

LAKELAND AUDUBON SOCIETY



The Chat



May 2026

CHAPTER MEETING

Tuesday, May 26

7:00 PM

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

Free and open to the public!

Bird Physiology – carotenoids, coloration, digestion, and nutrition

By Emily Webb

Join the Lakeland Audubon Society at its May 2026 chapter meeting. This meeting will feature a guest speaker (Emily Webb) who will give a talk called: Bird Physiology – carotenoids, coloration, digestion, and nutrition. Bird coloration has been studied for centuries. There are two main classes of pigments responsible for the vast majority of bird coloration, melanin and carotenoids. Carotenoid-based coloration is primarily responsible for the red-orange-yellow portion of the visible spectrum.

Because birds can only obtain carotenoids from their diet and carotenoids have other functions besides pigmentation, there is a natural connection between color and health. Some of these other functions include promoting immune health and filtering light in the retina (vision). Carotenoids have also been studied as antioxidants, although this literature is more controversial. Recently, more detailed genetic and physiological mechanisms underlying the production and condition-dependence of carotenoid-based bird coloration have been, and continue to be, uncovered.

About the Speaker

Emily Webb is an assistant professor of biology at Rockford University with a BA from Ohio Wesleyan University and a PhD from Arizona State University. She teaches anatomy and physiology, genetics, and introductory biology courses. She currently conducts research with undergraduate students on the production of green coloration in warblers and vireos.



Strategizing for Success:

The Art & Science of Becoming a Better Birder

By Wayne Rohde

Would you like to find more birds and see more birds and hear more birds and identify more birds and enjoy more birds?

Welcome to the club!

But note this: doing so takes work. And the harder you work at it, the better you'll become at birding. To that end, here's ten tips, in the form of a checklist (along with a few suggestions and examples), based on lessons I've learned during the past 60 years of birding...

1) Plan Ahead

- Study general field guides, such as the Peterson guide for beginners, and the Geo and Sibley guides for advanced birders; also study specialty guides, such as those for IDing hawks in flight, wood warblers, etc.
- Review audio recordings of bird songs and calls, such as the Stokes CD set.
- Chart the results of your research (e.g., warblers with and without wing bars, sparrows with and without breast streaks, etc.).
- Google BirdCast, for migration forecasts and reports.
- Arrange transportation ... and be sure your vehicle is reliable and refueled!
- Map your driving and hiking routes.
- Remember the need for bathroom breaks.

2) Pack Gear

- Binocular: A 7-8x magnification binocular with 35-50mm objective lenses is recommended; invest in a binocular that's optically, mechanically and ergonomically sound, and in alignment; "Bins" are the primary tool for grassland and woodland birds.
- Spotting scope: A 20-60x eyepiece with an 80mm objective lens is recommended; along with a sturdy spotting scope with a fluid head. Scopes are useful for distant birds, such as waterfowl on a lake or shorebirds at a mudflat.
- Camera: A digital mirrorless camera with a 400-600mm telephoto lens excels because of autofocus acquisition and tracking. Cameras are helpful for protracted and enlarged looks at distant birds after initial observations.
- Merlin: This Cornell Lab app recognizes many species, in the field, by their vocalizations.
- Checklist or field card, with pens or pencils.
- Food and water, for nourishment and hydration.

3) Select Clothing

- Dress in layers to keep just the right temperature.
- Don a hat or cap for warmth and protection.
- Wear boots for stability on the trails (ankle-high boots which are waterproof and breathable are preferable).
- Take a raincoat (if it isn't raining when you head out the door, it may very well rain while you're out in the field!).
- Netting and/or a bug shirt can keep mosquitoes and biting flies at bay.
- Repellent, especially with DEET, is useful in mosquito and tick infested areas.

4) Choose Location

- Range: Learn which species occur in our geographical area (e.g., if you hope to see flamingos, head to Florida!).
- Habitat: Visit a variety of local habitats, such as wetlands, grasslands and woodlands; be even more specific (e.g., check out both coniferous and deciduous forests, etc.); remember that edge habitat (i.e., the place where two habitats meet) is often the most productive.
- Hot spots: If you find a particularly productive spot, keep birding it before moving on.

5) Think Season

- Annually: Take advantage of the changing seasons (e.g., sparrows such as American Tree Sparrows are winter visitors in our area, whereas Chipping Sparrows are summer residents, Lincoln's Sparrows are migrants only, and Song Sparrows may be found all year long).
- Monthly: Various types of birds migrate at different times (e.g., waterfowl appear in March, sparrows and swallows in April, and vireos and warblers in May); even within a family some birds arrive earlier than others (e.g., Eastern Phoebes are among the first flycatchers; Hermit Thrushes, the first thrushes; Yellow-rumped Warblers, the first warblers. On the other hand, Yellow-bellied Flycatchers, Blackpolls and Dickcissels are among our latest migrants). Bird throughout the migration season.
- Daily: Songbirds are generally most vocal and active in the morning (i.e., 5:00-10:00 a.m.), and again in late afternoon and early evening; most owls are nocturnal, whereas some (e.g., Short-eared Owls are crepuscular). Adjust your schedule accordingly.

6) Prioritize Flexibility

- Good weather: Bird when the weather is most conducive to good birding.
- Bad weather: Bird after storms (strong winds may blow birds out of their normal range into your neck of the woods).
- Sunlit areas: Bird with the sun at your back.
- Protected areas: Find places where birds can get out of the wind.

7) Decide Approach

- Move from one place to another by vehicle and by foot.
- Stay in one place (e.g., by a bird feeder or in a favorite birdy spot).
- Realize that varied approaches increase the diversity of birds encountered.

8) Maintain Concentration

- Bird by sight: Look at the size, shape, color, patterns (on head, breast, back, tail, etc.), and behavior of the birds you find.
- Bird by sound: Listen for squawks, hoots, whistles, buzzes, etc.; note the quality and speed and volume and pitch of songs and calls.
- Bird by stealth: Quick movements frighten birds. Approach them slowly, and not directly.
- Take detailed notes: Write down your observations for later reference (remember: observe each bird while you can, before it flies away; you can consult a field guide later).

9) Enjoy Teamwork

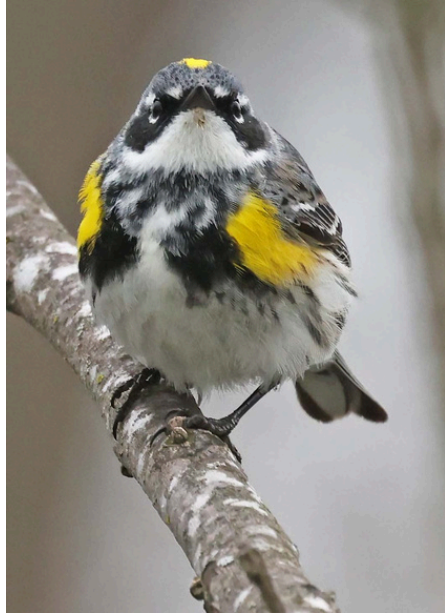
- More: Additional eyes and ears can be helpful; bird with bird buddies.
- Less: Too many noisy birders can scare birds away; if too many birders show up for one outing, divide the group into two groups and travel in opposite directions.

10) Trust Expertise

- Learn: Go birding with someone who knows birds better than you do.
- Teach: Mentor someone whom you can educate about birds. In teaching others you will learn even more.

Bird often. Practice will not make you a perfect birder, but it will make you a better birder.

So work on your strategy for success. Add your suggestions to this list, and discover what you can do to increase your own skill at birding. Above all, enjoy the birds!



Yellow-rumped Warbler, by Wayne Rohde

Peterson Field Guide To Birds Of Eastern & Central North America

See on Amazon:



National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of the US and Canada

See on Amazon:



The Sibley Guide to Birds

See on Amazon:



Hawks In Flight

See on Amazon:



Warblers of North America: A Comprehensive Guide to All Species

See on Amazon:



Stokes Field Guide to Bird Songs: Eastern Region

See on Amazon:



Stokes Field Guide to Bird Songs: Western Region

See on Amazon:

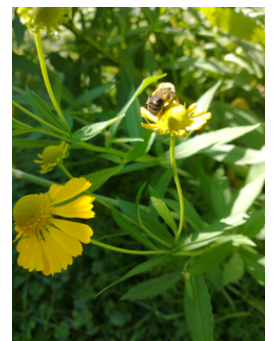


Native Plant Sale

“Go Native” for the birds, bees, and other wildlife.

Let’s dig in and make a difference!

- Do you want to help the birds, bees and other wildlife thrive in your own yard?
- Would you like to promote biodiversity right outside your door?
- Are you interested in the prospect of reducing your carbon footprint?



If so, then we urge you to add some native plants to your landscape this spring. Our plant sale makes finding these beneficial, native plants easy. Twelve different varieties are offered each year. This way, you can build upon your efforts every planting season, making your yard increasingly more biodiverse and inviting to wildlife.

Orders are due by May 27th, and the order pick-up is June 2nd at the Lions Field House in Williams Bay. Please see this year’s order form for more details.

(View the order form/info sheets by clicking on the button link to the right)

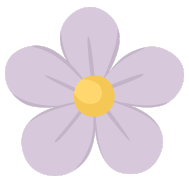


ONE APPLICATION. 14 DAYS OF DEATH.

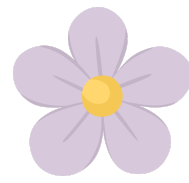
Here's What Dies and In What Order



You'll wonder in July why there are no fireflies.



A Day in the Field



Photos and notes from the trail.

By Kevin Dickey

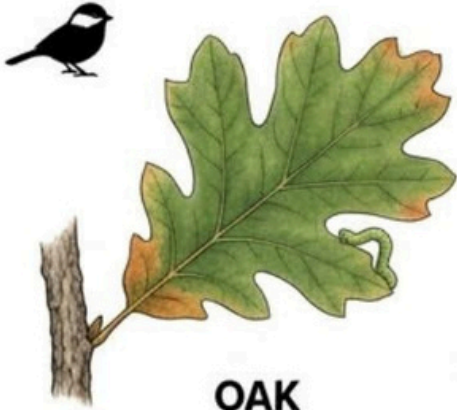
As the season progressed, native woodland wildflowers known as “Spring Ephemerals” were blooming in our area (see examples below). Migratory birds continued to make their way through our area to breeding grounds located further north, along with the species that nest here. The weather has been on the cool side and from what I can tell, it has slowed this spring’s bird migration. On a recent outing, I took some photos of what I like to call: “Seasonal Delight”.

Some of the birds I heard and saw, but didn’t get pictures of: Baltimore Oriole, Scarlet Tanager, Field Sparrow, Eastern Bluebird, Ruby-troighted Hummingbird, Eastren Towhee, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Palm Warbler, Great Eagret, Bald Eagle and a Red-tailed Hawk.



From left to right - Top: Jack-in-the-pulpit, Mayapple, Wild Geranium **Bottom:** Woodland Strawberry, Wild Columbine, Shooting Star

THE ONLY TREE RANKING THAT MATTERS



OAK
Quercus
500+
caterpillar species



BLACK CHERRY
Prunus serotina
450+
caterpillar species



WILLOW
Salix
450+
caterpillar species



BIRCH
Betula
400+
caterpillar species



POPLAR / COTTONWOOD
Populus
360+
caterpillar species



NATIVE MAPLE
Acer rubrum, A. saccharum
280+
caterpillar species



ELM
Ulmus americana
210+
caterpillar species



HICKORY
Carya
200+
caterpillar species



NATIVE PINE
Pinus
200+
caterpillar species

CATERPILLARS = SONGBIRD FOOD
ONE CHICKADEE CLUTCH NEEDS 6,000–9,000 CATERPILLARS TO FLEDGE.

Counts vary by region. Figures reflect University of Delaware / Homegrown National Park research.

Field Trip

Tuesday, June 9, 2026

9:00 AM – Noon

Lulu Lake Preserve – N9564 Nature Road, Eagle, WI

Free to attend and open to the public!



Join us for a morning of birding at **Lulu Lake Preserve** in the Town of Troy (Northeast Walworth County). We will hike the trails and do some stationary scanning for birds at one of the top bird-watching locations in the Southeast corner of the state. Situated on the shores of Lulu Lake (Hence the name), it has an array of habitats for wildlife and is quite significant in terms of size at 632 acers. The property is owned and managed by the Nature Conservancy and is located adjacent to **Lulu Lake SNA**, which is owned and managed by the Wisconsin DNR.

Meet in the main parking area east side of Nature Road (look for the sign). From there, we will hike the trails that wind through the property. Please contact us and let us know if you are interested in attending this field trip. <https://lakelandaudubon.com/contact>

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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.

Sundays

11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

White River County Park

6503 Sheridan Springs Road, Lyons, WI

Get out and enjoy one of the best parks Walworth County has to offer. We'll walk the trails and be on the lookout for birds and other critters. We'll also watch for plant blooms and other interesting elements of nature. Meet at the kiosk by the parking lot a little before 11:00 AM.

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

<https://lakelandaudubon.com/contact>

Call or Text: +1 (262) 729-9702

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.