



lakelandaudubon.com

The Chat

Lakeland Audubon Society

January 2022

CHAPTER MEETING

Tuesday, January 25

7:00 PM - 8:30 PM

Lions Field House

270 Elkhorn Road, Williams Bay, WI

The event is free and open to the public.

Our January meeting will feature the following educational talk:

Snowy Owls

By Jeff Bahls

Jeff's talk will include some biology, range, breeding and patterns of irruption. He will also point out where you could possibly find a Snowy Owl in Wisconsin. Project Snowstorm, a research project that looks into the Snowy Owl's travels and breeding areas, will be a key point in the discussion. In addition, Jeff will tell a little on his personal experience with the project and the Snowy Owl that the project is tracking.



Snowy Owl (Photo Provided by Jeff Bahls)

Jeff put out his first bird house when he was about 7 years old. He has 40 years of experience with the Horicon Marsh where he works part time for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Jeff has been a member of Horicon Marsh Bird club for the past 22 years and is the current President. He currently sits on the board of the Wood Duck Society, a nationwide organization devoted to placement, and care of Wood Duck nest boxes and the life cycle of the Wood Duck. Jeff was a member of Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2007 search team, for Ivory Billed Woodpecker in Arkansas. In 2018 Jeff was awarded the Wisconsin Society of Ornithology bronze Passenger Pigeon award for outstanding contributions in local and state areas for study and enjoyment of birds. Jeff also enjoys looking for birds in his kayak along Wisconsin's wonderful wetlands.

2021 Christmas Bird Count Report

By Kyle Cudworth

The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) in our local Lake Geneva circle was held on Saturday, Dec. 18, 2021 as part of Audubon's 122nd CBC. Our count circle of 7.5 miles radius is centered near the southwest corner of Lake Como. Weather on count day saw cloudy skies with temperatures near freezing, light winds, with no snow on the ground. Most lakes had little or no ice.

This year about 24 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 eight additional birders watched their feeders and yards. Some did feeder watches as well as covering an area. Cumulatively, we spent nearly 80 hours birding, driving about 475 miles, and hiking over 17 miles, counting over 11000 birds. In all, 51 species were found on count day, plus two more during count week. These data have not been fully proofread, so the numbers are preliminary.

Feeder activity was relatively slow, since the lack of snow meant that many of the usual feeder birds could find food elsewhere. Some of us also saw Cooper's Hawks attacking our feeder birds before and on count day. (Hawks have to eat too, but do they have to eat our Goldfinches while we are trying to count them?) Warm weather over the previous month may have caused some water birds to linger further north. We had over 3000 Canada Geese, compared to about 1500 last year and over 9000 the previous year. While the lack of snow cover could have kept birds away from feeders, it may also have allowed some migrants to stay around later than usual. In particular, large numbers of Starlings, totaling over 2000 birds, were seen. In recent years we have seen a few Bald Eagles on count day, and only one during count week last year, but this year 16 were seen on count day. Some years we have had dozens of Pine Siskins on count day, but this year only a couple were seen during count week. A few other birds of note include a Belted Kingfisher, 2 Pileated Woodpeckers, and 16 Trumpeter Swans. Some of us were privileged to hear Great Horned Owls in the evening.

Lisa Granbur organized things before the count and Kyle Cudworth is compiling the data for submission to Audubon. Counters included Wayne Rohde, the Mark Blacks, the Brockmans, the Cudworth/Albrecht team, the Fritzmanns, the Magdas & Martins team, the Tyksinskis, Pat Parsons, Lisa Granbur, Kate Dooley, and Beth Rendall; as well as Jim Black, Janice Bain, Kevin Dickey, Susan Seefeld, Joe Jacyna, Beth Goeppinger, and Cheryl Dooley. I humbly apologize to anyone I left off this list or whose name I spelled wrong. Participation in the CBC was a fun day of birding and we would love to have some additional birders join the fun next year.

Audubon Photography Awards

The 2022 Audubon Photography Awards are now officially accepting submissions! Now until Wednesday, March 9 you can enter your best bird photos and videos for a chance to win.

For the second year, Audubon will award the Female Bird Prize and the Video Prize along with six other prizes for spectacular images of birds. Winning photos will be published in future issues of Audubon magazine, our Youth winner will be awarded a special trip to take their bird photography to the next level, and our Grand Prize winner will take home a cash prize of \$5,000!

Combine your passion for birds and photography and apply today! Read on for detailed contest rules and tips on how to capture that perfect shot. [Click Here](#) to learn more.

JOIN US NEXT MONTH!

Tuesday, February 22 - Chapter Meeting - Lions Field House (Animal Tracks and Signs by Beth Goeppinger)
Sunday, February 27 - Chapter Outing - Kishwaukee Nature Conservancy (Nature Hike with Beth Goeppinger)

Further details will be available on our website and in next month's newsletter.



Snowy Owl Trivia



Lisa Granbur (Audubon board member) and I recently took a day trip to Milwaukee in search of the Snowy Owl. We were lucky enough to find one on the shore of Lake Michigan. While we were very cold, the owl seemed quite content with the arctic temperatures. I decided to learn more about this feathered friend, so I took to the internet. I've compiled some questions for you. I hope you learn a thing or two about our feathered friends. Good luck!

1. This is the snowy owl we found in Milwaukee. What sex is it?

- a. Male
- b. Female



2. What does "irruption" mean?

- a. Disruption in the food supply for a species
- b. A population explosion of a species
- c. When a species flies well outside their normal range
- d. When a bird regurgitates their food to feed their young

3. Note how "fluffy" the owl is. They have a multitude of feathers to insulate them from the Arctic temperatures. The weight of these feathers makes them one of the heaviest owls in North America. About how much do their feathers weigh?

- a. 4 oz
- b. 10 oz
- c. 3 lb.
- d. 4 lb.



4. The purpose of the feathers on the snowy owl's feet is

- a. To help it blend in with the tundra snow
- b. To provide insulation against the cold air
- c. To absorb any blood etc. from the prey that it is eating and keep the body feathers clean

5. When the snowy owls have owlets, who hunts for prey to feed the young?

- a. The female
- b. The male

6. What is the average wingspan of the snowy owl?

- a. 2-3 ft
- b. 3-4 ft
- c. 4-5 ft
- d. 6-7 ft

7. Snowy owls are generally ...

- a. Nocturnal
- b. Diurnal
- c. Sometimes both

8. When searching for snowy owls, it is best to search

- a. In trees
- b. On the ground

9. Do snowy owls' mate for life?

- a. Yes
- b. No

10. Female snowy owls' cache (store) the food brought by the male in a circle around their nests.

- a. True
- b. False

Answers

1. **B:** It is a female snowy owl. Males of the species have dark brown bars when they're young and get whiter as they age, while females retain dark markings throughout their lives. Even though females can be pale, and males can keep some markings, the whitest snowy owls are always male.

2. **C:** An irruption, in birding, is when a species of bird moves into an area where it doesn't normally winter.

3. **D**

4. **B:** Snowy owls have feet and legs swathed in thick feathers, which **provide** the owls with insulation for the cold Arctic climate. They also have thick pads on the bottom of their feet. These feathers and pads act like snowshoes to prevent the owl from sinking into the snow. Sharp talons (claws) are used to grab prey. *Fascinating Facts About Snowy Owls.* U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Published November 23, 2015.

5. **B**

6. **C:** On average, the wingspan is 4-5'. Female snowy owls are larger than males, as they're over 2 feet tall and have wingspans of up to 6 feet. <https://www.treehugger.com/facts-about-splendid-snowy-owl-4858433>

7. **C:** They aren't strictly nocturnal or diurnal. Their activity varies depending on location and the amount of sunlight. The type of prey available in the area also determines when the owl sleeps. This ability to hunt during the daylight is a good thing, since they breed in areas where the sun never sets. <https://www.treehugger.com/facts-about-splendid-snowy-owl-4858433>

8. **B:** Snowy owls like to hunt in treeless places: tundra, planes, airport fields, or beach dunes. The open space helps them in their pursuit of prey. They primarily hunt by perching on a pole or fence post in an otherwise empty area. They also hunt by hopping and walking along the ground. Hunting while flying involves making low passes just 3 feet off the ground.

Potapov, Eugene, and Richard Sale. The Snowy Owl. Bloomsbury, 2013.

9. **B:** No, they form an exclusive bond for a single breeding season (monogamous), but when the next year rolls around, they will start the courtship all over again.

10. **A:** Females store food the male has brought to the nest, generally in a wreath-like formation around the nest. Typically, they stock about 10-15 items, but scientists have recorded as many as 83 carcasses. Additionally, males will create caches at separate perches with around 50 lemmings. These caches provide food during times when prey is insufficient.

"Snowy Owl Bubo scandiacus." The Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Other sources: https://www.treehugger.com/facts-about-splendid-snowy-owl-4858433

LAKELAND AUDUBON SOCIETY INC.

P.O. Box 473
Elkhorn, WI 53121
lakelandaudubon.com
(262) 729-9702



LAS Board

President
Kevin Dickey (262) 889-4262

Vice President
Susan Seefeld (262) 537-4921

Treasurer
(Volunteer Needed)

Secretary
Dale Jefchak (262) 723-3025

Christmas Bird Count
Lisa Granbur (262) 275-5808

Newsletter
(Volunteer Needed)

Education
Janice Bain (262) 215-1407

Bird Seed Sale
(Volunteer Needed)

Conservation
(Volunteer Needed)

Hospitality
Kathy Wisniewski (262) 949-4174

Field Trips
(Volunteer Needed)

Publicity
(Volunteer Needed)

Bird Walks

Wednesdays: Big Foot Beach State Park
10:00 AM - Noon
N1550 S Lakeshore Drive, Lake Geneva, WI

Meet in the main parking area to the right of the entrance station a little before 10:00 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/>



Snowy Owl (Photo Provided by Jeff Bahls)

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.