

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Audubon Society



Coulee Birder

November/December 2013

Meetings

Monthly meetings are held in the lower level of the Ho-Chunk Nation Headquarters at 724 Main St. LaCrosse, and begin at 7:00 PM. They are free and open to the public.

November 20

Doug Aloisi of the Genoa National Fish Hatchery will talk about the Hatchery and some of its programs.

December 14

Our December "meeting" is our annual Christmas Bird Count, which will take place December 14. Look for an article with more information in this newsletter.

New Meeting Location!

New years mean new beginnings. beginning in January 2014, Coulee Audubon will be meeting at the beautiful Myrick/Hixon Ecopark. Same time, new site!

PresP

President's Message



Dan Jackson

It is hard to believe that it is now November. Where did this year go? I am definitely not ready for winter yet. That's not good since it isn't very far away. By now, most of our summer songbirds are gone until spring. However, there are still lots of great opportunities to see fall migrants and winter visitors. In fact, the peak of the fall waterfowl migration is still on its way!!

The best waterfowl viewing locations in the area are the Goose Island closed area on the south end of Goose Island County Park and the Brownsville closed area south of Brownsville. Each of these locations has overlooks along the highway that allow you to get great looks at the birds. Lake Onalaska also has tremendous flocks of birds on the western side of the lake but the birds aren't as close and therefore harder to enjoy. However, Lake Onalaska is the spot where I have had the best luck over the years to find sea ducks including Scoters and this is the best time of the year to see them. **(con't on page 2)**

President's message from page 1...

The waterfowl flocks typically peak in mid-November so this is the best time to check them out. On Sunday, November 10th, Coulee Audubon will be putting on a waterfowl viewing field trip. We plan to meet at noon at the Kwik Trip at the stop lights in La Crescent and we will head south from there. Come along and enjoy the fun!!

On Saturday, November 9th, I will be at the overlook in Ferryville helping people check out the birds on the river there. Ferryville is working on become a Wisconsin Bird City and this activity will help them to meet the requirements of that program. If you are in the area, please stop by and help me to spot some birds!

This year's La Crosse / La Crescent Christmas Bird count is coming up fast. It will be held on Saturday, December 14th and as always, we could really use your help. We are always looking for more volunteers to count the birds at their feeders!! If you live in the count circle and have an active feeder, please give me a call. I would also love to have more volunteers who will help count sections of the count circle. Please see the CBC article for more details.

We are already starting to plan for winter field trips. We plan to join the early January Lake Michigan shoreline field trip put on by the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology and we are also talking about a Sax-Zim Bog field trip and a Northwoods birding trip. Of course, as always, the board of directors of the Coulee Region Audubon Society is looking for suggestions for new field trips, activities, speakers, and other ideas that you might have for making our meetings and program year even better. We always welcome any suggestions that you can make!! Enjoy the birds!!

Looking ahead

It's not too soon to think about some of the events coming up.

Project Feeder Watch begins November 9. Learn more at www.feederwatch.org

Great Backyard Bird Count, February 15-18, 2014 Learn more at www.birdsource.org/gbbc

Annual Crane Count, April 12, 2014 Scott Pulchalski is our local coordinator

Highway Clean-Up, April 26, 2014 Mark Webster coordinates this. It's fun! Really!
Here's Mark's report about the fall cleanup...plan now to be part of the fun.

The Coulee Region Audubon Fall Adopt-a-Highway trash pick up was held on Saturday, October 12th between Dresbach and Dakota, MN. The event was almost cancelled due to low turnout, but thankfully we had the bare minimum of three people volunteer. So we proceeded on and ended picking and filling 13 large trash bags along our two mile stretch. It was an absolutely beautiful day - with the sun shining brightly and reflecting off of the river, bordered by the rich autumn colors on the bluffs. A big THANK YOU! to Doug, and Marilyn, who made it all possible!

Field Trips

Mississippi River Waterfowl Viewing – November 10, 2013. We will meet at noon on the street behind the Kwik Trip at the stop lights in La Crescent. We will head south and checkout the mudflats below the entrance to the Wildcat Landing in Brownsville and we will also stop at the refuge overlooks just south of there. This is not the date of the US Fish & Wildlife Service viewing event so it won't be as crowded. This is a great opportunity to see thousands of Ducks, Geese and Swans.

Lake Michigan Lakefront Birding. (First or Second Saturday in January)

We will join the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology (WSO) field trip along the shore of Lake Michigan. The trip will be held on the first or second Saturday in January and starts at the South Shore Yacht Club in Milwaukee and goes as far north as Sheboygan. This trip is a great chance to see waterfowl including Scoters and Long-tailed Ducks as well as other specialties including Snowy Owls and rare gulls. We will carpool from La Crosse. Details will be announced via e-mail in December.

Other field trip possibilities:

Sax-Zim Bog weekend

We are talking about another weekend trip to Duluth to visit the Sax-Zim Bog and other local birding hotspots. We would stay overnight in Duluth on Friday and Saturday nights and bird all day on Saturday and for about ½ day on Sunday. The Sax-Zim Bog is a special place where boreal specialties including Great Grey Owls, Northern Hawk Owls, Black-backed Woodpeckers, Pine and Evening Grosbeaks, Common and Hoary Redpolls, and Boreal Chickadees can be found. If interested, please send an e-mail to Dan Jackson.

Northwoods Birding

We would spend a long day checking out the northwoods in WI. We would leave before dawn and return after dark with visits to several locations in the Clam Lake and Gordon areas in search of boreal birds.

La Crosse Christmas Bird Count – Saturday, December 14, 2013

For the La Crosse Christmas Bird Count, we count all of the birds that we can find inside of a 15-mile "count circle" that is centered on the La Crosse County courthouse. As always, we are looking for volunteers to count the birds at their feeder (if it is within the count circle) or to work by themselves or as a member of a team to count the birds in one of many pre-assigned sections of the count circle. We would like feeder counters to count all of the birds at their feeder on at least one occasion on the count day (multiple observations would be even better). Section counters are asked to commit to at least a few hours of birding. Birders of all skill levels are welcome!!

At the end of the day, all participants are invited to take part in a potluck and social event that allows participants to share their results with other members of the count team. For more details or if you are interested in helping out with the Christmas Bird Count, please e-mail or call Dan Jackson, the count compiler at DanJackson@LBWhite.com or call him at his home phone, (608) 483-2271 by December 10th.

Coulee Region Audubon Society
P.O. Box 257
LaCrosse WI 54602

Contacts

President

Dan Jackson

DEJackson2256@gmail.com

608-483-2271

Vice President

Scott Puchalski

obsidianblur@gmail.com

608-769-2563

Treasurer

Marty Lohman

mdlohman@gmail.com

608-769-6144

Secretary

Mark Webster

mvweb@charter.net

608-charter.net

Board Member

Gwyn Calvetti

gwytells@gmail.com

608-786-2526

Board Member

Kurt Brownell

kurtbrownell@gmail.com

608-269-6124

Newsletter

Gwyn Calvetti

gwytells@gmail.com

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www.couleeaudubon.org

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