

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

Special Bird Walks in May

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

To celebrate World Migratory Bird Day, Bill Holton will be leading a walk at Seminary Woods on Saturday May 9th 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. Last year, we identified 60+ species, with 17 warbler species, during our visit.

Join Colleen Resendiz and Rita Flores 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 23rd – enter at the main entrance (near the corner of 27th & Layton Blvd) and we will have additional instructions if we need to park elsewhere due to Memorial Day activities (Facebook events will be updated as we know more). Please bring binoculars if you have them; we will have a few extra to lend. Last year we were treated to fledgling Red-tailed Hawks!



Say's Phoebe
Photo credit: Colleen Resendiz



**SEE INSIDE FOR
MORE INFORMATION
FROM WMAS!**



EXPANDING YOUR HOBBY - By Colleen Resendiz

When I was young, I started a stamp collection. The Harris Company made a large album for U.S. Stamps called the Liberty. Whenever there was a stamp show in town, my dad would take me and wait patiently as I sorted through bins of stamps to fill the empty spaces in my book. Back then, that was the only way to find stamps! However, there were a few companies who would send you stamps on 'approval'. They never seemed to figure out that I was just a kid, or maybe they didn't care!

Life intervened and I stopped collecting, although I never got rid of my album. A few years ago, I took it out of the box and joined the Waukesha County Philatelic Society (aka Stamp Club). A few people in that club had collections that weren't based on countries - they were based on a theme, or topic. WOW! I realized I had just found a new way to appreciate and learn about birds! I started to look for bird stamps. Some I buy, but others are given to me by people who know that I love both birds and collecting stamps.

Consider building a topical collection of your own, based on something you are interested in. Birds, trees, butterflies, even something as unusual as "cows facing left" (yep, I know someone with that collection!). I'm happy to share information about the different stamp clubs in the area. You can find my contact info in the Contacts section. The Milwaukee area hosts several stamp shows a year and you can buy used stamps for as little as a nickel!

Here is a one-page exhibit incorporating a few items from my collection that I put together for Milcopex, the largest stamp show in Wisconsin (held in Brookfield). The theme that year was "Uniquely Wisconsin" so I selected items with birds that we see here in our state.



Wehr Birders meets: Sundays at 8:00 am through October at the Wehr Nature Center in Franklin

November through February, we switch to 9:00 am.

NOTE: We will not meet if there is excessive snow (or rain) or if temperatures fall below 0 with the wind chill. Otherwise, use your judgment. We typically walk 1 – 1.5 miles although if bird activity is good, we may go further! Open to birders of all experience levels. Most walks are 90 minutes – 2 hours, feel free to come and go as you need to!

IS IT TIME TO RENEW YOUR AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP?

Your renewal date is 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 2025, WMAS supported the Waukesha County Land Conservancy, Milwaukee Area Land Conservancy, Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Merlin Bird ID project and for 2026 has pledged funding for Wood Thrush banding at Wehr Nature Center and an Osprey transmitter grant.

WHO DO I CONTACT?

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

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"WHEN THE SUN OF COMPASSION
ARISES DARKNESS EVAPORATES
AND THE SINGING BIRDS COME
FROM NOWHERE." — AMIT RAY



BIRDS OF WISCONSIN



American Woodcock postcard

Starting around-March and for about a month, woodcocks do an interesting courtship ritual. As it's getting dark, the male stands in a field and makes a nasally sound, "peenting". And turns a quarter turn and does it again. After several repeats he takes off into the sky, so high you lose sight of him, and then comes back with the wind literally whistling through his wingtips and he lands very near where he took off.



Barred Owl stamp

These owls are fairly common in Wisconsin, although more likely to be heard than seen due to their amazing camouflage. Their call is often described as "Who cooks for you?"



Pileated Woodpecker stamp

The pileated woodpecker is the largest woodpecker in North America. They nest mostly in dead, standing trees, so consider leaving an old tree in your yard!



Wood Duck stamp

"Woodies" perch and nest in trees. The morning after hatching, ducklings drop from their nests up to 50 feet off the ground! Pliable bones, soft feathers and leaf litter help cushion their fall.



Canada Goose stamp

It seems like these geese are everywhere today, but that wasn't always the case. Habitat loss and hunting nearly wiped them out in the early 1900s. They have definitely made a comeback!

Colleen Resendiz



Text, photos and art by
Heidi Meier
March 15, 2026

: Bird Brief :

American Woodcock (Scolopax minor)

ORDER: Charadriiformes (19 Families)

FAMILY: Scolopacidae (98 Species)

Once upon a time, on a brisk April night at sunset, a male American Woodcock left his comfortable home near the base of a young tree in the prairie. He wobbled toward a clearing like he was balancing on a tightrope. When he found the right spot, he called out a deep nasal “peent”. Based on years of practice, he had secured a home near one of the prime singing grounds ideal for attracting a mate. He continued “peenting” every six to seven seconds. Over 20 minutes, he gradually increased his song to every few seconds. At dusk, he took flight and started gently sloping upwards while spiraling in large circles. When he reached 200-300 feet, he flittered his three outer primary feathers faster to make repeated kissing sounds. Then, he changed his flight path, began chirping every four seconds, fell from the sky like a leaf and landed nearly right where he took off. He hoped a female was close by to visit and choose him to copulate. Because he was an experienced older male and selected one of the best singing grounds, he was *indeed* successful in finding a female. Over the years, he had learned that females prefer males that produce loud “peents” at optimal rates, and those that performed several quality aerial displays. Once copulation was complete, the female left to seek other males and he moved on to another nearby singing ground to perform his courtship routine again. He felt motivated to find more females that night and would dance at dusk and dawn until females stopped visiting.



After all the courtship dances that night, he started foraging for food. The nighttime was when he was most active. He teetered back and forth from one leg to the other while keeping his head still. This caused his food to move underground when he walked above. When he felt movement, he plunged his long bill into the soft dirt to grab an earthworm. The ground movement helped him find the earthworm as did specialized chemoreceptor cells called **Herbst corpuscles**. These sensitive cells helped him to see below ground by sensing touch, smell, and variations in pressure created by objects like earthworms. He preferred earthworms and usually consumed nearly his body weight in worms every night. While he foraged, he was always watching for predators. He could see nearly 360 degrees behind him because his eyes were far back on his head. This helped him compensate for a short neck that was hard to turn quickly when startled from above. He also felt safer from predators because of his camouflaged markings. He blended into his surroundings while foraging and resting because he looked identical to the forest floor of dried leaves, twigs, and moist soil where he spent the majority

of his life.

The same female who visited the male earlier that night, decided to also forage for food. Once daylight approached, she went back to her roost which wasn't far from the singing grounds. She had selected an inconspicuous location under a bush, near an old tree, on the forest floor. With markings similar to the male, she also blended into her surroundings well. The next night, she gathered leaves to line her hollow nest and placed branches around the rim. Over the next few nights, she laid four buff-colored eggs with brown specks that coalesced into blotches near the wider end. Over the next three weeks, she incubated and tended the nest. Then, one evening, the eggs hatched. Once the downy feathers dried off, the hatchlings followed their mom out of the nest. The female captured an earthworm, and the nestlings enthusiastically took it right out of her bill and ate it. She continued capturing earthworms for them until the nestlings grew larger and developed their bills to the point where they could forage on their own. They were ready to fledge in a short couple of weeks. The female was an empty nester now, with her single annual brood successful.

As spring turned to summer and then into fall, the male woodcock prepared for his month-long migration to the Gulf States where he preferred to spend the non-breeding season. He looked for nature's cues on when to migrate, including diminished sunlight, changes in barometric pressure, colder temperatures, and the moon. One night, he started off on his solo nocturnal migration southward. He flew at low altitudes around 50-100 feet, and went as far as 150 miles each night. Stopovers were important for him to recoup energy and rest. He lingered at a few stopover sites for nearly a week.

In the spring, he would migrate northward, stopping more frequently for shorter periods of time. However, it would take him nearly two months to reach his breeding season habitat and start his courtship dances again.

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RARE BIRDS VISIT WISCONSIN IN 2025

Compared to previous years, the list of rare and notable birds is not as long, however, one species was added to the state list: the Lesser Nighthawk. For more information on rare birds in Wisconsin, see ebird.org/region/US-WI/post/2025-wisconsin-ebird-year-in-review

Kelp Gull, our biggest celebrity: Spring, Milwaukee

Wood Stork: August 11, Dodge

Lesser Nighthawk: April 23, Dane

Neotropic Cormorant: May 19, Brown

Swallowtail Kite: July 30, Door

Black Vulture: April 30, Jefferson

Scissortail Flycatcher: April 22, Jefferson

Purple Gallinule: October 13, Dane

Crested Caracara: Walworth

White Wagtail: December 2024 to March 2025, Door

Tufted Duck: April, Brown and Kewaunee

Say's Phoebe: April 27, Dane

Burrowing Owl: May, Bayfield

Bullock Oriole: April-May, Racine and Dec, Ozaukee

Sage Thrasher: November-December, Brown & Vilas

Short-Billed Gull: July-August, Door and Grant

Brant: November 6, Ashland



WMAS SHIRTS ARE COMING!



Wisconsin Metro Audubon shirts are coming! Show your love for birds and our chapter with this stylish shirt designed by Steve Wiskowski. Available in men's/unisex and women's styles. There are also long sleeve shirts (available only in the unisex style). We plan to have the shirts available for sale at our April program and some of our birding events; and we will take orders if we run short of sizes or styles. Shirts start at \$21 for short sleeve and \$24 for long sleeve. Don't live nearby? We can look into shipping one to you; contact Colleen for info.

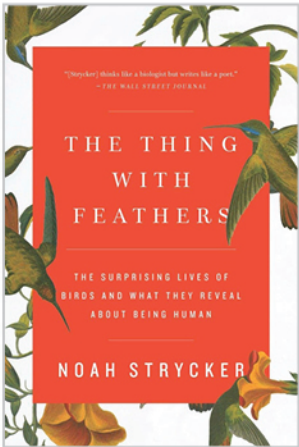
**"THE SOUL HAS ILLUSIONS
AS THE BIRD HAS WINGS:
IT IS SUPPORTED BY THEM."
— VICTOR HUGO**





REVIEWED BY ROBIN LANGENBACH

**“THE THING WITH FEATHERS”
The Surprising Lives of Birds and What
They Reveal About Being Human
By Noah Strycker**



The author was inspired to write this book when a shift in scientific thinking occurred, which considered that animal behavior is also shared by humans. With the belief that we cannot attribute the behaviors of birds to instinct alone, he provides the reader with insights of how bird behaviors might have evolved to give them an advantage for survival. The book is arranged by chapters,

each dealing with the behavior of a specific species of bird. Take the Snowy Owl, for example. Mr. Strycker asks ‘what causes an irruption?’ Common theory is that they are forced to move south because of a food shortage, due to a crash in the lemming population. However, this assumes that Snowy Owls stay in a single home area and eat nothing but lemmings. There is little evidence to support this theory. So it follows that no one really knows what causes irruptions. Based on other observations, it might be that they are just looking for space. The author suggests that Snowy Owls are nomads. Satellite technology shows they will meander up to 1,900 miles after nesting season concludes. Plus, many do not return to the nesting area. The author wonders if irruptions occur because Snowy Owls have a wanderlust gene. Science has identified that there is a genetic component in humans that drives us to move and explore. Are snowy also hard wired with this same gene?

Although most of this book is a delight to read, the chapter on vultures is quite troubling. It describes the experiments humans conducted on these birds to deduce if they find food by sight or smell. Some of the data goes back to the mid-1800’s, so these tests would most likely be frowned upon today. After years of experiments, not all of them cruel, it was found that vultures are actually picky about their food.

Mr. Strycker also explored such topics as “pecking order”, the mathematics of Starling murmuration, and the devotion, perhaps even love, between Albatross pairs.

How interesting!

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

MPM VISIT



WMAS enjoyed a visit to the Milwaukee Public Museum in March. We ‘birded’ the museum, looking for birds on a scavenger hunt and visited many iconic museum displays. Here is John, being surprised by the rattlesnake button in the Bison Hunt diorama. Did you know that MPM was the first museum to have dioramas? We took the opportunity to say goodbye to many of the exhibits and dioramas that won’t be at the new location, including Streets of Old Milwaukee.

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