

THE TRUMPETER: WISCONSIN METRO AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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

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Wisconsin Metro AUDUBON SOCIETY

Upcoming Wisconsin Metro Audubon Programs

Wehr Birders meets each Sunday at 8:00 a.m. in front of Wehr Nature Center, 9701 W. College Avenue.

No registration necessary, all experience levels welcome. Wednesday evening programs will resume in

September - currently on the schedule are Wanakia Wildlife Rehabilitation and RefloH2O. *More info will be posted on the website and in our fall newsletter!*

Special Bird Walks in May



Photo credit: Colleen Resendiz

Watch our Facebook (@AudubonWMAS) page for updates on these and other birding events!

As part of World Migratory Bird Day, Bill Holton will be leading a walk at **Seminary Woods** on **Saturday May 11th at 8 AM**. We will meet in the parking lot behind the Archdiocese of Milwaukee at 3501 S Lake Dr. This has been a very popular resting spot for birds heading further north.

Join Rita Wiskowski for a walk through beautiful and historic **Forest Home Cemetery** as we look for migrating and resident birds. We will meet at **8 AM on Saturday May 25th** outside the main office (near the corner of 27th & Layton Blvd). Extra binoculars will be available so this is the perfect event to bring those new birders in your life!

Periodical Cicada Field Trip



A once in a lifetime opportunity! There are several types of cicadas in Illinois, Wisconsin and Indiana, one that emerges every 17 years and another every 13 years. In 2024, two are coming up from the ground at the same time - for the first time in more than 220 years!

This means billions of cicadas will be emerging, largely in the Midwestern and Southern United States. The insects emerge with their brood and there is some overlap for about a month. Join WMAS, Lakeland Audubon Society and the Southern WI Butterfly Association as we witness the spectacle.

Location: Walworth County, Big Foot Beach State Park

Date: Tentative 6/1/24 (rain date 6/2) or 6/8/24 (rain date 6/9). Date will be determined on May 26.

Time: 11 AM - 1:30 PM

Transportation: Meet at the park (note: State Park sticker or admission fee required)

Bring water and expect mosquitos and flying insects. Wear protective clothing, long sleeves, solid shoes and a hat. Register at this link to receive updates: <https://shorturl.at/FZ249> or send an email to wmasbirders@gmail.com



A BIRD DOESN'T SING BECAUSE IT HAS AN ANSWER, IT SINGS BECAUSE IT HAS A SONG
- MAYA ANGELOU



**HOW CAN YOU EXPECT THE BIRDS TO SING
WHEN THEIR GROVES ARE CUT DOWN?
- HENRY DAVID THOREAU**

Find Us On Facebook



**Wisconsin Metro
Audubon Society
@AudubonWMAS**

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

WHO DO I CONTACT?

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PROGRAMS

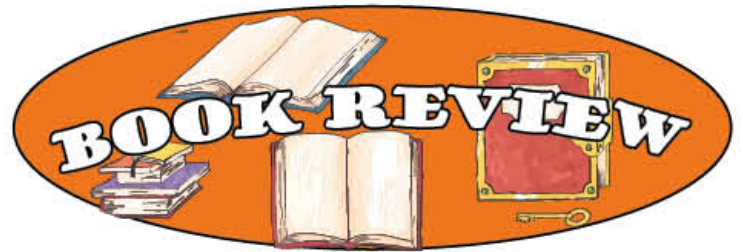
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BY ROBIN LANGENBACH

"A SEASON ON THE WIND - INSIDE THE WORLD OF SPRING MIGRATION"

By Kenn Kaufman



This story begins in Arizona, where spring migration is almost non-existent. As a passionate birder, Kenn Kaufman yearned to observe the phenomenon of migration and experience the sense of wonder as birds move northward across the continents. This yearning brought him to northwestern Ohio, specifically the area around Magee Marsh, where the spectacle of migration is the main attraction.

The author describes his birding experiences in almost magical terms, with each chapter of the book building up to the Biggest Week when migratory birds congregate in northwestern Ohio to rest and reenergize on their journey to their summer breeding grounds. He gives us a glimpse into their endurance as they fly thousands of miles across the landscape, despite numerous threats, including a changing climate and diminishing habitats. He gives examples of how our human structures pose threats to birds. Even "well placed" wind turbines cause the deaths of many birds, as well as a shocking number of bats. He calls on us to conserve our wildlands and protect bird habitat.

From a conservation standpoint, Kaufman believes that it's important to learn all we can for the survival of bird species. Technology has been an important tool to achieve this goal. It was accidentally discovered in WW2 that radar not only detected enemy planes, but also birds in flight. The next advancement was Nexrad, using Doppler technology, and now Motus is the means by which we detect birds on their travels. Even a single bird can be tracked as it makes its way north.

I invite you to join Ken Kaufmann as he tells the tale of spring migration and celebrates the wonder of nature. You will find that this book is a magnificent and inspiring story told by a man whose amazement of migration has never faded.



Warbler photo credits: Rita Flores-Wiskowski

GUEST ARTIST



The photo and painting presented here are by guest artist Holden Van Dyke. Holden is 14 and has been birding since 2019. His spark bird was an American Robin – he had seen them before, but this time he was surprised to hear it singing and almost couldn't believe it was the robin. His mom bought him field guides and he spent time in the backyard with the guides and a pair of plastic binoculars, which were upgraded after a couple of months. Favorite birdsong? Hermit thrush – it seems to mix sci fi and classical music genres. Favorite birding place – Horicon Marsh because it is big and has amazing birds such as whooping cranes and black necked stilts. Favorite bird? Holden says "I'm not doing that, I am afraid the other birds will take their revenge on me!" To build his artistic skills and remember details to help ID birds, he tries to paint a bird a day!

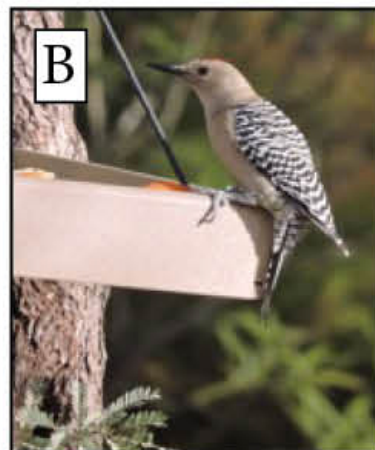


WESTERN WOODPECKER CHALLENGE

(ANSWERS ON PAGE 6)

By Jim Cieslak

My wife and I recently traveled to southern Arizona and had the chance to visit several birding hot spots. Here are the pictures of 4 different woodpeckers we saw in the Madera Canyon Area (hint), can you ID them? The correct answers are printed later in the newsletter. By the way, the folks down there were quite excited when their first ever Downy Woodpecker showed up.



IS IT TIME TO RENEW YOUR AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP?

Your renewal date is now printed on the back of the newsletter above your address. Renew directly through WMAS by using the form! More of your membership funds will support local activities and conservation projects. In 2023, WMAS made donations to BIPOC birding club, Kids in the Park, a scholarship for Wehr's Day Camp, and the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas. Membership dues and donations also help to fund this newsletter, keep our 6 annual programs free, and maintain our website.

: Bird Brief :

Sandhill Crane (*Antigone canadensis*)



ORDER: Gruiformes (12 Families)
FAMILY: Gruidae (15 Species)

Photos & text by
Heidi Meier
March 18, 2024

Several years ago, my husband and I returned to his home town in Nebraska for his father's funeral. His father, Ken, was a remarkable man! He was the most gentle, wise, kind, and patient person I knew. He loved and cared for his wife, children, and all animals with unwavering loyalty, compassion, and respect. He would rise extremely early to tend to his farm animals and make sure everyone was comfortable and repeat these efforts several times each day. He even had his best friend King, who was a scrawny, orange tabby cat, ride along in his truck or ATV during chores or for drives to town. At any rate, his passing was very difficult. But, I will never forget the most impactful moment I experienced when leaving the church on that cold, clear, autumn day. I kept hearing trilling honking but was unable to see where the sound was coming from. Then, once family and friends were all outside, the sound became louder and we all looked up to see many Sandhill Cranes circling directly above. It was as if Ken was giving us all a big hug by way of the beautiful cranes singing and circling around us. This spiritual moment still makes me tear up. Sandhill Cranes have always been a special bird in my life and when I see them, I think of strength, loyalty, reliability, and grace.



Wilcox, AZ
March 2, 2019

Sandhill Cranes have an extraordinary migration pattern. During the winter months, cranes can be found in large flocks around shallow, fresh-water rivers in Texas and Mexico. Around mid-February, family flocks of cranes form into larger flocks and fly north to breeding grounds. During the journey, cranes will settle at the same stop-over habitats or staging posts along the way. The Platte River Valley in Nebraska is the most common inhabited location and can bring up to 75% of the world's population. The cranes will spend several weeks in the valley where they will gain 10% more body weight for the continued migration. Every morning, at the very first sight of light, the cranes will begin vocalizing and the flock will soon take flight. Individuals will disperse to open water and agricultural fields where they forage for grains left from the previous growing season, as well as plants, invertebrates, frogs, small mammals, birds and eggs. The cranes will then reconvene back in the valley at night and roost with the rest of the flock. Migration then continues further north with shorter stays at staging posts until they reach breeding grounds in the upper United States, Canada, and Siberia. Sandhill Cranes migrate at around 2,500 feet, but have been recorded flying as high as 12,000 feet. They fly in "V" formation for energy conservation and can travel longer distances on warmer days because of improved updrafts. This can allow the cranes to travel up to 500



miles in about 10 hours. The adults train the young how to travel and relocate all staging posts and wintering habitats for the following migrations. Vocalization is steady during flight amongst the family.

Once the breeding site has been selected, the breeding ritual begins. Sandhill Cranes mate for life. However, both mated and unmated pairs still perform the mating “dance” which reminds me of the beautiful dance styles of the Native Americans. The pair will hop, bow, throw grass in the air, spread wings, and sing loud duet rattling calls. Sandhill Cranes have a long neck, and thus a long windpipe or trachea, which allows for loud sound to be generated during vocalization. I have often wondered how far away a Sandhill Crane can be heard. After a brief search through my references, I found that the call from a crane can be heard 2.5 miles away - *WOW!* Could you hear a car horn sound from 2.5 miles away? At any rate, post-pair bond dancing continues regularly and secures the established bond. The pair will make an elevated nest of sticks which is surrounded by water. The parents will incubate an average of 2 eggs for 30 days while duet singing at dusk and dawn. The precocial babies will leave the nest around day 4, but will follow and stay with the parents until the next annual breeding cycle. The parents are very protective of their young and will become aggressive to any predator like fox and raccoons. Sandhill Cranes are sexually mature by 2 years of age.

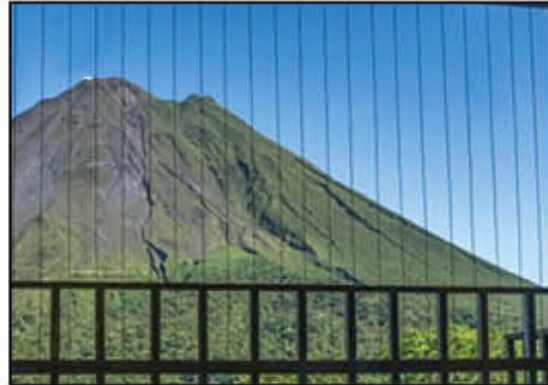
Sandhill Cranes are one of the first to arrive in Wisconsin to begin breeding. I usually see them in agriculture fields near water. In fact, they tend to turn a rufous color while they are here because they try to camouflage into the habitat by preening with mud that is iron-rich in our environment. They are marvelous to see fly, tend to their young, listen to, and enjoy during the spring and summer months. Many bird watchers will take trips south to see them in their staging posts during migration in the spring and fall. This is definitely worth the journey to experience! And since they frequent the same habitats, you can always expect to see them at the same time in the same place each season.

References:

1. Flights of Passage. Mike Unwin and David Tipling. 2020. White Lion Publishing, London.
2. The Birder's Handbook. A Field Guide to the Natural History of North American Birds. Paul R. Ehrlich, D. S. Dobkin, D. Wheye. 1988. Simon and Schuster Inc., New York, NY.
3. Peterson Reference Guide to Bird Behavior. 2020. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, New York, NY.
4. The Sibley Guide to Bird Life and Behavior. David Allen Sibley. 2001. Andrew Stewart Publishing, Inc., NY and Toronto.



COMMUNITY ACTION CENTER: PREVENT BIRDS FROM HITTING YOUR WINDOWS!



Acopian Bird Savers

BY ROBIN LANGENBACH

Most of us know of Flaco, the Eurasian Eagle-Owl who escaped from the Central Park Zoo. He flew freely for one year through the "wilds" of New York City. However, just after he reached his one year mark of freedom, Flaco befell a fatal injury when he collided with a window. This tragic incident reminds us that we should take measures to protect birds from window strikes. This is especially important now with spring migration approaching. Here are the statistics: almost 600 billion birds die from window collisions in the U.S. Almost ½ occur with buildings 1 to 3 stories tall. Just a little over ½ occur with buildings 4 to 11 stories tall. Skyscrapers account for 1%. When we think about reducing window strikes, keep two goals in mind: the first is to reduce transparency or a 'pass through' effect, and the second is to reduce a window's reflection of the environment. Start the process by identifying the problem windows in your home or building. Usually there are only a few. Solutions (most effective at the top) include:

- 1) Apply decals of dots/grids/squares (ie bird tape, Feather Friendly dots etc)
- 2) Hang Acopian Bird Savers, aka Zen Wind Curtains – or paracord DIY version
- 3) Use a bar of soap or use tempura paint on the outside of the glass to draw a pattern on your window
- 4) Use window screens
- 5) Turn off lights at night during migration
- 6) Use a highlighter or paint stick to draw a grid on your window (interior glass)
- 7) Close curtains or window blinds – this is mostly a solution if you have 'see through' windows – where the issue is that birds can see from one exterior space to another, such as from the front to back yard. It will not prevent strikes from reflections.

When placing decals or markings on your windows, use the 2 inch rule. Research shows that birds will try to maneuver into spaces that are more than 2 inches wide. That means anything you put on your windows to prevent or reduce bird collisions should be spaced 2 inches apart or less. This is why silhouettes of birds are not effective unless you place them 2 inches apart.

To purchase or DIY these items, here are some websites to provide you with more information:

<https://swibirds.org/prevent-collisions>
<https://www.birdsavers.com/>
<https://www.sossaveoursongbirds.org>
<https://www.featherfriendly.com/>

In Milwaukee, Bird City Wisconsin works with the community to encourage urban bird conservation. If you have questions or concerns, here is their contact information:

BirdCityWisconsin@gmail.com or call 414-533-5398



DIY Paracord solution

Hummingbird Quest BY PAT FOJUT

Hummingbirds have always been fascinating to me and for many years it's been my quest to find a hummingbird nest. Ruby-throated hummingbirds are the only nesting hummers in Wisconsin. I researched the places I could find their nests by looking through field guides and on the web. I discovered that they use a hanging branch, often over water such as a creek, and about 20 feet above the ground. When I moved near a creek in 2003, I started planting natives in my yard such as Cardinal flower, Great Blue Lobelia, Monarda and many others. At that time, I was in my butterfly stage, and I referenced the website Journey North to gather data for Monarch butterflies. The website was expanded to gather data and observations for many populations and signs of nature. According to Journey North, <https://journeynorth.org/> the Ruby-throated Hummingbird returns to Wisconsin in mid-April. It has 2 broods and in 2023, I was so excited when I found a hummingbird nesting right in my yard.



Figure 1 Female hummingbird on nest



Figure 2 Two Young Hummingbirds from above



Figure 3 Just before second fledgling left the nest

Here are my observations:

August 6 As I sit in my backyard, I watch a hummingbird land in a nest just 25 feet away. I don't need my binoculars. Finally, I have been blessed to see and watch observe a hummingbird working hard to bring two hummingbirds into this world. The female chose a large 70 yr old Catalpa tree with low hanging branches. I recall that the hummingbird was fluttering around these low branches a week ago, perhaps looking for the exact branch to use.

August 14 10 AM Hummingbird sitting on nest. I'm careful when walking out the door so I don't disturb the female hummingbird as she sits on the nest incubating the precious eggs. A little more research and I find that females do all the care of the eggs and the young, but I did see another hummingbird sitting in a nearby Red-panicle Dogwood. The female also leaves the nest and often sits nearby on a bare branch.

August 16 I can see tiny beaks sticking out of the nest. I notice the female leaves the nest quite often, and I don't want to disturb her so I use different doors to leave the house. My granddaughter is very helpful by whispering that "we must keep the babies safe." I regularly check from the window on the progress mom hummingbird is making. She stays away for longer periods of time gathering food for the youngsters as they get older.

August 29 The birds are getting more visible, and the female stays away during the day. I know she will be on the nest as night fall approaches. I record the activity at the nest 10 minutes at a time using the video on my camera set a tripod. I am able to get clips of the mother's return. More research found that young hummingbirds fledge 21 days after hatching. I am now on watch!

September 3 The young were taking turns on the edge of the nest. Later in the day both were on the nest edge, fluttering their wings rapidly for a few seconds. The female returned and fed the birds. About 4 pm one bird flew off. Later that evening I saw one bird comfortable in the nest.

September 4 I saw the female return to a branch next to the nest about 10 AM. The second bird fledged by flying away and leaving the nest empty. I learn that the nest stretches as the babies grow and it is not used again. Visit this link on YouTube to see video of the nesting Ruby-throated hummingbird. <https://bit.ly/3TINBml>

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