

**LAKELAND AUDUBON SOCIETY**



# ***The Chat***



**March 2024**

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## **CHAPTER MEETING**

Tuesday, March 26

7:00 PM

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

Free and open to the public!

### ***Volo Bog – a Unique Illinois Wetland***

By Stacy Iwanicki

Just south of the Wisconsin-Illinois line lies Volo Bog, the southernmost open-water quaking bog in North America to still have all stages of bog succession. Just what does that mean? Stacy Iwanicki with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources will share the natural history of this fascinating wetland from its beginnings in an old glacial lake to today where it is a publicly accessible Illinois Nature Preserve. Volo Bog is an ecosystem of concentric vegetation zones where carnivorous plants and floating trees can be observed up close along a floating boardwalk. She'll also share stories from decades ago of the fight to protect Volo Bog from a strip mall, golf course and condos, to today where it has become a treasure not only to Illinoisans but to people from around the world. This National Natural Landmark also helps illustrate the importance of peatlands in trapping and storing carbon and thus helping to mitigate the effects of climate change. Visitors can hike to the eye of Volo Bog, stop in the Visitor Center, have a picnic and take in an additional 5.5 miles of hiking through other habitats at the State Natural Area.

#### **About the Speaker**

Stacy Iwanicki is a Natural Resource Coordinator working for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources at Volo Bog State Natural Area, Moraine Hills State Park & McHenry Dam. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in Zoology from Michigan State University. Stacy began working as an environmental educator at Volo Bog State Natural Area in 1987. In 2004, she expanded her efforts to include Moraine Hills State Park and McHenry Dam. She recruits, coordinates, and trains volunteers at the three sites. Together they offer a multitude of nature programs for the public, as well as for school children, youth groups, and adult groups offerings.



Volo Bog State Natural Area - Ingleside, IL

**Continued on next page.**

The sites also offer numerous special events throughout the year such as a celebration of World Migratory Bird Days, Love our River Day, and International Bog Day. Art shows, live music, and a monthly book discussion are also among the offerings. Stacy provides outreach to adult groups including environmental, garden and bird clubs, business organizations, faith-based groups, civic groups, and others. Stacy is past president of McHenry County Audubon, a chapter of the Illinois Audubon Society, and serves on the Rural Woodstock Public Library District board.

A resident of Wonder Lake, Illinois, Stacy and her husband Mike have established native habitat on nearly 2/3rds of their 1.25-acre suburban lot. Their yard has earned the distinction of Backyard Wildlife Habitat from the National Wildlife Federation, is certified in the Nature at Home program from the Land Conservancy of McHenry County and has twice been featured in the McHenry County Wildflower Preservation & Propagation Committee's Natural Yards Tours. Stacy and Mike enjoy bee hiking, reading, gardening, traveling, and spending time with their two Norwegian elkhounds and two indoor (always!) house cats.



<https://ahnow.org/>

## Animal Help Now

**Animal Help Now envisions a world in which humans:**

- Respect wildlife
- Are familiar with the threats facing wildlife and act to minimize them
- Are educated about wildlife emergencies and empowered to effectively help orphaned, injured and distressed wild animals
- Are educated about living in harmony with wildlife and empowered to effectively and humanely resolve human/wildlife conflicts
- Place a high value on the services provided by wildlife rehabilitators, humane wildlife conflict operators and other wildlife experts

**Mission: Animal Help Now (AHNow) creates innovative apps that empower the public to save wildlife and companion animals and organizes a diverse community focused on keeping these animals safe from human threats.**

Animal Help Now's services, available at [AHNow.org](https://ahnow.org/) and through free iPhone and Android apps, leverage digital technologies to serve the public and help animals. The organization's flagship app, Animal Help Now, immediately connects people involved with wildlife emergencies and conflicts with the most appropriate time- and location-specific resources and services. The organization's PHaR app (Pet Help and Rescue) empowers users to quickly and effectively alert and coordinate with their trusted neighbors if their pets need to be evacuated. Animal Help Now serves the entire United States.

**[Get the app for your Android device!](#) or [Get the app for you iPhone!](#)**

Animal Help Now also advocates on behalf of wildlife and educates the public about minimizing everyday threats to wild animals (such as vehicle strikes, window strikes and cat and dog attacks). Further, Animal Help Now provides guidance on finding assistance for domestic animal emergencies, such as lost and found companion animals, abuse and neglect, etc. **(See the website for more info)**

# “It Happens Every Spring..”

Proper mindset and patience are keys to birding well consistently.

By Wayne Rohde

Everyone knows what a robin looks like. Right? And everyone knows how to tell a cardinal from a blue jay. Right? The ability to swiftly and correctly identify a great many species of birds with but a passing glance rests, in part, on our familiarity with some birds (consider the adult Bald Eagle), as well as, in part, on the fact that quite a few birds simply stand out from all others (think pelicans vs. hummingbirds!).

On the other hand, several species are easily confused with others. Such as Trumpeter and Tundra Swans, Long-billed and Short-billed Dowitchers, Cooper’s and Sharp-shinned Hawks, Warbling and Philadelphia Vireos, Northern and Louisiana Waterthrushes, Eastern and Western Meadowlarks, Common and Hoary Redpolls, etc. In some cases, such as that of the swans and vireos and waterthrushes and meadowlarks, the songs of birds are helpful, even decisive, as aids to proper identification. In other cases range and habitat, as well as behavior, assist us in the task.

More challenging yet are several closely related species, such as the “peeps” (our smallest shorebirds) and the “empids” (our smallest flycatchers). The same is true of the Catharus thrushes (i.e., the Hermit, Swainson’s and Gray-cheeked Thrushes and the Veery), and of our native sparrows. Indeed, not a few birders, upon glassing a flock of juvenile sparrows, have been heard to exclaim, in sheer frustration, “Just another LBJ (i.e., little brown job!)” And don’t get me started with gulls. You know, seagulls!

As I write this article, I can hear a House Finch announcing its territory outside my office window. House Finches, as most birders now know, are not native to our area. For this reason this species was not even included in some of our older field guides to eastern birds (as recently, for example, as the third edition of Roger Tory Peterson’s “A Field Guide to the Birds”). But once the House Finch spread to Wisconsin, back in the ‘70s, and then quickly populated the state as a permanent resident (i.e., spring, summer, fall and winter), many birders began reporting Purple Finches during their Christmas Bird Count (it happens every winter) – not realizing that the birds they had seen were actually House Finches, not Purple Finches. To be sure, Purple Finches can be found in southern Wisconsin during the winter months, though not in the summer; yet even during the winter they are not nearly as plentiful as House Finches.

And this brings us to something which seems to happen each spring: reports of Eastern Wood-Pewees in March and of Swainson’s or Gray-cheeked Thrushes or Veeries in March. In point of fact, Eastern Phoebe migrate to our area (in late March) long before the other flycatchers (which arrive in May), even as Hermit Thrushes show up (in late March) before the other Catharus thrushes (which arrive in May). What’s the lesson? Pay attention to your calendar when observing birds, as well as to their field marks, vocalizations (songs and calls), geographical range, habitat ... and behavior (Eastern Phoebes and Hermit Thrushes both flick their tails).

Interestingly, another identification error seems to persist each spring: confusing Hermit Thrushes and Fox Sparrows! But in addition to noting the general shape and markings of these birds (which occupy much different families), check out how radically different their bills are! And think about how the shape of their bills indicates how much different their diets are! Could it be that this is why we see Fox Sparrows, but not Hermit Thrushes, at our feeders during the winter?

Spring seems to have arrived early this year, and with it the desire to get out and find those early birds of the season. It’s fun to be the first to see this or that species each spring. But be careful. For good birding is not just a matter of looking and listening, but also of thinking. Think carefully before reporting what you think you’ve found, lest you become a victim of something which happens every spring.



Bald Eagle - Prairie du Chien, WI, Photo by Wayne Rohde

# The Early History of Lakeland Audubon Society

A look back at how our chapter began and it's founding members.

By Bruno Schiffleger

Environmental awareness began building since the publication of Rachel Carson's book "Silent Spring" The environmental movement officially kicked off when Sen. Gaylord Nelson (WI) proposed the establishment of a national day devoted to learning about how we can mitigate the effects we humans have on the environment.

Around this time the National Audubon Society (NAS) through its magazine was encouraging the establishment of local chapters. A group of Elkhorn subscribers including myself, Elfrieda Matheson, Virginia Church, and several others applied for chapter status. Once granted, all NAS magazine subscribers in the geographical area of Elkhorn became members of the Lakeland Audubon Society (LAS). Because the application for chapter status came from Elkhorn, explains why the chapter's address is P.O. Box 473, Elkhorn, WI 53121. The framed certificate hanging on a wall at the Lions Field House in Williams Bay commemorating the establishment of LAS as an official Audubon chapter is dated: December 1, 1970.

During the 1970's Ed Brigham III was a district representative from NAS who would make quarterly visits to our chapter. He acted as a liaison between NAS and LAS. He would present programs on environmental issues that NAS was dealing with and gave advice on how to better manage our chapter.

A one page newsletter was sent out monthly announcing meeting dates, program speakers, field trips, and other chapter business. Monthly meetings were held at the Elkhorn library. They usually consisted of a short board meeting, a guest speaker, and ended with refreshments and socializing.

Field trips were made to Chiwaukee Prairie, Audubon Center at Lake Michigan, a Blue Heron rookery near Burlington, and other local areas of environmental interest. Environmental literature, general and related to birds, from NAS was distributed to Walworth County elementary schools, and every year several elementary school teachers from the area were given a two week scholarship to Audubon Camp at Sarona, WI.

Dr. Gaylord Culp, a Lake Geneva member, was an excellent and devoted bird watcher. On one of his many excursions on the Walworth County Warbler Walkway (now known as the Duck Lake Nature Trail) that follows the former rail bed of Chicago-Northwestern between Lake Geneva and Williams Bay, he observed and identified a Chat (once considered a member of the warbler family). Thus, "The Chat" became the name of our Newsletter.

In 1980 I returned to graduate school and my interests and activities drifted to other areas, but my membership continued. At age 94 much is forgotten about the early days. However, it is gratifying to see the chapter still flourishing after 50+ years due to the efforts of so many wonderful people that have participated in the activities of LAS throughout these many years.



# Planting for Wildlife

## Native Plant Spotlight

By Mariette Nowak



### **Pussy Willow (*Salix discolor*)**

Along with robins and red-winged blackbirds, this early-blooming shrub is a harbinger of spring. It's named for the fuzzy male catkins (pussy fur) since they resemble soft kitten paws. Its leaves are green above and powdery white below, for which it has been given the species name *discolor*. The fuzzy male flowers soon burst into a spray of lovely golden tipped flowers. It's no wonder that pussy willow stems are often gathered for indoor floral displays. The willow's female flowers, on the other hand, which occur on separate willow shrubs, look like hairy greenish caterpillars.

Willow flowers attract swarms of tiny insects, perfect in size of hummingbirds. Hummers also use the cottony hairs on the seeds for nesting material. An astonishing number of bees likewise visit the flowers. A study in the Chicago area found 45 species of bees feasting on the flowers. Several of them were bees that specialize on willow pollen.

A number of our favorite butterflies visit for willow nectar including mourning, cloaks, question marks, red admirals, eastern comma and spring azure. Far more species of butterfly and moth caterpillars, some 450 species, feed on willows and offer a bonanza for birds. Willows, in fact, are one of the three top species hosting butterfly and moth caterpillars, along with oaks and cherries. Since most land birds feed their young with insects and some birds feed solely on insects even as adults, willows are one of the most important species to plant for birds.

Besides caterpillars, many birds including ruffed grouse, white-crowned sparrows, as well as squirrels, turtles, rabbits, muskrat, beavers, deer, and elk, feed on their favored willow offerings from buds, seeds, foliage or branches. The American goldfinch, gray catbird, northern harrier, warbling vireo, willow flycatcher, Wilson's warbler, and yellow warbler often construct nests hidden within willow foliage. Studies have found that there are three billion fewer birds in North America today than there were fifty years ago. It's essential that we do all possible to reduce the precipitous decline of many bird species. Planting native species for birds is one of the best ways to do so. Chickadees, for example, need 70% percent of *native* plants in an area so they can find caterpillars and other insects for their nestlings which are best provided by the native plants with which they evolved. Without these essential native plants, their nestlings don't survive.

**How to grow:** Pussy willows are easy to grow in moist to wet soils in sunny or partly shady spots. If planting young plants, be sure to install 3-5 individuals to make sure there are both male and female plants. Both sexes are needed for pollination. Since pussy willows can be very vigorous once established, you'll need to cut them back heavily every few years.

**Do You Know?** Native Americans boiled tea from the inner bark and leaves of willows to relieve fever and pain. Willows contain salicin, a key ingredient in aspirin, which was developed from willow in the 1800's. They also used willow for arrows, baskets, dream-catcher hoops, poles for wigwam and lodges and many other things.



# Field Trip

Tuesday, April 16, 2024

9:00 AM – Noon

Lake Ivanhoe/Bloomfield SWA – 845 Dunbar Avenue, Burlington, WI

Open to the public!

Join us for some birding at [Lake Ivanhoe](#), Which is part of the Bloomfield State Wildlife Area. The property is located south of Burlington and east of Lake Geneva in the Town of Bloomfield. We will do some hiking and also some stationary scanning for birds. The location has an interesting and somewhat unique history that is worth reading about. For more information, click or tap the following link: [Lake Ivanhoe's History-WHS](#)

Meet at the parking area on the north side of Dunbar Ave prior to 9:00 AM. From there, we will follow the trails throughout the property on the lookout for birds during spring migration. Please contact us and let us know if you are interested in attending this field trip.

<https://lakelandaudubon.com/contact> Call or Text: +1 (262) 729-9702

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## LAKELAND AUDUBON Board of Directors

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### **Field Trips**

(Volunteer Needed)

### **Publicity**

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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.