

Coulee Birder

Newsletter of the Coulee Region Audubon Society

May/June 2019

Meetings

Monthly meetings are held the third Wednesday of the month at the Ho-chunk Nation Building, 724 Main Street, LaCrosse, starting at 7PM. They are free and open to the public.

May 15

We had planned something fun, but it doesn't look like that's working out. Instead, we can have fun sharing all the migration sightings and we'll present information on how anyone can help with this final year of the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas project anytime you're out birding in the state.

June 19

Our last meeting before our summer break is the potluck, followed by birding on the trails. We will have the potluck at a location to be announced. Please bring dishes and of course, a dish to share. We will have the potluck at **6PM** and go birding when we're done eating!



President's Message

By Jonathan Ringdahl

Greetings bird lovers,

It has been a wild Wisconsin spring. We hope your home has been spared from the area's flooding. While on the topic of flooding, it has changed the route of our marsh bird walks. Rest assured, they are continuing with a modified route. Please meet at the Myrick parking lot as usual. Hixon Forest walks are continuing as planned. It is also the final year of the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II. We still have La Crosse County blocks we need to finish. If you want to be apart of an amazing citizen science project and help birds, please reach out to us through our email address or Facebook page. We can use your help. You can make a difference for birds!

Happy birding,
Jonathan

Events, events, events!

Even one of the yoga instructors at my studio knows this is my favorite time of year, probably because my attendance there is limited this month. Migration is our favorite time of year and in keeping with the fever of spring, there are lots of things happening. Here are some of those.

May 14 Myrick Marsh Bird Walks. Start at 6:30 AM at the EcoPark building parking lot.

May 16 Hixon Forest Bird Walks. Meet at 6:30AM at the Hixon Forest parking lot.

International Migratory Bird Day Events: Protect Birds: Be the Solution to Plastic Pollution

May 11 Trempealeau Wildlife Refuge

Lots to do this weekend, beginning with a wine social May 10 at Elmaro with Craig Thompson presenting, and a full slate of activities on Saturday at the Refuge.

For more info, check: <https://www.fws.gov/nwrs/threecolumn.aspx?id=6442453388>

May 11 MVC Linked to the Land Sugar Creek Bluff Hike

If you seek river views from on high, consider signing up for this hike led by the Mississippi Valley Conservancy to the top of Sugar Creek Bluff near Ferryville.

For more info, check: <https://www.mississippivalleyconservancy.org/events/migratory-bird-walk>

And a few more events in the area.....

May 18, Kickapoo Valley Reserve

Birding and Habitat Workshop, 7:00AM-1:00PM

One key to better birding is understanding the habitat preferences of each bird, and knowing the characteristics of each habitat. This workshop will include beginner and advanced bird walks, and a variety of workshops, including one on the Breeding Bird Atlas by our very own Paul Hayes. For more info, check:

<https://valleystewardshipnetwork.org/product/birding-and-habitat-workshop/>

May 12 Wyalusing Field Trip

Wyalusing State Park south of Prairie du Chien is a premier birding destination this time of year. Cerulean Warblers are literally everywhere, and they have some birds that can be hard to find elsewhere in the area, such as Yellow-Throated Warblers, Henslows Sparrow and Louisiana Waterthrush. This makes for a great day of birding and it's looking as if we'll hit the peak of spring migration this year. Join Dan Jackson as he helps us spot these and many more flying gems. Some of us will camp Saturday night to be wide awake when we gather at 6:30AM at the park entrance.

May 24-27 Wisconsin Society for Ornithology Annual Convention, Eau Claire

This annual event is not too far from home and along with workshops and social events, birding outings are part of the agenda. For registration and more info, check here: <https://wsobirds.org/what-we-do/annual-convention>

In Praise of Field Guides!

Gwyn Calvetti

Social media has affected the birding world in many ways. We can see photos others share of birds in our region, learn about events or sightings and even arrange meet-ups for outings. Gone are the days when telephone hotlines were the way to hear about these things, although some of us still appreciate the local hotline for good sightings.

The immediacy of social media has had another interesting effect...social media as “field guide.” Birders love to help people new to this lifelong activity and are happy to help them identify the birds they see. The flip side of this phenomenon is that perhaps people aren’t allowing themselves the opportunity to do their own detective work using a favorite field guide or birding app. The process of studying the bird in the field or on my camera has been so helpful in allowing me to quickly identify that bird when I see it again. Take those Little Brown Jobs that can frustrate so many of us. Spending time looking at the plates or photos of sparrows in a field guide, along with reading about their habits and habitat, will allow a person to feel the joy of solving that mystery for themselves.

Many of us own many different field guides and a couple of birding apps. Each has its strong points, so we like to have them handy. I personally have one in both our vehicles at all times, another by my computer, and in my own birding vehicle, at least two or three more. I love to look through them when I’m the passenger, choosing to study those more difficult ones and using whatever memory I still have to cement those facts in place.

So, if you want something special for Mothers or Fathers Day, may I suggest putting a field guide on your wish list? Personally, I still need a Sibley’s.



A few of my favorite things!

Coulee Region Audubon Society

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Thanks!