

Coulee Birder

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Audubon Society
Website: <http://couleeaudubon.org/>



January-February 2010

Events

Meetings

NOTE - MEETING LOCATION

We are meeting in the new Eco Park building located in Myrick Park, off of La Crosse Street. There is easy access parking nearby and the entire building is handicapped accessible.

January 20

Pot Luck and Annual Meeting

Potluck begins at 6 p.m. Bring a dish to pass and your own dishes and utensils.

Following a brief business meeting to elect officers, members and guests are invited to share their pictures of special trips and of the outdoors.

A notebook computer and projector will be available if you would like to share digital pictures. Please bring them on a CD or flash drive. If this setup doesn't work for your photos, please bring your own equipment or talk to Dan Jackson to work out the details.

In recent years, the pictures that have been shared included birds, reptiles, amphibians, and other nature subjects. There have also been short presentations on special nature trips taken by members.

In addition to pictures, please bring suggestions for field trips and/or speakers for the coming year. The board is always interested in ideas to make our programming better and fresh ideas are appreciated.

January 26

Conservation Lobby Day at the Wisconsin State Capitol

Join citizens from across Wisconsin to lobby our legislators about natural resources issues. To learn more about this event or to sign up to participate, visit

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President's notebook

Thanks for a good year!

By Dan Jackson

I encourage you to attend our annual meeting Jan 20. See the Events column at left for details. I think you will enjoy the program – a sharing of photos by our chapter's talented photographers.

As I sit and contemplate the beginning of a new year, I can't help but think about the year that has just been completed. For the Coulee Region Audubon Society, this has been a very busy year. We held 9 monthly meetings with great presentations, close to a dozen birding events, a highway

clean-up in April, a Salamander Survey, the Crane Count, the Christmas Bird Count, a prairie seed collection event, and gave several chapter sponsored presentations to other organizations in the area.

What is really exciting to me about this is that it shows that our chapter is active and involved. In fact, well over 100 different people took part in chapter events this year and close to 100 of them donated time to help out on one or more of the counts, surveys, and work events that were held.

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Cornell Ornithology Lab invites submissions on bird survival

Ithaca, NY—How do birds withstand wicked winter weather and other daily threats to survival, even in warmer climates? A new environmental challenge from the Celebrate Urban Birds project at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology invites participants to show how birds are surviving in their neighborhoods this winter. It can be a photo, artwork, video, even a story or a poem describing how birds are finding the food, water, and shelter they need.

People of all ages can participate as

well as groups such as schools, libraries, clubs, and businesses. Celebrate Urban Birds is a free, year-round citizen-science project focused on birds in neighborhood settings.

"It's unbelievable how even tiny birds can survive being outdoors 24/7 in places where winter is cold and snowy," says project leader Karen Purcell.

"We want to see how they're getting along. It might be a crow huddling near a chimney to get warm, visits to bird feed-

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We need your contributions of material for the Audubon newsletter. Please send your suggestions for articles, news of events and other things birders need to know. Deadline for copy for the March/April issue is March 1. Send information to: dskoloda@earthlink.net.

iPhone application tracks birds, locations

Newswise — Looking for larks? Searching for surfbirds? Checking for chickadees? There's an app for that.

BirdsEye, a new application for the iPhone and the iPod touch, is now available. Using content from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the Academy of Natural Sciences and bird expert Kenn Kaufman, this new application was developed by Birds in the Hand, LLC.

Learn where specific birds have been

observed and obtain directions to the site. The new app offers a list of birds seen near your location and a map of birding hotspots for any point in North America — the contiguous 48 states, Canada, and Alaska. BirdsEye includes images and audio for 470 of the species that are most frequently observed in North America. Even for elusive birds, additional content is available — for a total of 847 species.

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology's

Macaulay Library archive, the largest collection of bird and animal sounds in the world, provided bird sounds, while the VIREO collection at the Academy of Natural Sciences provided the images. Kaufman wrote text for each species. BirdsEye accesses real-time observations that bird watchers submit online to eBird, a citizen-science project of the Cornell Lab and Audubon. Users of eBird file up to two million bird observation reports each month. The ability to submit observations to eBird directly from BirdsEye is already in the planning stage.

Portions of BirdsEye sales go back to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology to help support its research, education, and citizen science projects focused on birds, and to the Academy of Natural Sciences to support VIREO, the world's largest collection of bird photographs.

Web sites:

Cornell Lab of Ornithology:
www.birds.cornell.edu

eBird: www.ebird.org

BirdsEye: www.getbirdseye.com

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Given all of these activities and all of the time and effort that has gone into them, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for making the past year a success. I really appreciate all of the people who donated time and effort to make our projects a success. I would also like to thank a number of people who have worked hard behind the scenes. I would especially like to thank Dave and Gretchen Skoloda for all of the effort that goes into organiz-

ing and publishing our newsletter (and hounding me to write my articles), Tom Link, Mary Sullivan, Mark Webster, Kurt Brownell and Janice Hatt for all their effort and ideas that they have contributed as officers and members of the board, Fred Leshner for organizing birding trips, Jean Ledman for coordinating the Crane Count, Lennie Lichter for his website work, and to Mark Webster for his effort to coordinate Highway Clean-up.

Thanks for a great year!!

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www.conservationvoters.org or call Mark Webster, Coulee Audubon representative at 608-787-6398.

February 17

Meeting begins at 7:00 PM at the Eco Park.

Edward J Lagace, Winona District Park Ranger will talk about the river and our social impact on it with some discussion of climate change. It will be combined with a slide show of the river and bluffs in all seasons with the sounds of swans geese, ducks, and eagles in the background, flute music and a meditation session.

Look for more information on this program on our web site, www.couleeaudubon.org

March 17

Barb Thompson is the Outdoor Education Center Coordinator for the West Salem School District and since 1996, a summer volunteer at the Muraviovka Park For Sustainable Land Use, a crane

reserve environmental education camp in Siberia.

She will talk about the birds of the park, what Americans are doing to help increase environmental knowledge/ethics through teachers and children in the area and the joys and sorrows one feels when working with another culture in another country.

The park is a beautiful wetland/upland complex where temperate, tropical and mountain flora and fauna converge to create areas of unimaginable bio-diversity. The endangered Red-crowned and White-

napped Cranes nest there, with at least four other cranes species using the park lands a resting areas on their yearly migrations.

April 21

Bob DuBois "Enjoying the Dragonflies and Damselflies of Western Wisconsin" The talk will focus on citizen enjoyment of the dragonflies and damselflies of northern Wisconsin.

Watch for more information on this presentation in the March/April newsletter and on the web site, www.couleeaudubon.org

Partners in Flight celebrates 20 years

In 2010, Partners in Flight (PIF) will be celebrating 20 years of birdconservation activity. Launched in 1990, PIF arose in response to concerns over disturbing declines among Neotropical migrant landbirds - those which breed in North America and winter in Latin America and the Caribbean. PIF's

main message has been that the resources of public and private organizations in this hemisphere have to be combined, coordinated, and increased in order to conserve our shared bird population resource.

There will be events and products throughout the year to highlight the PIF

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Breeding bird surveys may aid land use decisions

by University of Wisconsin
News Service

MADISON - University of Wisconsin-Madison researchers are hoping that the results of breeding bird surveys will play a role in helping land managers make decisions.

In a presentation at the fall meeting of the American Geophysical Union in December, Patrick Culbert, a Ph.D. student in the University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of Forestry and Wildlife Ecology, reported on a study correlating satellite images with results from an annual survey of breeding birds.

The strongest relationship between satellite imagery and bird biodiversity was found in the Laurentian mixed forest ecoregion province, an area of mixed deciduous and coniferous forests, Culbert says. The region includes the southern halves of Wisconsin and Michigan, southeastern Minnesota, and portions of Indiana, southern Illinois and southern Missouri.

Culbert's survey used Landsat images, taken around the year 2000, covering parts of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana and Missouri. The images covered about 585

"routes" of the annual Breeding Bird Survey. During the survey, amateur ornithologists traverse these 25-mile routes and record which species of birds they hear singing.

Culbert compared the number of bird species along the routes with measures of "habitat complexity," which is how wildlife ecologists describe the range of niches within a particular location. A forest with many levels of vegetation or an area with a mixture of wetlands and forest are two examples of complex habitat that, in repeated studies, tend to support higher biodiversity.

To explore the same relationship on a larger scale, Culbert says he focused on variation among the pixels in satellite images. "Some areas have a richer texture in the pattern of pixels than others. In an agricultural field, all the pixels are very similar, but in an old growth forest, we see lots of gaps, with a much more varied texture."

And more species of birds would live in an old-growth forest than in a farm field.

Measures of biodiversity can have a practical significance in land-use decisions, says Volker Radeloff, an associate professor who is Culbert's adviser.

Radeloff says the current effort grew from previous studies by graduate students who focused on smaller areas. "A scrub desert in New Mexico had a pretty strong relationship between landscape texture and species diversity. And there was a very strong correlation in grasslands around Fort McCoy, Wis., but these were on much smaller areas. Patrick is studying the Upper Midwest to see if what worked on tens of square miles can be expanded to a broader area."

"We are trying to come up with a quick, easy way to identify areas with high biodiversity," says Culbert, "because we don't have a good handle on where it is and where it's not. Birds are a good indicator of habitat quality, because they are mobile and can quickly respond to changing conditions, and the breeding bird survey provides a wealth of data because it has been performed annually since the 1960s."

Eventually, the goal is to make a "plug-and-play" system that could use remote sensing to support a more realistic and logical approach to planning, says Radeloff. "The habitat changes that ensue from building a new subdivision, highway or mall inevitably affects the mix of the species that live on that land."

Although the need to predict land-use changes is growing along with the expanding human footprint, "The traditional data-gathering approach of wildlife ecology is too slow to advise local governments about land use,"

Radeloff says. "If somebody says, 'We want to develop this land,' and you ask for five years to do a survey to get the answers, you will no longer be asked. For land managers, this could be a huge step forward."

Scientific results that could help a planning commission or a county board are not useful when sequestered in obscure journals, Radeloff says. "We want biodiversity to be a key measure when people decide on land use. We are learning a lot about the relationship of bird biodiversity to habitat features, and Patrick, by making the data useful, is making a major contribution."

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ers, a berry bush that birds raid for food, a fountain birds use for water, or maybe even one of the lucky birds soaking up the sun in a warm, southern state."

Prizes include a pair of Eagle Optics binoculars, bird feeders, a birdsong calendar, books, posters, cards and more. The first 50 entrants will receive a copy of the "Little Green Places" poster and selected images and videos will be posted on the Celebrate Urban Birds website.

How to enter:

1. Email entries to urbanbirds@cornell.edu. If you submit a video, post it on YouTube and send us the link.

2. Write "Survival_yourfirstname yourlastname yourstate" in the subject line.

3. Include your mailing address in your email

4. Explain why you submitted your entry—describe your winter conditions and what you observe the birds doing during winter.

5. One entry per person, please. Deadline for entries is February 15, 2010

Visit the Celebrate Urban Birds website for more information, to see entries for past challenges, and to read the terms of agreement for all entries.



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anniversary. For example, PIF will share www.birdday.org www.partnersinflight.org/ [<http://www.partnersinflight.org/>](http://www.partnersinflight.org/)
the spotlight in the IMBD theme, "The For more details on PIF and the 20th www.partnersinflight.org/
Power of Partnerships." For details Anniversary, see:
see: www.birdday.org [<http://](http://www.birdday.org)

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