



January/February 2022

Meetings

Monthly meetings are held the third Wednesday of the month. For now, they are held via Zoom. More information about that is included in this newsletter.

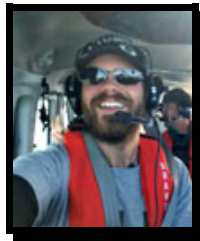
January 19 Important!

This month's meeting is a little bit different. Our annual meeting will begin at 7PM, followed by election of officers and then sharing of photos. If you have photos you think our members would enjoy, please do limit yourself to no more than 25, so all who want to share have a chance.

February 16

Sparky Stensaas
Minnesota's Sax-Zim Bog & the "Invasion of the Vole Snatchers"

After an Introduction to the Sax-Zim Bog and why it's the "magic mix" for boreal birds, we'll learn about the Invasion each winter of "vole snatchers": Great Gray Owls, Hawk Owls, Boreal Owls, Northern Shrikes, hawks, ermine, marten, fox, coyote and more survive and thrive on a diet of voles. And we'll also enjoy some HD video of these critters actually snatching voles. We'll also touch on the work of Friends of Sax-Zim Bog to preserve over 4,000 acres of bog lands for future generations of birds and birders.



President's Message
By Jonathan Ringdahl

Greetings bird lovers!

Happy New Year! January is an exciting time for us. We get to start a brand new year list and start gathering first of year sightings. There is nothing like a fresh start. I am personally excited to see the pictures the photographers in our group have gathered over the last year to show us in the slideshow at our annual meeting. The meeting will be held over Zoom. We appreciate you for your understanding and acceptance of our virtual format for meetings. We have enjoyed being able to bring in speakers from greater distances than normally possible. We have some great speakers lined-up for the spring! Check out the rest of the newsletter to hear about who we have coming.

Happy birding,
Jonathan Ringdahl

Christmas Bird Count

Thanks again to everyone who participated in this year's La Crosse / La Crescent Christmas Bird Count!! It is really great to have a large group of volunteers who are willing to give up time on a Saturday in the Christmas season to take part in this event each year!

Our species count this year was higher than previous years. 30 of the 31 pre-defined sections of the count circle were counted and 36 feeder counts were also completed. There was a total of 17042 birds seen that represented 73 different species. These included first-ever observations of a Northern Waterthrush and Eurasian Collared Doves for this count. Other special birds seen/heard included a Baltimore Oriole, a Barn Owl, a Ruffed Grouse, a Killdeer, a Merlin, and a Golden Eagle.

One important reason for these results is the large number of people who take part in this event. This year, we had 47 section counters and 43 feeder counters. Thank You for this effort! Thanks again to Dan Jackson for coordinating all the counters and compiling these results.

Upcoming Events!

January 15 – Golden Eagle Survey. The National Eagle Center in Wabasha puts on a Golden Eagle Survey in the Driftless area each January. Check their website at www.nationaleaglecenter.org for more information.

February 18-21 Great Backyard Bird Count Bird watchers of all ages count birds to create a real time snapshot of where birds are. To learn more and participate in this citizen science project, visit their website at: <http://gbbc.birdcount.org>

April 9 - Annual Midwest Crane Count - 5:30 a.m.-7:30 a.m. The Annual Midwest Crane Count is one of the largest citizen-based wildlife surveys in the world. One of the primary purposes of the Crane Count is to monitor the abundance and distribution of cranes in the Upper Midwest. The Crane Count is organized by county in Wisconsin and portions of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, and Minnesota.

More information on the Crane Count can be found at: www.savingcranes.org.

International Festival of Owls, April 30-May 1 Houston Minnesota

You may have heard that the festival has moved into the spring season to allow for an outdoors event. Here's what you can expect this year.

Immerse yourself in owls at this all-owl festival. Highlights include at least six species of live owls (including a Snowy Owl), a birding and natural history bus trip, owl photo sessions, and the World Owl Hall of Fame awards. Families can build an owl nest box, dissect an owl pellet, make a variety of owl crafts, buy owl merchandise, enjoy owl art made by kids from all over the world, and have a hoot eating owl-themed food. The whole city of Houston gets involved! The event will be held at the Houston Hoedown Days Fest Grounds, which is located off the north end of Lincoln Street, north of Cedar Street, between the 200 & 300 blocks. Park next door by the community center.

In addition, there are virtual owl expert programs on most Sundays this winter. Check out the website for all things owl. <https://www.internationalowlcenter.org/>

Winter fun at the bird feeders!

While the weather outside might be frightful, the birds at our feeders are often even more busy than the nicer days of winter. Most of us know the harbingers of winter, the Dark-eyed Junco, sometimes called "snowbirds." They are fairly reliable early in the season, looking like nothing so much as little sparrows in tuxedos....the males, at least.

Other winter visitors are less reliable and sometimes seen only in a few places on any given year. Here are a couple that usually delight when they do make a visit.

Common Redpoll

The Common Redpoll usually appears in flocks, finding niger especially appealing...but they'll eat other offerings as well. It is a small bird with a tiny yellow beak, streaked flanks and a jaunty red cap. The males will show a small black "bib" as well.



Photo courtesy of Gwyn Calvetti

Pine Siskin

Pine Siskins have a recognizable "brrzip!" call as they forage in.....well...pines. They are also small, with a slender beak and deeply notched tail. Notice the yellow in the wings at rest, seen more readily when they decide to take flight.



Photo courtesy of Dan Jackson

Coulee Region Audubon Society

P.O. Box 2573

La Crosse WI 54602

Contacts

President

Jonathan Ringdahl

jonringdahl@gmail.com

608-498-9309

Vice President

Mark Webster

mvweb@charter.net

Treasurer

Dan Jackson

dejackson2256@gmail.com

Secretary

Gwyn Calvetti

gwyntells@gmail.com

Board Member

Gwyn Calvetti

gwyntells@gmail.com

608-786-2526

Roger Hanson

nosnahr@gmail.com

Mory Jahangir

mory.jahangir@gmail.com

Newsletter

Gwyn Calvetti

gwyntells@gmail.com

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www.facebook.com/Coulee

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www.couleeaudubon.org

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Thanks!