14th Annual

Northwoods Birding Festival

Festival Guide

May 11-12, 2018

Hosted by the North Lakeland Discovery Center in Manitowish Waters, WI

The Northwoods Birding Festival is an opportunity for bird enthusiasts of all levels to celebrate birds while enjoying the camaraderie of fellow birders in the beautiful Northwoods of Wisconsin. Participate in sunrise warbler walks, enjoy field trips to local birding hotspots, try your hand at bird banding, and learn from experts in the field of ornithology!

Contents

Friday Evening Reception.....2

Saturday Morning.....3

Field Trips.....4,5,6

Keynote.....7

Concurrent Sessions.....8,9,10

Friday Evening Reception

Welcome Reception:

Friday, May 11, 5:00pm-6:00pm

Join us before the presentation to meet fellow birders and swap some stories about the birds you've seen recently. You will enjoy complementary appetizers donated by members of the Discovery Center Bird Club and other volunteers, as well as a cash bar.

Presentation: "Snowy Owls & Project SNOWstorm in Wisconsin"

Friday, May 11, 6:00pm-7:00pm

Speaker: Ryan Brady

Few birds generate excitement like the Snowy Owl; its white plumage, bright yellow eyes, and diurnal tendencies make it appealing to even the most casual nature lover. Wisconsin hosts at least small numbers of snowy owls each year, but this past winter featured another large irruption as hundreds were seen in nearly every county of the state. Ryan Brady has been closely monitoring the birds in recent years and will discuss how this year's flight compared to others, why these mass movements take place, and tips for finding them in years ahead. Ryan will also detail the movements and travels of five snowy owls tagged with transmitters this year as part of Project SNOWstorm, a cutting-edge international research project that aims to better understand this nomadic species, whose populations are at greater risk than their recent numbers in Wisconsin would suggest. Find out why, and nearly everything else you might want to know about snowy owls, in this presentation!

About the Speaker

Ryan Brady

Ryan Brady is a Conservation Biologist for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, where he serves as Bird Monitoring Coordinator for WDNR and the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative. Based out of Ashland, Ryan oversees a variety of statewide bird monitoring and conservation projects focusing on owls, nightjars, secretive marsh birds, and other species. He is also Science Coordinator for the second Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas, an ambitious citizen-based bird survey taking place across Wisconsin from 2015-2019, former chair of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology's Rare Birds Records Committee, and an active member of the Wisconsin eBird team. His voice can be regularly heard discussing Snowy Owls, recent bird sightings, and other bird conservation news on Wisconsin Public Radio and other regional outlets.

A native of Philadelphia's suburbs, Ryan received his Bachelor's degree in Biology from Northland College in Ashland and Master's degree in Raptor Biology from Boise State University in Idaho. He has been observing and studying birds across northern Wisconsin since 1995 and has served on the Chequamegon Bay Birding & Nature Festival's steering committee since its inception. Though first and foremost a birder, Ryan is also an accomplished naturalist and photographer who enjoys chasing butterflies, dragonflies, tiger beetles, and anything else that moves. He resides on the shores of Lake Superior in Washburn with his wife and two sons.

Saturday Morning

Sunrise Warbler Walks

Saturday, May 12, 6:30am – 7:30am
Leaders: Sarah Besadny, Zach Wilson, Elizabeth Stone,
Colleen Matula, Guy David

These short hikes are a great way to catch some early birds! View and listen for bird activity around the Discovery Center grounds at the busy hours of the morning. Warbler Walks are offered for beginner, intermediate, and advanced birders. Just indicate your preferred walk on your registration.

Transportation: Onsite
Physical Activity Level: Relaxed. A hike over gentle terrain of about 1-2 miles.

Bird Banding Demonstrations

Saturday, May 12, 6:30am – 12:00pm
Bander: Bruce Bacon

A bird in the hand beats two in the bush! Stop by when the nets are open as Bruce demonstrates the techniques for live bird banding. See birds up close and learn more about how banding can be used for research on bird survival, productivity, and distribution. You may even have the opportunity to release one of the birds once it has been banded!

Photos by: NLDC Staff

Field Trips

Saturday, May 12, 8:00am-11:30am

Powell Marsh Photography

Leaders: Jeff Richter and Sarah Besadny

Here's a chance to hone your bird photography skills at the scenic Powell Marsh area with Professional Photographer and owner of Nature's Press Publishing Jeff Richter. You'll learn some photography basics and then visit Powell Marsh, where you will have a good chance of photographing a variety of shorebirds and other signature species such as Sandhill Cranes, Bobolinks, Northern Harriers, Bald Eagles, Wood Ducks, Pied-billed Grebes, Tree Swallows, Yellow-headed Blackbirds, Semipalmated Plovers, and Trumpeter Swans. Following the trip you'll spend some time viewing each others' photographs as well as professional photos.

Equipment: Camera with telephoto or Zoom lens, Tripod
Transportation: Carpool

Birding By Canoe

Leader: Zach Wilson

Zach Wilson, Conservation Specialist with Iron County Land and Water Conservation, will guide you on a fun paddle down the Manitowish River (or Gresham Creek, depending on water levels). Flatwater dominates and waterfowl and songbirds use the river as stopover and nesting sites. You'll paddle slowly and stop frequently to observe all the wonderful birdlife and other wildlife. Canoes, paddles, and life jackets will be provided. If the weather is poor on that day, plan to join one of the other land field trips.

Transportation: Provided
Physical Activity Level: Moderate: Must be able to get in and out and paddle a canoe for 1-2 miles.

Field Trips

Saturday, May 12, 8:00am-11:30am

Frog Lake

Leader: John Bates

Join Naturalist and Author John Bates as you scout for birds along Frog Lake. Frog Lake and Pines features an undisturbed wilderness lake adjacent to older growth stands of Red and White Pines. While walking, listen for Pileated Woodpeckers, Red-breasted Nuthatches, Pine Warblers, Blue-headed Vireos, Blackburnian Warblers and more!

Transportation: Carpool

Physical Activity Level: Relaxed: Mostly driving with occasional short walks on gentle terrain.

Powell Marsh

Leader: Guy David

Head out early to Powell Marsh with Bird Club member Guy David and explore one of the best spots for shorebirds and a variety of other species too! You'll have time to explore some less traveled parts of Powell Marsh as you search for signature species including Sandhill Cranes, Bobolinks, Northern Harriers, Bald Eagles, Wood Ducks, Pied-billed Grebes, American Bitterns, Semipalmated Plovers, and Trumpeter Swans.

Transportation: Carpool

Physical Activity Level: Moderate: Gentle terrain, 2-4 miles.

Presque Isle Ponds

Leader: Colleen Matula

Take a tour of a true Northwoods hidden treasure. You'll hike around "the ponds" of Presque Isle, a little known birding hotspot that provides opportunities to view both shoreline and woodland bird species. Your guide, Colleen Matula, Forestry Specialist with the WDNR, will help you locate birds and other wildlife that frequent this location.

Transportation: Carpool

Physical Activity Level: Relaxed: Flat terrain, 1-2 miles.

Field Trips

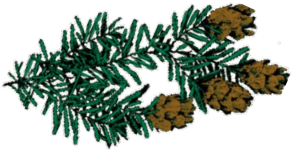
Saturday, May 12, 8:00am-11:30am

Turtle-Flambeau Auto Tour

Leaders: Terry Daulton and Jeff Wilson

Join your guides Terry Daulton and Jeff Wilson as they take you to several prime birding spots around the Turtle-Flambeau Scenic Waters Area. You will drive between birding locations, stopping periodically to get out of the van and view both shore and woodland bird species. This trip will involve limited hiking and is a good option for those who are looking for a very relaxed birding experience.

Transportation: Provided
Physical Activity Level: Relaxed. Mostly driving with occasional short walks on gentle terrain.



Van Vliet Old Growth Hemlocks

Leader: Licia Johnson

Discovery Center Naturalist Licia Johnson will take you on a guided exploration of this recently designated State Natural Area. The beautiful old growth forest and other diverse habitats of this site offer great opportunities for viewing Hermit Thrush and several warbler species such as Black-and-white Warblers and Black-throated Green Warblers. This trip will also focus on other wildlife and landscape features.

Transportation: Carpool

Little Turtle Flowage Hike

Leaders: Heather Gerth and Donna Roche

Join former NLDC staff member and biologist, Heather Gerth, and Bird Club member Donna Roche on a hike around the Little Turtle Flowage. This wetland area is a part of the Little Turtle Waterfowl Management Area, and its diverse habitat promotes a wide variety of migratory and resident bird species such as Black Terns, Osprey, Bald Eagles, Wood Ducks, and Hooded Mergansers.

Transportation: Carpool
Physical Activity Level: Moderate: Gentle terrain, 2-3 miles.

Keynote

"The Relationship between Old-Growth Habitat and Birds in Wisconsin's Northwoods: Do Birds Care and Why?"

Saturday, May 12, 12:15pm-1:00pm

Speaker: John Bates

Wisconsin's old-growth forests lack a large, charismatic bird species like the Spotted Owl that lives only in western old-growth forests. But researchers have found significant differences in bird populations between old-growth forests and managed forests. Brown Creepers, Black-throated Green Warblers, Winter Wrens, Swainson's Thrushes, Blackburnian Warblers, Pine Warblers, and numerous others are all more abundant in northern old-growth than in managed stands.

Only 0.3% of Wisconsin's old-growth forests remain. What ecological characteristics attract some bird species to old-growth forests, and what can we do on our own land to increase habitat for these birds? Come find out!

About the Speaker

John Bates is the author of nine books and a contributor to seven others, all of which focus on the natural history of the Northwoods. He's worked as a Naturalist in Wisconsin's Northwoods for 29 years, leading an array of trips all designed to help people further understand the remarkable diversity and beauty of nature, and our place within it. John's poems have appeared in five different art/science collaborations, several of which have traveled nationally. He has served on the Board of Trustees for the Wisconsin Nature Conservancy, the Wisconsin Humanities Council, and the River Alliance of Wisconsin, and now serves on the Board of the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame and the Board of the Northwoods Land Trust. His most recent book is Our Living Ancestors: The History and Ecology of Old-Growth Forests in Wisconsin (and Where to Find Them). John and his wife Mary live on the Manitowish River in Iron County where they raised two daughters.

Concurrent Sessions

About the Organization

Northwoods Wildlife Center

is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization working toward a better future for wildlife through education, research and rehabilitation. The NWC's experienced staff of wildlife rehabilitators and environmental educators continues to ensure all animals are cared for and treated in the most ethical and humane way. Their educational programs are designed to be informational and interesting for all ages.

Birds of Prey Up Close and Personal!

Session 1: 1:15pm-2:10pm

Session 2: 2:20pm-3:15pm

Speaker: Bart Kotarba

Leave your binoculars in the car! You won't need them to see some amazing raptors! Bart Kotarba of the Northwoods Wildlife Center in Minocqua will feature live birds in this presentation. You will learn about the natural history of some of the species that call the Northwoods home as well as hear about the Wildlife Center's efforts to rescue and rehabilitate them.

The Amazing World of Bird Sounds

Session 1: 1:15pm-2:10pm

Speaker: Heather Gerth

Bird vocalizations are incredibly diverse and complex. We often detect birds by sound before seeing them, so a highly trained ear may prove to be even more useful than your binoculars! In this presentation we will explore some tools like sonograms and mnemonic devices that can help you learn to identify birds from their vocalizations more quickly and easily. Interactive websites and apps will be used in the presentation and recommended for future use. You will also gain a new appreciation for birds and their amazing vocalizations while learning a little about the unique bird anatomy that makes these vocalizations possible.

About the Speaker

Heather Gerth worked for the Discovery Center from 2013 to 2016 as the Discovery Center's Research and Monitoring Coordinator. Her love for the Northwoods was cultivated while earning a Masters in Natural Resources with an emphasis in Environmental Education through a UW graduate fellowship program at Conserve School in Land O' Lakes, WI. She also has Masters in Zoology from UW-Madison.

Concurrent Sessions

Wild Turkey Ecology and Management

Session 1: 1:15pm-2:20pm
Speaker: Christian Cold

Turkeys are an important game species and an iconic symbol in American culture . They have had an interesting population history as wildlife managers and biologists have reintroduced the turkey to large parts of the Midwest. In this presentation we will examine the biology, ecology, history and management of the Wild Turkey in Wisconsin.

About the Speaker

Christian W. Cold is a wildlife technician for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Bureau of Wildlife Management. Based at Ladysmith, he also serves as a mobile, non-formal educator, who travels extensively throughout Wisconsin offering programs on wildlife and related topics of natural history to schools and adult audiences. Mr. Cold is a 1991 graduate of UW-Stevens Point, with a Bachelor of Science in Natural Resource Management & Wildlife, with an emphasis in Environmental Education. He is a licensed falconer (since 1970) and former bird bander (28 ears). He lives near the Flambeau River with his wife Susan.

Building Suet Feeders

Session 1: 1:15pm – 2:10pm
Session 2: 2:20pm – 3:15pm
Workshop Leader: Ryan Wahlgren

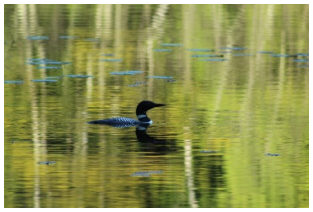
Take home a handmade festival souvenir! Construct a suet feeder using pre-cut wood pieces and place in your yard or natural area to attract native birds!

Concurrent Sessions

About the Speaker

Mike Meyer, PhD, recently retired from Wisconsin DNR after 25 years as a wildlife research scientist. Mike currently operates NOVA Ecological Services, offering environmental consulting services in the Northwoods.

Project LoonWatch



Session 2: 2:20pm-3:15pm

Speaker: Mike Meyer

During his tenure with WDNR, Mike and colleagues conducted extensive research on Common Loons in the Northern Highlands, including capture and banding of over 3,000 individual loons- all of which were individually color-marked. Learn about important Common Loon research findings as well as recommendations for preserving Northwood's Common Loons for future generations.

Saving An American Icon: Challenges and Successes of Reintroducing Whooping Cranes

Session 2: 2:20pm-3:15pm

Speaker: Anne Lacy

A critical component of delisting the endangered Whooping Crane is successful establishment of other populations, independent from the natural flock migrating through the central US. Beginning in 2001, Whooping Cranes have been reintroduced into the wetlands of Central Wisconsin. Utilizing various unique rearing and release methods, the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership is monitoring this still-young population intensively. This talk will summarize the abundance of lessons learned from this endeavor.

About the Speaker

Anne Lacy with International Crane Foundation

Anne grew up in Madison and attended college in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, where she earned a B.S. in Biology (1994). After completing her M.S. in Biology coursework from Duluth in 2000 Anne accepted a full-time position at ICF as a research associate in the Field Ecology Department, working on an ongoing long-term study of Sandhill Cranes. More recently she began working with the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership, of which ICF is an active member, to also study the ecology of the newly reintroduced Whooping Cranes in Wisconsin.

Register at:

North Lakeland Discovery Center

www.DiscoveryCenter.net ~ 715.543.2085