



The Chat

Lakeland Audubon Society

January, 2020

lakelandaudubon.com

January 28 Program

Winter Birds & Winter Birding

By Wayne Rohde

Wayne will focus on the birds we see in winter, whether permanent residents, regular winter visitors, or migrants/summer nesters which happen to show up. He'll also discuss the various types of birding we can do during the winter months, such as attending eagle days, birding from vehicles, watching birds at feeders, and more. A superlative birder and bird photographer, Wayne is a former board member of the Lakeland Audubon Society, as well as past editor of the Chat and field trip leader. In addition, Wayne has given a number of popular birding presentations at Lakeland Audubon's chapter meetings. Wayne Rohde is a life-long resident of Wisconsin, has been an avid birder for 52 years, and has photographed 260 species of Wisconsin birds in the past 12 years.

This program is scheduled on Tuesday January 28 at 7 pm at the Lions Field House in Williams Bay and is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served before and after the meeting.

Directions

The Lions Field House is located 0.4 miles north of Geneva Street in Williams Bay on Highway 67. Turn on Stark Road on the west side of Highway 67, across from Kishwauketo Nature Conservancy. Turn right at the next intersection to go to the parking lot.

Left: Snowy Owl

Photo by Wayne Rohde



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Upcoming Programs – Mark your Calendars!

February 25, 2020: John Williams - "Ecological Responses to climate change: Lessons from the Past"

March 24, 2020: Jennifer Kuroda - *Bobcat "The Native Cat"*

April 28, 2020: Michael Edmonds - "Taking Flight"

Highlights of the Geneva Lake Christmas Bird Count



Several Bald Eagles were seen on the Geneva Christmas Bird Count.

Photo by Wayne Rohde

December 21 dawned clear and calm with no snow on the ground and temperature a few degrees below freezing. Clear skies throughout the day allowed warming into the 40's despite the low sun angle on the Winter Solstice – beautiful weather to be out birding. This was the 120th year that Audubon has conducted a Christmas Bird Count (CBC), though the local count does not have as long a history.

Our count circle of 7.5 miles radius is centered near the southwest corner of Lake Como and we try to cover it as thoroughly as possible with as many participants as possible. This year 25 local birders spent some or all of the day driving and hiking their assigned areas keeping careful track of how many birds of which species were seen, while five additional birders watched their feeders and yards. A few did feeder watches as well as covering a section. Cumulatively, we spent about 94 hours birding, driving nearly 500 miles, and hiking about 24 miles. In all, 60 species were found.

Feeder activity was slow, since the lack of snow meant that many of the usual feeder birds could find food elsewhere. In contrast, open water on Geneva Lake, and especially open patches on Delavan, hosted very large numbers of water birds (with a few Bald Eagles nearby). We often get thousands of Canada Geese, so this year's count of 9692 (the largest number for any species in our circle) was no surprise, but was well below the record. However, we also had 200 Cackling Geese, setting a new record for this species in our count circle. The report of 604 Greater Scaup on Delavan also is a new record. Though the lack of snow cover probably kept birds away from feeders, it may also have allowed some migrants to stay around longer. In particular, large flocks of Starlings, totaling about 4500 birds, were seen south of Geneva Lake, bringing our count total for this species to 5235 (another new record).

Our participants this year included some who have counted for many years, but we also welcomed several people who were new to the CBC, or to our circle. Counters included the Berriers, the Brockmans, the Cudworths, the Parsons, the Magdas, the Haases, the Fritzmanns, and the Rendalls; as well as Jim Black, Kevin Dickey, Susan Seefeld, Wayne Rohde, Joe Jacyna, Beth Goeppinger, Nick Memier, Mariette Nowak, Bridget Wescott, Chris Gullikson, Doug Mohr, Sonya Dailey, and Cheryl Dooley.

News and Views from Susan

A report of the chapter's field trip to Horicon NWR

By Susan Seefeld, Vice President - Lakeland Audubon Society

On the 29th of October, five chapter members, including myself, took a field trip to Horicon National Wildlife Refuge. A large part of our state, including the Horicon area got up to five inches of snow the night before, but thankfully the roads were clear in morning. The five of us, which included: Don Brockmen, Dale Jefchack, Mike Wisniewski, Kevin Dickey, and I, departed from the Lions Field House at 8:25 a.m. We chose to take Highway 67, that being the more scenic route, most of the way to our destination. After reaching Dodge County we got off of Highway 67 and made our way to Horicon.

We started our tour of the refuge at the Wisconsin DNR's visitor/education center in Horicon. While we were there, we saw lots of Sandhill Cranes, Canada Geese, Coots, a Redhead Duck and some Mallards. After our time inside the center, we decided to do some hiking on the trails and spotted a few Whooping Cranes (in flight). Before leaving the center, we also saw a Northern Harrier, formerly known as a "Marsh Hawk" to us old timers.

After our stop at the DNR visitor center, we then drove a handful of gravel roads, including the Dike Road, that provided access to more secluded areas of the refuge. On these roads we saw: Chickadees, a Northern Cardinal, more Sandhill Cranes, Bluejays, Pheasants, Horned Larks, Gulls, Bald Eagles, a few Hawks, and many species of Ducks. When we were done driving the gravel access roads, we then stopped at the U.S. Dept. Fish & Wildlife visitors center in Mayville. While we were there we enjoyed the many exhibits on display.

Our next stop was along Highway 49 at the north end of the refuge. This part of the trip was a highlight for me, as we spotted nearly 50 Trumpeter Swans foraging in small groups, with some of the groups containing their offspring from earlier this year. We then went to the Auto Loop

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Great Backyard Bird Count

February 14-17

Count birds for science and for your own enjoyment this February during a designated four day period. You can count birds anywhere and for as long or as little as you have time for. It's also free to participate. More information can be found at: <https://gbbc.birdcount.org/>



American Tree Sparrow. Photo by, Wayne Rohde

The Chat is the newsletter of the Lakeland Audubon Chapter of the National Audubon Society, P.O. Box 473, Elkhorn, WI 53121. Subscription is \$15 per year for printed copies sent by US mail.