

# THE TRUMPETER: WISCONSIN METRO AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

*Our mission is to encourage wise environmental practices through education and awareness.*

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*Thank you to outgoing Directors Jim Cieslak and Tom Petri, and welcome to Larsen Birdsong!*



# Wisconsin Metro AUDUBON SOCIETY

## Upcoming Wisconsin Metro Audubon Programs

Wisconsin Metro Audubon presents in-person programs at Wehr Nature Center, 9701 W. College Ave in September, October and November. Join us at 7 pm. Read more about these programs inside!

■ September 20	The Changing World of Birding	Ryan & Derek Sallman of Badgerland Birding
■ October 25	Journey of a Thousand Lifers	Bill Volkert, WI DNR Educator
■ November 15	WI Eagle Nest Monitoring	Brenna Marsicek, Madison Audubon

## Deadline for Crane Field Trip is August 30!

### Crane Field Trip • September 23, 2023



Photo by Jeremy Meyer,  
[www.jmeyerphotography.net](http://www.jmeyerphotography.net)

Wisconsin Metro Audubon Society and Friends of Wehr Nature Center have partnered to provide an excursion to explore Crane Conservation in Wisconsin. Join us on a bus trip to Baraboo, WI to learn about Crane conservation and the worldwide work being done to conserve cranes and the places they – and we – need to survive. We will visit the International Crane Foundation and the Aldo Leopold Foundation building and

Memorial. The bus will leave from Wehr Nature Center parking lot at 8 AM and return by 5 PM. Please visit the Metro Audubon website to learn more and to get the reservation form. The deadline to register is August 30, 2023, or when we reach 32 participants. Wisconsin Metro Audubon Society and Friends of Wehr members will receive a discounted fee. For additional details and a downloadable registration form, please visit <https://wisconsinmetroaudubonsociety.org/birding-events/> or contact Pat at 414-839-0987.



## WEHR BIRDERS

Wehr Birders meets every Sunday at 8 am in front of the Wehr Nature Center building. Note that this changes to 9 am December through February. This is an outdoor hike of anywhere from 1.5 to 2 miles and we typically wrap up by about 10 – unless the birding is amazing! All experience levels welcome and feel free to come and go as you need to. Wehr has a pretty amazing life list of species, with over 160 in 2023 alone!





Image from MMSD

## THE FUTURE OF PETROLEUM PIER *Action Needed* – Robin Langenbach

For those of you who have spent a cold winter's day enjoying the ducks and other water birds at Petroleum Pier, its future as a birding hotspot is uncertain. Plans are underway to remediate contaminants from the Milwaukee Estuary, which is the convergence of the Milwaukee, Menomonee, and Kinnickinnic Rivers. This involves creating a sealed landfill to contain the dredged contaminated materials, which will extend the existing Ferry Terminal landfill almost to Petroleum Pier (aka Liquid Cargo Pier). This is a great project as it will remove PBCs and PAHs from the river bottoms, and enhance the habitat for wildlife and recreation. But does this mean birders will lose a great place to view birds? Maybe not. The organizations involved in the project are asking for community input. You can help by submitting a request to provide lake access for birding (and fishing!) as part of the project plan.

**Comment forms and more information can be found on these websites:**

<https://cacmke.org/contact> - Community Advisory Committee Contact Form

<https://www.mmsd.com/what-we-do/milwaukee-estuary-aoc/dredged-material-management-facility> - Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewage District Comment Form and information

<https://www.wuwm.com/2022-06-13/groups-work-to-remove-contaminated-sediment-from-milwaukee-estuary-hope-to-engage-public> Pod cast and comment form

<https://mkewaterwaypartners.org/dredged-material-management-facility-dmmf/> - Comment form and information

<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/GreatLakes/Milwaukee.html> - Information

Thank you in advance for taking action!

### ● WHO DO I CONTACT?

#### MEMBERSHIP

Diane Lembck | PHONE 414-425-9616  
EMAIL [lembck6492@wi.rr.com](mailto:lembck6492@wi.rr.com)

#### PROGRAMS

Pat Fojut | PHONE 414-839-0987  
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#### WEHR BIRDERS

Colleen Resendiz | PHONE 414-379-6741  
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#### ALL OTHER INQUIRIES

Colleen Resendiz | PHONE 414-379-6741  
EMAIL [Colleen@Benefit-Realty.com](mailto:Colleen@Benefit-Realty.com)

#### About BIPOC Birding Club

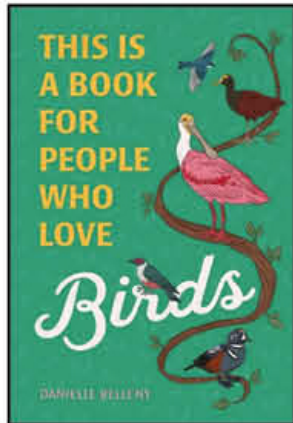
The club was formed in June of 2021 for people of color and anyone who shares and supports the values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and access for all. Its long-term goals are to encourage love of nature and birding for those who might not have considered it, to foster curiosity that might lead to life-long careers and hobbies, to offer the healing aspect of nature to all, and to encourage more people of color to become birders and nature enthusiasts.

To learn more, visit the club's website <https://www.bipocbirdingclub.org/>, follow on Facebook and Instagram, or contact Rita Flores Wiskowski, the Milwaukee area coordinator, at (414) 766-0760 or email [bipocbirdingclubmilwaukee@gmail.com](mailto:bipocbirdingclubmilwaukee@gmail.com)





BY ROBIN LANGENBACH



**"THIS IS A BOOK FOR  
PEOPLE WHO LOVE BIRDS"  
by Danielle Belleny**

Have you ever thought about how a brown pelican can survive a dive of 65 feet, hitting the water at 45 miles per hour? Or why Northern Cardinals are redder at some times of the year rather others?

Author Danielle Belleny, a wildlife biologist and co-founder of Black Birders Week, answers such questions in her charming little book of bird lore. This is not a field guide nor an encyclopedia of birds, rather it touches on tidbits of information that will be sure to increase your knowledge of bird trivia. Topics include: how a bird sings; the relationship between birds and dinosaurs; and how birds visually perceive the world and each other. When addressing the behavior and characteristics of several select birds, she describes her subjects vividly and with humor. For example, she asserts that Gulls deserve more praise than persecution. What other bird has been known to trigger an automatic door, sneak into the snack aisle, grab a bag of chips and walk out with chips in tow? When it comes to Harlequin Ducks, she notes that they don't quack, rather they squeak like mice lost at sea. Although well researched, there are some gaps in detail – but they only leave you wanting to learn more!

Ms. Belleny's excitement and enthusiasm for birds shines throughout the entire book. Birders of all experience levels, as well as readers from most age groups will find this book a delight.



Baby killdeer at St Martins Park – Colleen Resendiz

## Citizen Science in our parks!

We have a wonderful ongoing opportunity to assist Milwaukee County Parks with bird surveys. It's very easy to do, and you might just find a new birding spot! Almost every week we post a new 'surveys needed' list of parks on our Facebook page. These areas are identified and tracked by County Natural Areas staff. These surveys help the County understand what bird species are using the parks and inform future conservation and restoration work. Did you know that the Milwaukee County Park system is designated a Wisconsin Important Bird Area?

Find a park on the weekly list (they vary each week), visit and record your bird species in the appropriate eBird hotspot. It's that simple. WMAS members have already made over 50 visits in 2023, and added many species to the park bird lists as a result. For more information, contact Colleen (see page 2 for contact info).

## IS IT TIME TO RENEW YOUR AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP?

Your renewal date is now printed on the newsletter above your address. Your renewal date is also on the magazine label of the National Audubon magazine.

Renew through WMAS! More of your donation will support local activities and conservation projects. Use the form in our newsletter or on our website,

<http://www.wisconsinmetroaudubonsociety.org>



**IN EVERY WALK WITH NATURE  
ONE RECEIVES FAR MORE  
THAN HE SEEKS.**

- John Muir



# FALL PROGRAMS

**SEPTEMBER 20, 2023**

**"The Changing World Of Birding":** How the hobby has evolved over time.



Presented by Derek and Ryan Sallmann from Badgerland Birding

Derek and Ryan Sallmann from Badgerland Birding will explore how they became birders and how they use YouTube and Social Media to interest and inspire young birders. Check out their birding videos, interviews, identification tip videos, reviews of backyard birding products, and more on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPOxZjoHULhsO95SRN4ScPg>

Bio: Derek and Ryan Sallmann got into birding at a fairly young age after watching the movie "The Big Year". After realizing how much fun birding was, they wanted to share the joy of adventure with a larger audience, and started publishing videos on YouTube. With now over 22,000 subscribers they have expanded to doing videos on backyard birding, identification, gear reviews, and more. Although based in Wisconsin, they have also made birding videos in Grenada (in the Caribbean) and many other birding hotspots. Derek and Ryan both graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran College, and Derek received an MS in Marine Biology at Nicholls State University in Louisiana. They wish to continue to grow their channel and to spread the joy and excitement of birding with others, and also help promote bird conservation. You can check out their YouTube channel and blog ([www.BadgerlandBirding.com](http://www.BadgerlandBirding.com)) to learn more.

**OCTOBER 25, 2023**

**Journey of a Thousand Lifers**

Presented by Bill Volkert, a former Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources educator, will present "A Journey of a Thousand Lifers".

This around-the-world trip of Bill and his wife Connie covered 12 countries over 8 months through Africa, Nepal, and Southeast Asia. Bill saw over a thousand new birds, visited cultural



sites, and took over 35,000 pictures! This program provides an overview of their travels and some of the amazing wildlife and wild places they visited. This truly was the trip of a lifetime.

For more information visit Bill's website <http://www.billvolkert.com/index.html>

**NOVEMBER 15, 2023**

**Monitoring Bald Eagle Nests in Wisconsin**

Brenna Marsicek, Director of Outreach | Madison Audubon



In 2018, Madison Audubon launched the Bald Eagle Nest Watch program with the goal to monitor and better understand how Bald Eagle populations are doing in Wisconsin. The program began with just a dozen nests in Dane County and has grown to include over 100 nests in 36 counties!

Brenna will present a program about how the program works, and how the 2023 Bald Eagle nesting season went. [Bald Eagle Nest Watch — Madison Audubon](#)

Bio: Brenna Marsicek (she/her) coordinates and helps with many of Madison Audubon's citizen science programs (Bald Eagle Nest Watch, Bird Collision Corps, Christmas Bird Count, Kestrel Nest Box Monitoring Program), and plans events and field trips throughout the year. Brenna grew up in Minnesota, earned degrees from UW-Madison, and spent 7 years in Wyoming before moving back to Madison to work at Madison Audubon. She is a general nature enthusiast -- including but not limited to birds!





## : Bird Brief :

### **Chimney Swift** (*Chaetura pelagica*)

**ORDER:** Apodiformes (3 Families)

**FAMILY:** Apodidae (112 Species)



Photos & text by  
Heidi Meier

Summer is a welcomed season for many sensory experiences. It is time to enjoy the sun's warmth, dip your toes in the cool Lake Michigan water, listen to birds sing, watch and smell the aromas of the wildflowers and trees as they change during the season, and sip on iced beverages. Watching birds in the summer is more about listening than spotting, unless you are patient and wait for a bird to come out into the open from the camouflage of a prairie, shrub, or tree. This is also a time to learn and recognize species-specific bird songs. Some common bird sounds heard in summer are from robins, starlings, finches, warblers, vireos, gulls, geese, sparrows, swallows, and one of my favorites - Chimney Swifts (*Chaetura pelagica*)! These small, brown, flying cigars have the most delightful, staccato, kissing songs. I absolutely love hearing and watching them during the summer. I am also amazed these birds are on the wing all day! They eat insects, drink water, bathe, and even sleep while flying. I can usually find them flying at lower altitudes around Downer Avenue because there are large chimneys for them to roost, mate, and nest within. This popular East Side location is a nice place to grab a coffee, visit a locally owned bookstore, and sit outside listening to the swifts sing.

Chimney Swifts are aerial insectivores that primarily live in flight. They have short legs, rest on vertical surfaces, and build nests using saliva that has adhesive properties. These characteristics are common for birds in the **Apodidae** Family which includes over 100 species. The genus *Chaetura* or "spine-tail" is made up of two Greek words: *chaite* meaning "spine or bristle" and *oura* "tail." This unique tail is composed of ten stiff feathers that end in a point which enables the bird to rest or prop itself up on vertical surfaces. Chimney swifts have **anisodactyl** feet which means three toes are in front and one toe is behind. However, these swifts can get a better grip on surfaces by moving the back toe, or **hallux**, forward. Swifts also have a wing anatomy that allows them to change the sweep angle of the wings, improving lift and decreasing drag. The proximal, or upper wing, is shorter compared to other birds and the distal, or lower wing, is longer. This allows the wings to angle from outstretched to sickle-shaped toward the tail.

Chimney Swifts migrate from the Amazon basin near Peru. I first saw them in Milwaukee on May 6th of this year as they began colonizing the same breeding sites from last season. Courtship involves a pair flying close together with wings held in a "V" shape. The monogamous pair will begin nest construction by breaking off small twigs from the tops of trees in flight. Glue-like saliva is used to form a half saucer-shaped nest inside the top of a chimney. The pair will often colonize with others in the same chimney and begin laying an egg every other day for a total of up to six



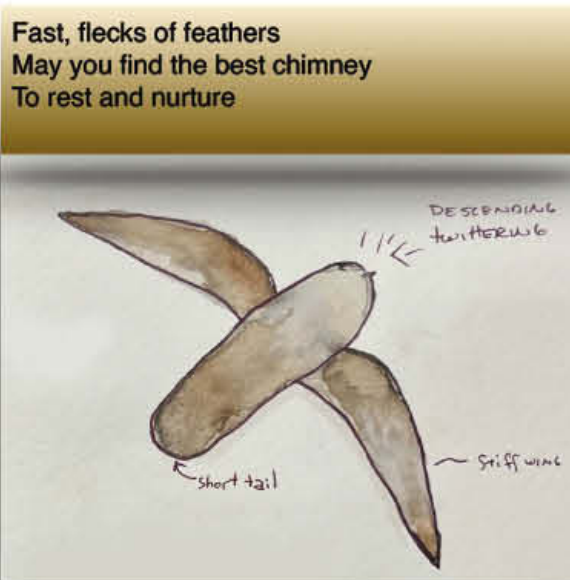
CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



eggs. Interestingly, this species may have two to three helpers assist with incubation and feeding of the nestlings. Around three weeks of age, the sharp-clawed fledglings will crawl and grip on the vertical wall surface and leave the nest.

After breeding, thousands of swifts will begin congregating and colonizing larger chimney structures as stopover points before the long migration to Peru. They will inhabit the stopover location for several days in order to increase fat reserves. Many bird watchers thoroughly enjoy the spectacle of watching hundreds of swifts form into a cyclone-like mass of birds that rapidly dives into a chimney at dusk. Each year I find myself asking questions when experiencing this roosting behavior. Do the swifts dive rapidly in a large flock in order to prevent predation? Does the large number of birds moving very quickly into a solitary roosting habitat cause a distraction to predators?

There are local groups who monitor and count chimney swifts. If you are interested, feel free to visit the Wisconsin Chimney Swift Working Group (<https://www.wisswifts.org/>) for more information. This web site offers activities, resources, and information on how to get involved. Perhaps you, your neighbor, or your friends will want to make your chimney a habitat for swifts in the near future.



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# Gardening for the Birds, Bees & Butterflies

- Jim Cieslak

While this is being written on the Fourth of July weekend, I am already thinking about next year when it comes to gardening. Before I forget, I would like to send a special thank you to my new friends, Jana Boswell and Ted Porada for their help with the Holy Trinity Garden. Both were directed to me by our friends at Wehr Wild One's, and their help has been greatly appreciated.

The Holy Trinity Garden is starting to look like more than just a big mound of weeds. If you are in the neighborhood of 117th and Cleveland, check it out. We have seeded the garden with over 25 varieties of native wildflowers and are adding more plants as we find local deals.



Speaking of next year, I am willing to take on another site for a new pollinator garden. If you know of a church, school or other location that would be willing to share some of their space with our many "winged wonders", please let me know. I would be pleased to meet with anyone and discuss what could be done. You can reach me at [cieslakjames3@gmail.com](mailto:cieslakjames3@gmail.com)



## THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS

Donations allow us to provide programs free of cost, contributions to environmental projects, and education and community outreach. A HUGE THANK YOU to our donors!

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## WMAS Diversity Statement

Just as biodiversity strengthens natural systems, the diversity of human experience strengthens our conservation and education efforts for the benefit of nature and humankind. Wisconsin Metro Audubon Society is welcoming to all, providing educational and conservation programs that are free and open to the public. Yet we recognize that our open door policy is not enough to bring more voices and experiences to our Society. To that end, we strive to foster inclusivity by:

- 1) providing programming in, for and by diverse communities
- 2) continuing the discussion regarding diversity, equity and inclusion
- 3) welcoming ideas & viewpoints of all community members regarding meaningful inclusion

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