

# NOVEMBER MEETING

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2008

## **Birding by Ear**

Steve Betchkal of Eau Claire will present a program called “Birding By Ear” (a well-received and always popular talk with lots of inter-active elements -- like his "simulated May"...)” and will also discuss his new book - *All of This and Robins Too: A Guide to the 50 Or So Best Places to Find Birds in Wisconsin*.

Steve has these comments to introduce himself:

As an experienced Wisconsin naturalist, I know where the buzz about birds is coming from. Since identifying my first wild bird in 1969 (American Robin, what else?), I have been chasing birds across Wisconsin and the North American continent. 42 states (every state in the lower 48 but the mid-Atlantic coast from RI to VA), 54 national wildlife refuges, 39 years, and some 7 or 8 binoculars along, I am approaching 600 (599 and 1/2) different birds seen in the U.S. and Canada, and with trips to Isla de Mujeres, Mexico in 2005, and Zihuatanejo, MX in 2006, have begun exploring places outside temperate North America.

I have a sharp eye – which I credit to enduring commitments to birding, my profession as a videographer, and reffing adult volleyball – and am quite experienced at identifying birds by song or call. Each June I conduct two of Wisconsin’s 90+ Breeding Bird Surveys coordinated by the US Geological Survey (one in the region of Bloomer, the other runs through Augusta).

I have been writing about birds for the Eau Claire Leader-Telegram since 1998, and am featured as a regular columnist for Wisconsin West Magazine. My bird articles have also appeared in Cabin Life, Northland Adventures, and Birder’s World. (I am currently working on several more Birder’s World articles, including camping in the Dry Tortugas last May). *All of This and Robins Too: A Guide to the 50 Or So Best Places to Find Birds in Wisconsin* is doing well and getting great reviews, and I hope to soon have it for sale alongside "Bird Haunts" in the ABA catalog.

I not only write about birds, but have produced award-winning TV stories about them while working for both the NBC and ABC affiliates in the Chippewa Valley. I also enjoy drawing and painting birds, and have had my work displayed in the ArtsWest show at the LE Phillips Library in Eau Claire. I attended college at UW- La Crosse (late 70's -early 80's), and worked in three national parks – Glacier, Yellowstone, and Big Bend – before settling in Eau Claire. Two of my fondest nature memories are interviewing Roger Tory Peterson and birding with David Sibley. My favorite bird is the Swallow-tailed Kite, which I saw for the first time soaring above the Santee River in coastal South Carolina, April 2003.

Birds are beautiful and captivating – whether describing their behaviors, their diversity and physical adaptations, or the music they make. They are also central to discussions

about global warming, and other current environmental topics. Over the years I have led many hikes and tours and have presented programs on topics ranging from “100 Birdy Things Everyone Should Experience Before They Die” to “The Sordid Life History of Birds in Film”. (In September I presented to the Chicago Ornithological Society about bird-finding in WI). I love talking birds and birding, and I encourage questions and the sharing of bird stories.

In addition to my interest in ornithology (birds) and writing, I am a passionate gardener, environmentalist, movie buff, canoeist, and camper/backpacker (fresh returned from a packtrip into Canyonlands NP in Utah), and I also enjoy identifying wildflowers, insects, trees, clouds, and constellations.

The meeting begins at 7 p.m. at the Ho Chunk Nation Building, lower level, 725 Main Street, La Crosse.

The program is free and open to the public.

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## OCTOBER MEETING

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2008

### **Birding in Norway**

Pat and Bobbie Wilson will present a program and show slides of their trip this summer to the Svalbard Archipelago, a Norwegian territory at the same latitude as Northern Greenland, closer to the North Pole than to the Arctic Circle. Some of the birds sighted include nesting Glaucous Gulls, Black-legged Kittiwakes, Thick-billed Murres, Doves, Black Guillemots, Northern Fulmars, Long-tailed Jaegers, Great Skua, Purple Sandpipers, Snow Buntings, Red Phalaropes, Pink-footed Geese, Barnacle Geese and Common Eiders. They also have photos of polar bears and Arctic fox, walrus and seals, along with great scenery and a few adventure tales.

Pat and Bobbie are long-time Audubon and Sierra Club members. Some of their travels have taken them to Central America, Ecuador and kayaking in the Arctic.

The meeting begins at 7 p.m. at the Ho Chunk Nation Building, lower level, 725 Main Street, La Crosse.

The program is free and open to the public.

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## **SEPTEMBER MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2008**

### **Challenges to Wildlife Conservation in Wisconsin**

Scott Craven, state specialist in Wildlife Ecology with the University of Wisconsin Extension will present a program on "Challenges to Wildlife Conservation in Wisconsin" at the Coulee Region Audubon Society meeting on Wednesday, September 17th. The meeting begins at 7 p.m. at the Ho Chunk Nation Building, lower level, 725 Main Street, La Crosse.

Craven is well-known around the state for his monthly appearances on Wisconsin Public Radio where his knowledge of wildlife provides answers to questions people have about their encounters with wildlife, hunting, birdwatching and habitat for wildlife.

He has a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and has done extensive research in wildlife damage control and wildlife management on private lands. Additional duties include teaching and providing support for the network of county agents in Wisconsin. Statewide programs focus on wildlife damage management, urban wildlife management, youth education, and wildlife-based recreation.

There will be time for questions from the audience.

The program is free and open to the public.

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## **JUNE MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18, 2008**

### **Annual Picnic Pot-Luck at Myrick Park 6:00 PM**

Meet at the Gun Club. Bring a dish to pass and your own dishes and utensils.

A bird walk in the marsh will follow the picnic. The public is welcome to attend the pot luck and the bird walk.

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## **MAY MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 21, 2008**

### **Stories of the Coulee Region**

The Coulee Region Audubon Society May program will be presented by Ken and Terry Visger on Wednesday, May 21 at 7:00 pm at the Ho Chunk building.

Terry will act out a story about a clammer's wife in the early 1900's. She is a professional storyteller, founder of the Bluff Country Storytelling Guild, and actively involved in the La Crosse Storytelling Festival held each fall. Her story will depict the multi-million dollar clamming industry on the Upper Mississippi.

Ken is a self-described "old river rat with a passion for preserving what we have left of our great Upper Mississippi River resources." He will talk about the threat to our native mussels and the life cycle of mussels. He is active in both the Friends of the Upper Mississippi Fishery Services and Mississippi River Wild, a refuge friends group.

Kim Grveles of the WI DNR will be conducting Kirtland's Warbler survey training at 6:00 for those who signed up to help with that project.

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## **APRIL MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16, 2008**

### **Kirtland's Warbler Says "Yes" to Wisconsin**

The Coulee Region Audubon Society will meet Wednesday, April 16 at 7:00 PM at the Ho Chunk Nation building, lower level, 725 Main Street, La Crosse.

The program is free and open to the public. The program will feature Kim Grveles, Assistant Zoologist/Ornithologist, Bureau of Endangered Resources, Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources. Her topic is "Kirtland's Warbler Says 'Yes' to Wisconsin". (The program is rescheduled from February.)

The federally-endangered Kirtland's Warbler was found nesting on Plum Creek Timber Company land in central Wisconsin in 2007. This was the first ever documented breeding of the species in Wisconsin, and the first nesting outside of the State of Michigan since the 1940's. The species population has increased in recent years to the point where the available habitat in Michigan is mostly saturated, resulting in the pioneering of new habitats such as Wisconsin. In 2007, the annual Kirtland's Warbler census documented an estimated 1,697 singing males in Michigan alone, a significant increase over the 1,478 counted in 2006. This is the highest total ever recorded for the census, which was started in Michigan in 1951 and has been conducted annually since 1971. Given the events of

2007, it seems possible that Kirtland's Warblers could be found at additional locations in Wisconsin. In an attempt to better define the breeding status of this species in Wisconsin, the Department of Natural Resources is working in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to develop a widespread and organized census effort beginning in 2008.

The 2007 Wisconsin nesting activities, bird life history, conservation and management issues and other related Kirtland's Warbler topics will be presented. An opportunity to sign up as a volunteer for the Kirtland's Warbler 2008 survey will also be offered.

Kim has a masters degree in conservation biology from Central Michigan University. She has conducted and coordinated bird surveys for Michigan State Parks, Michigan Natural Features Inventory, The Nature Conservancy, and other organizations. An internship with the International Crane Foundation brought her to Wisconsin in 1998. Kim went on to serve as a Conservation Educator with Adams County and then as an all-bird planner for the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative before her current position in the Bureau of Endangered Resources. In addition to her leadership role on the Wisconsin Kirtland's Warbler Conservation Strategy, Kim coordinates a migratory bird stopover habitat protection project and tracks rare and endangered birds for the Wisconsin Natural Heritage Inventory Program.

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## MARCH MEETING

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 2008

**"The What, Why and How of Rain Gardens"**

The Coulee Region Audubon Society will meet Wednesday, March 19 at 7:00 PM at the Ho Chunk Nation building, lower level, 725 Main Street, La Crosse.

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Speaker, Joyce Powers, a consultant on ecosystem restoration, will discuss The What, Why and How of Rain Gardens. Joyce is an ecologist with a vast amount of experience in restoring native ecosystems in Wisconsin. With undergraduate degrees in biology and English, she has a masters degree from the University of Chicago in zoology and a masters in Natural Science Communications from the University of Wisconsin - Madison. Starting with native prairie plants, she founded Prairie Ridge Nursery in 1974, branching out to include wetlands, savannas and woodlands where she worked on restoration of native ecosystems.

In her talk and slide presentation, Joyce will discuss the concept of rain gardens, what

they are, why they are needed, and how they work. Included will be examples and pictures of native plants that thrive in rain gardens. Finally she will describe how to establish a rain garden. The meeting is free and open to the public.

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## **FEBRUARY MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2008**

**"Bugs and Plants The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly"**

**Meeting time: 7 pm at the HoChunk Three Rivers House at 8th & Main.**

We have had to make a last minute speaker substitution for the Audubon meeting tomorrow night. Kim Grveles, our scheduled speaker was injured in a fall and is not able to travel.

Kurt Brownell, a natural resource specialist for the US Corps of Engineers and a member of our board, has graciously offered to give a talk entitled "Bugs and Plants The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly" that focuses on invasive species of the Mississippi floodplain, how the Army Corps of Engineers uses insects (biocontrols) and other methods to battle these invasive species, and insects that spread disease and cause damage to the floodplain forest.

It should be an interesting presentation and I hope to see you there!!

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## **JANUARY MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2008**

The Coulee Region Audubon Society's Annual Meeting and Potluck will be held on January 16th. The potluck will start at 6:00 PM and the meeting will follow. The meeting will include the annual elections, a presentation by Mark Webster and Kurt Brownell, and will also include a photo sharing session for those interested in sharing pictures or videos of wildlife sightings and wildlife watching trips.

We hope to see you there.