

COULEE *Birder*

MAY-JUNE 2011

Meetings

Meetings begin at 7 p.m. at the Eco Park building located in Myrick Park off La Crosse Street. There is easy access parking and the entire building is handicapped accessible.

May 18 - John Sullivan - Down the Wide Missouri; a photographic presentation of his 2,340 mile trip down the Missouri River. He will discuss some of the issues facing this great river from the Gates of the Rocky Mountains to the Mississippi River.

John is a paddling/poling enthusiast who enjoys extended solo canoe trips. His excursions started in the late 1990s and were focused primarily in Wisconsin. John's initial interest was to follow the paths of early explorers and voyageurs in their journeys from the Great Lakes to the Mississippi. Over the past decade he has paddled several thousand miles and has descended the lengths of the state-named rivers that flow to the Mississippi including the Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, Ohio and Missouri.

John has spent his lifetime on rivers. He grew up paddling the flat waters of the Rock River at Horicon, attended the University of Minnesota on the banks of the Mississippi and earned his master's degree studying the Big Eau Pleine River in north central Wisconsin. His working hours are spent as a water quality specialist monitoring and protecting the water quality of the Mississippi River for the Wisconsin DNR at La Crosse. His leisure time is

See **EVENTS**, page 3

President's Report

By Dan Jackson

It is hard to believe that May is upon us. For those of us who are interested in birds, that means that the best month of the year is here! Although the spring migration has been in progress for two months, May is the peak of the spring passerine (perching bird) migration and the time when most of the birds that nest in our area arrive for the breeding season. It is also the month when many of the really showy birds like the Warblers, Tanagers, Orioles, and some of our other favorite birds finally come back to our area or move through on their way to breeding grounds farther north.



If you enjoy birds, this is one of the best times of the year to get outside and enjoy them. Many birds are wearing their finest feathers of the year and many are truly spectacular. If you haven't been out in the woods and fields yet, you really can't wait any longer!! The time to get out birding is right now!

The Coulee Region Audubon Society will be doing our part to make sure that you have lots of opportunities to go birding in May. We have been trying to run at least one field trip each month this year and so far we have kept that schedule. However, in May, with the help of other area organizations, we will be outdoing ourselves. This month, I know of one or more birding field trips that will be held on at least 11 different days of the month in the La Crosse

See **PRESIDENT**, page 2

We welcome contributions of material for the newsletter. Please send suggestions for articles, news of events and other things birders need to know. Deadline for copy for the September/October issue is Aug. 26. Send information to: gskol@earthlink.net.

President's report from page 1

area. There will be birding opportunities for everyone from beginner to expert. Whether you are a beginner looking for tips and pointers on how to identify more birds, an expert looking for a birding challenge, or someone in between, there will be opportunities for you.

See the Events column for all the details.

Even if you don't take part in these activities, I urge you to get out and enjoy the woods, fields and marshes in May. It is a wonderful month when the natural world around us bursts with new life and colors. When you go, make sure that you take a kid with you. The only way tomorrow's adults will value the natural world around them is if we show

them today why it is so special. potential permanent damage to the world that we live in.

I urge you to pay attention to what is going on in state and national politics and to let your representatives know when you agree and disagree with what is being proposed. In this time of political radicalism, we need to remind our representatives that winning a slight majority in any election is not a mandate for political extremism (on the left or the right). We need to make sure that we can be proud of the state, nation, and world that we pass to our children and grand-children.

Coulee Audubon president bitten by birder bug in 1995

(This is the second in a series of profiles of Coulee Audubon leadership. -Ed.)

Dan Jackson, Coulee Region Audubon president, grew up in La Crosse and graduated from Central High School in 1979. He graduated from UW-Stevens Point in 1984 with a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration and Computer Science.

Immediately after college, Dan worked as a Programmer and Programmer Analyst for First Interstate Bank in Sheboygan, WI. After 2 years, he and his wife moved to the La Crosse area where he went to work as a Business Analyst for the G. Heileman Brewing Company. During his 5 years at Heileman, he also earned an MBA from UW-La Crosse. From Heileman, Dan moved to LaCrosse Footwear in 1991 where he was responsible for the company's manufacturing computer systems and also became responsible for the company's PCs. He eventually built

the company's computer network and became the Manager of Network Planning. He continued at Footwear for 11 years until the company's corporate headquarters were moved to Portland, Oregon. He decided to stay in the Coulee Region and in 2002 he accepted his current position as the IT Manager for the L. B. White Company in Onalaska.

Dan was bitten by the birding bug in the spring of 1995. On family walks in the woods and marshes he rekindled his interest in birds and started to notice species that he had never seen before. A trip to Alaska and field trips in the Myrick Marsh and Hixon Forest led by Pat and Bobbi Wilson added more fuel and sealed his addiction. Over the past 15 years, he has become an avid birder and dragonfly enthusiast and has also taken up wildlife photography. He has birded extensively throughout the state of Wisconsin and the Midwest and has also birded in several other states throughout the country when

family vacations and work trips have made that possible.

Dan describes himself as a concerned amateur naturalist. He has participated in many volunteer research activities and citizen science projects including the USGS Breeding Bird Survey, the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas, Wisconsin DNR Owl, Nightjar, Kirtland's Warbler, Frog, and Red-shouldered Hawk Surveys, the Wisconsin Odonata Survey, Christmas Bird Counts, and the Great Backyard Bird Count. He is the compiler for the La Crosse Christmas Bird Count, has led dozens of birding field trips, and has given dozens of presentations on birds, birding, and the art of Digiscoping to local groups and organizations.

An amateur wildlife photographer, Dan has taken pictures of over 400 species of birds, insects, and other animals. His photos have been published in the Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine, the WSO Journal, and the Big River Magazine.

EVENTS from page 1

often spent canoeing the backwaters of the Mississippi or planning the next canoe trip. A web site of some of his trips can be found at Irishvoyageur.com

June 15 - Pot Luck and Bird Walk. The Pot Luck begins at 6 p.m. Bring a dish to pass and your own utensils. Immediately after the pot luck, Dan Jackson will lead a Birding 101 walk in the Myrick Marsh. Although the migrants will have already passed through the area, there are many interesting birds that nest in Myrick Marsh. We hope to see Common Moorhens, Sora and Virginia Rails, Herons, Geese, Ducks, Black Terns, Red-winged and Yellow-headed Blackbirds among others.

Field Trips/Hikes

Early May mornings - Join Dan Jackson and Pat and Bobbie Wilson for bird walks to see our regular bird residents return to the area. The walks are from 6:30 to 8:00 a.m. Feel free to leave early or stay later. Tuesdays: May 3, 10, and 17 (La Crosse River Marsh, meet at the Myrick Hixon EcoCenter parking lot)

Thursdays: May 5, 12 and 19 (Hixon Forest, meet at the Hixon Forest trail parking lot, off Milson Court)

May 7 - Myrick Hixon EcoPark will be holding an International Migratory Bird Day event. In addition to family-friendly activities including bird banding, Sue Fletcher

MVC seeks volunteers for bird surveys

Mississippi Valley Conservancy is seeking volunteers for upcoming birding inventories. Knowing what birds use MVC properties and MVC-conserved private properties helps us to fine-tune our management activities, and prioritize lands for grant applications.

The birding inventory entails a trip to the site, late May/early June, and an hour or two hike to listen & see

and Dan Jackson will lead bird walks on the Marsh trails at 6:30, 7:30, & 8:30 a.m. These trips are open to everyone and should produce some great sightings.

May 7 - Mississippi Valley Conservancy will host a Mother's Day Wild Flower hike on the Holland Sand Prairie near Holmen. See www.mississippivalleyconservancy.org <<http://www.mississippivalleyconservancy.org>> for time and details.

May 12-15, the Wisconsin Society of Ornithology will hold its annual convention at the EcoPark. This event will include field trips on Thursday through Sunday, and presentations on Friday night and Saturday afternoon. It is still possible to take part if you register at the event on Friday evening.

May 14 - International Migratory Bird Day event at the Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge. It includes birding field trips, bird banding, and other family friendly events.

May 21 - Dan Jackson will lead a Coulee Region Audubon field trip to Wyalusing State Park. Wyalusing is the best birding destination on the western side and is the home to a number of special species of birds that are hard to find elsewhere in Wisconsin. Local specialties include: Cerulean, Yellow-Throated, Kentucky, and Prothonotary Warblers, Cuckoos, Henslow's Sparrows, Acadian Flycatchers,

what bird species are using the property.

Please let us know if you can help. If interested, email achurch@mississippivalleyconservancy.org or call 608-784-3606 ext 5.

Sites include:

Cade Property - Romance, WI - new nature preserve for MVC. Includes a stretch of the Bad Axe River. Great site to find cerulean warblers and acadian flycatchers.

Chirko Property - Cashton, WI - open grasslands & rolling

Scarlet Tanagers and Wood Thrush. There is a strong probability that late migrants will still be coming through which means that we see many other species of sparrows, thrushes and warblers. For those interested in carpooling, please e-mail

Dan Jackson at DanJackson@LBWhite.com. by May 18.

June - A trip to Horicon Marsh is planned. Details will be posted on the web site in early June. www.couleeaudubon.org <<http://www.couleeaudubon.org>>

June 11 - Mississippi Valley Conservancy will host a hike on the La Crosse Blufflands. See <<http://www.mississippivalleyconservancy.org>> for time and details.

Late June or July - Dragonfly field trip - Details will be posted on the web site in June.

MVC to benefit from WSO auction


The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, at its annual meeting in May in La Crosse, will donate the proceeds from its silent auction to the Mississippi Valley Conservancy, a land trust serving 7 counties along the Mississippi River. Abbie Church, MVC conservation specialist, will speak to the WSO on Friday, May 13 on Grass Roots Landowners + Land Trust = Bird Conservation in the Coulee Region

woodlands. Great candidate for grassland birds & opportunity to find Henslow's Sparrows.

Gifford Property - adjacent to Wyalusing State Park. This 640 acre property is for sale. Numerous rare plants on the site. We need to determine if there are rare birds using the site so we can apply for grant funding to purchase this habitat and expand Wyalusing State Park.

Coulee Region Audubon Society
P.O. Box 2573
La Crosse, WI 54602

Coulee Audubon volunteers clean I-90 roadside



The spring adopt-a-highway pickup went smoothly. The rain held off and the clouds provided a little coolness for a great clean-up. Seven volunteers picked up 30 large trash bags worth of roadside debris in 2 1/2

hours. Some sections of our area along I-90 at Dresbach were quite dirty. Others, not so bad. We all enjoyed a great lunch and camaraderie at Corky's Restaurant in La Crescent afterward. A big, and hearty Thank You! to the

volunteers: Tom Link, John Schuppel, Pat Wilson, Wilbur, Humphrey, and Marilyn Webster.

Mark Webster, Coordinator

Contacts

President
Dan Jackson
DanielEJackson@earthlink.net
608-483-2271

Vice President
Sue Fletcher
796-9820
jjren@centurytel.net

Treasurer
Mary Sullivan
608-785-7095
marysullivan@hotmail.com

Secretary
Mark Webster
608-787-6398
mvweb@charter.net

Board Member
Janice Hatt
608-498-1191
wooliesrus@charter.net

Board Member
Kurt Brownell
KurtA.Brownell@mvp02.usace.army.mil
608-269-6124

Newsletter
Dave and Gretchen Skoloda
608-781-7502
dskoloda@earthlionk.net
or gskol@earthlink.net

COULEE REGION AUDUBON SOCIETY LOCAL MEMBERSHIP

\$15 HOUSEHOLD \$30 SUPPORTING

I'd like to receive the newsletter electronically

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ St _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Mail with your check to:
Coulee Region Audubon Society
PO Box 2573
La Crosse, WI 54602-2573
Thanks!