

THE TRUMPETER: WISCONSIN METRO AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Our mission is to encourage wise environmental practices through education and awareness.

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Wisconsin Metro AUDUBON SOCIETY

WMAS Chapter Updates

Welcome to the new version of our newsletter.

This issue is probably earlier than you expected it. We are trying to get the issues to be more in-sync with the start of each birding season, and we will do our best to have the articles do the same. Our goal is to get each issue mailed to you by the first part of the month in March, June, September, and December. The topics will focus on upcoming events over the next four months, so you can mark your calendars. There may be more detailed information on some events on our website or Facebook pages, so please check them out.

Upcoming Planned Bird Walks

EVERY SUNDAY

Wehr Birders - 8 am at Wehr Nature Center

Walk the trails with Colleen Resendiz and our merry band of birders. This walk includes visits to lake shore, prairie and woodland habitats. It normally takes about two hours and it is not uncommon to see over 40 species in migration seasons. You can contact Colleen at Colleen@Benefit-Realty.com to be included for updates on this and other walks she is planning.

trail and weather conditions, the walk may include some near-by nesting sites where scopes will be helpful. Please let Colleen know if you plan to attend in case plans are changed.

Saturday June 4th

Retzer Nature Center - 8:30 am to 11 am.

In 2021 her group saw Bobolinks, Henslow Sparrow, Dicksissel, Meadowlarks as well as the common bird species this time of year. Meet at Retzer Parking lot, 8:30 am. Bathrooms available. Retzer Nature Center, S14 W28167 Madison St, Waukesha, WI 53188. Contact Pat Fojut at ptfojut@gmail.com. Let her know if you will meet at Retzer or are willing to carpool from Wehr Nature Center. Leaving Wehr at 7:40 am.

Saturday April 16th

Big Muskego Lake – 8:30 am

Colleen Resendiz will lead a multi-stop walk in search of migrating waterfowl and other birds. The meeting place will be the Boxhorn Launch parking area. Depending on



Marsha Berenson

THANK YOU, MARSHA!

We have been very fortunate to have Marsha Berenson editing this newsletter for the past few years. She has decided to move on to other adventures in nature. You have made this a better source of information for our readers and helped make some of us (like me) better writers.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

Our chapter relies on volunteers to get everything done. We are looking for someone to take charge of organizing this newsletter. You would not have to write the articles, just get them organized and forward the draft to our printer.

If you are interested in helping please email us at: lembck6492@wi.rr.com.

EVENING PROGRAMS AT WEHR NATURE CENTER

Our programs begin at 7 pm. Zoom participation is available by contacting us at: lembck6492@wi.rr.com.

March 16, 2022 - Tom Presby - Great Lakes Audubon and IBA's in Wisconsin

- Audubon Great Lakes and Bird Conservation in Wisconsin
- Wisconsin Conservation Manager for Audubon Great Lakes

Mr. Prestby will detail how Audubon's Great Lakes Regional Office works to protect birds and their habitats in Wisconsin. Projects include strategic priority areas of Lake Superior and Lake Michigan's Coastal Wetlands, the Important Bird Area program, and the Wild Indigo program. He'll also detail the work occurring in each of these initiatives and will include ways you can help these and other bird conservation projects succeed.

April 20, 2022 - Paul Sparks - Butterflies of Texas

An amateur photographer's experience going to the Lower Rio Grande Valley in Texas for the first time to photograph butterflies.

Paul's interest in photographing butterflies is an extension of his love for photographing all kinds of wildlife. He enjoys photographing birds, dragonflies, and all kinds of other bugs. His photos have been featured in various news and nature publications and websites. He has been photographing nature for about 15 years.



adventures

There's lots more Audubon Adventures online, with fun, interactive features! AudubonAdventures.org

NEW AUDUBON ADVENTURES FOR GRADES 3 AND UP

Check out the latest issue of *Audubon Adventures*, "Safety for Birds in Flight." It explores why clear glass windows and nighttime lights are hazards for birds, and how everyone—including children—can take measures to reduce the threat. *Audubon Adventures*, an activity-focused publication about birds and conservation, is for use with classrooms, groups and clubs, and at-home learning. It comes in 16 different topics and is available for groups or single students. Spanish language editions are also available. If you are interested please call Wisconsin Metro Audubon Society at 414 425-9616.



Watching Birds Disappear

For those of you who may have missed the reports last year, we are living in a time when birds populations are in sharp decline. We are not talking about 10% or 20% decline, we are talking about 50% to 80% declines over a 50 year period. There are many reasons for the drop in numbers, but there are three worth singling out. Habitat loss due to human development has hit the grassland birds the hardest. Our warming planet is pushing many birds farther up into the mountains or farther towards the poles. Drought and fires have wiped out and altered major ecosystems, and some birds can't adapt to the changes. Hopefully, your favorite birds will survive the next few decades. I encourage everyone who reads this to find a way to make a difference. If not enough is done, we are all just watching birds disappear.

IS IT TIME TO RENEW YOUR AUDUBON MEMBERSHIP?

Your renewal date is now printed on the newsletter above your address. Your renewal date is also on the magazine label of the National Audubon magazine.

Renew through WMAS! More of your donation will support local activities and conservation projects. Use the form in our newsletter or on our website, <http://www.wisconsinmetroaudubonsociety.org>



BACKYARD BIRDING

Spring is the best time of year to see the many colorful migrants that pass through our area. Your feeders, bird bath, flowering shrubs and budding trees will all attract hungry and tired migrants. All you have to do is sit quietly and watch for them. As a bonus, it is a great form of meditation. Please send us (cieslakjames3@gmail.com) pictures and we will share them on our Facebook page. The turkey picture we have included was taken in a backyard off of 35th and Mitchell in Milwaukee. That bird had to do some serious walking to get there!



Red-breasted Nuthatch



Turkey

Give Him Some Space Please!

This young Red-tailed Hawk has become too comfortable around people near the feeders at Wehr Nature Center. If you are fortunate enough to have a close encounter, please try to maintain a safe distance. It is a wild creature and those talons can do some serious damage. If the bird feels threatened while near the building, it could injure itself trying to escape.



Red-tailed Hawk

WMAS Diversity Statement

Just as biodiversity strengthens natural systems, the diversity of human experience strengthens our conservation and education efforts for the benefit of nature and humankind. Wisconsin Metro Audubon Society is welcoming to all, providing educational and conservation programs that are free and open to the public. Yet we recognize that our open door policy is not enough to bring more voices and experiences to our Society. To that end, we strive to foster inclusivity by:

- 1) providing programming in, for and by diverse communities
- 2) continuing the discussion regarding diversity, equity and inclusion
- 3) welcoming ideas & viewpoints of all community members regarding meaningful inclusion



Photos and Text by Heidi Meier
meierdvm@hotmail.com
February 3, 2022

: Bird Brief :

Terns

ORDER: Charadriiformes (13 Families)

FAMILY: Laridae (390 Species)

Caspian Tern
Hydroprogne caspia

Forster's Tern
Sterna forsteri

Common Tern
Sterna hirundo

Black Tern
Chlidonias niger

The much anticipated spring bird migration is rapidly approaching. This is an exciting time of year to see many bird species linger to rest and forage before they continue flying to their chosen breeding grounds. Bird watchers long to see the colorful warblers pass through our region as well as orioles, tanagers, grosbeaks, flycatchers, vireos, and one of my favorites - terns!! The color of spring is breathtaking from feather to flora!

I have to say, there is nothing like watching a tern dive head first to catch a fish, then fly back out of the water, body shake to remove water while consuming its meal all within a breath of a second. Terns are militarily precise, persistent and simply - elegant! They make gulls look like pudgy, slow, disheveled birds. Additionally, they fly with purpose and rarely rest. Terns are definitely show stoppers along the lakefront in spring!

I typically look for the Caspian, Forster's, and Common terns at McKinley Marina. The Caspian terns are the largest and earliest spring arrivals. Next, the smaller Forster's arrive, and shortly thereafter the Common terns. The black terns thrive in marshy habitats, so I often see them at Horicon Marsh in early May around the time of the annual Horicon Marsh Bird Festival.

Terns have distinct contrasting markings that make them easy to identify. Caspian, Forster's, and Common terns have a black cap, whitish-gray body plumage, and a bright reddish to orange bill. By far, the challenge comes when trying to identify the Forster's from the Common tern. So, here is a table of marking characteristics that may help you differentiate terns seen in our region.

	Caspian Tern Largest	Forster's Tern	Common Tern	Black Tern Smallest
Head Shape	Large and blocky	Blockier and Larger than Common	Rounded and smaller than Forster's	Small, round and all black
Bill Shape	Spearhead-like and usually flies with bill angled down	Thicker than Common	Thinner and longer than Forster's	Long and slender
Bill Color	Orange and very broad-based	Orange	Red to orangish-red	Black
Wing Tip	Large black wedge	Pale primaries	Dark wedge on primaries	Gray-black
Tail Markings	Short; shallow forked	Long forked tail	Long forked tail with black outer webs on outer tail	Short and slightly forked
Call	Explosive KE-OUW	Harsh Keeeee	kee-yaa	Scratchy KEK

I would like to share some of my favorite facts about these terns.

First, courtship and nesting are charming! During courtship, the male tern will present a fish to the female in his bill. They will then perform a synchronized aerial ballet while calling to one another. This has been called the ***fish flight***. If a bond is established, then both will land and the male will finally

give the fish to the female and proceed to mate. Interestingly, the male will continue to feed the female during egg laying and early incubation. In fact, clutch size and weight of the offspring are greatly improved if the male provides quality food during the early nesting period. This, in part, will keep the female healthy and well fed and thus she will be a better care provider for the semiprecocial offspring. This is important because researchers have found that weight gain of the nestlings is the best predictor for survivability of terns. I'm also intrigued by their nesting design. The nest is constructed by loosely scattering gravel or sand while making a shallow depression, which is called a scrape nest. What is heartwarming is the fact that the tern will sometimes decorate the edge of the nest with mollusk shells. I love the fish flight, the fish delivery to the female, and the nest decorating - all fascinating aspects of courtship.

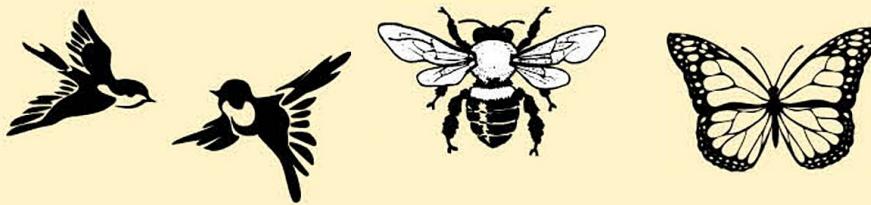
Second, the name tern comes from the Old Norse word, *taerne*. Do you remember the story of Captain Cook? Well, the Forster's Tern is named after Johann Reinhold Forster, a scientist who accompanied Captain Cook around the world. The Caspian Tern was named for the Caspian Sea where it was first identified.

And finally, the tern wing and tail are unique and have been studied to understand aerodynamic forces of lift and drag. In other words, are the wings the focus of providing lift and is the tail responsible for drag? Is the aspect ratio, or ratio of wingspan to wing width, important in flight? Well, the higher the aspect ratio and the higher the lift-to-drag ratio, the less energy is needed for flight. Birds with slender, long wings are the most energy efficient and can stay in flight for long periods of time. Albatross birds are a perfect example and can stay aloft for months without landing because of their extraordinary energy efficiency. For birds with wider, shorter wings, more energy is needed for flight. However, these birds, like hawks, can maneuver and takeoff rapidly. For terns, not only do they have slender, pointier wings, but they also have forked and fanned tails. Studies have shown that these attributes provide high lift-to-drag ratios. This means that terns can float on open water winds with minimal energy expenditure. So, not only are terns elegant, they are magnificent energy conserving fliers which allows them to fly long distances around the globe!

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Gardening for the Birds, Bees and Butterflies

For those of you who did not follow this project last year, please see our website wisconsinmetroaudubonsociety.org for background on it. We are continuing to promote and support the expansion of native plant gardens, and we encourage our members to create their own backyard bird sanctuary.

The Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewage District is again holding spring and fall native plant sales. The problem with their sales is that you have to drive into downtown Milwaukee to pick up your plants. If there is sufficient interest, we will do the pick-up and delivery. We will contact MMSD and work out the details. Please contact us to let us know about how many plants you would be ordering at: cieslakjames3@gmail.com. Do not place an order until you have heard back from us.

I Can Still Hear the Blue Jays

A friend I sometimes join in walks with at Warnimont Park was describing an unusual call of a bird she heard. We guessed at possibilities and went on with our walk.

Some feared that the development of electronics would take away from birding. In my experience just the opposite happened. Getting into birding later in life and having a case of tinnitus, the apps on my phone are really helpful.

The first app that I became familiar with was BirdNET. A graph of sounds similar to an EKG appears when BirdNET picks up sounds. When highlighted with a finger sweep, it analyzes the sounds picked up sometimes saying "show wild guess" or "likely." After showing BirdNET to my niece, the next time we got together she had three pages in a large notebook of birds she found in her yard. Did I help a younger person get involved in birding? I hope that's another use of the app.



Merlin is a second app which I use often. When Merlin picks up the sound of a bird, a picture and the name appears. Each time the bird sings, the name is highlighted. One drawback to using the apps is that they can't connect to the internet everywhere. Then you may get a strange report of a bird that would not be appropriate for your area. Also, for human voices, Merlin may report Great-horned Owls. When the computer recording of the owl was made, it picked up the excited voices of people, too. The apps are useful when you want to confirm what bird you are seeing. They can help confirm a guess about which bird it is. In my case, often Merlin will hear a bird before I do. Then I can look for the bird that Merlin heard to confirm what it's reporting. It's fun to test yourself to see if your guess is correct if you're newly learning bird songs.

Both BirdNET and Merlin are free to download.

At the end of our walk at Warnimont Park, we heard the same unusual call again. It was from a flock of five Blue Jays. Merlin also reported there were not only the Blue Jays, but House Finches, Dark-eyed Juncos and a Northern Cardinal in the area.

Happy birding,
Diane Lembck

UPCOMING BOARD ELECTIONS

Wisconsin Metro Audubon Society holds an election for board members in April. We are looking for volunteers to help us grow in activities and help spread the love of birds. It is still to be determined if we will have an in person election at our April program as we did before the Pandemic or by email like we did last year. Normally, our board meetings are held 6 times a year. Recently, we have mainly communicated by email. If you see a way you could help us, please volunteer. Give me a call at 414 425-9616 or email me at lembck6492@wi.rr.com.

I have been honored to serve as WMAS president since 2001. It has been great fun planning programs, field trips and activities with other board members. I must add that I have been blessed with a wonderful group of other board members. I will continue to serve as your membership chair person. You can call me or email me to answer questions about your membership or just talk birds.

Diane Lembck
President, Wisconsin Metro Audubon Society

New Directions and Member Survey

While live birding events will remain a major focus of our activities, Audubon will not remain relevant if we do not move in new directions. Outreach to communities that have limited or no access to our programs is needed. Education programs are needed to remind the larger community and students of the value and beauty in the natural world. Habitat restoration cannot be left to the few under-funded groups trying to hold back the effects of suburban sprawl and invasive species. No doubt, there are other priorities not mentioned here. The simple truth is that regardless of the issue, we need more people willing to take part and help take us to the next level.

Please take a few minutes and send us an email on what **you** feel needs to be done, and perhaps how you would be willing to help. Send your comments to: lembck6492@wi.rr.com .

HABITAT RESTORATION PROJECTS & CONTACTS

Help us battle buckthorn and other invasives while restoring native habitat in our area. If you can pull Garlic Mustard, you would be a big help on any of the projects we are connected with. You don't have to sign up for every work party or every site. Just let us know you are interested and we will keep you updated.

Stahl Conrad Homestead and Buffalo Speaks property
William Holton
WHolton@wi.rr.com

Milw. Area Land Conservancy & The Mukwonago Watershed
Jim Cieslak
cieslakjames3@gmail.com

Wehr Nature Center
Mary Gaub
mary.gaub@milwaukeecounty.wi.gov



About BIPOC Birding Club

The club was formed in June of 2021 for people of color and anyone who shares and supports the values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and access for all. Its long-term goals are to encourage love of nature and birding for those who might not have considered it, to foster curiosity that might lead to life-long careers and hobbies, to offer the healing aspect of nature to all, and to encourage more people of color to become birders and nature enthusiasts.

To learn more, visit the club's website <https://www.biopcbirdingclub.org/>, follow on Facebook and Instagram, or contact Rita Flores Wiskowski, the Milwaukee area coordinator, at (414) 766-0760 or email biopcbirdingclubmilwaukee@gmail.com

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