

The Lake Flyer

Winnebago Audubon Society, Inc.

JUNE/JULY 2008

All programs and activities are open to the public

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

Bluebird Trail Know-how

Learn about bluebirds, see their nests and observe their young getting ready to fledge.

Saturday, June 28

9:00 am - Ceresco Prairie Conservancy, Ripon



Ever wondered what a professional bluebird trail looks like? Join Dr. Kent Hall of the Bluebird Restoration Association of Wisconsin (BRAW) on June 28 to view nest boxes on the bluebird trail of Dr. Memuna Kahn, Asst. Prof. of Biology at Ripon College (Behavioral Ecologist). Dr. Kahn will speak about her research with assisted feeding behavior of juvenile bluebirds and Dr. Hall will point out the qualities required to establish a high quality bluebird trail. You will be able to see nests of both bluebirds and tree swallows on this tour.

Dr. Hall directs a 960 nest box trail in central Wisconsin (expected to produce nearly 5,000 bluebirds this season) and coordinates data collection and analysis for BRAW. Last season, he processed reports from 7,800 nest boxes submitted by 410 persons in the state. BRAW members and associates fledged 28,244 bluebirds last season, breaking the all-time national record. Dr. Hall is quite interested in talking to anyone interested in developing their own trails in the Oshkosh and Winnebago County area.

Please join Winnebago Audubon for this morning walk through the prairie to see and learn about bluebirds from two people who are passionate about their survival. We will meet in Ripon at the entrance to the Ceresco Prairie Conservancy adjacent to Ripon College. (Same place we met for the Frog Night Hike.) Take State Rd. 44 from Oshkosh to Ripon. Go straight through Ripon on Oshkosh Ave. Go straight at the intersection with Hwy. 23 (Pizza Hut on the left, US Bank on the right). The street will now be named Union St. Four blocks down, turn right onto Congress St. and follow to parking area behind the Rodman Center for the Arts and Storzer Athletic Center. The field trip is open to the public and there is no charge.

For more information contact Janet at 920-589-2602 or wiss@centurytel.net.



Save the date!

Thursday, August 21

Are bats on your radar this summer?

Sue Saari, an expert on bats, will present an evening program at Sheldon Nature Area at Oakwood Environmental Charter School.

Watch for more details in the next newsletter or checkout our website: www.winaudubon.org



A Kid's Eye-view by Carmen Meuret

Hop to it and save the frogs! The **Frog Night Hike** with Randy Korb was very enjoyable and brought a *huge* crowd. I feel that holding the frogs and getting hands-on, plays a major part in getting kids my age (11), kids younger and older than me, to help preserve our wildlife.

The frogs Randy brought that night were very jumpy. I had one jump on my shirt and some others next to me got the frog on their shirt, pants and even a watch! My favorite frog was the Bullfrog. When I was holding it, it peed on me! Even though it did that, it is still my favorite because it is big, has a cool sound and its legs are long, slender and perfect for jumping.

Thank you Randy Korb for an enjoyable night and for bringing all your amphibian friends to meet us.

The next event that I would like to respond to is the **Family Outdoor Fun at Waukau Creek**. I saw many of

you there and you may have seen me. I either would have helped you with a bird feeder or helped you decide what stickers to use to decorate your binoculars. I hung my feeders up in my yard and I have seen some Goldfinches take a stop there.

I was unable to walk through the woods with Carol Thomas but I bet it was very fun and informative. Thank you to the Winnebago Audubon Society directors and Carol Thomas for making the event possible.

Which was *your* favorite frog that Randy brought? What did you see on the nature walk through Waukau Creek woods with Carol? Send me your responses to: Carmen Meuret, 1231 Grand St., Oshkosh, WI 54901. I will choose two responses from each question to put in my next article. Include your name and age on the response. Please have the responses in no later than July 20, 2008. Thanks for participating and have fun!

(Carmen is a fifth grader at Emmeline Cook Elementary School.)

Despite the Weather, Salamander Surveyors Completed their Task

The weather in early April was wet and cold, but our volunteer families got the job done. They put out the traps, then checked them every day for 6 days straight. It was cold and rainy; the water was deep; and some of them had to go out in the dark. The conditions were not ideal for finding any salamanders in their traps, but they were thrilled with whatever they did encounter.

This was a statewide survey funded with a grant from the Wisconsin Citizen-based Monitoring Network to Wisconsin Audubon Council, Inc., a coalition of the state's 17 Audubon chapters and centers. Experts with the WDNR and state universities are guiding this effort.

Monitors will also place traps at the same sites for 6 consecutive days between July 1-15 in order to detect larval salamanders and all life stages of central newts.

Our volunteers are: Tom & Mary Willadsen and son, David; Veronica Hansen and son, Zach; Terry & Cheryl Broullire and children, Ella and Nathan; Katherine Kasten and son, Freddy.

Ella Broullire (age 10) wrote: *The salamander survey was a great experience. Every day we would look forward to going. We were always hoping to find a salamander or to see interesting things in the traps. Every day was exciting and we always wanted it to last. We mostly found chorus frogs and water beetles and only a few wood frogs. Some days we found chorus frogs mating in the traps. That was fascinating. We never found any eggs. One evening when our Dad stayed silent at one trap we knew something was up. Since the traps were under water we thought something had died. It had rained a lot the night before so we were frightened. When Dad announced it was a salamander, we raced over, not caring if we got wet. That was the end of staying dry. At first Dad thought it was dead, but it wasn't. It was a blue-spotted salamander. That was our lucky day. But each day was an adventure. Dad wore bags on his legs (in his knee high boots), hoping to keep dry. We wore boots and almost never stayed dry. Only twice did we wear bags. We walked back to the car with soaked pants and the water was freezing. We had to dump water from our boots. The week was very rainy and it was strange seeing the water rise. The weather was mostly dreary and wet. There were only a couple good days. One night it was very dark and we had to use flashlights. It was actually kind of scary. At the pond we heard frogs singing and we didn't feel as lonely. Even though we had to go every day, we never got bored. In the beginning when we checked out the pond, we found garter snakes. It was a very fun week looking for salamanders!*

Veronica Hansen and her son Zach said: *This really is a great project for the reptile/amphibian enthusiast, but it is not designed for someone who likes to be squeaky clean at all times. Our biggest challenge was learning the best way to maneuver the traps in and out of the water with a minimum of wet feet! We found using a long stick to position the traps in the right depth of water as well as for pulling them out worked really well. Thank goodness we tied the traps to branches and such! With the amount of rain and/or snow we had, some days we would not have found them without the attached ropes. In contrast,*

some days the water would recede a bit and then the traps didn't have as much water in them as we would have liked.

Although we were disappointed to not catch any salamanders, we felt quite honored to catch 3 wood frogs on separate days. We enjoyed observing them with their unique coloration. We also caught baby fish, leeches and huge bugs. Everything we did catch was alive in the traps and we were able to release them back into their home.

David Willadsen (far left) stands on the board walk at Sullivan's Woods near the pond. Ella and Nathan Broullire (left) hold the blue-spotted salamander found in one of their traps.





Badger Tracks

by Anita Carpenter



LOOK DOWN AND DISCOVER

It's too quiet this early June afternoon at my favorite "Lund's swamp" wetland. Only squabbling black terns in the distance and a serenading yellow warbler break the silence. Two Canada goose heads pop up from the growing marsh reeds, wondering about this intruder. Baskettail dragonflies would rather perch than fly. Butterflies are absent. I console myself that early afternoon is not the best time to see and hear marsh activity.

Then I look down. I'm standing on the grassy shoulder of the road and discover apple-sized limestone rocks in various shapes had been laid down in the shallow water along the shoulder to stabilize the road. The sun-warmed water is only two to three inches deep above the rocks before it deepens into the marsh. I see movement and crouch down for a close look. I quickly realize that this is where it is happening!

A two-inch long, half-inch wide flattened leech undulates along. Its underside is a surprisingly bright red while its dorsal (top) side is gray, finely outlined in red. A few bright red dots highlight its back. For a leech, it really is beautiful and graceful as it swims along. It moves down and disappears among the rocks perhaps searching for food then reappears and continues on.

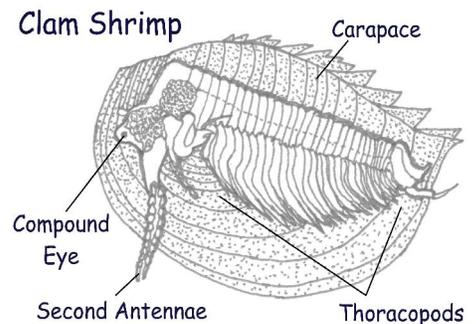
Numerous grape-sized snails creep over the rocks gleaning for food. I almost overlook the big, two-inch long snail because its shell is camouflaged with algae. The algae streams out behind making the creature look like it's in a wind tunnel. Then a curious thing happens. The snail releases itself from the rock and rests in the still water. It turns its big muscular foot up and floats to the surface exposing the bottom of its foot to the air. Was it sun tanning its foot? Probably not. More likely it was "inhaling" fresh air. After resting a few minutes, the snail withdraws its foot from the surface, turns over, remains suspended for a while, then loses buoyancy and sinks straight down. It grasps a rock and starts crawling ever so slowly. Life goes on.

As I ponder that, a black leech, the size and shape of my middle finger, appears from under a rock. It swims a bit then attaches its posterior end to a rock and with its very flexible anterior end probes under rocks as if searching for something. After exploring all nooks and crannies, the leech detaches itself and inch-worms to another rock, attaches itself and probes some more.

Fascinating to watch.

Smaller critters are present. I see dragonfly, mayfly and mosquito larvae, water boatmen and a few very tiny minnows. I also observe many BB sized (3mm) brown organisms swimming in bouncy, jerky movements. I know I've never seen anything like this before. I gently scoop one up and discover it has a hard transparent covering resembling a clam shell. Using a hand lens, I see the critter inside is flattened on its side with many gill-like appendages moving furiously and a tiny compound eye. A mass of tiny specks looks like eggs. What am I looking at?

Later research revealed that I was looking at a very primitive crustacean called a clam shrimp. The origin of its clam shrimp name is apparent because the tiny shrimp is almost entirely enclosed within a bivalve carapace which resembles a little clam shell. Unlike true clam shells which close with a hinge, the shells of clam shrimp close with muscular action.



Crustaceans have two pair of antennae. Clam shrimp use their large, more developed second antennae for locomotion. The gill-like appendages called thoracopods filter food and absorb oxygen. Eggs are carried in a mass on the back between body and shell.

There are many species of clam shrimp. All prefer shallow, warm freshwater. Some species live in temporary pools. Some of the large species (about half inch long) show growth lines on their shells. The smaller species I was observing did not. Clam shrimp are short-lived, can be quite numerous when present but are also very local in distribution.

The easy-to-overlook clam shrimp were the exclamation point on this day in the swamp. The day began and ended quietly but we shouldn't always need bird song, frog or insect music or whispering leaves to fill the day. Quietly watching the silent world in a shallow pond or marsh is also exciting. And discovery is exhilarating. So bend those knees for a closer look at the water world near your feet. You never know what discovery awaits you.

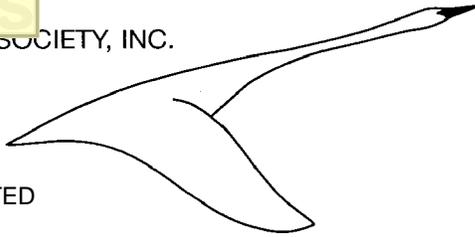
Thank You Crane Counters!

63 volunteers participated in this year's ICF Midwest Crane Count in Winnebago County. 35 of the 45 designated sites were surveyed from 5:30-7:30 am on April 19. 672 sandhill cranes were counted and an estimated 68 breeding pairs. Many of us enjoyed a hot breakfast and shared stories at the Fin 'n Feather afterwards. Thanks to all of the counters!

More Upcoming Audubon Activities

- Sept. 6** Monarch Butterfly Tagging
- Sept. 27** Walk the Wiouwash Trail and learn about the prairie remnants in the State Natural Areas
- Nov. 8** Work day on the Wiouwash Trail prairies

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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

Vida Allen	Don Lewis
Dan Buehring	Chrystal Marchant
Jay Callies	Joan Mark
David Graham	Marti Norton
Norm Halfen	Lola Olsen
Douglas Jirovetz	Lois Roeder
Dru Kraft	Moss Ruedinger
Charles Lepinski	Elaine & Severin Swanson
Chloe Wandschneider	

We welcome you to take part in Winnebago Audubon Society events. As a member of National Audubon you receive membership in the local chapter. We hope that you find new opportunities for supporting the environment through your membership. 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)