



The Chat

February 2023

CHAPTER MEETING

Tuesday, February 28

7:00 PM

Lions Field House - 270 Elkhorn Road (Hwy 67), Williams Bay, WI

Free and open to the public.

Featuring the following educational talk:

"Wood Ducks – Nest Boxes"

By Jeff Bahls

In this talk, the speaker will cover all aspects of the biology and life history of Wood Ducks. Jeff will provide an in-depth view by drawing from his many years of experience as a sportsman/conservationist and also from his vast knowledge of these birds. Additionally, he will share insight on how to attract and help propagate this beautiful species of waterfowl.

About the Speaker

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.



Pair of Wood Ducks on a nest box.

Winter Road Warriors

by Janice Bain

I raced down the backroads headed for a walk in the woods and swoosh, I scared up a small flock of birds. The flush caused me to wonder what particular birds these might be. Who scavenges along the roads in the dead of winter; what might they be after. Curiosity got the best of me so I pulled out my camera, found some of the quieter backroads and snuck up on their little groups. I was happy to find a variety of birds lurking at the road's edge.

Horned Larks

The largest of the warriors are the Horned Larks (6-8"). If you are fortunate enough to hear them, you will treasure their "tinkling" sound. Horned Larks have a unique feature often added to their nests. The nest is a slight depression in the ground, lined with grass, weeds etc. The interesting part is that one side of the nest often has a flat "doorstep" of pebbles.



American Tree Sparrows

Smaller in size (5.5 - 6.3 in) than the Horned Lark, but just as plentiful were the American Tree Sparrows. While most sparrows winter farther south, American Tree Sparrows like our northern states. They are easy to find by open fields, brushy roadsides and weedy edges. In the winter, their diet is almost entirely seeds. When the ground is snow covered, these sparrows have been observed to fly around a weed plant, using their wings to dislodge its seeds onto the snow below for easy retrieval.



White-Crowned Sparrows

As I combed the roadsides, what I didn't expect to find was a White-crowned Sparrow. It is an uncommon migrant or wintering bird in our area. Like the American tree sparrow, its winter diet consists of the seeds it forages from weeds and grasses. During the winter, a White-crowned Sparrow's body contains about 3 grams of fat of which $\frac{1}{2}$ is used up at night and must be replaced every day. (Wild Birds Unlimited)



Lapland Longspur

While the summer plumage of the Lapland Longspur is quite spectacular, the winter plumage is rather subdued; this makes the bird very easy to overlook. Lapland Longspur's size, about 6 inches, and winter plumage help them blend in with flocks of wintering sparrows. In fact, I didn't know I had found any until I went home and reviewed my pictures. The name Lapland Longspur caused me to question how it received its name. What I learned was that Lapland is a region of Scandinavia, partly in Sweden and partly in Finland. They breed in the Lapland region. The name "longspur" refers to its unusually long hind claw.



Dark-eyed Juncos (no photo)

Finding juncos in the winter is no surprise. They grace us with their presence at feeders and also on our roadsides. When flushed from the roadside, they are the easiest to identify since their outer tail feathers are white; a defining field mark. Dark-eyed Juncos like to return to the same area each winter. The ones you feed at/under your feeder this year will be the same ones you fed last year and will again next year. Oh and don't let their name fool you, Dark-eyed juncos are considered sparrows.

I hope you have time to comb the backroads for some of these hardy birds. Maybe you will be luckier than me and find some of the elusive Snow Bunting. Happy Birding!

2023 Audubon Photography Awards

The National Audubon Society is once again holding its annual contest.

Audubon invites photographers and videographers to submit to the 2023 Audubon Photography Awards, open for entries from January 11, 2023, until March 1, 2023, 11:00 AM CST. Judges will award eight prizes to photographers and videographers: the Grand Prize, Professional Prize, Amateur Prize, Youth Prize, Plants for Birds Prize, Fisher Prize, Female Bird Prize, and Video Prize.

For the third year, Audubon will award the Female Bird Prize and the Video Prize. The Female Bird Prize continues to showcase the beauty of female birds, which are often underappreciated and under-researched in both birding and science. The Video Prize once again will be awarded to the top video demonstrating unique bird behaviors or highlighting birdlife in its habitat.

Winning photos and videos will be featured in a future issue of Audubon Magazine. Top photos and honorable mentions will also be showcased in a traveling exhibition hosted by Audubon centers and chapters across the country. For inspiration, check out the [2022 Audubon Photography Awards winners!](#)

Prizes include:

Grand Prize: \$5,000 USD

Professional Prize: \$2,500 USD

Amateur Prize: \$2,500 USD

Plants for Birds Prize: \$2,500 USD

Video Prize: \$2,500 USD

Female Bird Prize: \$1,000 USD

Fisher Prize: \$1,000 USD

Youth Prize: Six days at Audubon's Hog Island Audubon Camp for Teens during the 2024 season

[CLICK HERE TO ENTER](#)

The judging panel for the 2023 contest includes:

- Sabine Meyer, photography director, National Audubon Society
- Preeti Desai, senior director of social media & storytelling, National Audubon Society
- Melissa Hafting, conservation photographer and youth nature educator
- Morgan Heim, conservation photographer, filmmaker and adventurer
- Noppadol Paothong, nature/conservation photographer
- Marlene Pantin, partnerships manager, Plants for Birds, National Audubon Society
- Mike Fernandez, video producer, National Audubon Society
- Rina Miele, wildlife photographer and videographer
- Mick Thompson, wildlife photographer and videographer
- Karine Aigner, conservation photographer
- Founders of the Galbatross Project: Brooke Bateman, Stephanie Beilke, Martha Harbison, Purbita Saha, Joanna Wu

Additional Details & Rules:

The contest is open to all legal residents of the 50 United States, the District of Columbia, and Canada (excluding Quebec), who are 13 years of age or older as of the date of the submission. Audubon encourages ethical bird photography and videography. Photos that do not adhere to Audubon's Guide to Ethical Bird Photography and Videography will be disqualified. Entry fees are \$15 per image or video. No payment is required for submissions to the Youth Division or to the Plants for Birds or Video Divisions for entrants who are 13 to 17 years of age. Visit the website for [official contest rules and frequently asked questions](#).

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

Join the Count: Good for You, Good for Birds

Positive vibes go both ways when people connect with birds!

The 26th annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) takes place Friday, February 17, through Monday, February 20. Bird and nature lovers everywhere unite in the effort to tally as many of the world's bird species as possible over these four days. Combined with other bird counts, GBBC results help create a clearer picture of how birds are faring—whether individual species are declining, increasing, or holding steady in the face of habitat loss, climate change, and other threats.

"Based on the recently released State of the Birds report, we know that half the bird species in the United States and Canada are decreasing," said David Bonter, co-director of the Center for Engagement in Science and Nature at the Cornell Lab. "We absolutely need the eyes and ears of birdwatchers to give us the big picture when it comes to shifting bird populations."

Each participant or group counts birds for any length of time (but for *at least* 15 minutes) and enters the birds they could identify at each site they visited, whether that be from home, at a local park, or in a wilderness area. Those new to the event should read the **How to Participate** instructions. People of all ages and skill levels are welcome. And there's another reason to count the birds: It's good for you.

"Take a moment over this long weekend to observe, listen to, and count birds and improve your health, too. Birdwatching and being in nature can reduce stress and improve your mood," said Chad Wilsey, chief scientist and vice president at National Audubon Society.

An estimated 385,000 people participated during the 2022 GBBC. They reported more than 7,000 species from 192 countries. Many GBBC participants discover a new fascination with birds and enjoy exploring (and comparing) results from around the world.

"The Great Backyard Bird Count is a steppingstone towards bird conservation," said Patrick Nadeau, president of Birds Canada. "Taking this step in February launches a journey of discovery whether you're just beginning to learn about the birds around you or an experienced birder watching out for new feathered friends!"

The Great Backyard Bird Count is a joint project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, National Audubon Society, and Birds Canada and is made possible in part by founding sponsor Wild Birds Unlimited.

Step-by-step instructions for entering your bird lists for the GBBC:

- * Merlin Bird ID app: <https://www.birdcount.org/merlin-bird-id-app>
- * eBird Mobile app: <https://www.birdcount.org/ebird-mobile-app>
- * eBird on a computer: <https://www.birdcount.org/ebird-on-computer>



BIRD WALK – Great Backyard Bird Count (CHAPTER OUTING)

Monday, February 20, 2023

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM (Noon)

Kishwauketo Nature Conservancy - 251 Elkhorn Road (Hwy 67), Williams Bay, WI

This event is open to the public and free to attend.

Join members of our chapter as we walk the trails of the Kishwauketo Nature Conservancy and look for birds. This event will coincide with the 26th Annual Great Backyard Bird Count. Be aware that this activity will consist of a substantial amount of hiking in winter weather.

Meet at the KNC pavilion by Highway 67 prior to 10:00 AM. Parking is available at the Lions Field House, which is located on the west side of Highway 67. Chapter President Kevin Dickey will be leading the walk. Please contact him if you have any questions.

[Contact – Lakeland Audubon Society](#) Call or Text: (262) 729-9702

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Bird Walks

Saturdays

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Big Foot Beach State Park

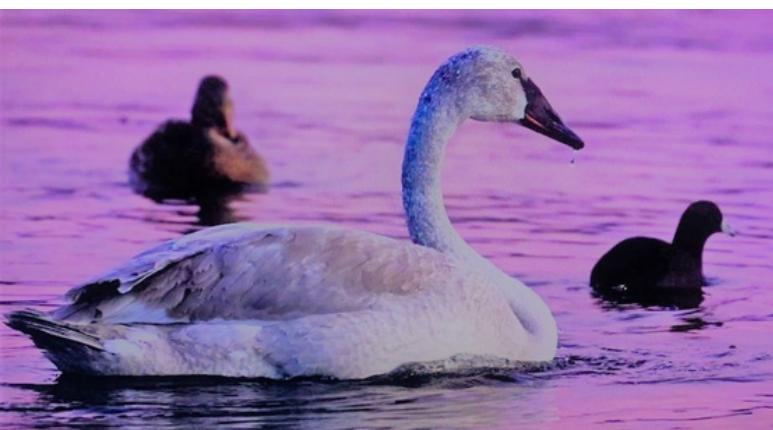
N1550 S Lakeshore Drive, Lake Geneva, WI

Meet in the main parking area to the right of the entrance station a little before 11:00 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.

Please contact us to let us know you are interested in attending a walk.

<https://lakelandaudubon.com/contact>

Call or Text: (262) 729-9702



Trumpeter Swan - Williams Bay, WI. Photo by Janice Bain.

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.