and the oldest-known wild Gyrfalcon.

Daryl Tessen again writes: “Waterfowl were present in low numbers. Snowy Owls were present in excellent numbers again this winter. Northern Shrikes were remarkably scarce! Winter finches were present this winter in contrast to last year. However only siskins

# Winter 2014-2015



Choropleth map of Wisconsin displaying how many species of birds were seen in each county from December 1st, 2014 through February 28th, 2015. Milwaukee and Ozaukee Counties recorded over 100 species of birds for this winter season, while there were only four species recorded in Menominee County.



Kerry Schloff captured a pose by this Short-eared Owl at Killsnake Wildlife Area in Calumet County in January.



A Townsend's Solitaire at Marquette County's Observatory Hill State Natural Area as depicted by Kerry Schloff in January.

or goldfinches were around in good numbers. Redpolls remained away from feeders but were present occasionally in good-sized flocks in the country. Pine Grosbeaks, Red Crossbills, Evening Grosbeaks were confined in the northern counties and present in small numbers. Overall it was a quiet winter birdwise. Gulls were present in low numbers, and poor variety overall. Tree sparrow numbers were low.”

### DATA

Reports were received this season from all 72 counties, and only Menominee County submitted fewer than 20 species (Figure 1). Both Dane and Ozaukee Counties topped 100 species at 104 and 103 species respectively. Species reports included Christmas Bird Count (CBC) data, approved eBird reports, single and multi-county reports, photographs, selected Wisconsin Bird Network reports, and WSO Rare Bird Documentation Forms. Rare species which are reported to WSO but not documented properly are not included here. (The WSO Rare Bird Documentation Form should be completed for those species with asterisks next to their name or for those that are within the top three record early or late entries. The Rare Bird Documentation Form as well as early and late bird records can be found at [www.wso-birds.org](http://www.wso-birds.org) under the “Records” tab.) Information in this report from CBCs included only those more uncommon species that were found on 15 or fewer counts. Count-week CBC sightings were represented in parentheses, while some CBC data may be included in reports following initial CBC data. These abbreviations are included in this report: BOP=beginning of period, EOP=end of

period, TTP=throughout the period, m. obs.=many observers, and CBC = Christmas Bird Count.

### REPORTS

(1 December 2014–  
28 February 2015)

(Species marked with an asterisk are on the review list and require documentation. The documentation is then reviewed by the Record Committee to determine which are valid records.)

**Greater White-fronted Goose**—Only found on two CBCs for a total of six individuals as well as 28 individuals from Dane County (Thiessen) and five from Green (Evanson). Still down from 18 counties two years ago, but higher than last year’s 10 individuals from one county.

**Snow Goose**—Total of 10 individuals on 10 CBCs, which is higher than last year’s two individuals on two CBCs. Reports from 12 counties with a high count of 15 individuals in Dodge County (Delap).

**Ross’s Goose**—Found on three CBCs for a total of four individuals, with single individuals reported from Fond du Lac (m. obs.), Manitowoc (Haus, Murkowski, Sontag, and Steinmetz), and Racine (Collinx, Goldberg, Howe, and Wegner).

**Cackling Goose**—A total of 139 individuals found on nine CBCs, which is quite a bit higher than last year’s 25 individuals, but lower than the 480 from two years ago. Found in 14 counties, with a high count of 30 on 19 December in Milwaukee County (Horn).

**Canada Goose**—Reports from 58 counties, with a high count of 4,075 on 20 December in Dane County (Stutz). Other counties with counts greater than 1,000 include: Brown (Swelstad), Chippewa (Hogseth), Green Lake (Roti Roti), Fond du Lac (m. obs.), Kewaunee (Sinkula and Swelstad), Milwaukee (Lubahn and Wanger), Ozaukee (m. obs.), Pierce (Maercklein), Racine (Collinx and Pugh), Rock (Klubertanz), Sheboygan (Frank and Schroeder), and Waukesha (Jacoby and Szymczak).

**Mute Swan**—Total of 34 individuals on eight CBCs. Reported from 11 counties, with a maximum of 21 birds on 15 December in Racine County (Howe).

**Trumpeter Swan**—Reported from 23 counties, with a high count of 529 on 1 January from St. Croix County (Persico).

**Tundra Swan**—A total of 21 individuals from eight CBCs, which is markedly reduced from last year's 464 individuals. Also unlike last year, there were no counts greater than 1,000 birds reported. The high count of 460 birds was on 6 February from Dane County (Henrikson).

**Wood Duck**—Found on nine CBCs, with a total of 10 individuals. Reported from 12 counties, with February birds from Brown (Schilke), Milwaukee (Wood), Oneida (Peczynski and D. Schultz), and Sheboygan (Grgic).

**Gadwall**—A total of 206 individuals found on 11 CBCs, which is a little lower than last year's 257 birds, though the distribution of birds was lower from 17 counties down to nine. The high count of 50 birds was reported on 21 January in Dane County (Maust).

**American Wigeon**—Only found on two CBCs for a total of five individuals. Reported from the following six counties: Dane (m. obs.), Milwaukee (m. obs.), Racine (Swelstad), Sheboygan (Frank), Washington (Schaefer and Szymczak), and Winnebago (Tessen).

**American Black Duck**—Reported from 37 counties, with a maximum count of 110 individuals reported on 3 January from Brown County (Walton).

**Mallard**—Reported from 54 counties, with counts 1,000 or greater from Dane (Ready), Douglas (Richmond), Fond du Lac (Frank), and Milwaukee (Lubahn and McKinley).

**Blue-winged Teal**—Only found during the count week of the Ephraim CBC, but otherwise not found on the day of any of the counts. Otherwise, only two reports for the rest of the period: one from Door County on 12 December (Lukes) and one from Trempealeau County on 1 January (Stratton).

**Northern Shoveler**—A total of 503 individuals from four CBCs, which is an increase from last year's 425 individuals on two CBCs. The maximum count of 460 individuals was reported on 22 January from Dane County (Henrikson).

**Northern Pintail**—A total of 10 individuals found on seven CBCs. Reported from nine counties, with a high count of seven individuals reported on 22 December from Fond du Lac County (Wood). At least six birds overwintered

in the Twin Ports, but no more than three birds were reported from the Douglas County side (m. obs.).

**Green-winged Teal**—A total of 13 individuals found on four CBCs. Reported from five counties, including: Dane (m. obs.), Dunn (P. Campbell and Hoyland), Fond du Lac (D. & K. Schloff and Wood), Sheboygan (Grgic, Schroeder and Wood), and Washington (Schaefer and Szymczak).

**Canvasback**—A total of 170 individuals found on seven CBCs, which is higher than last year's 96 individuals on three CBCs. The maximum count of 70 birds was recorded on 20 December from Dane County (Gericke Fandel and Kreitingen).

**Redhead**—A total of 108 individuals found on 14 CBCs, which is lower than last year's 175 individuals. Reported from 16 counties, with a high count of 215 birds on 2 January from Racine County (Howe).

**Ring-necked Duck**—A total of 37 individuals found on 11 CBCs, which is slightly higher than last year's 23 individuals across six CBCs. Reported from 14 counties, with a high count of 15 birds on 7 February in Dane County (M. & R. Gibson).

**Greater Scaup**—Reported from 12 counties, with a high count of 3,700 on 20 December from Milwaukee County (Lubahn); Ozaukee County was the only other county with a count of 1,000 (Vokoun).

**Lesser Scaup**—A total of 239 individuals found on 14 CBCs, which is higher than last year's 133 individuals. The high count of 185 individuals was recorded on 31 January in Milwaukee County (Brown).

**Common Eider\***—One female found on the Superior CBC (Johnson, J. & L. Kraemer, and Svingen). This represents the first report ever for Common Eider on a Wisconsin CBC and is the sixth record for the state. Originally found with another bird in Duluth, Minnesota (Bardon), this same individual persisted in the Twin Ports region until EOP (m. obs.). She provided absolutely wonderful views and allowed great comparisons with the other ducks present, which she would often bite. See "By the Wayside" and WSO Records Committee Report: Winter 2014–2015.

**Harlequin Duck**—Only one individual found on the Sheboygan CBC; Manitowoc



An Eastern Screech-Owl in Dane County posing for Greg Hottman last December.



A Common Eider swimming in Lake Superior during January allowed Cynthia Bridge to get this shot in Douglas County.



Robbye Johnson captured a Common Eider landing in Lake Superior, Douglas County late last winter.

County was the only other county with any reports (Sontag, Tessen and J. & P. Trick).

**Surf Scoter**—A total of seven individuals found on three CBCs. Birds reported from the following five counties: Kenosha (Olson), Milwaukee (m. obs.), Ozaukee (m. obs.), Racine (Howe and Wegner), and Sheboygan (Tessen).

**White-winged Scoter**—A total of four individuals found on three CBCs. Reported from nine counties, with a high count of 15 on 24 February in Ozaukee County (Tessen).

**Black Scoter**—A total of five individuals found on four CBCs. Reported from the following five counties: Milwaukee (Frank and Lubahn), Ozaukee (m. obs.), Racine (Howe and Wegner), Waukesha (Szymczak), and Winnebago (R. Mueller).

**Long-tailed Duck**—A total of 628 individuals found on seven CBCs, which is quite a bit higher than last year's 123 birds. Reported from nine counties, with a high count of 300 individuals on 27 January in Sheboygan (Frank).

**Bufflehead**—Reported from 21 counties, with a maximum count of 86 individuals on 20 December in Dane County (Stutz). This is substantially lower from the counts of 2014 and 2013 with values of 290 and 230 respectively.

**Common Goldeneye**—Reported from 52 counties, with the high count of 1,300 on 20 December in Milwaukee County (Lubahn). Other counties with values equal to or greater than 1,000 include: Brown (Sonneland, Swelstad, Prestby and Sinkula), Kewaunee (Sinkula), Milwaukee (Lubahn, McCuen, and Pendergast), and Winnebago (Malcolm).

**Common Goldeneye / Hooded Merganser**—Only two reports, both from Little Lake Buttes des Morts in Winnebago County on 9 February and 18 February (Malcolm).

**Hooded Merganser**—Reported from 20 counties, with a maximum count of 13 individuals on 20 December in Dane County (Kamp), which is lower than last year's 41 birds.

**Common Merganser**—Reported from 52 counties, with no counts over 1,000. The high count of 690 individuals occurred on 31 December from Pierce County (Iliff). This is substantially lower than last year's maximum of 2,500.

**Red-breasted Merganser**—Reported from 14 counties, with a high count of 1,614 individuals on 7 February in Racine County (Howe). This is a marked increase from last year's high of 750 birds.

**Ruddy Duck**—A total of 95 individuals on eight CBCs, which is higher than last year's 42 individuals. Birds were reported from 11 counties, with a high count of 37 individuals in Milwaukee County on 12 December (Lubahn).

**Northern Bobwhite**—Two individuals on CBCs: one on the Washington Island CBC and the other found count week on the Chippewa Falls CBC. The high count of three individuals was recorded on 14 December in Chippewa County (Steger).

**Ring-necked Pheasant**—Reported from 41 counties, with a high count of 30 birds in Dodge County on 1 January (Collison).

**Ruffed Grouse**—Reported from 33 counties, which is higher than last year's 26. Two counts of eight tied for the highest this season - one on 2 December from Jackson County (Otto) and the other on 14 December in Marinette County (Swelstad).

**Spruce Grouse**—Only reported from three counties: two reports from Forest County - a single individual on 7 December [Huset] and three birds on 10 January [Nowak], one individual on 14 December in Iron County (Calvetti), and two birds in Vilas County on 14 December (Huset).

**Sharp-tailed Grouse**—Also only reported from three counties. The high count of 13 individuals was recorded on 2 February in Burnett County (Menge). One report of six birds on 6 December in Price County (David) and two reports from Douglas County, one on 25 January (Geraghty) and the other on 27 January (Pendergast).

**Greater Prairie-Chicken**—A total of 19 individuals found on the Arpin CBC. The high count of 52 birds occurred on 19 February (Bergen and Reese), which is lower than last year's high count of 173. Greater Prairie-Chickens put on a nice show for the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II meeting field trip to Marathon County on 28 February (m. obs.).

**Wild Turkey**—Reported from 70 counties, which is higher than last year's 67 counties. The only counties missing were: Menominee and Taylor. The high count of 230 birds was reported from Iowa County on 21 February (Fissel, Heikkinen, and Otto).

**Red-throated Loon**—A total of three individuals, one each on the following CBCs: Cedar Grove, Madison and Racine. Also reported from: Kenosha (Howe and Wegner), Milwaukee (m. obs.), Ozaukee (m. obs.), Racine (Howe and Wegner), and Sheboygan (Cutright and Schwartz) Counties.

**Common Loon**—A total of nine individuals on 6 CBCs. Reported from the following four counties: Dane (Schneider and Myers), Kenosha (Howe and Wegner), Milwaukee (Coulter, A. & G. Kent, Lubahn, McKinley, and S. Miller), and Ozaukee (Strong).

**Pied-billed Grebe**—A total of 10 individuals on six CBCs, which is higher than last year's five birds on three CBCs. Reported from the following eight counties: Columbia (Yoerger), Dane (Paynter, Hicks, Schmidt), Door (Haig), Iowa (Duerksen), Kenosha (Howe, Olson, Wegner, Witynski), Pierce (Mandel), and Waukesha (Fiedler).

**Horned Grebe**—A total of 16 individuals on five CBCs. Reported from four counties, with a high count of four birds in Milwaukee County on both 14 December (Herriges and Skinner) and 21 December (Wanger). The other three coun-

ties with records were: Door (m. obs.), Manitowoc (Sontag), and Ozaukee (Tessen).

**Red-necked Grebe**—Only one report of one individual on 2 December from Ozaukee County (Tessen), which is comparable to last year's two individuals.

**Double-crested Cormorant**—A total of 29 individuals on seven CBCs. Three counts of five birds all come from Winnebago County: the first from 1 December (Tessen), the second from 12 December (Malcolm), and the third from 1 January (Ward).

**American White Pelican**—One individual found on the Appleton CBC (Outagamie County) and nine on the Green Bay CBC (Brown County). Reported from three counties: Brown (m. obs.), Fond du Lac (D. & K. Schloff), and Winnebago (m. obs.).

**Great Blue Heron**—Reported from 19 counties, which is higher than last year's 13 counties. The high count of four birds was recorded on 20 December in Waukesha County (Gustafson and Horn).

**Turkey Vulture**—A total of 10 individuals from seven CBCs. There are three other reports of single individuals: one from 2 December in Sheboygan County (Tessen), the next from 5 December in Ozaukee County (Wanger), and the last on 25 December in Fond du Lac County (Schaefer and Szymczak).

**Bald Eagle**—Reported from 70 counties, with only Menominee and Price missing. The maximum count of 115 was recorded on 17 January from Buffalo County (Cameron and Geraghty). This is lower than last year's high count of 635.

**Northern Harrier**—Reported from 32 counties, with a high count of 12 individuals on 1 January in Iowa County (Kivikoski). The northernmost reports come from Brown County on 3 December (Swelstad) and 22 February (Seeger).

**Sharp-shinned Hawk**—Reported from 43 counties, with no counts over two individuals. Northernmost reports were from the following counties: Bayfield (Brady and S. Roberts), Florence (B. & K. Kavanagh), Forest (Maertz), and Polk (Maercklein).

**Cooper's Hawk**—Reported from 52 counties, which is higher than last year's 46 counties and comparable to the previous year's 54. Northernmost records were from Burnett County

(Bridge, Lindemer, and B. Schmidt) and Marinette County (J. Campbell, Hurst, and Woodcock).

**Northern Goshawk**—Reported from 15 counties, which is higher than last year's 11. Southernmost reports were from 3 January in Adams County (Pendergast, Russell, and Yoerger) and 22 January in Fond du Lac County (Edlhuber and R. Sallmann).

**Red-shouldered Hawk**—A total of nine individuals on nine CBCs, plus an additional bird during count week on the Trempealeau CBC. Reported from seven counties: Adams (Russell), Buffalo (Geraghty and Nienhaus), Columbia (W. Mueller and Schwartz), Dunn (P. Campbell), Grant (Kivikoski), Iowa (m. obs.), and Sauk (Holschbach, Mack, S. Miller).

**Red-tailed Hawk**—Reported from 62 counties, which is comparable to last year's 61 counties. The high count of 21 birds on 17 January in Buffalo County (Wu) is also similar to last year's 20. There were also reports of the western subspecies (*Buteo jamaicensis calurus*) in Jefferson County (Bridge and Stutz) and Milwaukee County (Wanger and Lubahn).

**Rough-legged Hawk**—Reported from 59 counties, which is higher than last year's 52 counties, but lower than the previous year's 69. The maximum count of 26 birds was recorded on 4 February from Manitowoc County (Domagalski).

**Golden Eagle**—A total of 20 individuals found on 12 CBCs. Reported from 15 counties, which is lower than last year's 23 counties. However, the high count of 25 birds on 17 January in Buffalo County (Cameron and Geraghty) is higher than last year's nine.

**Virginia Rail**—A total of nine individuals on four CBCs. Only reported in three counties: Columbia (Yoerger), Racine (Gustafson and Stehno), and Walworth (Howe).

**American Coot**—A total of 688 individuals on four CBCs, which is just barely greater than one-tenth of last year's incredible 6,454. The maximum count of 1,600 was recorded on 1 December in Green Lake County (T. Schultz).

**Sandhill Crane**—A total of 987 individuals on 12 CBCs, which is much higher than last year's 65 birds. The northernmost report comes from Barron County on 12 January (Carlsen).

**Killdeer**—Only one individual recorded on the Sauk City CBC. The only other reports in-



Mary Anne Pfitzinger “froze” a Bald Eagle mid-air in “Rapt Attention” at Petenwell Dam, Juneau County in January.



A Bohemian Waxwing with wings outstretched at Ephraim, Door County, as photographed by Nancy Nabak in February.



A Red Crossbill pair as seen by Ryan Brady in January in Bayfield County.



A male White-winged Scoter in the Milwaukee River Mouth in February as seen through the lens of Jim Edlhuber.

clude one individual from Dane County (Gorzo) and two individuals from Vernon County (Hayes and Jackson).

**Wilson's Snipe**—A total of 11 individuals on eight CBCs. Reported from nine counties, with a high count of four birds on 15 December in Trempealeau County (Bautch) and 15 February in Vernon County (Hayes).

**Ring-billed Gull**—Reported from 28 counties, which is similar to last year's 29 counties.

**Herring Gull**—Reported from 33 counties, with the following counties over 1,000: Green Lake (T. Schultz), Jefferson (m. obs.), Manitowoc (Sontag), Milwaukee (Frank, Schroeder and Stehno) and Racine (Howe and Wegner).

**Thayer's Gull**—A total of nine individuals on four CBCs, which is similar to last year's 10 individuals across three CBCs. The high count of six individuals was reported on 16 December in Douglas County (Nienhaus).

**Iceland Gull**—A total of four individuals, two on both the Hales Corners and Milwaukee CBCs as well as one individual during the count week of both the Madison and Washington Island CBCs. Reported from 10 counties, with a high count of three birds from Jefferson County on: 25 January (Stutz), 4 February (Thiessen), and 22 February (Thiessen).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull**—Two individuals on the Milwaukee CBC, one on the Racine CBC and one during count week on the Hales Corners, Madison, and Washington Island CBCs. Reported from 12 counties, with a high count of four in Racine County on 27 January and 11 February (Howe).

**Glaucous Gull**—A total of 40 individuals across 11 CBCs, which is higher than last year's 33 birds across nine counts. Reported from 17 counties, with a maximum count of 15 recorded on 16 February in Douglas County (Haas).

**Great Black-backed Gull**—A total of 32 individuals on eight CBCs, which is lower than last year's 49 birds. The high count of 12 birds was reported on 17 January in Manitowoc County (Schroeder).

**Rock Pigeon**—Recorded from 67 counties, which is higher than last year's 64 counties. The only counties missing are: Iron, Menominee, Price, Sawyer, and Waushara.

**Eurasian Collared-Dove**—One individual each on the Bridgeport and Richland Center CBCs as well as one bird during count week on the Randolph CBC. This is a marked reduction from last year's 50 individuals and the previous year's 28 birds.

**Mourning Dove**—Reported from 71 counties, with only Menominee County missing. The maximum count of 216 occurred on 20 December in Brown County (Mead and Sonneland).

**Eastern Screech-Owl**—Reported from 26 counties, with no reports for the northern half of the state. The maximum count of seven birds occurred on 14 December in Lafayette County (Gabanski and Stotz).

**Great Horned Owl**—Reported from 49 counties, with a high count of 12 birds on 14 December in Green County (Gabanski and Stotz).

**Snowy Owl**—For the third year in a row we have had incredible numbers of Snowy Owls in the state. This year's number of 48 counties is between last year's 56 counties and the previous year's 40 counties. High numbers of birds were reported along the shores of both great lakes and in the center of the state.

**Northern Hawk Owl\***—Two accepted records this season. Eau Claire's "Lars", which was present from 6 December TTP (R. Schmidt). Another bird was found not too far away in Chippewa County on 13 February (K. Lund and Mehls). There were also reports of a bird in Polk County, but none of those reports was submitted to the Records Committee. See WSO Records Committee Report: Winter 2014–2015.

**Barred Owl**—Reported from 46 counties, which is higher than last year's 39 counties and ties the previous year's number of reports. The high count of five birds occurred on 14 December in Iowa County (Engel).

**Long-eared Owl**—A total of six individuals on six CBCs, which is just under half of last year's 13 birds. Reported from the following seven counties: Calumet (Watson), Fond du Lac (Hockman), Grant (Yoerger), La Crosse (m. obs.), Oconto (Rickaby), Portage (McCuen and Pendergast), and Washington (Meyer).

**Short-eared Owl**—A total of 12 individuals on nine CBCs. Reported from 17 counties with a high count of 10 birds on 21 February in Calumet County (Parrish).

**Boreal Owl\***—One report from 7 February in Oneida County (Ersepke). See WSO Records Committee Report: Winter 2014–2015.

**Northern Saw-whet Owl**—Twenty-seven individuals found across 14 CBCs, which is much higher than the last two year's total of 16 birds. Reported from 16 counties, which is higher than last year's nine counties.

**Belted Kingfisher**—Reported from 29 counties, which is lower than last year's 34 counties.

**Red-headed Woodpecker**—Reported from 27 counties, with a high count of 15 birds occurring on 5 January in Grant County (McKay and Monson).

**Red-bellied Woodpecker**—Reported from 70 counties, with only Iron and Menominee Counties missing. The maximum count of 35 was recorded on 19 December in Grant County (Yoerger).

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**—Only reported from eight counties, which is substantially lower than last year's 20 counties. Birds were reported from the following counties: Adams (Minier), Dane (Dischler, Harp and Herb), Jefferson (Daley, Hale and Schneider), Milwaukee (McCaw), Outagamie (Straub), Sauk (Anderson and R. Fischer), Washington (Schaefer), and Waukesha (Cassini).

**Downy Woodpecker**—One of two species recorded in all 72 counties this season. The high count of 42 birds occurred on 19 December in Grant County (Yoerger).

**Hairy Woodpecker**—Reported in all counties except Menominee; the maximum number of 23 was reported from Door County on 12 February (Walsh).

**Black-backed Woodpecker**—An awesome four individuals found on the Three Lakes CBC. Only reported in two counties for the season, one on 26 December in Ashland County (Brady) and the others in Forest County (Fissel, Otto, Pope, Swelstad, and Tessen).

**American Three-toed Woodpecker\***—One bird originally found on 3 December in a bog on Burnett County not far from the Minnesota border (Hoefer). It was intermittently re-located thereafter, with the last report on 15 January (DeKeyser). See WSO Records Committee Report: Winter 2014–2015.

**Northern Flicker**—Reported from 41 counties, which is comparable to last year's number of 42 counties. The high count of 13 was recorded on 20 December in Dane County (Stutz).

**Pileated Woodpecker**—Reported from 69 counties, which is higher than last year's 62, but just barely lower than the previous year's 70. The only counties missing were: Menominee, Milwaukee, and Pepin.

**American Kestrel**—Reported from 51 counties, comparable to last year's 49. The maximum count of 10 birds was reported on 21 February in Grant County (Fissel, Heikkinen and Otto).

**Merlin**—A total of 13 individuals on 11 CBCs, which is higher than last year's eight birds. No counts above single individuals, though there was one report of the Prairie subspecies (*Falco columbarius richardsonii*) from Dane County (Ready).

**Gyr Falcon\***—One adult male banded on 1 February in Douglas County (Evans). Cooler still is that this bird was initially banded by Evans on 19 January, 2003 (!!!). This is the longest-living wild Gyr Falcon known. He returned most winters through 2007 and had not been seen again since. Bird was present until EOP. See "By the Wayside" and WSO Records Committee Report: Winter 2014–2015.

**Peregrine Falcon**—A total of 12 individuals on seven CBCs. Reported from 14 counties, with northernmost reports from Douglas County (m. obs.).

**Northern Shrike**—Reported from 58 counties, one fewer than last year. The high count of three birds occurred on 28 December in Ashland County (N. Anich).

**Gray Jay**—A total of 16 individuals found on six CBCs. Reported from seven counties, with a high count of three birds on 15 December in Forest County (Domagalski).

**Blue Jay**—Reported from 71 counties, with only Menominee County missing. The maximum count of 88 occurred on 13 February in Clark County (J. Lund).

**Black-billed Magpie\***—Amazingly, there are two records of this species this winter. The first from 27 January in Douglas County (Sh. Peterson) and the second from 22 February through EOP in Bayfield County (Brady). See WSO Records Committee Report: Winter 2014–2015.



A female Evening Grosbeak  
photographed by Ryan Brady in  
December in Bayfield County.



A Horned Lark in Walworth County with its “horns” flattened, taken by Jim Kuchler in February.



A Northern Hawk Owl captured in flight by Delia Unson in Eau Claire in December.



Dave Lund photographed this Northern Hawk Owl in December.

**American Crow**—One of two species recorded in all 72 counties this season! The high count of 280 birds was reported on 20 December in Richland County (Hagar).

**Common Raven**—Reported from 44 counties, with a high count of 45 birds on 27 January in Douglas County (Nienhaus). Southernmost reports come from the following counties: Adams (m. obs.), Green Lake (T. Schultz), and Monroe (Epstein and Vos).

**Horned Lark**—Reported from 59 counties, with a maximum count of 200 on 8 February in Dane County (Kauffman and Maxwell).

**Black-capped Chickadee**—Reported from 71 counties with only Menominee missing, which is the same as last year. The high count of 189 was recorded on 15 December in Forest County (Domagalski).

**Boreal Chickadee**—The Three Lakes CBC (Forest County) continues to impress with four individuals. All other reports were also from Forest County, with a high count of five birds on 23 February (D. & K. Schloff).

**Tufted Titmouse**—Reported from 44 counties, with a high count of 13 reported on 5 January in Grant County (McKay and Monson).

**Red-breasted Nuthatch**—Reported from 58 counties, which is lower than last year's 64. The maximum count of 75 birds occurred on 15 December in Forest County (Domagalski).

**White-breasted Nuthatch**—Reported from 71 counties, with only Menominee County missing. The high count of 43 birds was reported on 21 December in Fond du Lac County (Schwartz).

**Brown Creeper**—Reported from 51 counties, with a high count of 21 birds in Grant County on 5 January (McKay and Monson).

**Carolina Wren**—A total of 17 individuals were detected on 12 CBCs, which is the same as last year. Reported from 14 counties, with the northernmost record from St. Croix County (Olyphant).

**Winter Wren**—A total of nine individuals on six CBCs, which is barely greater than one-third of last year's totals. Reported from 12 counties, with a high count of two individuals in Waukesha County on 17 and 19 December (Stehno).

**Sedge Wren**—One individual found during the count week of the Richland Center CBC.

There is only one other winter record for WI - 21 December, 1957.

**Golden-crowned Kinglet**—Reported from 30 counties, with a high count of 23 birds on 1 December in Forest County (Prestby).

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet**—Four individuals found on three CBCs. Reported from the following four counties: Dane County (Dischler), Jefferson County (Bridge and Stutz), La Crosse County (Stark), and Milwaukee County (Halmo, Huf and Wood).

**Eastern Bluebird**—Reported from 21 counties, with a maximum count of 10 individuals recorded on 1 February in Ozaukee County (Dolan).

**Townsend's Solitaire**—One individual found on the Riveredge CBC and one found during count week for the Baraboo CBC. Also reported from the following three counties: Chippewa (P. Campbell, Hoyland, and Polk), Marquette (m. obs.) and Ozaukee (Baumann, Sher and Sommer).

**Hermit Thrush**—A total of six individuals found on five CBCs. Reported from seven counties, with only Dane County breaking the single bird mark on both 20 December (Schilke) and 29 December (Marschall).

**American Robin**—Reported from 46 counties, with a maximum count of 135 individuals on 23 January in Iowa County (Holschbach).

**Varied Thrush**—Reported from the following five counties: Door (Lukes), Jackson (Geraghty and Zuhlke), Marathon (Abel and Murkowski), St. Croix (Trosen), and Trempealeau (Calveti, Jackson and Nienhaus).

**Gray Catbird**—One individual found during the count week of the Madison CBC. Also reported from Ashland County (N. & P. Anich) and Dane County (Bridge and Bailey).

**Brown Thrasher**—One individual on both the Ephraim and Stevens Point CBCs. Reports also from: Brown County (Swelstad), Door County (Thilly and Lukes), Marathon County (Belter and Rose), and Trempealeau County (N. Kent).

**Northern Mockingbird**—Only one individual reported this season. This bird was found on 1 December in Oconto County (Prestby).

**European Starling**—Reported from 71 counties, with only Menominee County missing. Counts equal to or greater than 1,000 were recorded in the following counties: Calumet (Vokoun), Dane (Axelson and Gyllenhaal), Fond du Lac (D. & K. Sehloff), Jefferson (Heikkinen, Pope, Schwarz, and Thiessen), Kewaunee (Schilke and Swelstad), Manitowoc (Domagalski and J. & P. Trick), Milwaukee (Stehno), Outagamie (Nowak), Ozaukee (Cutright, Frank and Sher), Sheboygan (Cutright and Schwartz), Washington (D. & K. Sehloff) and Waukesha (Frank, McKinley, Steger and Wanger).

**Bohemian Waxwing**—A total of 183 individuals found on 10 CBCs. Reported from 16 counties, with southernmost records from Brown County on 2 January (Prestby, Walton and Watson) and Outagamie County on 14 December (Tessen).

**Cedar Waxwing**—Reported from 43 counties, which is ten fewer than last year. The maximum count of 145 birds occurred on 8 February in Dane County (Henrikson).

**Lapland Longspur**—Reported from 28 counties, which is also 10 fewer than last year. The high count of 630 was recorded on 10 January in Ozaukee County (Cutright and Sher).

**Snow Bunting**—Reported from 58 counties, although unlike last year, there were no counts greater than 1,000. The highest count was 700 individuals on 31 January in Fond du Lac County (Roti Roti).

**Pine Warbler**—One individual found during the count week of the Oshkosh CBC in Winnebago County. Other reports also come from Winnebago County on 23 January (Sherer) and 16 February (Benson). If this were the same individual, it would represent the 11<sup>th</sup> winter record for the state.

**Yellow-rumped Warbler**—Four individuals found on three CBCs and one more found during the count week of the Baraboo CBC. Only reported from six counties: Brown (Beilke, Giese, Prestby and Walton), Door (Su. Peterson and Lukes), Milwaukee (Wanger), Ozaukee (Scheiman and Szymczak), Racine (Howe), and Waukesha (Coulter).

**Eastern Towhee**—One individual on both the Bridgeport and Sauk City CBCs with two more found during the count week of both the Racine and Richland Center CBCs. Reported from the following five counties: Dane (Westley), Dunn (Koch and Uher-Koch), Monroe (Kaberle),

Portage (Henrikson, Mayer and Senner), and Racine (K. DeBoer).

**American Tree Sparrow**—Reported from 61 counties, with a maximum count of 400 individuals on 10 January (Klubertanz).

**Chipping Sparrow**—Six individuals found on five CBCs. The only other reports come from Manitowoc County (B. & T. Kocourek and J. Trick).

**Field Sparrow**—One individual found on the Baraboo CBC and otherwise only reported in three counties: Columbia (Holschbach and Mack), Kenosha (Willard and Witynski), and Ozaukee (Frank and Tessen).

**Vesper Sparrow**—One individual found during the count week of the Richland Center CBC.

**Lark Sparrow\***—One individual found on 26 January in Eau Claire County (Kragness). This is only the third winter record for Wisconsin. See "By the Wayside" and WSO Records Committee Report: Winter 2014–2015.

**Savannah Sparrow**—Only reported from Milwaukee County on 2 December (Vargo), Ozaukee County on 16 January (Wood) and 26 January (Frank), and Sheboygan County on 4 February (Frank).

**Fox Sparrow**—Reported from 18 counties, which is ten fewer than last year. The maximum count of four individuals occurred on 6 January in Racine County (J. DeBoer).

**Song Sparrow**—Reported from 30 counties, with a high count of eight individuals on 15 February in Brown County (Sonneland).

**Swamp Sparrow**—A total of 24 individuals found on 11 CBCs. Reported from 11 counties, with a maximum count of six birds on 28 December in Racine County (Havel).

**White-throated Sparrow**—Reported from 34 counties, which is comparable to last year's 31 counties.

**Harris's Sparrow**—One individual found on the Bridgeport CBC. The only other report comes from Columbia County from 1 December through 16 December (Wentz).

**White-crowned Sparrow**—A total of 12 individuals found on nine CBCs. Reported from 13 counties, with high counts of seven birds in Dane



Looking regal, this Rough-legged Hawk in Iowa County permitted this shot by Eric Preston in January.



Jeff Galligan garnered this shot of a Great Horned Owl in February at Pheasant Branch Conservancy in Middleton, Dane County.

County on 13 December (McDowell) and 19 January (Senner).

**Dark-eyed Junco**—Reported from 69 counties (all except Menominee, Taylor, and Washburn). The maximum count of 339 individuals occurred on 5 January in Grant County (McKay and Monson). There are also reports of the Oregon subspecies (*Junco hyemalis oregonus*) from the following counties: Buffalo (Geraghty), Dunn (Hoyland), Eau Claire (Geraghty), Green Lake (T. Schultz), Ozaukee (Tessen), Polk (Maercklein), Richland (Duerksen), and Waupaca (Tessen).

**Northern Cardinal**—Reported from 68 counties, excluding Iron, Menominee, Sawyer, and Taylor.

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak**—Only one bird from Douglas County from 1 December through 17 January (O'Neill).

**Red-winged Blackbird**—Reported from 19 counties, with a maximum count of 125 individuals on 9 January in La Crosse County (Jackson).

**Eastern Meadowlark**—One individual on both the Ellsworth and Pensaukee CBCs. Reported from the following three counties: Columbia (Tessen), Door (Lukes), and Ozaukee (m. obs.).

**Rusty Blackbird**—Eight individuals across four CBCs. Only reported from four counties: Grant (Yoerger), Iowa (Kivikoski and Li. Miller), Polk (Maercklein), and Rock (Haycraft and Yoerger).

**Common Grackle**—A total of 63 individuals across 14 CBCs. Reported from 12 counties, with a maximum count of three birds on 18 December in Dane County (Thiessen).

**Brown-headed Cowbird**—Reported from 19 counties, which is higher than last year's 12 counties.

**Pine Grosbeak**—A total of eight individuals across six CBCs. Reported from seven counties, which is higher than last year's two individuals, but lower than the previous year's 36 counties. The high count of 11 birds was recorded on 29 December in Bayfield County (Brady).

**Brambling\***—The third record for the state of Wisconsin came to a feeder in Bayfield County on 26 January (Beebe). See WSO Records Committee Report: Winter 2014–2015.

**Purple Finch**—Reported from 61 counties, which is considerably higher than the last two years' counts of 50 and 44. The maximum count of 55 individuals occurred on 28 January in Ashland County (Lehner).

**House Finch**—Reported from 57 counties, which is comparable to last year's total of 58 counties.

**Red Crossbill**—A total of 48 individuals found on eight CBCs, which is higher than last year's six individuals. Reported from 11 counties, with an incredible high count of 150 birds on 8 February in Burnett County (W. Mueller and Reese).

**White-winged Crossbill**—A total of 84 individuals found on four CBCs, which is a substantial increase from last year's single individual. Reported from six counties, with a high count of 34 birds on 26 December in Ashland County (Sherlock).

**Common Redpoll**—Reported from 61 counties, which is a marked increase from last year's seven counties. The maximum count of 1,200 occurred on 24 January in Portage County (Tessen).

**Hoary Redpoll**—A total of seven individuals found on 6 CBCs. Reported from 13 counties.

**Pine Siskin**—An incredible year for seeing Pine Siskins - they were reported from 71 counties, only missing Menominee.

**American Goldfinch**—It was also a great year for viewing American Goldfinches, which were reported from 71 counties too. Again, the only county without any observations was Menominee.

**Evening Grosbeak**—A total of 174 individuals found on nine CBCs, which is more than eight times greater than last year's count of 20. Evening Grosbeaks have been recorded on CBCs each year since 1951. Reported from 10 counties, with a high count of 67 birds in Ashland County on 26 December (Sherlock).

**House Sparrow**—Reported from 67 counties, which is nine counties higher than last year.

## CONTRIBUTORS

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Michael Kamp, Heather Kauffman, Bob and Kay Kavanagh, Anna Keaney, Adam Kent, Gina Kent, Neil Kent, Ted Keyel, Matthew King, John Kivikoski, Tom Klubertanz, Nina Koch, Betsy and Tom Kocourek, Katie Kozak, Jan and Larry Kraemer, David Kragness, Kim Kreitinger, Kristy Larson, Tony Lau, Alex Lehner, Kyle Lindemer, Laura Loke, Steve Lubahn, Joe Luedtke, Charlotte Lukes, Kristi Lund, Judy Lund, John Mack, Robin Maercklein, Mary Maertz, Stuart Malcolm, Craig Mandel, Rebecca Marschall, Kyle Maust, Heather Maxwell, Joshua Mayer, John McCaw, Trey McCuen, Mike McDowell, Kelly McKay, Karen McKinley, Robert McLure, David McQuade, Tammy McQuade, Robert Mead, Kathy Mehls, John Menge, Leo Miller, Shawn Miller, Liz Miller, Mike Minier, David Moffat, Jason Monson, Jym Mooney, Kathy Morales, William Mueller, Ross Mueller, Geri Mulliner, Steve Murkowski, Clinton Nienhaus, Gloria Nikolai, Paul Noeldner, Tony Nowak, Scott Olson, Cathy Olyphant, Mark O'Neill, Logan Orlowski, Carol Ortenzio, Jim Otto, Sid Padgaonkar, Amanda Parrish, Andy Paulios, Matthew Paulson, Terry Pavletic, Leslie Paynter, Mike Peczynski, Rob Pendergast, Larry Persico, Sue Peterson, Sheree Peterson, Chris Petherick, William Phelan, Janine Polk, Nolan Pope, Tom Prestby, Scott Puchalski, Helen Pugh, Donald Radcliffe, Patrick Ready, Tom Reed, Mike Reese, Nancy Richmond, Ryan Rickaby, Kim Risen, Jeff Roberts, Sam Roberts, Cindy Rose, Jon Roti Roti, Robert Russell, Sarah Sabatke, Cassie Sajkowski, Lori Sallmann, Ryan Sallmann, Derek Sallmann, Tom Schaefer, Dan Scheiman, Paul Schilke, Bob Schmidt, Rod Schmidt, Kristin Schmitt, Daniel Schneider, David Schrab, Carl



A Snowy Owl “At Takeoff” as captured by Mary Anne Pfizinger in December near Antigo in Langlade County.



Kumlien's Iceland Gull showing its pale plumage at the South Shore Yacht Club in Milwaukee County in February, taken by Jim Edlhuber.



Adult Great Black-backed Gull as taken by Cynthia Bridge in late February at Johnson Creek, Jefferson County.

Schroeder, Wendy Schultz, Thomas Schultz, Debby Schultz, Carl Schwartz, Jim Schwarz, Nick Seeger, Dave and Kerry Sehloff, Luke Seitz, Paul Senner, Sophie Shaffer, Rebecca Sher, Ginnie Sherer, Ann Sherlock, Adam Sinkula, Joan Sommer, Art Sonneland, Charles Sontag, Seth Spencer, Alex Stark, Bruce Steger, Brad Steger, Spence Stehno, Jeff Steinmetz, Douglas Stotz, Doug Stratton, Karen Straub, Jean Strelka, Madison Strong, Peder Svingen, James Swanson, Jack Swelstad, Andrea Szymczak,

Daryl Tessen, Steve Thiessen, Mary Thilly, Darwin Tiede, Joel Trick, Patti Trick, Chris Trosen, Hannah Uher-Koch, Steve Vinson, Elaine Vokoun, Sandy Vorpahl, Susan Vos, Melody Walsh, Nick Walton, Mike Wanger, Todd Ward, Jay Watson, Kristin Wegner, Laura Wentz, Malcolm Westley, Max Witynski, Thomas Wood, Chris Wood, Julie Woodcock, Brianna Wordell, Jian-Long Wu, Quentin Yoerger, Brad Zinda, Jeff Zuhlke.

# WSO Awards 2015

*Andy Paulios*

**T**he Society received many excellent award nominations across five categories. Once again this led to tough choices since the number of outstanding nominations is ultimately a reflection of the depth of amazing people deserving of awards across our state. The 2015 awards were presented at the 76<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Society for Ornithology annual convention in Wausau, WI.

The **BRONZE PASSENGER PIGEON AWARD** is presented to individuals that have made outstanding contributions, either locally or in the state, to promote ornithology. These contributions might include teaching and outreach, conservation, or the creation and support of birding organizations.

This year, the award went to Department of Natural Resources Research Scientist **Dr. Mike Meyer** for his career efforts dedicated to loon monitoring and research. Meyer was also recognized for the work he has done with contaminants such as mercury and other toxins in a variety of bird species, including loons and eagles, as well as his work on the adaptations of Wisconsin wildlife to climate change and on shoreline restoration. Mike's research has often involved numerous volunteers in citizen science projects, and Mike has spent thousands of hours over his distinguished career doing public outreach and educational efforts in ad-

dition to leading Natural Resources Foundation field trips regarding loons, lakeshore habitat, eagles, contaminants and climate change.

This year's **SILVER PASSENGER PIGEON AWARD** was given to **Carl Schwartz** for his dedication to bird conservation and to the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology. Schwartz helped launch Bird City Wisconsin's education and community recognition efforts as project coordinator in 2009 and in 2014 took over as chair of the BCW Steering Committee. He also chairs the Steering Committee for the Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory and serves on steering committees for the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II and the Great Wisconsin Birdathon, where his Big Day team of Cutright's Old Coots has been a leading fundraiser for the past three years. He is program chair for the Noel J. Cutright Bird Club and past board president of the Friends of Cedarburg Bog.

The Silver Pigeon specifically looks at service to WSO, where Schwartz is the immediate past president and a current board member. He now is the editor of the monthly newsletter for WSO, *The Badger Birder*, and for a decade led the Honey Creek Birdathon/Bandathon, helping raise nearly \$60,000.

**THE NOEL J. CUTRIGHT CONSERVATION AWARD**, formerly known as the Green



Figure 1. Mike Meyer receiving the Bronze Passenger Pigeon Award from WSO Awards Chair Andy Paulios.



Figure 2. Carl Schwartz receiving the Silver Passenger Pigeon Award from WSO Awards Chair Andy Paulios.

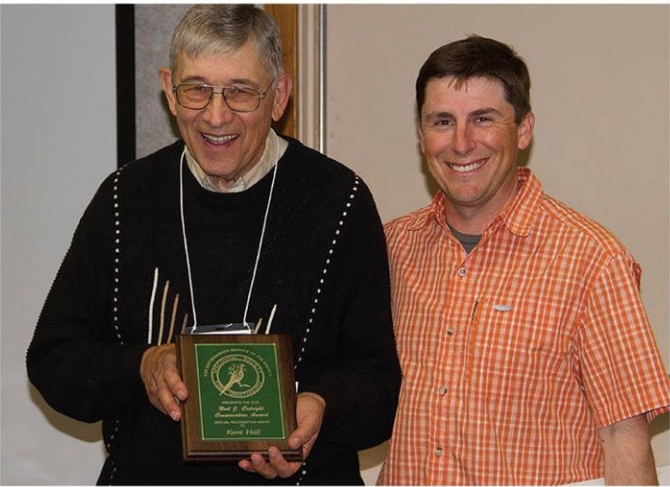


Figure 3. Dr. Kent Hall receiving the Noel J. Cutright Conservation Award from WSO Awards Chair Andy Paulios.



Figure 4. Roy and Charlotte Lukes, recipients of the Samuel D. Robbins Lifetime Achievement Award.



Figure 5. Robert Domagalski Receiving the Certificate of Achievement from WSO Awards Chair Andy Paulios.



Figure 6. Christine Reel receiving the Certificate of Achievement from WSO Awards Chair Andy Paulios.



Figure 7. Dr. Stanley Temple receiving the Special Recognition Award from WSO President Kim Kreitinger

Passenger Pigeon Award, is given out each year to a person, group, or organization that has worked to protect birds or bird habitat or toward educating the public on bird conservation issues. This award was renamed in 2014 to honor one of Wisconsin's leading bird conservationists who twice served as WSO president and died in 2013.

This year, the award went to **Dr. Kent Hall**, coordinator of data collection and analysis and former vice president of the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin (BRAW). Kent's efforts as a bluebird ambassador and bird advocate have helped make Wisconsin the top producing bluebird state in North America since 2007. In what is judged the most successful restoration of a songbird in Wisconsin conservation history, Hall has contributed to education, awareness and citizen participation in monitoring bluebird nest boxes. Hall also is being recognized for leadership roles with the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative (WBCI), the Aldo Leopold Chapter of the National Audubon Society, the Wisconsin Audubon Council and the Bird City Wisconsin Steering Committee.

In addition to these efforts, Kent has also spearheaded efforts to raise large sums of money for conservation including major portions of the funding that built the education and visitor center at Mead State Wildlife Area and helped to endow a permanent educator at the center.

The **SAMUEL D. ROBBINS LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD** was presented to **Roy and Charlotte Lukes**. This prestigious award honors those whose outstanding service to WSO has continued after they have received the Silver Passenger Pigeon Award for "distinguished

service." Roy and Charlotte's long time conservation efforts in Door County have resulted in ongoing education and preservation at the Ridges Sanctuary and across the wild places of Door County, more than five books about the natural history of Door County, and more than a thousand newspaper articles. They both are long time WSO members, and Roy has served as president, vice president, and Education Committee chair.

They were jointly awarded the Silver Passenger Pigeon in 1984 and the Bronze Passenger Pigeon in 1999 and again in 2010 for their conservation work outside of WSO, including founding the Friends of Toft Point, working extensively with the Door County Land Trust and their extensive public education outreach.

**CERTIFICATES OF ACHIEVEMENT** are awarded to past recipients of the Silver Passenger Pigeon for continued service to WSO. This year, two were awarded.

The first went to **Robert Domagalski**, who received a Silver Pigeon in 2008. Domagalski was statewide compiler for Wisconsin's 100+ Christmas Bird Counts for 14 years before retiring from that role in 2014. He continues to coordinate four CBC circles in the Manitowoc County area and has served since 2010 as Fall Field Notes Compiler (or seasonal editor) for WSO's *The Passenger Pigeon* quarterly journal. He also has maintained an extensive online database of Wisconsin Rare Bird Records for WSO.

The second Certificate of Achievement was awarded to **Christine Reel**, who received a Silver Pigeon in 2009, along with her husband Don. The Reels managed the WSO Bookstore from 1996 to 2001 before Christine became

treasurer in 2002, serving for 11 years. Since “retiring” as treasurer, Reel has continued to keep the books for the Honey Creek Birdathon/Bandathon, the annual convention and WBCI annual meetings, as well as working to update WSO bylaws, policies and procedures. In 2014, the WSO board recognized Reel’s continuing involvement by naming her “treasurer emeritus.” That same year, she became a member of the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II planning team and serves as project treasurer.

This year, the WSO Board also created a **SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD** to recognize **Dr. Stanley Temple** for his work on the 100th anniversary of the Pas-

senger Pigeon’s extinction. WSO wanted to honor not only his work nationally with the Passenger Pigeon Project, but also the pivotal role he played in helping to organize WSO’s 75th anniversary convention last year in Prairie du Chien, which featured the premier of the film “From Billions to None,” which WSO helped finance, as well as the restoration and rededication of the Passenger Pigeon Monument at Wyalusing State Park. Temple was editor of *The Passenger Pigeon* from 1988 to 1992. He was awarded the Silver Passenger Pigeon in 1993, after receiving the society’s Golden Passenger Pigeon, for individuals who have made outstanding contributions to ornithology, in 1989.



Jeff Galligan caught a Lapland Longspur at rest at Goose Pond, Colombia County in February.

## “By the Wayside”—Winter 2014–2015

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*Some of the species documented with reports this season as rare or uncommon include: Common Eider, Gyrfalcon, and Lark Sparrow. Below are selected descriptions.*

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(“By the Wayside” is intended to show selected documentation that successfully won acceptance from the WSO Records Committee. They are presented without editing, as submitted by the authors.)

### COMMON EIDER (*Somateria mollissima*, presumably *v-nigrum*)

**15 December, 2014, Superior Entry, Wisconsin Point, Douglas County**—We watched and photographed the eider between 1230 and 1240 when the waterfowl were flushed by a Bald Eagle. The eider and most of the goldeneyes flew east until they gained enough altitude to fly over the Minnesota break-wall and turn towards downtown Duluth. We wish it hadn't been so foggy! Potential 6th Wisconsin record if accepted by WSO. This individual has been seen regularly between Brighton Beach and the Canal Park area of downtown Duluth, MN, since 11/10/2014 and was documented on both sides of the Aerial Lift Bridge at Canal Park as recently as 12/13, but this was the first time it was known to show up at the Superior Entry. Due to fog, the identification was based on size in comparison to goldeneyes, and

head/bill shape in profile. Head shape was angular/blocky with an obvious step down from crown to forehead. Bill length appeared to be exceptionally long in proportion to its head and neck. Culmen shape was essentially straight. We were unable to detect the shape and extent of the loreal feathering. Close up images of this bird taken at Canal Park, Duluth, the previous day, show head and bill characteristics of the “Pacific” form (*Somateria mollissima v-nigrum*) which may be split from Common Eider. King Eider (*Somateria spectabilis*) is smaller in size with a shorter bill, concave culmen, and shorter extension of loreal feathering along the side of its bill. Yesterday, while watching and photographing this bird at Canal Park, Duluth, it vocalized several times by delivering a single low-pitched, resonant, haunting “aagh”.—*Peder Svingen, Duluth, Minnesota.*

### GYRFALCON (*Falco rusticolus*)

**25 February, 2015, Peavey Grain Elevators, Douglas County**—The Gyrfalcon flew onto the top of a tall silo and rested there for 15 minutes until a Bald Eagle flew by and caused it to relocate to the Peavey grain elevators. It was a

large, bulky falcon with pointed wingtips that did not reach the tip of the tail. It appeared to be a gray morph adult with an overall gray coloration. It had a gray crown with a white nape, except where a triangular wedge of gray extended from the crown part of the way down the nape. It had a distinguishable gray moustachial stripe extending from the base of the bill to the bottom of the face. It also had a dark gray eye line and a faint white supercilium. The throat and forehead were white. The mantle, wing coverts, and scapulars were pale gray with thin white tips. The primaries were unmarked dark gray with white tips. I could see 7 of the primary tips. The breast, belly, and what little could be seen of the undertail coverts were white with short, thin gray horizontal bars. The long, pale gray tail had many evenly spaced horizontal dark gray bars. I could not see the legs, but at certain angles I could see this falcon had a yellow iris. There was a yellow orbital ring and a yellow cere. The bill was bluish-gray. I never had a view of the underwing, but when the bird flew after being startled by the Bald Eagle, I saw the upperwing and it looked uniformly gray. This bird was much too large to be any of the smaller falcons, and I judged it to be much paler than any Peregrine Falcon I have encountered. I also eliminated a Peregrine by the lack of a thick black moustache, and the fact that the wingtips did not reach the end of the tail. The barring on the underparts was darker and thicker than would be expected on an adult Northern Goshawk, the supercilium was much fainter, and the iris was yellow rather than the red that would be seen on a Northern Goshawk. A Northern Goshawk would have wingtips that terminate even fur-

ther from the tip of the tail.—*Thomas Wood, Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin.*

**LARK SPARROW**  
(*Chondestes grammacus*)

**31 January, Fall Creek, Eau Claire County**—Larger sized adult sparrow, with distinct facial pattern, spot on central breast and long tail. Facial pattern consisted of brown or chestnut colored cheek with white semicircular area directly below the eye, thin black eye strip extending from lores to nape of neck, white supercilium extending from beak to nape of neck, brown crown with white stripe in center. There was a white malar stripe below the cheek and eye with a black lateral throat strip below the malar stripe. The throat was white. The beak was light colored. The breast and belly were white, without any striping and with a very distinct black central spot. The sides and flanks were tan. The upper back was tanish-brown with darker strips and the rump was grayish without strips. The tail had white tipped rectrices on the upper side with the length of the white on the tips shortening from the outer rects to the inner central rects. The outer rects were white for most of their length. The tail appeared white from below. The distinct tail pattern was particularly noticeable when in flight. American Tree Sparrow also has a central breast spot and is common in this location this time of year but the facial pattern and color as well as lack of white tips on the tail feathers eliminate this species. Lapland Longspur is also present in Wisconsin this time of year and has a somewhat similar facial pattern and tail pattern but does not have a central breast spot and has some streaking along the sides and flanks thus elimi-

nating this species. Clay-colored Sparrow also has a somewhat similar facial pattern but is a smaller bird and does not have a breast spot or white tipped tail and has a buffy colored breast thus eliminating this species. Chipping Sparrow has a slightly similar facial pattern but is a smaller bird without a breast spot or white tipped tail feathers and has a grayish colored breast thus eliminating this species. Bird was eating seed at a feeder and on the snow covered

ground below the feeder. The feed mixture consisted of cracked corn, sunflower, millet, wheat and milo. The bird also sat on a branch of a Norway Spruce tree above the feeder at about 8 feet above the ground. The bird was feeding with a group of about 8 Dark-eyed Juncos when on the ground. All of the birds flushed at one point and then returned. The bird appeared to act normally and to be in good health.—*David Kragness, Fall Creek, Wisconsin.*



A majestic Bald Eagle portrayed by Mary Anne Pfitzinger in late January, "Landing in a Sticky Situation" at Petenwell Dam in Juneau County.



A White-breasted Nuthatch in January displayed  
a classic pose for Eric Preston in Iowa County.

## 50 Years in *The Passenger Pigeon*

Dovekie in Northern Wisconsin. On November 10, 1964, Mr. Alvin Christman found a live Dovekie on his lawn in the Village of Tony, approximately six miles east of Ladysmith. The strange bird was brought to Postmaster Joe Peterson of Tony who kindly turned it over to me. The bird lived in my home for two days. It was very fond of small minnows and would readily swim to catch them when placed in a bath tub half filled with water. It would refuse minnows presented to it in a small dish of water.—L.C. Tiews, Game Management Division

Wild Turkeys Have Best Year Yet! This could be a record year for Wisconsin's growing flock of wild turkeys. Prior to this year, the largest young turkey brood seen numbered 12. This year, two broods of 15 each have been recorded! The best average ever reported in past seasons was 7.8 turkeys per brood. This year the average (for 9 broods seen so far) is 10.4! This is almost phenomenal for turkey broods. Clarence (Bud) Smith, Game Manager on the State's 90 square mile Meadow Valley Wildlife Area, where the Wisconsin Conservation Department's turkey project is centered, cautioned, "The year's picture isn't complete yet. We must expect some losses of young birds during the next few weeks. However, these should be small because past experience has shown that few birds are lost after August 1. Barring a major disease outbreak or some unusual weather catastrophe, we can be very optimistic for a good increase in our wild turkey flock this year," Manager Smith added.

Hawk Owl: One was well seen and described at Wausau December 20 and 27 by Mr. & Mrs. Leroy Mattern. One was seen at Goose Island, LaCrosse County, February 28 by Howard Young.

*Excerpts from The Passenger Pigeon, Winter 1965, Vol. 27(4) by Historian Nancy J. Nabak, 410 Stonehedge Road, Green Bay, WI 54302; 920. 655. 4185; [historian@wsobirs.org](mailto:historian@wsobirs.org).*



John Rasmussen observed a Snow Bunting pausing while feeding in Oneida County in December.

# A Tribute on a Monument to the Pigeon

*B.J. Hollars*

A century after the last one's death, I strike out in search of a Passenger Pigeon. Or at least what's left of them—a stone monument in Wisconsin's Wyalusing State Park. I drive south (spot an eagle, some tree sparrows) until reaching the park's entrance, which has not been plowed, and poses a challenge for my front wheel drive. The car crawls to a halt near Long Valley Road, not far from an ice-encrusted volleyball net. The park is a freshly shaken snow globe—beautiful but desolate, not a person or pigeon anywhere.

My pilgrimage was inspired by Wisconsin conservationist Aldo Leopold, whose 1946 remarks, "On a Monument To The Pigeon," had—when I first read it—aroused within me such an unrelenting guilt that I found myself re-sorting the recycling bin three times through that week. Maybe it wouldn't bring back any Passenger Pigeons, but I'd sleep a little easier. How else was I to respond to Leopold's hard truth: that no human would ever again see "the onrushing phalanx of victorious birds...chasing the defeated winter from all the woods and prairies of Wisconsin."

I could have used some of their win-

ter-chasing on the day I arrive at their monument. Or almost arrive there. I don't dare drive down the accurately named Long Valley Road so I get out and walk, instead. The problem, though, is that I'd been too cheap to pay for the full-day park pass, opting for the hour-long rate, instead. Which means I have to hustle, really hustle, or I might just miss my monument.

If you've never seen a grown man sprint through the trees, binoculars bouncing, I highly recommend it. That is, assuming you are not that grown man. Thankfully, save for a rabbit and a couple of deer, my tracks are the only tracks in the snow.

A few steps shy of experiencing a coronary event, I at last reach my monument. I recognize it from pictures—a miniature monolith upon which rests a plaque featuring an engraving of our departed bird. And just below, a line that will soon have me absolving myself once more in the recycling bin: "The species became extinct," it reads, "through the avarice and thoughtlessness of man."

I am still breathless, frantic, checking my watch; my time here, I know, is short. But so was the Passenger Pi-

geons', once we began alighting their sky with our nets and our smoke and our bullets.

From my place on the bluff, I am at last eye-level with the birds. Though there are no birds, not today. *What better reminder, I think, of our own mortality than a sky with no wings on the wind?*

Ten minutes later, I retrace my tracks through the snow. Still, no one is anywhere—no people, no pigeons, certainly no snowplows. The solemnity afforded by the forest provides little comfort, just further proof of what I'd feared—that our past transgressions were coming home to roost; the echo of the emptiness is deafening.

*This article previously appeared in Flyway.*

*B.J. Hollars is the author of two award-winning nonfiction books—*Thirteen Loops: Race, Violence and the Last Lynching in America* (the 2012 recipient of the Society of Midland Author's Award) and *Opening the Doors: The Desegregation of the University of Alabama and the Fight for Civil Rights in Tuscaloosa* (the 2014 recipient of the Council of Wisconsin Writer's Blei-Derleth Non-fiction Prize—as well as a collection of stories, *Sightings. From the Mouths of Dogs: What Our Pets Teach Us About Life, Death, and Being Human* is forthcoming next fall. He is an assistant professor of creative writing at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.*

# WSO Records Committee Report: Winter 2014–2015

*Quentin Yoerger*

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The WSO Records Committee reviewed 17 records of 11 species for the Winter 2014–2015 season, accepting 15 of them (88%). The highlights had a decidedly northern flavor this season. Wisconsin's sixth record of Common Eider spent most of the winter in the Duluth–Superior area. Other notable birds in the north included American Three-toed Woodpecker, Black-billed Magpie, Gyrfalcon, Boreal Owl, and two Northern Hawk-Owls.

The rarest bird of the season was the Brambling that spent several days coming to a feeder in Bayfield County. This bird represents a third state record. To add to this great find the homeowner also shared pictures of a Green Violet-eared tanager taken at their home in 2002. This is the seventh state record of this vagrant hummingbird from Mexico.

## ACCEPTED RECORDS

Table 1 provides a list of records accepted by the WSO Records Committee during the Winter 2014–2015 season. Information on each record, such as species, location, observer(s), and date(s), is accompanied by the tally of

votes made by the five-person committee. Records with one or fewer dissenting votes are accepted into the state records.

## RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED

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

### Northern Hawk-Owl—

Whitefish Bay, Milwaukee County, 20 February 2015 (0-5).

The observer reported seeing a bird that was “Brown with white markings. More than 12 inches but less than 24 inches in overall length” and that “It looked like a hawk (which we see pretty frequently) but with a broader head and shoulders.”

The observer did not provide any details on what would make this bird a Northern Hawk-Owl instead of one of the much more common owl species found in southern Wisconsin.

Table 1. Records Accepted by the WSO Records Committee.

Species	Date	Observer	Location	County	Notes	Vote
Am. Three-toed Woodpecker	12/3/14 - 1/3/15	James Hoefler	Bents Rd. tamarack/spruce blowdown	Burnett	Photo	5 - 0
Black-billed Magpie	2/22 - 3/5	Ryan Brady	City of Washburn	Bayfield	Photo	5 - 0
Black-billed Magpie	1/27	Sheree Peterson	Hwy 13 approx. 10 miles west of Superior	Douglas	Photo	5 - 0
Boreal Owl	2/7	Carol Ersepke	8681 Koolish Rd. Minocqua	Oneida	Photo	5 - 0
Brambling	1/26	Janice Beebe	61020 Olaf Johnson Rd. Mason	Bayfield	Photo	5 - 0
Common Eider	12/14	Peder Svingen	Superior Entry - Wisconsin Point	Douglas	Photo	5 - 0
Common Eider	1/27	Thomas Wood	Barker Island, Superior	Douglas		5 - 0
Green Violetear	10/3/2002	Janice Beebe	61020 Olaf Johnson Rd. Mason	Bayfield	Photo	5 - 0
Gyr Falcon	2/6	Peder Svingen	Connors Point, Superior	Douglas	Photo	5 - 0
Gyr Falcon	2/25	Thomas Wood	Connors Point, Superior	Douglas		5 - 0
Lark Sparrow	1/26	David Kragness	Cnty D, Fall Creek	Eau Claire	Late	5 - 0
Northern Hawk-Owl	12/13	Chuck Heikkinen	Brookwood Dr. Eau Claire	Eau Claire	Photo	5 - 0
Northern Hawk-Owl	1/10	Thomas Wood	Brookwood Dr. Eau Claire	Eau Claire		5 - 0
Northern Hawk-Owl	2/13	Anne Geraghty		Chippewa	Photo	5 - 0
Pine Warbler	1/23	Ginnie Sherer	Menominee Dr, Oshkosh	Winnebago	Photo/Late	5 - 0

**Orange-crowned Warbler—**

Coal Dock Park Port Washington,  
Ozaukee County, 24 December 2014  
(1-4).

The description given was “Green-gray upper parts, grayer on head, yellowish wash below, brightest on the undertail coverts; glimpsed yellow on

upper tail coverts too.” Also noted under similar species that “Tennessee Warbler does not have a yellow wash beneath and is even less expected in winter.”

This very brief description fails to actually identify the bird in question as a warbler. This description also fails to eliminate other warbler species in their winter plumage.



A cooperative Rough-legged Hawk posed in January for a formal portrait by Jim Stewart at Horicon NWR, Fond du Lac County.



Eric Preston shows the fine detail in a Dark-eyed Junco found in Iowa County in December.

# Report of the Annual Meeting

## May 23, 2015

*Quality Inn Midway Hotel, Wausau*

### MINUTES

#### **WSO President Kim Kreitinger called the meeting to order.**

There was a prize drawing for those in attendance.

A special Thank You was given to the Convention Planning Committee—Christine Zimmerman, Margaret Brasser, Michael John Jaeger, Janet Speth, Sue Haug, Dan Belter, and Jeff Baughman.

Stan Temple presented a \$500 charitable contribution from Capital Brewery in Madison to the WSO.

The Readers Committee (McKeever, Dennis, Goodwin) presented their recommendation for the approval of the minutes of the May 17<sup>th</sup> 2014 annual meeting in Prairie du Chien, WI—the minutes were approved as submitted.

Marty Hunt, Wendy Schultz, and Peter McKeever are the new Readers Committee for the 2015 annual meeting.

The reports of officers and committee chairs were previously submitted by all board members—please refer to [notes/agenda](#) provided to all attendees of convention. Additions are noted below:

#### **President—Kim Kreitinger**

Gave thanks to outgoing and incoming board members.

Outlined primary activities during the previous year—e.g., working on the website update/new website.

Announced that the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas (WBBA-II) data will be inputted through the WSO website.

Announced that WSO is partnering with and supporting the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas-II.

#### **Mickey O'Connor—Treasurer**

Under item #2—noted that donations during 2014 amounted to \$64,000—Thank You!

#### **Badger Birder Editor—Carl Schwartz**

Thanked Barbara Schwartz for the look of *The Badger Birder*.

Thanked contributions from the board and members for content for *The Badger Birder*.

Noted that advertisement spots are available in *The Badger Birder*. Consider advertising if you have a small business that would be interested!

Requested more content for *The Badger Birder*.

**Communications Committee**—The chair Erin Parker was not present. President Kreitinger suggested that members sign up for e-Alerts in order to be informed of upcoming activities.

**Passenger Pigeon Editors**—  
**Chuck Heikkinen and Delia Unson**

Hoped that everyone likes the new look of *The Passenger Pigeon*.

Requested that more articles be submitted (including for the peer review section).

Requested a volunteer to write a feature for each issue that is similar to the discontinued “Lessons from the Seasons.”

Requested more photo submissions from members.

**Education Committee**—**Ed Hahn**

Announced that five Youth Grants were awarded this year—\$250.00 to student projects.

Reported that bird-monitoring kits can still go out to organizations/schools. Two kits will be coming from Eagle Optics with some Kaufmann bird ID kits. They will pay \$990 for a value over \$2000; WSO will also contribute.

Noted that WSO has funded a student trip.

**Honey Creek Committee**—**Levi Wood**

Reported that thanks to some help from Tom Craft, the sign is now up at Honey Creek. Jim Ellison and his crew have done some work for major garlic mustard pulling.

**Membership Committee**—  
**Jesse Peterson**

Announced that we have had a lot of new members in the beginning of this year. Requested that all of us encourage friends to join!

**Conservation Committee**—  
**Mary Korkor**

Noted that the committee has been very busy, meeting monthly. Andy Cassini has taken over leading the committee.

Announced that brainstorming important issues has started, i.e. re: the Black River Forest proposed golf course, outdoor cats, Chimney Swifts, Badger Ammunition Plant, the Sandhill Crane hunt, state budget cuts, and climate change.

Reported that Peter McKeever has assisted the committee from a legal perspective. Peter Dunn is a Prairie Chicken expert. Michael John Jaeger has assisted in many areas. Mary is the note-taker and does some lobbying. Andy Cassini continues to guide the group.

Reminded that proposed state budget cuts are coming up on Tuesday morning with important issues.

Stated that the Knowles/Nelson Stewardship fund and other important issues are included in the proposed cuts.

Provided contact information to members today in order for members to contact their legislators.

Said that comments are always welcome to the committee.

**Convention Committee—  
Christine Zimmerman**

Thanked the Wausau Bird Club for their assistance in this year's convention.

Announced that the 2016 Convention will be in the Racine/Kenosha area with assistance from the Hoy Audubon Society during the weekend of May 12-13, 2016.

**Harriman motioned that the 2016 Convention be in the Racine/Kenosha area. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.**

Old Business—There was none.

**New Business**

WSO learned that a landowner who has property adjacent to Honey Creek that is interested in selling. He has 105 acres for sale. It could potentially complete a whole section of the Honey Creek area. A representative of WSO has met with the landowner. WSO is very interested in obtaining this land and is waiting to hear if they can receive a stewardship fund grant, which could raise half of the funds for the property.

There was a question from audience—is any part of the proposed property that could be leased out for profit? The answer was that most of the land is heavily wooded, and the hope would be to turn any pasture area into natural prairie.

It was clarified that the stewardship fund is a state program started in the 80s which is a way for state trusts/organizations to acquire funding for land conservation.

Baraboo Range Preservation has informed WSO of some possibly available grant money.

Report of the Nominating Committee—Carl Schwartz, Karen Etter Hale, and Brian Lenz

The following slate of officers was proposed:

President—Kim Kreitingner

VP—Michael John Jaeger

Treasurer—Mickey O'Connor

Secretary—Jennifer Wenzel

Heikkinen and Unson would continue as editors of *The Passenger Pigeon*. This is no longer an officer position.

**The motion was made to approve the slate of officers as presented by Mary Korkor, and was seconded by Dan Doeppers. It was approved unanimously.**

**Schwartz motioned to adjourn. It was seconded and approved unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Jennifer Wenzel, Secretary

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

1. WSO's Policies (adopted April 2005) state that annual dues payments shall cover the cost of membership services—that is, all costs in providing *The Badger Birder*, *The Passenger Pigeon*, and other direct membership benefits, and the costs associated with maintaining membership and soliciting renewals and new members. The breakdown of those costs during 2014 is as follows:

***The Passenger Pigeon*—**

Expenses for 2014

(not including color printing)

3 issues paid \$19,879

1 issue invoiced in 2015 \$3,777

Total Pigeon costs (4 issues) \$23,656

***Badger Birder—***

Expenses for 2014 (11 issues)	\$5,752
Total publication costs	\$29,408
Membership expenses	\$1,844
<b>Total cost of</b>	
<b>membership services</b>	<b>\$31,252</b>
Membership dues received	\$29,535
Library subscriptions/ back issues	\$577
<b>Total membership-related</b>	
<b>income</b>	<b>\$30,112</b>

During 2014, the costs associated with membership services were more than membership income by approximately \$1,100. A shortfall hasn't happened in quite some time, but this past year was a celebratory year and *The Passenger Pigeon* had larger and more colorful issues, although the cost of color doesn't impact this comparison. With ever increasing numbers of members receiving *The Badger Birder* electronically, it is anticipated that during 2015 the related income will once again cover the costs associated with membership.

2. Your generous support of WSO continues, and donations during 2014 amounted to nearly \$64,000. It is owed to your generosity that WSO continues in a solid financial position. THANK YOU!

3. WSO has a long history of supporting individuals by administering grant funds to help finance ornithological research and other non-budget projects. These amounts do not appear in the financial summary below because they are financed entirely by sources outside of WSO. Current non-budget projects include the following:

- **Bird Kits:** In partnership with the education committee of Wisconsin Bird

Conservation Initiative, WSO provides kits to help educate youth and adults about birds and the natural world. Begun in 2004, the goal of this project is to have a bird kit available in every Wisconsin county; kits have been placed in more than half of the counties to date. The kits include binoculars, a spotting scope and tripod, field guides, and other support materials.

- **Flying WILD/One Bird–Two Habitats:** These long-standing projects, which have been merged into one financially, provide training for educators in ornithology and emphasize the importance of looking beyond birds' nesting ground needs in Wisconsin to their wintering ground needs to the south.

- **Sam Robbins Shorebird Endowment Fund:** SRSEF, which was established in 2000, is managed by its own board to provide support for education and habitat preservation to benefit shorebirds. An endowed fund, the earnings are to be used in a way that honors Sam Robbins's bird conservation legacy.

- **Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative:** In 2014 WSO served as treasurer for WBCI's annual meeting.

4. Of the total assets as of 31 December 2014 (\$538,123—see II. WSO Balance Sheet as of 31 December), the amount available to cover general operating expenses is \$63,340; the remainder is restricted. All of the amounts listed as received in Restricted Revenue in Part I, as well as for grants and other non-budget projects administered by WSO, must be reserved for their intended use.

# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

## I. WSO Statement of Revenue and Expenses, 2011–2014

	2014	2013	2012	2011
<b>Unrestricted Revenue*</b>				
Birder Adv/Back Issues	180	458	380	400
Donations-Unrestricted	6,648	6,562	5,820	2,580
Wisconsin eBird Portal	476	1,020	4,250	1,430
Interest/Dividends	188	132	80	134
Membership Dues	29,535	28,610	30,135	26,415
Pigeon-Subscr/Back Issues	577	747	930	1,004
Color Fund	10	80	1,165	1,350
WSO Pubs/Bookstore	1,171	767	1,211	1,601
Miscellaneous**	2,802	1,559	3,670	4,476
<b>Total Unrestricted Revenue</b>	<b>41,587</b>	<b>39,935</b>	<b>47,641</b>	<b>39,390</b>

\* Unrestricted revenue includes some amounts that are actually restricted as to use (e.g., donations for Wisconsin eBird portal and color printing in the *Pigeon*). They are included here because if donations do not completely cover the costs, the Board of Directors is committed to covering them from general operating funds.

\*\* Miscellaneous unrestricted revenue during 2014:

- Convention profits, \$1,385.
- Project SNOWstorm, \$745.
- From Billions to None travel expense, \$400.
- Costa Rica field trip profit, \$140.
- Field trips, \$132.

	2014	2013	2012	2011
<b>Expenses (Unrestr Rev)</b>				
Administration	3,165	5,580	2,874	2,761
Awards	471	196	346	194
Bird Reports	78	100	199	193
Birder	5,752	4,375	4,089	5,063
Communications	388	509	159	112
Conservation	100	165	100	100
Historian	307	0	0	0
Hotline	0	0	188	450
Membership	1,844	1,409	1,561	855
Brochure	0	390	0	720
Pigeon	19,879	22,827	19,918	20,554
Color Printing	5,713	4,026	4,949	3,086
Schol/Grants	3,000	6,000	3,000	1,892
Website	565	667	572	3,101
WSO Pubs/Bookstore	273	245	278	294
Printing	572	413	268	1,265
Miscellaneous*	10,204	6,577	1,993	1,630
<b>Total Expenses (Unrestr Rev)</b>	<b>52,311</b>	<b>53,479</b>	<b>40,494</b>	<b>42,270</b>

\* Miscellaneous unrestricted expenses during 2014:

- From Billions to None film, \$4,400.
- Project SNOWstorm, \$3,245.
- Wisconsin eBird portal, \$1,500.
- Passenger Pigeon Monument sign, \$741.
- Field trips, \$318.

	2014	2013	2012	2011
<b>Restricted Revenue</b>				
Atlas II	9,798	20,021	12	13
Conservation Projects	25,421	0	0	0
Convention	20,304	19,227	16,575	11,235
Duck Stamps	941	985	977	1,147
Endowment-Donations	20	1	55	16
Interest/Div/Cap Gains	272	515	847	1,326
Life/Patron Memberships	3,725	2,800	2,725	1,575
Field Trips*	11,145	69,514	-650	38,571
Honey Creek-Donations	7,054	27,766	11,326	9,870
Mems/Bequests (unallocated)	9,270	40,692	0	0
Schol/Grants-Donations	30	261	550	521
Interest/Dividends	56	36	21	25
Youth Fund Dons	91	201	130	301
WSO Pubs-Atlas/Haunts Sales	2,606	5,795	4,423	5,313
Miscellaneous**	277	781	304	323
<b>Total Restricted Revenue</b>	<b>91,010</b>	<b>188,595</b>	<b>37,295</b>	<b>70,236</b>

\* Field trip income during 2014: Costa Rica.

\*\* Miscellaneous restricted revenue during 2014:

- Sales tax transferred from convention and bookstore, \$277.

	2014	2013	2012	2011
<b>Expenses (Restr Rev)</b>				
Atlas II	38,871	0	0	0
Conservation Projects	244	0	0	0
Convention	20,375	19,342	17,997	11,334
Duck Stamps	926	1,042	948	1,159
Field Trips*	28,291	52,259	27,254	10,667
Honey Creek	10,461	7,521	9,489	14,999
Website Redesign	12,754	0	0	0
WSO Pubs-Atlas/Haunts Sales	836	701	686	682
WGLBBO	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Youth Fund	2,485	7,953	4,887	395
Miscellaneous**	248	268	311	333
<b>Total Expenses (Restr Rev)</b>	<b>120,491</b>	<b>94,086</b>	<b>66,572</b>	<b>44,569</b>

\* Field trip expenses during 2014: Costa Rica.

\*\* Miscellaneous restricted expenses during 2014:

- Sales tax on convention T-shirts and bookstore sales, \$248.

II. WSO Balance Sheet as of 31 December

	2014	2013	2012	2011
General Funds	33,054	52,936	6,424	7,890
Savings and Temp Cash Invs	403,245	425,289	404,380	424,686
Inventory for Sale	24,882	29,006	35,498	42,227
Land and Buildings*	31,895	31,895	31,895	31,895
Mutual Fund Investments	0	0	15,457	13,584
Assets Held by Another Org**	45,047	43,810	10,751	9,767
<b>Total</b>	<b>540,137</b>	<b>584,949</b>	<b>506,417</b>	<b>532,060</b>

\* Land and Buildings carried at cost:

- Prairie-chicken land, 60 acres in Portage County, \$1,491 (leased in 1962 to WDNR for 99 years).
- Honey Creek land, 264 acres in Sauk County, \$21,476.
- Honey Creek buildings, \$8,928.

\*\* Assets held by another organization:

- Important Bird Areas Fund, an endowed fund held by the Natural Resources Foundation since 2007, \$12,513.
- Sam Robbins Shorebird Endowment Fund, an endowed fund held by the Natural Resources Foundation since 2013, \$32,534.

ANNUAL REPORT OF OFFICERS

**President—Kim Kreitingner**

First, I would like to thank all of our members, donors, volunteers, partners and especially our board of directors for your commitment to our mission. Because we are a volunteer-based organization, your support is critical to our success! I'd like to acknowledge all of the board members that migrated to other roles over the last year. Thanks to former Conservation Chair Pete Blank for his work to invigorate our conservation committee; former Bookstore Manager Penny Fish for her years of service in that role; former *Badger Birder* editor Mary Uttech for her excellent work with our monthly newsletter; and Bettie and Neil Harriman for making *The Passenger Pigeon* journal one of the best publications of any state ornithological society. Many thanks also to our former legal counsel David Kinnamon for his years of service.

I would also like to welcome the new additions to our board over the last

year. Conservation Chair Andy Cassini, who, along with the other members of that committee, has done amazing work keeping our members apprised of important conservation issues; Bookstore Manager Dar Tiede, who has hit the ground running and is doing great work; Communications Chair Erin Parker, who seemed to effortlessly learn the inner workings of our website, social media platforms and email delivery system; Chuck Heikkinen and Delia Unson, who are somehow finding ways to make *The Passenger Pigeon* even better; and Carl Schwartz (and his wife, Barbara) for making our monthly newsletter the go-to publication for bird news in the state. I'd also like to welcome Peter McKeever as our new legal counsel. In his short tenure, Peter has already been providing guidance with our bylaws revision and contract reviews.

As I think you will see from the officer and committee reports, we have made significant progress towards our strategic planning goals and accomplishing our mission of promoting the

enjoyment, study and conservation of Wisconsin's birds. I'd like to highlight two of the major projects that I have worked on this past year:

### **Website Upgrade**

A generous bequest from a long-time member of WSO enabled us to complete a major upgrade to our website. WSO worked with GreenLeaf Media of Madison to redesign and upgrade the way we communicate with both our members and the world at large. The new site has improved content, better navigation with drop-down menus, a footer menu, a calendar function on our home page, direct access to our Facebook and Twitter accounts and stunning photographs. We are very grateful to Eric Preston, Sunil Gopalan, Michael Huebschen, Steve Meyer and Dennis Malueg for donating the use of their images! We have also added Bird TV to our website—a series of educational videos produced by Steve Betchkal that highlight the amazing life of birds with ideas on how we can help conserve them. Check out our new website at [wsobirds.org](http://wsobirds.org)!

GreenLeaf Media also helped us with some other updates. Although many elements of our logo remain the same, *The Passenger Pigeon* is now in color and our name is in larger font and no longer encircling the pigeon. Our letterhead was updated to include the redesigned color logo and our new mission statement. The mastheads for both *The Passenger Pigeon* and the *Badger Birder* have been redesigned to coordinate with the font types used on the website. Additionally, we have selected a new color palette for the journal based on colors used on the website.

### **Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II**

WSO is a major partner in the second Atlas effort. Over the last year, WSO funded the development of the eBird data entry portal for the Atlas and provided funding for a part-time Atlas Development Director. In December, WSO contracted Charlie Luthin as Development Director and we are pleased to report that he has done an amazing job fundraising for the Atlas. More than \$100,000 has already been raised through species sponsorships and grants, with additional grant requests pending. WSO is providing website support to the second Atlas, and I would like to give a very big THANK YOU to our web administrator Paul Jakoubek for his help with this. We provided administrative support for the Atlas Kick-Off Meeting in February, which was well attended and a resounding success. And we also serve as the fiscal agent for the second Atlas, for which I would like to thank Christine Reel for her incredible work on our behalf.

### **Vice President—Michael John Jaeger**

I assumed the position of WSO Vice President in May of 2014 at the Annual Convention in Prairie du Chien. This report summarizes my activities from the 2014 Convention through the current 2015 Convention.

I became a member of WSO's Convention Committee and have attended all committee meetings held this year. I put together the convention's Saturday afternoon program of presentations and workshops and arranged for the banquet speaker. I've also helped scout out preliminary sites for the 2016 Con-

vention, targeting the Racine/Kenosha area.

I have been an active member of the Conservation Committee. I've attended all of the monthly meetings that committee has been holding. I've helped identify issues for the committee to consider, research the issues, and draft documents.

I attended, as the WSO representative, the quarterly meetings of the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative Steering Committee. I have also attended, as the WSO representative, meetings of the Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan 2 Steering Committee and provided input on draft revisions of the plan.

I worked with the ad hoc Honey Creek team, which has been attempting to put together the purchase of the property adjacent to our current lands.

I continue to serve as chair of the Scholarship and Grants Committee. This year we added two new members, Aaron Greene and Cindy Burtley, to the committee to help Steve Brick and I review project proposals. We approved seven Steenbock Awards and WSO Grants in early 2015.

I met with the Natural Heritage Land Trust to discuss possible WSO funding to assist adding an observation deck, trail expansion and improved signage at Patrick Marsh in Dane County to increase the area's educational value to an adjacent school.

I worked with President Kim Kreitinger and past Treasurer Christine Reel to create and have approved a number of revisions to WSO's Bylaws. These revisions allow, among other things, the option for the Board to use electronic means for meeting and acting on motions if items can't be easily

deferred to a regular quarterly Board meeting.

I proposed a small program to recognize the contributions of our Board members. WSO now has a program where a Board member who has served for 4 years is eligible to receive a small, engraved wooden plaque that includes the WSO logo. Two recent board members, Mary Uttech and Penny Fish, along with current board members Carl Schwartz, Jeff Baughman, Thomas Schultz, Jesse Peterson, Levi Wood, and myself, were recognized.

I attended the annual meeting of the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative and the kickoff meeting of the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas-II.

#### **Treasurer—Mickey O'Connor**

Please see Financial Report.

#### **Secretary—Jenny Wenzel**

All WSO board meeting minutes are now being electronically backed up on WSO's Go Daddy website.

#### **ANNUAL REPORTS OF COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

#### ***The Badger Birder* Editor— Carl Schwartz**

I took over in the summer of 2014, in tandem with my wife, Barbara Dembski, who is serving as designer of *The Badger Birder*. We hope we have made a great monthly newsletter even better in implementing a number of changes in the months following the retirement of Mary Uttech, who served as editor for 13 years.

Most notable has been our attempt to make *The Birder* newsier, with articles on important issues and developments

on the state ornithological scene. But there also has been an increase in the size of the publication, with most issues eight pages larger than their monthly counterparts a year previous. The October and November issues contained twice as many pages as in 2013, all of this thanks to the contributions of many WSO members. The January and February issues were each a record 20 pages.

The January issue featured the Society's first "corporate" style annual report, the program schedule and registration form for the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II Kickoff Meeting, as well as our annual Totals Form to update annual state, county and lifetime birding lists. That issue also introduced a new delivery system for the *eBirder*, utilizing the MailChimp e-mail delivery system with a members-only link to our web site at [wsobirds.org](http://wsobirds.org). February saw a further enhancement of this system with the MailChimp e-mail incorporating highlights of that issue's content with links to the issue.

Both the *eBirder* and regular mail edition have benefitted from a freshened design and updated masthead incorporating the Society's new logo. There also has been a marked increase in the use of photos and graphics, and *eBirder* readers get them in color without any additional cost to WSO. We hope this encourages more readers to switch to the *eBirder*, further reducing our costs.

We continue to feature the long-standing contributions of Tom Schultz and Mark Korducki, but have new monthly columns from Jim Knickelbine (*Call Notes*), Steve Petznick (*Keep Looking Up*), Diana Hierlmeier (*Bird of the Month*), Nancy Nabak (*Found in Our Archives*), Kate Redmond (*Kate's Quotes*) and Dani Baumann (*Let's Go Birding*).

Naturalist and writer Anita Carpenter is now a regular contributor as well.

I also am attempting to compile more news about our members, although this will require the help of our members. We have started carrying obituaries on notable folks in the state birding community.

And thanks to Kim and Paul, members can now catch up with past issues of *The Birder* at <http://wsobirds.org/ebb-recent>. WSO also wants the many new visitors to our recently upgraded website to see the quality of our publications. However, only issues more than three months old will be available on the website, so you will need to be a WSO member to keep current with Wisconsin's birding news.

At its January meeting the Board of Directors approved the first increase in ad rates for *The Birder* in at least 14 years. Beginning with the May 2015 issue, these rates (**B&W/color**) will be in effect for camera-ready ad copy:

1/10 of a page (business card size):

**\$25/\$35**

¼ page (3.75 × 5"): **\$45/\$65**

½ page 7 × 5"): **\$85/\$115**

Full Page (7 × 10"): **\$160/\$200**

We offer a 10% discount for the second time an ad runs and for any subsequent insertions of the same ad.

### **Bird Reports Coordinator— Joe Schaufenbuel**

As Bird Reports Coordinator, I have seen a lot of changes in the past four years and 2014 probably went the smoothest. After our Spring Seasonal Editor David La Puma migrated to Cape May Bird Observatory, we found a very competent replacement in Sunil

Gopalan. After a recent conference call between the seasonal compiler team and a few others, Sunil's computer prowess quickly became evident. He has volunteered to help streamline the eBird data sorting, which will greatly reduce the time and energy required to create reports from this massive database. Otherwise my North American Bird Reports went off without problems and I look forward to 2015.

### **Bookstore—Dar Tiede**

I took over as bookstore manager from Penny Fish in the fourth quarter of the year. Thank you to Penny and also Christine Reel for answering all my questions and getting me up to speed. I'm also now on a first name basis with a few of the area postmasters!

Our current inventory consists of eight items. Two new items were added during the year in response to major anniversary events. One of these was a tote commemorating the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of WSO in 1939. The second was a reprinting of the 1947 edition of *Silent Wings: A Memorial to the Passenger Pigeon*. This reprinting was part of the commemoration of the centennial of the tragic extinction of the bird in 1914.

Total traditional sales for the year were \$4,542 for 109 orders. This was a significant drop from the 2013 sales of \$7,712 on 119 orders. One major contributor to this lower figure for 2014 was a drop of about 50% in sales to retail outlets. The 2014 convention sales (\$292.39) were very similar to the 2013 convention (\$299.50).

The major items on inventory are the *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Wisconsin* (2006) and *Wisconsin's Favorite Bird Haunts* (2009), both of which are

becoming dated and possibly reaching market saturation. The WSO board decided to lower the price of the bird haunts book in the fourth quarter in order to promote sales and reduce the aging inventory. A similar approach was taken with the price of the breeding bird atlas book at the 2015 Atlas Kick-off meeting in Wausau.

The other items on the bookstore inventory include the Checklist with Migration Graphs ("Blue Book"), field checklists, the WSO barred owl cap, and WSO ("We Brake for Birds") bumper sticker.

### **Communications Committee— Erin Parker**

In 2014, I took on the role of Communications Chair. In the late fall, I worked with Kyle Lindemer to remind and encourage Christmas Bird Count compilers to register online. We began sending out the electronic version of *The Badger Birder* via MailChimp to our member list along with the eAlerts that go out to a broader audience. Each week, I put relevant *Badger Birder* content up on the website and have helped with some of the WSO Facebook posts and am beginning to use the WSO Twitter account to send occasional tweets about timely news and events. I've also reached out to a few researchers in the upper Midwest, asking them to consider writing an article or submitting a paper for peer review to *The Passenger Pigeon*.

### **Conservation Committee— Andy Cassini**

The WSO Conservation Committee is focused on a wide array of avian conservation issues in Wisconsin and be-

yond. We have established ourselves as a standing and effective committee of the WSO, comprised of Andy Cassini (Chairperson), Peter Dunn, Michael John Jaeger, Mary Korkor, Peter McKeever and Diane Packett. We have been meeting as a group monthly since July 2014 and the following account is a brief summary of those efforts.

The Horicon Marsh is one of the premier interior wetland ecosystems in the country. Unfortunately, Highway 49 crosses the northern portion of the marsh resulting in high levels of avian mortality. The Committee has been researching this situation and is currently reviewing the Western Transportation Institute Report that evaluates this issue. Building upon the previous effort of other WSO members and conservation groups, we are beginning to mobilize a renewed effort to help reduce the effects of this dangerous section of highway.

Another threat in a different part of the state involves the destruction of a high-quality 247-acre migratory stop-over site along Lake Michigan. Part of this Black River Forest area is slated to become a golf course; this will fragment a rare mature forest along the lake, while also potentially negatively impacting the adjacent Kohler Andre State Park. The committee is currently drafting a position letter to leaders of the community to argue against the fragmentation and degradation of this high quality habitat.

Elsewhere in the state, Greater Prairie Chickens have experienced a 20% decline each year over the last 10 years. The committee is carefully monitoring this situation and plans to review the new DNR management plan and then assist with possible interventions. WSO Committee member Dr.

Peter Dunn published an article on this topic in *The Badger Birder*. In addition to this article, we have drafted a number of other pieces for publication. Andy Cassini authored two articles for *The Badger Birder*, one chronicling current conservation efforts of the committee and a second that evaluates the proposed Sandhill Crane hunt. Michael John Jaeger submitted a follow-up article on this issue and provided insights on how the Conservation Congress works and the need for birders to be represented at these hearings. The whole committee contributed to authoring an article highlighting concerns about current budget cuts and the wide-ranging negative effects this will have on birds, scientific research and conservation-minded land acquisitions in the state of Wisconsin. Committee members Diane Packett and Mary Korkor followed up with an additional budget piece that highlighted actions that WSO members can take on this issue. We also sent a letter to the Joint Finance Committee addressing these concerns.

We are also carefully monitoring recreational use planning for the Badger Ammunition Plant grounds, to insure low-impact/quiet outdoor activities are well represented. To help facilitate a positive outcome for this incredibly important grassland bird area, we are developing a working relationship with the Wisconsin Chapter for Society of Conservation Biology. We have already had multiple meetings with members from this group and are hopeful that we can help develop an even stronger conservation network in Wisconsin. To this end, we are actively involved with the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative (WBCI). Committee members Andy Cassini and Mary Ko-

rkor are sitting on the WBCI Issues Committee and even helped to revise and update key WBCI Issues Papers on the negative effects of cats and windows on bird populations. Though these two issues receive a great deal of attention from other organizations, our committee remains committed to exploring positive ways to reduce avian losses resulting from these two important avian threats.

We plan to continue actively networking with other bird and conservation organizations from around the state to insure a unified effort. But most importantly, as the WSO Conservation Committee continues to develop, we hope to use the support of the WSO membership to enact powerful changes for improving bird conservation efforts in Wisconsin. With an extremely active birding community in Wisconsin and over 1400 members, the WSO is a truly powerful voice for avian conservation. By using sound scientific research and applying this knowledge, we know that we can make a difference for all birds and the people who enjoy watching them.

#### **Convention Committee— Christine Zimmerman**

The planning for the 2014 Convention in Prairie du Chien started in spring of 2013. Dr. Stanley Temple and the Friends of Wyalusing provided additional support in Prairie du Chien and helped to plan all aspects of the Convention. The 2014 Convention was the second highest attended convention in recent history with 196 attendees, with only the previous year's Ashland Convention of 206 registrants being larger. Our home base for a ma-

jority of the Convention was a local restaurant called The Barn.

The 2014 Convention made great progress with online registration and the use of PayPal for transactions. This was very well received by our membership—110 online registrations using PayPal versus 96 paper registrations (2013 for comparison: 122 online registrations using PayPal versus 78 paper registrations).

We offered Thursday and Friday full day field trips, including bus and car caravans. There were 50 people on the bus trip and 86 on the car caravans. We also offered half-day field trips on Saturday and Sunday mornings. Saturday morning field trips were all within Wyalusing State Park, assuring that the majority of Convention participants could attend the Passenger Pigeon Monument Rededication. Sunday morning field trips included a canoe trip and an alternate trip to a local Prairie du Chien park where participants were able to see a Yellow-breasted Chat.

This year marked the second year of having the Awards Ceremony on Friday evening. Award recipients are now informed in advance of the ceremony so that they may invite family and friends to attend. The Awards Ceremony was well attended, filling the room with 150 people. A light reception followed the ceremonies with cake and coffee for all that attended. The convention also had a wonderful display celebrating the 75 years of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, including old pictures and artifacts. We even had the privilege of displaying a Passenger Pigeon for all to see its beauty.

Saturday was a fun-filled day, including morning field trips at Wyalusing State Park and the rededication of the

Passenger Pigeon Monument. Due to limited parking near the monument, we rented a school bus to move people back and forth from the upper parking lot near the pavilion. Dr. Stanley Temple was the keynote speaker for the rededication ceremony. Each person attending the ceremony was given a reprint of *Silent Wings* and a WSO 75th anniversary pen to help celebrate the day. The Convention then returned to the restaurant for lunch and our annual meeting. We also took a 75th anniversary picture of all attending. The afternoon sessions focused on conservation success stories, including programs on Trumpeter Swans and Bluebirds. The day ended with the banquet attended by 127 members. The keynote for the evening was the premiere screening of the documentary "From Billions to None: The Passenger Pigeon's Flight to Extinction," including a question and answer session with filmmaker David Mrazek and Dr. Stanley Temple.

Thanks to the donations and bids by WSO members, the 2014 silent auction raised \$4,248. The proceeds were split between the Bird Protection Fund of the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, the Mississippi Valley Conservancy and Friends of Wyalusing.

In summary, 2014 was another successful convention. A total of 166 bird species were seen during the Convention. The weather was perfect for the entire four days, making the experience that much more enjoyable. We were able to pay all of our costs for the convention, and in the end were able to add \$1,385.33 to the WSO balance sheet.

## **Editors, *The Passenger Pigeon*— Chuck Heikkinen, Delia Unson**

Although we were elected the new editors of *The Passenger Pigeon* at the May 2014 Convention, we did not actually produce an issue until the Winter 2014–2015 because Bettie and Neil Harriman were kind enough to continue through the Fall 2014 issue. They have been extremely helpful in assisting us with the transition, and we are very grateful for their help.

The Winter 2014–2015 issue was mailed on schedule at the end of November. We ran into problems with the Spring 2015 issue because of the tardiness of a key article, which resulted in a delay of about a month. No delay is anticipated with the publication of the Summer 2015 issue.

The Spring 2015 issue featured the start of a new color palette, which is coordinated with the colors of our upgraded website. As in the past, each season has its own color.

We had hoped to start publishing peer-reviewed articles beginning with the Winter 2014–2015 issue, but that was not to be. We are hoping now that the summer issue will be the first to contain at least one peer-reviewed article.

## **Education Committee— Ed Hahn, Jim Knickelbine**

The Education and the Youth Education committees have been merged into one Education Committee, co-chaired by Ed Hahn and Jim Knickelbine and joined by member Jeff Galignan. Erin Parker, WSO Communications Chair and a teacher, has also joined the Education Committee so the

two committees will work more closely together.

The Education Committee is now coordinating the Great Wisconsin Oriole Count. The Oriole Count webpage has been redesigned with the help of Paul Jakoubek and Erin Parker, and supplementary materials were produced for distribution to participants. The Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education and Wisconsin Association for Environmental Education and the Wisconsin Nature Center Collaborative project were contacted to help promote the event to schools and youth organizations statewide. At the time of this writing, groups are registering for the count. Eagle Optics has again generously donated binoculars and a scope so that we can have a drawing to award prizes to participants.

We continue to receive inquiries about the Bird Monitoring Kits. These kits contain a spotting scope with tripod, and 15 pairs of binoculars. This makes each kit suitable for group outings. Also, each kit has five copies of the "Kaufman Field Guide to Birds of North America," and a variety of other materials. We have placed one kit in Darlington with the Bluebird Nest Nature Center. We will be placing two kits this spring. We have also recently received another request for information about the kits. Some groups have been applying for grants as a source of funding to help pay for the Bird Monitoring Kits.

We funded three youth grants during 2014. The first provided funding to Gabrielle Diebold for a Science club at JC McKenna Middle School in Evansville. They purchased field guides, checklists, and binoculars. After being trained, the Science club shared what they learned with the sixth grade class,

and later to youth attending a summer camp. The materials they purchased and used were given to Nancy and Phill Kress of the Evansville Nature Center to use in their birdwatching and nature workshops.

The second youth grant was awarded to Quinn Steinman, a seven-year-old first grader who became concerned when she saw the results of a bird striking a window. Together with her mom she contacted the Milwaukee County Zoo to learn what she could do to prevent future bird strikes. Her project was to provide window decals for their home, for her friends at school, and even at the Milwaukee County Zoo.

The remaining grant was awarded to Aiden Laureli to study Eagles. After learning all kinds of interesting facts about eagles, and how big their nests can be, he and his classmates watched an eagle's nest. You can find the eagle's nest cam at the following email address: [www.alcoa.com](http://www.alcoa.com)

### **Field Trips Committee— Tom Schultz, Jeff Baughman**

This past year has been another good one for field trips, except for occasional challenges caused by inclement weather. In the past year, we increased our offerings by teaming up with *The Prairie Enthusiasts* for a visit to Schurch-Thomson Prairie last June, coled by Pete Blank (former WSO Conservation Chair) and Eric Preston and Rich Henderson of The Prairie Enthusiasts. We also added a new opportunity last fall—a field trip to Linwood Springs near Stevens Point to observe the banding of Northern Saw-whet Owls. The presentation was great and the attendance outstanding, so we will be repeating this outing in 2015.

The joint field trip opportunities will continue this year, with four field trips added to our regular schedule. Two of these will be ventures offered in conjunction with the *Natural Resources Foundation*, including a trip for teen birders that will be led by Kim Kreitingner and Andy Paulios and a trip to our Honey Creek Preserve led by Kim Kreitingner, Levi Wood, and Sharon Fandel of DNR. We will again offer our joint trip with the Prairie Enthusiasts to Schurch-Thomson Prairie and then a July 10 field trip to the Penokee Range—to be led by Ryan Brady and Nick Anich. Thanks to President Kim Kreitingner for coordinating several of these events.

Our committee is lining up another WSO Costa Rica Tour that will be held next year, with details to be announced shortly.

#### **Historian Report—Nancy Nabak**

The WSO archives continue to reveal mysteries that I am trying to unravel. Much of my time is spent on trying to identify individuals in photos and when/where/why those photos were taken. I continue to learn a lot by sifting through many old minutes, newsletters and correspondences. I am also working on a numbering and identification system for all past photos (and items) that will be a sustainable system for future items that we inherit. I plan to visit the State Historical Society in April to assess the WSO records from 1939-1955. A plan may need to be developed around that material. By reaching into the past, it's my goal to assist with current and future WSO needs.

#### **Honey Creek—Levi Wood**

Garlic Mustard Control: Quercus Land Stewardship Services, Jim Elle-son and his crew of up to six employees treated garlic mustard throughout the property north of Sky View Road over three days in May. They concentrated on the known areas with garlic mustard concentrations and walked a grid pattern across most of the property searching for and spraying garlic mustard. They planned to come back in the fall to treat surviving GM, which remains green after native vegetation has turned brown and leaves have dropped. But it turned cold early in November and snowed early. The herbicide does not work well in cold weather, so they did not do any fall treatments. They have been asked to return this spring, late April or early May, to treat the areas with GM concentrations.

The Nature Center has been improved by the installation of six new windows, thanks to Jacob Brickel of J Brick Construction LLC. They are an improvement over the old windows, a few of which had rotten sill boards. Jacob replaced the decaying window frames. Jacob may be doing a few other small jobs, including repairs to the front door, this year. Barbara Morford volunteered to paint the new window frames, which she did in November with help from Levi.

Also, the Harold and Carla Kruse Nature Center interior walls have four new signs created by our president, Kim Kreitingner. There are four beautiful, large (3' x 4') signs with text about our Honey Creek property and attractive pictures. Take a look at them when you next visit our Honey Creek preserve!

Our next project at Honey Creek is a new entrance sign. I have been working with The Nature Conservancy sign expert, Cary Reich, who has designed a two panel sign with information about the biological importance of our Honey Creek preserve, a bit of the history about Harold and Carla Kruse, a list of appropriate activities there, some prohibited activities and a map with the trail. We hope to send a draft of the two panel sign to a local sign maker in time to install it late this spring.

### Membership—Jesse Peterson

In 2014, overall membership recovered a bit vs. 2013 but remained steady from a 3-year trend perspective. The renewal rate has remained steady at approximately 90% in recent years.

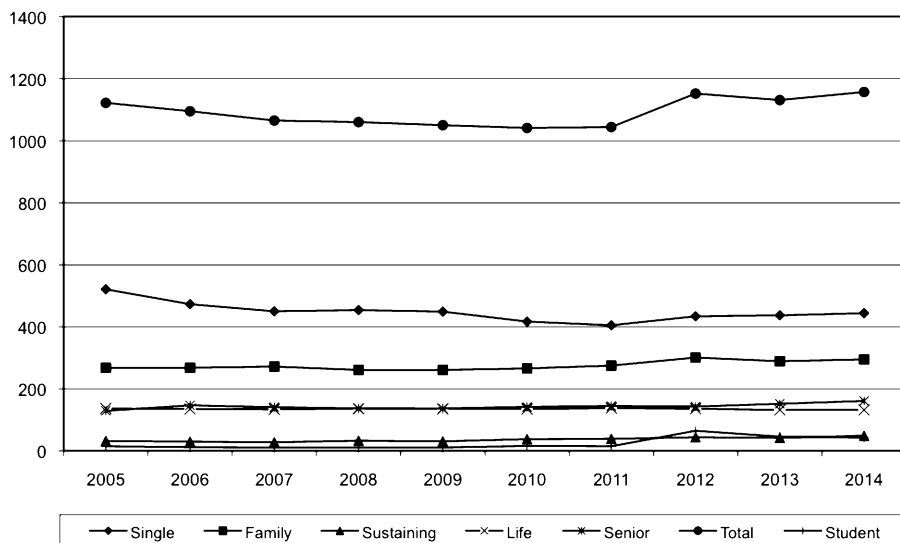
Membership activities and accomplishments throughout the past year include:

- Continued oversight of printing and mailing of the paper *Badger Birder*
- Continued oversight of distribution of the *e-Birder*, the electronic version of the WSO newsletter, to a growing number of subscribers
- Monitored and managed the publication exchange program
  - 6 current exchange partners
- Managed the annual membership renewal activity via postal mail and e-mail
  - Three renewal notices as required
  - E-mail reminders to try to minimize postal mail efforts and costs
- Managed the new member “on-boarding” activity including sending out “Welcome” packets to each new member
- Provided support to strategic planning, web site redesign, and other miscellaneous activities

### Total Membership at 2014 Calendar Year End:

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Single	521	473	450	454	449	417	405	434	437	444
Family	268	268	272	261	261	266	275	301	289	295
Sustaining	32	30	28	33	31	38	39	44	42	49
Life (1 of 4)	3	2	1	2	0	1	1	2	1	1
Life (2 of 4)	1	3	2	1	1	0	1	2	2	1
Life (3 of 4)	0	1	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
Life-Couple (1 of 4)	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
Life-Couple (2 of 4)	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1
Life-Couple (3 of 4)	2	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0
Life	134	135	134	136	135	135	138	135	132	132
Life-Couple	3	10	10	10	13	13	13	13	17	18
Patron	8	7	7	7	6	6	6	6	5	6
Senior	129	147	141	137	137	142	145	143	152	161
Student	15	12	11	11	11	16	15	65	46	43
Honorary Life	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	4
Board	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1122</b>	<b>1095</b>	<b>1065</b>	<b>1060</b>	<b>1050</b>	<b>1041</b>	<b>1044</b>	<b>1151</b>	<b>1131</b>	<b>1157</b>
New Members	74	43	34	46	72	51	52	155	109	134

## 10-Year Membership Trends 2005–2014



### Nominating Committee— Carl Schwartz

Pursuant to Article 6 of the Policies and Procedures of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Inc. (2012)

#### NOMINATION AND ELECTION

1. During the month of January the President shall appoint a nominating committee to consist of one Board member who is not an officer and two general members to submit a slate for the WSO officers to the membership at the annual meeting.
2. Officers shall be elected for a term of one year.

During the January 2015 meeting of the WSO Board of Directors, President Kim Kreitingner appointed Board member **Carl Schwartz**, editor of *The Badger Birder*, to chair the nominating committee for 2015. Schwartz in turn se-

lected two members of the Society to serve with him on the committee:

**Karen Etter Hale**, Lake Mills  
**Dr. Bryan Lenz**, Milwaukee

The committee contacted the current four officeholders for WSO and was pleased to determine that each was willing and interested in standing for re-election. As a result, the Nominating Committee will offer for election at the annual meeting on May 23, 2015 this slate of nominees for one-year terms:

**President**, Kim Kreitingner, Madison  
**Vice President**, Michael John Jaeger, Madison  
**Secretary**, Jennifer Wenzel, Racine  
**Treasurer**, Mickey O'Connor, Milwaukee

Continuing in their position as editors of *The Passenger Pigeon* are Charles Heikkinen and Delia Unson; under a revision of the bylaws since the last an-

nual meeting, the position of editor is no longer considered an officer of WSO and thus is no longer subject to election but rather is appointed by the president and confirmed by the Board of Directors.

**Records Committee—  
Quentin Yoerger**

The WSO Records Committee evaluated the following records by season:

Season	Reviewed	Accepted	Not Accepted
Winter 2013–14	24	19	5
Spring 2014	92	73	19
Summer 2014	29	23	6
Fall 2014	73	61	12
TOTAL	218	176	42

\*Overall acceptance rate = 81%

Two species new to the state were found during this period. A Garganey was found at Crex Meadows in April and a Crested Caracara was found on Washington Island in May. This brings the state list to 437 species.

Another change of note from this period was an update by the American Birding Association. They now consider the eastern migratory flock of Whooping Cranes as countable. The WSO follows the ABA listing guidelines, so the Whooping Cranes summering in Wisconsin are now consider listable.

Quentin Yoerger continued as the Committee as Chair with Mark Kordecki, Jerry DeBoer, Aaron Stutz, and Tom Prestby as the other members of the Committee.

Aaron Stutz took it upon himself to gather and enter all historical records reviewed by the Records Committee and published in *The Passenger Pigeon* into eBird.

**Research—David Drake**

No written report.

**Scholarships and Grants—Michael  
John Jaeger**

WSO awarded seven \$500 grants in March 2015 to support ornithological research in Wisconsin by professionals, students and amateurs. WSO provided awards in two categories: WSO Grants and Steenbock Grants.

WSO Grants are intended to supplement the work supported by professional institutions, such as universities or museums. In these cases, WSO funds are added to other funding sources, and often make incremental work possible that might not have otherwise occurred.

Steenbock Grants are targeted at beginners, amateurs and independent researchers, and usually fund travel, supplies and equipment related to research.

Ornithological research has always involved both amateurs and professionals; WSO's grants support studies by both, and in doing so enhance the knowledge of Wisconsin bird life for all bird lovers. The following lists the successful applicants.

*Max Witynski* received a WSO Grant for work on *migratory connectivity in a widely distributed North American warbler*.

*Regan Dohm* received a WSO Grant for work on *long-term impact of wind development on raptor abundance and behavior*.

*Audrey Wilde* received a WSO Grant for work on *ecoimmunology of songbirds*

*with differing reactivity to West Nile Virus assays.*

*Sam Jonas received a WSO Grant for work on can Osprey overcome Bald Eagle competition based on nest platform placement in Iron County Wisconsin?*

*Vicki Piaskowski received a Steenbock Award for work on Snow Bunting in southeastern Wisconsin in collaboration with the Canadian Snow Bunting Network.*

*Micheline O'Connor received a Steenbock Award for work banding hummingbirds in Wisconsin.*

*William Stout received a Steenbock Award for work on an urban Cooper's Hawk population and nesting study in the metropolitan Milwaukee area.*

I thank Steve Brick, Aaron Greene and Cindy Burtley for their help in reviewing this year's proposals.

## **Website—Paul Jakoubek**

In January of 2014, the WSO board allocated \$20,000 to do a complete redo of the WSO website. Kim Kreitinger and Paul Jakoubek reviewed proposals from two web development companies. Greenleaf Media was selected to do the development work for the WSO website. In October 2014 the new website was released. It provides a much better looking website and gives WSO a better platform.

There was also a change in the workload for ongoing web work. Erin Parker and Kim Kreitinger are creating web content for WSO. Nick Anich is creating web content for the Atlas. Paul can now concentrate on website administration.

The website for the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II was integrated with the WSO website. Nick Anich and Ryan Brady worked on developing content for the Atlas pages.

**Dr. Thomas Kay Soulen**  
**1935–2015**

Several years ago Tom shared with us a story of how he became interested in birds. As with many children growing up in the 1940's, a puppy was a part of the ideal family. When his parents asked Tom on one occasion what he wanted for a gift, he enthusiastically informed them that he really wanted a puppy. To his surprise, when he received the greatly anticipated gift, it was instead a Peterson Field Guide to the Birds. Tom, the eternal optimist, turned that potential for great disappointment into an enormous gift for those interested in Wisconsin's birds. And, the fruits of Tom's contributions to Wisconsin birding interests continue to be appreciated by the current generation of Wisconsin birders.

Tom, in his formative years birded Waukesha County with members of the Benjamin F. Goss Bird Club, where he was an active member beginning in 1949. His love of birds also led to years of involvement with the Wisconsin Society of Ornithology (WSO), beginning in high school. His activities included years of organizing bird censuses, and publishing a paper in *The Passenger Pigeon*, while still in high school. It was this talent and skill for documentation and meticulous record keeping that led to a role as seasonal field notes editor, a position he held with WSO for 31 years. Tom took his interest in birding very seriously, and held the record for the

most birds seen in one year in the state of Wisconsin on more than one occasion. Through his extensive contributions to Wisconsin birding, Tom was recognized by WSO with its Silver Passenger Pigeon Award in 1992, and a Lifetime Achievement Certificate of Appreciation in 2008.

A memorial to Tom would not be complete without mention of his talent *in* and contributions to music. As an accomplished pianist, Tom gave many piano recitals and appeared with the Waukesha Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Milton Weber, as an occasional member of their percussion section and accompanist when a piano was required. Later in life, Tom sang in the Minnesota Chorale during its inaugural season, and served as one of its early board presidents. And, as his family grew, he accompanied his daughters Karen and Sarah and son Peter as they gave musical performances in the Twin Cities area. He was blessed with perfect pitch, a trait that naturally helped him in both his music and with bird identification.

For 38 years, Tom served with distinction as professor in the Department of Plant Biology at the University of Minnesota. A natural leader, he became the departmental chair during a tumultuous period when the Plant Biology Department was considered for reorganization into other departments

for administrative reasons. He was successful in preserving the Department. His teaching and administrative excellence was recognized by the University of Minnesota with a number of awards, including a departmental award, the Horace T. Morse Alumni Association Award, and the President's Award for Outstanding Service.

Tom shared his talents with many, especially the Presbyterian Church serv-

ing as an Elder and choir director, and many leadership roles in the Boy Scouts. But, it is his interest and contributions to Wisconsin birding that garner our respect and affection at the passing of this remarkable person, Tom Soulen.

Written by Charles Sontag and Peter Weber, with generous assistance from Fred Alyea, Jennifer Tyskiewicz and Karen Soulen Wasiluk.



Jim Edlhuber found this female White-winged Scoter in February swimming at the Milwaukee River Mouth.

## About the Artists

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**Ryan Brady** is an avid birder, naturalist, and photographer residing along the shores of Lake Superior in Washburn, Bayfield County, Wisconsin. He has been birding the Chequamegon Bay area since 1995 and is a former chair of the WSO Records Committee. Based out of Ashland, he works as a Research Scientist for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, where he serves as Bird Monitoring Coordinator for the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative.

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**Cynthia Bridge** has been an avid birder for the past 22 years ever since taking Ornithology at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. In recent years she has taken up amateur photography and digiscoping to complement her birding passion. Cynthia also serves as a member of the Wisconsin eBird review team.

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**Jim Edlhuber**, a lifelong native of Wisconsin, has been photographing wildlife for over 20 years. He considers himself an avid photographer and is always trying to capture nature and wildlife through his lens. He is in several photography clubs and has won numerous awards for his work. In recent years, Jim has focused mostly on birding photography and finds it to be the most challenging. Jim features some his photography work online through his blog, [windowtowildlife.com](http://windowtowildlife.com).

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

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**Jeff Galligan** is 48 years old and lives in Middleton, Wisconsin. He is a retention program advisor and the coordinator of a mentoring program for students of color at Madison College and recently completed his doctorate in educational leadership. He enjoys wildlife photography (especially birds), reading, cooking, traveling, kayaking, and hiking.

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**Greg Hottman** is an amateur wildlife photographer from Oregon, Wisconsin. Greg started out taking pictures of birds, mostly warblers to help with iden-

tification. As a youngster in the 60's he can remember seeing flashes of red going through the yard in his hometown of Cross Plains and running inside to the Encyclopedia Britannia to see what bird that might have been. He inherited that "those cows ain't gonna milk themselves" gene so he gets up early, gets most of his work done by 6am which frees him up for the rest of the day. Greg's favorite birds to photograph are owls. The neighborhood foxes are fun too.

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**Robbye Johnson** grew up wandering the woods and the edges of Lake Superior in search of plants and birds in northern Bayfield County. She went off to art school at the U of Wisconsin Superior where she met her husband of 46 years, David. She earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, and spent time there working on a Master's, and certification to teach art K-12. In the meantime she started work as the horticulturist at the UWS greenhouse where she still works. She also taught art metals in the art department there for twelve years. In 1980 her husband gave her an SLR camera for Christmas and she has been hooked on nature photography since then. She has lived in Superior all of her adult life, raising a son and watching two grandchildren grow up. Her childhood interests of birds, plants and art still occupy her time.

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**Jim Kuchler** is an avid outdoor photographer focused on travel, wildlife, fine art landscape, recreation and conservation sports. Based in Whitewater and Winter, Wisconsin, Jim does his bird

watching while hiking the Southern Kettle Moraine and paddling the waters of the Flambeau River State Forest.

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

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**Nancy Nabak** of Green Bay, Wisconsin is smitten with birds! She's going on her 5th season of birding and just can't get enough. She enjoys the challenge and reward of capturing these feathered beauties digitally when out watching. She is also the Historian for WSO, the Bird City Green Bay representative, and the president of the Bay Area Bird Club.

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**Mary Anne Pfitzinger** grew up observing nature at home and on family camping trips. She is an amateur photographer who is inspired by and loves capturing the beauty of creation with her lens. When not working as a graphic designer, she likes to get out hiking, paddling, and exploring. Mary Anne regularly travels the Upper Great Lakes region for most of her subjects. Her passion is for nature, landscape, and wildlife photography. More of her

work can be seen online at [www.flickr.com/photos/maryanne\\_pfitz](http://www.flickr.com/photos/maryanne_pfitz). Mary Anne is originally from the western suburbs of Chicago, currently makes her home in Tomahawk.

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**Eric Preston** is an amateur nature photographer who travels the Midwest, and beyond, to photograph the natural world. He especially likes looking for and photographing birds and butterflies in the native grasslands of southern Wisconsin. His photographs have appeared in numerous books and magazines, including *Birder's World* and *Gulls of the Americas*. He has been interested in birds and nature for most of his life. He currently lives in Madison, Wisconsin with his wife Kim and son Anders.

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**John Rasmussen** lives in Rhinelander and is retired from a career in Environmental Health with the State of Wisconsin. He has been doing wildlife and large format wilderness photography for both pleasure and for Nature Publications for about 30 years. In the days of film most of the work was in Wilderness Scenics. When Digital came of age he transitioned to Avian Wildlife mainly in the Midwest with emphasis on our beautiful Cranes. He has also done much work with passerines, shorebirds, and waterbirds. His bird photography has appeared in galleries and periodical publications.

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**Kerry Sehloff** is a part-time birder and photographer when she is not cataloging books for the University of Wis-

consin Colleges. She and her husband Dave have been watching, feeding and photographing birds since their college days back in the 70s, when films, negatives and slides were the order of the day. She says the switch to digital photography and access to the internet have been exciting, making it easier to record and share images of birds from all around the state of Wisconsin. Kerry has called the hills of Saint Peter in northeast Fond du Lac County her home for the past 30 years, where the yard bird life list stands at 120 species. Her statewide birding took a back seat to raising two boys, but the nest has been empty for a while and traveling to locate and digitally capture different avian species is becoming more commonplace.

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**Jim Stewart** is the son of an upstate New York salt miner and an elementary school teacher. He arrived in Wisconsin 36 years ago and fell in love with the state's natural areas. For all of those many years he has felt, along with Jean Henri Fabre and Wisconsin's Aldo Leopold, that beauty and perception "grow at home as well as abroad." Now, with the luxury (and shortness) of time that comes with age he is able to play, camera in hand, in the natural areas that dot Dane and surrounding counties—jewels that provide sustenance to diverse wildlife. His interest is to use his photography as a means to better see by asking, over and over, two questions posed by Rachel Carson in her remarkable book *The Sense of Wonder* (1956/1998): "For most of us, knowledge of our world comes largely through sight, yet we look about with such unseeing eyes that we are partially blind. One way to open your eyes to the unnoticed

beauty is to ask yourself. What if I had never seen this before? What if I knew I would never see it again?"

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**Delia Unson** got hooked on birding while participating in the first Breeding Bird Atlas of Wisconsin from 1996 to 2000. She enjoyed learning about the lives of the birds she watched—their migration to Wisconsin, courtship and

nest building, chick hatching and raising, flight and food-gathering training and for most, their eventual migration to warmer climates for the winter. About 10 years ago, she added bird and other nature photography to the mix, which greatly increased her enjoyment in nature forays. Recently, she and her husband, Chuck Heikkinen, started co-editing *The Passenger Pigeon*.

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A male Northern Pintail in Douglas County dipping its toes in Lake Superior in January as depicted by Jim Edlhuber.

# Guidelines for Authors and Artists

**R**eaders are encouraged to submit articles to be considered for publication in *The Passenger Pigeon*. It should be noted that all research articles will be submitted for peer review. Articles not presenting research will go through the traditional editorial process. The editors will do as much as possible to see that work is published, including offering suggestions for improvement when pertinent.

General articles should be sent via email to [PassengerPigeon@WSOBirds.org](mailto:PassengerPigeon@WSOBirds.org) and research-based articles should be sent directly to the Peer Review Editor, Matt Hayes at [mhayes315@hotmail.com](mailto:mhayes315@hotmail.com). If necessary, articles may be sent by surface mail to: Passenger Pigeon, 5018 Odana Rd, Madison, WI 53711.

Following are specific guidelines for submission:

1. The article should be relevant to birds in Wisconsin, and have not been previously published in a different journal.

2. The text must be in Word format, either Word for Windows or Word for Mac.

3. The text must be on pages separate from figures and tables.

4. Each figure and each table **must** be on a separate page.

## GUIDELINES FOR ARTISTS

All photos must be submitted as jpeg digital images in e-mail attachments to Michael Huebschen, the Assistant Edi-

tor for Art, at [mhuebschen4@gmail.com](mailto:mhuebschen4@gmail.com). They will be stored in secure digital files until recommended for a given quarterly issue of *The Passenger Pigeon*.

Most images chosen for *The Passenger Pigeon* will be printed in black & white on “fill pages” between articles. While many of the readers might like more color images throughout each issue, the costs of doing so are prohibitive. One image per issue will be selected as a color cover photo. Every effort will be made to use the best photos submitted by as many contributors as possible. Final selections will be made by the Editors—Chuck Heikkinen and Delia Unson.

Following are the criteria for submitted work:

1. Jpeg digital images of photos, drawings, paintings, sculptures, wood carvings, quilts or other artistic works featuring birds seen or photographed in Wisconsin should be sent as email attachments and should be in as large a size as possible, with resolution of at least 300 d.p.i. (1.2 megabytes for black-and-white and 1.5 megabytes for color). Lower resolution simply does not print well and pixel-dense images make the best candidates for printing since they often need to be cropped. All photos of birds submitted must have been taken in Wisconsin.

2. Please note: since the seasonal reports are for the year previous to the current issue, any photographs for a given issue should also be from the same period. For example, photographs

for the Winter, 2015 issue should have been taken on or between December 1, 2014 and February 28, 2015; photographs for Spring, 2016 should have been taken on or between March 1, 2015 and May 31, 2015; and so on.

3. All images submitted must be material not previously published in *The Passenger Pigeon*.

4. All images must include the bird species name and name of the artist. Date and location are also necessary in the case of photographs. Images of works other than photographs should have a title if one has been selected.

5. The most useful images are those in “portrait” format, rather than “landscape” format. A cropped photo 4” horizontal by 5” vertical is ideal for consideration for a cover photo. The “fill page” images are also best done in portrait format and might run as large as 4.75” × 7”. The editors may do some additional cropping of images for publication.

6. Since no images will be returned,

the submission must be high-resolution copy of the original. In most cases contributors will have cropped the images for the best effect. Cropping the images too tightly should be avoided since the editors may choose to do more cropping. All unused or unusable digital images will be destroyed after a certain time period.

7. It is the policy of Wisconsin Society for Ornithology not to offer monetary compensation to contributing artists for use of their images in *The Passenger Pigeon*. The Society is grateful for those who have contributed limited use of their images for publication in *The Passenger Pigeon* in the past and to those who will do so in the future.

8. When images have been selected and approved for each quarterly issue, a short biography from each contributing artist will be requested. It is tradition to publish those in the “About the Artists” pages of each issue.

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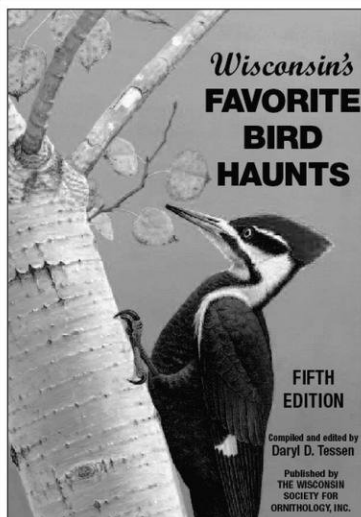
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A Red-tailed Hawk on alert in January photographed by Stephen Fisher in Richland County.



Cynthia Bridge took this image of a first-cycle Great Black-backed Gull at Johnson Creek, Jefferson County in February.



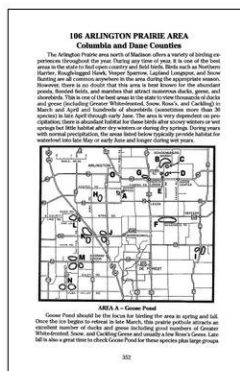
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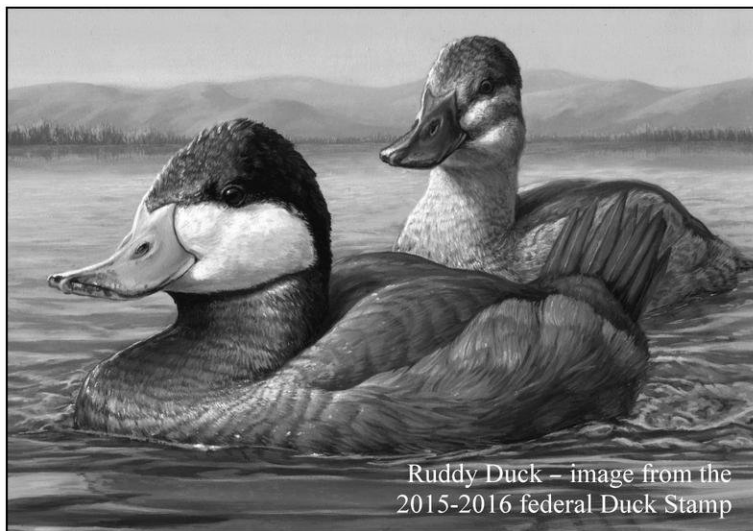
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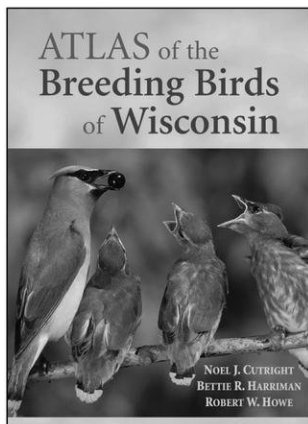
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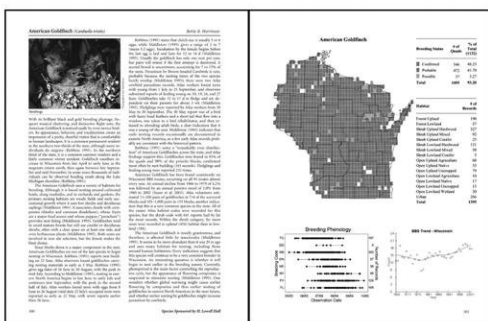
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