



The Lake Flyer

Winnebago Audubon Society, Inc.

FEBRUARY 2009

All programs and activities are open to the public

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Check our website for up-to-date information: www.winaudubon.org

Bird Watching & Great
Backyard Bird Count Workshop
Saturday, February 7: 10:00 am - Noon
Oshkosh Senior Center — Willow Room
200 N. Campbell Rd.

Learn about common birds in our area, bird feeding tips, some great birding areas, optics and how to participate in the citizen science program called the Great Backyard Bird Count. All ages and skill levels are welcome to attend.
The workshop is free and open to the public. Pre-registration is not necessary, but would be helpful in planning handouts. To register, or for more information, contact Janet Wissink, 920-589-2602 or wiss@centurytel.net.

“Count for fun, count for the future!”

Bird and nature fans throughout North America are invited to join tens of thousands of everyday bird watchers for the 12th annual Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), **February 13-16, 2009**.

A joint project of the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, this free event is an opportunity for families, students, and people of all ages to discover the wonders of nature in backyards, school yards, and local parks, and, at the same time, make an important contribution to conservation. Participants count birds and report their sightings online at www.birdcount.org

“The Great Backyard Bird Count benefits both birds and people. It’s a great example of citizen science: Anyone who can identify even a few species can contribute to the body of knowledge that is used to inform conservation efforts to protect birds and biodiversity,” said Audubon Education VP, Judy Braus.

(Continued on page 2)

Lauren Hierl
“ From Rainforests to Polar Bears:
Tackling Alaska’s Conservation Challenges”
Thursday, February 19 - 6:30 pm
Oshkosh Senior Center — Willow Room, 200 N. Campbell Rd.
The event is free and open to the public.
Alaska contains our largest and most spectacular public lands, including National Parks, National Forests, and National Wildlife Refuges. Alaska is also home to incredibly diverse wildlife, from bald eagles, brown bears, and salmon in the south to polar bears, musk oxen, and snowy owls in the north.
These public lands are facing critical conservation threats ranging from oil drilling on important wildlife habitats on the North Slope to logging rare old-growth temperate rainforest in the Tongass National Forest.
Audubon is scientifically identifying and prioritizing the most important wildlife habitats in these threatened regions, and is working hard to protect these priority areas from development.
Learn what’s being done to protect Alaska’s public lands, and what you can do to help.
About the Speaker: Lauren Hierl is the National Audubon Society’s traveling ambassador for protecting Alaska’s natural riches. She has worked on conservation projects from Maine to southern California, and has published several journal articles on her work. She has hiked and backpacked in more than 50 national parks across North America and abroad, including recent stints in Kruger National Park, South Africa and the Annapurna region of Nepal. She received her BA in Environmental Studies from Dartmouth College, and Master of Environmental Management and Master of Public Policy degrees from Duke University. She is now excited to be working on the critical conservation threats facing our public lands in Alaska.

Winnebago Audubon Society extends a sincere thank you to each of you who made a contribution to our chapter:

Pat Bernhardt	Paul McHugh
Louise Coumbe	Don Meton
Anita Dahlke	Roger Rose
Laurie Davis	Ken & Audrey Ruedinger
Amy & Jesse Fissel	Diane Schmude
Richard Hansen	Marilyn Shubat
Gary & Judy Jolin	David & Doris Thomas

Rill Fund: Constance Berner
Terry & Cheryl Broullire
David L. Misterek

In Memory of Bob Eichel: Jo Eichel

In Memory of Molly: Charles Beyer

In Kind Donation: Mail List Processing

The Future of Winnebago Audubon

It's barely February, but it is time to be looking ahead to our chapter's new fiscal year that will begin in May. Our board of directors has a passion for the environment and enjoys working together to bring worthwhile programs and events to our community. We would welcome the energy and ideas of additional board members to help us continue that tradition of over 25 years. Please consider volunteering to serve as a director. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have about the responsibilities and time involved, so give me a call or send an e-mail.

Each year Winnebago Audubon coordinates the annual Midwest Crane Count in Winnebago County for the International Crane Foundation. It will be held April 18. We are looking for someone to take on this short term project for us. Please contact me for more information. — Janet

e SAVE THE DATE !!! f

for our Spring Banquet

Saturday, May 2

Dinner and a special program are being arranged.

(Continued from page 1)

"Count for fun, count for the future!"

"Families, teachers, children and all those who take part in GBBC get a chance to improve their observation skills, enjoy nature, and have a great time counting for fun, counting for the future."

Anyone can take part, from novice bird watchers to experts, by counting birds for as little as 15 minutes (or as long as they wish) on one or more days of the event and reporting their sightings online at www.birdcount.org. Participants can also explore what birds others are finding in their backyards – whether in their own neighborhood or thousands of miles away. Additional online resources include tips to help identify birds, a photo gallery, and special materials for educators.

The data these "citizen scientists" collect helps researchers understand bird population trends, information that is critical for effective conservation. Their efforts enable everyone to see what would otherwise be impossible: a comprehensive picture of where birds are in late winter and how their numbers and distribution compare with previous years. In 2008, participants submitted more than 85,000 checklists.

"The GBBC has become a vital link in the arsenal of continent-wide bird-monitoring projects," said Cornell Lab of Ornithology director, John Fitzpatrick. "With more than a decade of data now in hand, the GBBC has documented the fine-grained details of late-winter bird distributions better than any project in history, including some truly striking changes just over the past decade."

Each year, in addition to entering their tallies, participants submit thousands of digital images for the GBBC photo contest. Many are featured in the popular online gallery. Participants in the 2009 count are also invited to upload their bird videos to YouTube; some will also be featured on the GBBC web site. Visit www.birdcount.org to learn more.

A Kid's Eye-View by Carmen Meuret

"We are expected to get four to six inches of snow." That is probably the last thing everyone wants to hear anymore this year. Well, maybe not everyone. That news is so awesome to someone who snowmobiles!

This season has not been so good for snowmobiling because the trails have been closed due to icy conditions. But that may not be the only reason for closure.

On Saturday, January 10, a group of snowmobilers ran over five deer, dragged them from the back of their snowmobiles, tied one of them to a tree. That morning, about seven hours after that incident, I was taking the DNR test to become a safe, cautious, certified snowmobiler. Hearing this news, crushed my positive thoughts about the sport.

Snowmobiling can be a wonderful way to view wildlife; up close, and personal. But, that doesn't mean that you can touch the animals, hurt them in any way or damage their environment.

Even though the deer are not people, they are still one of God's creations that have every right to a safe environment. Hunting is okay and so are all the predators that need to survive by eating them. Deer should be respected like all living things. Hurting any animal in any way is cruel and will not be tolerated.

All Waupaca County trails were closed due to the investigation. Hopefully this terrible incident will not ruin the snowmobiling season for the rest of the state.

I hope this article makes you think about how important it is to be nice to all creatures and to care for all animals. We all have to live together and share our environment. Oh, and remember, always be a safe and ethical snowmobiler!

(Carmen is a sixth grader at Webster Stanley Middle School.)

Badger Tracks by Anita Carpenter



BERRIES UNDER A BLANKET

As I sit gazing out my kitchen window, wet snow is lazily falling and sticking to each branch, twig and bough. I feel like I'm inside a giant snow globe watching snow beautify and soften the neighborhood. While watching this gentle scene, my mind starts to wander and I ask myself, how many natural organisms found in Wisconsin have snow in their names? Aside from snow and its many forms such as snowflakes, snow squalls, snow drifts, snow storms, snowballs and snowmen, the list is rather short.

Snowy owls and snow buntings, white avian visitors from the frozen north, delight us in these cold months while the few snow geese we see in autumn have long departed for the sunny, warm south. Snow fleas, tiny jumping black specks are easily overlooked on the cold, white landscape but they are apparent to those curious about moving black specks. Larger jumpers are the snowshoe hares whose unique tracks in the snow reveal to us their comings and goings. Snowy tree crickets chirp to us in summer but the cricket music is now silent. Finally, creeping snowberry, a diminutive evergreen plant, survives winter's harshness under the insulating snow blanket.

Let's take a closer look at this easily overlooked plant that lives in the acidic bogs and cold, conifer swamps of northern Wisconsin. Creeping snowberry, *Gaultheria hispidula*, creeps along the ground, as its name implies, often forming mats thus belying the fact that it really is a shrub. It belongs to the heath plant family, Ericaceae, whose members include other northern-loving plants like bog rosemary, trailing arbutus, bearberry, blueberry, cranberry, leatherleaf and Labrador tea.

Creeping snowberry's reddish stems are densely covered with bristly hairs (hispidula means hairy, bristly). Its unbranched stems are crowded with tiny, alternate leaves. The thick leaves have a waxy, leathery texture

(botanical term is coriaceous) which aids in its winter survival by reducing water loss. Because each tiny, pointed leaf is less than 1/2 inch long, a hand lens is needed to observe its finer features. The margin or edge of each leaf is rolled under, which is often a characteristic of plants growing in harsh bog environments. A few scattered, rust-colored bristles decorate the greenish undersurface and the margin of each leaf. The presence of leaf bristles distinguishes creeping snowberry from the similar-looking cranberries which grow in the same habitat. Cranberries have pale, smooth leaf undersides with no bristles.

Tiny, bell-shaped white flowers (which resemble blueberry flowers) are less than 1/8 inch long. They appear singly, scattered along the stems in late May. The small blossoms are tucked under the leaves and are easily overlooked but insects find and pollinate them.

From each flower, a plump, 3/8 inch long berry matures in September and is larger than most of the leaves. Inside each berry are many dot-sized seeds. The berries may remain on the plant over winter.

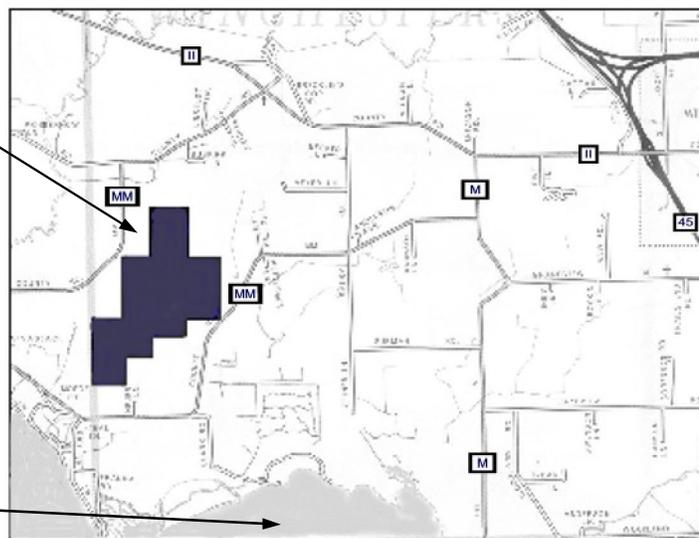
Creeping snowberry is in the same plant family and genus as wintergreen, *Gaultheria procumbens*. Like its larger and more familiar cousin, all parts of creeping snowberry release a wintergreen smell when bruised.

Creeping snowberry is challenging enough to find in summer. In winter, it is next to impossible to discover under the blanket of snow. Where does one look? Yet I take comfort knowing this beautiful little plant is a member of our native flora just doing what is necessary to survive whatever Mother Nature sends its way. It's a worthy and interesting member of my native "snow family".



WINNECONNE WETLANDS
441.92 acres of wetlands was acquire by the Wisconsin Dept. of Natural from the James Clark family with the help of Northeast Wisconsin Land Trust, Ducks Unlimited and Kay Rill.

Lake Winneconne



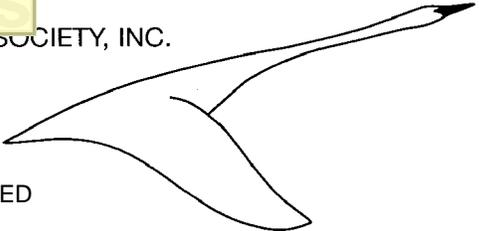
← Hwy. 10

← Hwy. 45



North

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RENEWALS: Your mailing label includes your membership expiration date above your name. If you are a "Chapter Only" member the word CHAPTER will appear after the expiration date. Please renew your chapter membership by filling out the application form below. Thank you for helping us save on the cost of renewal reminders.
If you are a member of National Audubon, you will receive renewal notices from National or you may renew by using the form below.
TEMPORARILY AWAY? Please notify us of your address change. The post office will not forward your newsletter and we pay for the returned newsletter. Contact Pat Nichols with any questions regarding your subscription: jvnichols@earthlink or 920-426-0261.

Winnebago Audubon Society Mission Statement: Advance the mission of the National Audubon Society to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity through grassroots efforts of community outreach and advocacy.

**AUDUBON SOCIETY
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

YES, I want to become a member at the **chapter level** and receive the Winnebago Audubon newsletter. I've enclosed a \$20.00 check payable to Winnebago Audubon.

YES, I want to become a member of the National Audubon Society, and the Winnebago Audubon Chapter. My membership dues entitle me to *Audubon* magazine, and all chapter benefits. I am enclosing a \$20.00 check payable to National Audubon Society.

I do not wish to receive correspondence or solicitations from National Audubon Society.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____ Chapter Code: Z12 7XCH

Mail this form with payment to:
Pat Nichols, Membership Chair
P.O. Box 184, Oshkosh, WI 54903

Welcome
New Audubon Members

The following people have become new members since November. Several of the new members are teachers using Audubon Adventures in their classrooms, an effort supported by donations from a number of our members and the Winnebago Audubon Society (WAS). We hope all of you take advantage of the WAS special events during the coming year.

Vicky Bahr	Wayne Hakes
Karen & Mark Burns	James Kreston
Erin Dougherty	Robert Mason
Sylvia Froeliche	Mary Petesch
Susan Goodwin	Sharon Ruedinger
Jennifer Hadel	Patricia Steger

Please contact me if you have any questions regarding membership or interest in becoming more involved with the chapter.

Pat Nichols, VP, Membership Chair
(email me at: jvnichols@earthlink.net)