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The Chat

Lakeland Audubon Society

October 2021

CHAPTER MEETING

Tuesday, October 26, 2021
7:00 PM – 8:30 PM

Lions Field House – 270 Elkhorn Road (Highway 67) Williams Bay, WI

Restoring and Providing Habitat for Birds and other Wildlife

By Jim Killian

Restoring, providing and maintaining quality habitat is important for birds and a wide diversity of other wildlife. This sometimes means assisting wildlife by creating new habitat suitable to the environmental conditions of the site. Wisconsin Master Naturalist Instructor Jim Killian discusses the elements and processes of restoring former and creating new wildlife habitat in Kishwauketo Nature Conservancy, a moderate-size and environmentally diverse public property located in Williams Bay, Wisconsin.

After his retirement as a healthcare executive, Jim dove headfirst back into his undergraduate college love of field biology and conservation by volunteering on various stewardship and restoration projects at Kishwauketo. Jim serves on the Board of Kishwauketo, often leading various restoration plans, initiatives and grant writing requests. He is also an avid volunteer for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the University of Wisconsin Madison Division of Extension Snapshot Wisconsin program, hosting and managing two wildlife trail cameras in Kishwauketo.



Above: Jim Killian

Jim, his wife, Roberta, and their dog Kepler reside in Williams Bay, Wisconsin. Jim recently co-authored the book Kishwauketo, A Nature Conservancy for the Children of Tomorrow in partnership with Lake Geneva photographer and graphic designer Jen Schildgen. All proceeds from the sale of this book will benefit The Friends of Kishwauketo, Ltd. in continuing the restoration activities in the conservancy.

Right: Bluebird Trail at Kishwauketo



Event Schedule

7:00 PM – 7:10 PM Introduction & Birding Reports (from attendees)
7:10 PM – 8:30 PM Talk (followed by Q&A session)

IN THIS ISSUE

Pier Construction Proposed on Lake Como
Sandhill Crane Hunt Being Considered
Project FeederWatch

Too Much of a Good Thing?

By Kevin Dickey

Large scale pier project being proposed for the Lake Como shoreline.

More is Less - Less is More, is a saying that we all have heard before. I think it's a good saying because it applies to so many situations and under a great deal of circumstances. This saying certainly can be used when pointing out a case of overuse, which often is a form of abuse. Recreation, in-and-of-itself, is a good thing, but too much can be a bad thing. It's well known that recreational activities can be, and often are, good for our well-being and the economy. I won't get into the numbers, other then to say, that recreation generates a whole lot of revenue.

Even with that said, the question of whether a certain amount of something (Even though normally considered good) is too much, is a question that should, and in certain cases, must be asked. When answering this question, one must take into consideration the interests of all parties involved. Other things that should be considered are the benefits (Short Term/Long Term) and also the impacts (Definite/Potential).

As is the case with recreational boating, both the benefits and impacts are indeed great. I know this from my own experience. It would be hard for me not to notice the signs of this activity. People towing boats behind their vehicles, filling up at the gas station and boats out on water are an obvious indication that the "Boating Industry" is alive and well. This is good for the economy, for sure, but there are some often overlooked costs when it comes to feeding this cash cow. Chief among these costs is the sometimes irreparable damage done to our lakes and rivers.

The damage can be in the form of pollution, erosion and the introduction of invasive species (Plant or Animal). Some other costs to be considered are: safety risk, noise (Loss of Tranquility), reduction in the quality of scenery and conflicts. Overall, it's a give and take situation when it comes to intensive use of our natural resources. The real debate is whether the benefits outweigh the negative impacts.

This brings us to what Geneva National wants to have installed on the shore of Lake Como in the Town of Geneva. What they have planed is a large scale shoreline development project that consists of 10 piers with 120 boat slips. I say "Large Scale" because this project is definitely big when you consider the size of Lake Como. The size of Lake Como is approximately 955 acres, with only 600 of those acres able to be used for boating. Potentially having 120 more boats on the lake during it's busy "Summer Season" would be a major increase in traffic and congestion.

That many more boats will have a significant impact on the lake itself. Shoreline erosion would certainly increase, and it's already a concern, as Lake Como is actually an impoundment that relies on an earthen dam to maintain both it's size and depth. If that dam breaks, what happens then? Who's responsible for fixing it and where does the money come from to pay the cost?

There's also the impact on wildlife. Lake Como has multiple wetlands along it's shoreline that will be affected by an increase in erosion and pollution. Let's "Speak Up" for the birds and lovely Lake Como by telling the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) your thoughts on the matter.

Contact Luke Roffler: luke.roffler@wisconsin.gov

Some good articles can be found online for those who would like more information (Just Click on the Text):

Geneva National proposes constructing 120 boat slips on Lake Como; many have concerns with project
By Karena Tse (Lake Geneva Regional News)

Lake Como Property Association Squares Off Against Geneva National Over Plans to Build New Piers
By Chris Devincenzo (Legendary Real Estate Services)



Lake Como, as seen from the Dam Trail

Sandhill Crane Hunt Being Proposed!

URGENT NEWS

This update is provided by the Madison Audubon Society.

A Hunting Season on Sandhill Cranes?

Being an iconic Wisconsin bird species and an amazing conservation success story is not enough to protect Sandhill Cranes.

A package of bills that include a variety of hunting-related proposals is being fast-tracked for consideration by the Wisconsin State Assembly. One of the bills would legalize and establish a Sandhill Crane hunting season.

The public hearing is Tuesday, October 19, and your legislators need to hear from you [NOW](#).

A Sandhill Crane hunt is neither an effective way to prevent crop damage (the dominant argument for establishing the hunt), nor does it ensure proper safeguards to prevent crane populations — now stable after decades of work — from declining. We fear the proposed hunt is being rushed through without properly considering the best available science and opinions from stakeholders — like YOU!

To learn more about this critical issue, please visit the website of the International Crane Foundation (based in Baraboo, WI), one of the world's leading organizations in the conservation of crane species, including Sandhills. The [ICF statement](#) includes thorough and fact-based information about Sandhill Crane biology, potential effects of hunting cranes (including the endangered Whooping), existing effective crop predation management, and how we can all live in community with nature.

You can make a difference for this species in Wisconsin. Our Sandhill Cranes need you. Please make your voice heard ASAP:

1. Contact your legislators to share your opinion on this important issue. [Find your legislators here](#).
2. Write an op-ed to your newspaper or post about the issue and the hearing on social media.
3. Attend Tuesday's hearing in person to testify or register your opinion. To learn more about how to do so, [click HERE](#).
4. Spread the word to friends and neighbors about the importance of Sandhill Cranes, the proposed hunt, and science-based decisions on their management.

Thank you for protecting Wisconsin's birds, and in particular, the beautiful Sandhill Crane.

Sincerely,
The Madison Audubon Team



Sandhill Crane

Project FeederWatch is almost here!

Citizen science project, now in its 35th year, starts November 13th.

Project FeederWatch turns your love of feeding birds into scientific discoveries. FeederWatch is a November-April survey of birds that visit backyards, nature centers, community areas, and other locales in North America. You don't even need a feeder! All you need is an area with plantings, habitat, water or food that attracts birds. The schedule is completely flexible. Count your birds for as long as you like on days of your choosing, then enter your counts online. Your counts allow you to track what is happening to birds around your home and contribute to a continental data-set of bird distribution and abundance.

[Click here to sign up for FeederWatch](#)

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(volunteer needed)

Publicity
(volunteer needed)

Bird Walks

October 27: Big Foot Beach State Park
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM
N1550 S Lakeshore Drive, Lake Geneva, WI

November 3: Big Foot Beach State Park
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM
N1550 S Lakeshore Drive, Lake Geneva, WI

November 10: Big Foot Beach State Park
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM
N1550 S Lakeshore Drive, Lake Geneva, WI

Meet in the main parking area to the right of the entrance station a little before 9:00 AM. A state park sticker (\$28, \$13 if age 65 or older) or daily pass (\$8, \$3 if age 65 or older) is required to enter Big Foot Beach State Park.

<https://lakelandaudubon.com/contact/>



Blue Bird Nest (Photo provided by Jim Killian)

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.