

*The more you know,  
the more you grow*



madison  
**AUDUBON**  
  
society

August 2018



# Lifelong

## Bird-brained

*Birds have so much to teach us*

Madison Audubon  
is your local  
Audubon chapter

*Together with our  
members, we work to  
protect and improve  
habitat for birds and  
other wildlife through  
land acquisition  
and management,  
education and  
advocacy.*

Before the 1934 publication of Roger Tory Peterson’s *Field Guide to the Birds*, and despite decades of efforts to standardize common and Latin bird names in North America, chaos reigned in ornithological nomenclature. Anglicized Native American bird names mingled with names assigned by French, English, Spanish and other explorers to the New World, which in turn mingled with a huge assortment of names used locally by farmers and market gunners. The latter names, in particular, tended to be based on observable characteristics or behaviors. Herons, for example, earned a variety of endearing names derived from their habit of defecating upon taking flight. So, when Audubon Society wardens took to the waters of southern Florida early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to enforce newly enacted laws against market hunting for the trade in feathers for ladies’ hats, they wore heron emblems on their uniforms

(the flying great egret was not introduced as the symbol of National Audubon until 1953) and the organization soon became known locally as the “Shitquick Society.”

These and great flocks of other fun facts can be found in Michael Edmonds’ book published this spring by the Wisconsin Historical Society Press, *Taking Flight, A History of Birds and People in the Heart of America*. Edmonds examines in fascinating detail the 12,000-year history of human interactions with birds in the American Midwest. From the shamanic rituals and subsistence practices of the Native Americans, through the missionary and exploratory efforts of the first European travelers to the new land, to the first scientific and artistic documentation of the wonders of the New World, to the sod-breaking of the European settlers, to the growth of cities, farms, railroads and market and recreational hunting that together decimated native flora and fauna in

COVER: The opportunities to learn in nature are endless. *MAS Photo* | ABOVE LEFT: A creative Vera Court youngster paints her interpretation of nature. *MAS Photo* | ABOVE RIGHT: MAS Members Fiona McTavish and Kay Gabriel show off the kestrel chicks they helped band at Goose Pond Sanctuary. *MAS Photo*



# Learning

the late 19th and early 20th centuries, to modern efforts to conserve the same, birds played an outsized role every step of the way.

Birds, of course, continue to play an outsized role in our lives, despite the many technological temptations that conspire to keep us indoors. We may not be as familiar with the habits of birds as the market hunters of the late 19th century, but birds still make a great excuse to cut the internet connection and get outside. Each of us probably learns something new every time we follow birds outside—about birds; about the plants and animals they share their habitats with; about weather; about geology; about ourselves. And while it's been amply documented that getting outside in nature is good for our physical health, it has also been amply documented that lifelong learning is good for our mental health.

In this issue of the newsletter, we focus on the many ways that Madison Audubon is helping people of all ages to sharpen their minds by learning about birds, their habitats,

and all the wondrous critters with which they (and we) share habitat. So join us for one of our new adult education classes, try your hand at citizen science, come to our next *Evenings with Audubon* program, learn to recognize prairie plants in the fall by collecting seed with us, teach a kid something new by volunteering with our education program (and learn something new in the process), or just get outside at one of the awe-inspiring places we protect, and while you're there, learn a new bird song, or identify a new plant, or even learn Latin (names, that is).

People in the American Midwest have been learning and benefitting from their interactions with birds for 12,000 years. We'll all benefit if we make an effort to learn a thing or two from birds during our brief time here.

Roger Packard, president  
[rpackard@uwalumni.com](mailto:rpackard@uwalumni.com)

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ABOVE LEFT: Whosit? Vera Court kids work on identifying a bird they spotted during a MAS lesson. *Photo provided by Vera Court* | ABOVE RIGHT: Bald eagle monitoring all-star team: ASSEMBLE! *MAS Photo*

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## Lessons from a treasure hunt

*Faville Grove's annual orchid count inspires wonder*

On a steamy overcast day in June 2007, four 20-something year-olds crouched over a spike of extraordinary white flowers, armed with toothpicks and curiosity. I was one of them, part of a crew of ecological restoration interns that spent a glorious summer working in and exploring the habitats at Faville Grove Sanctuary. That particular June day, when we combed two prairies in search of the federally threatened, state-endangered eastern prairie white fringed orchid, remains crystal-clear in my memory.

I don't recall how many orchids we found, for the activity that stole the show was the delicate task of guiding a toothpick into an orchid's corolla, locating the pollen sac, convincing it to stick to the skewer, and carefully extracting it. That little bundle of genetic gold would later pollinate a different prairie's orchids in the effort to maximize genetic diversity and the plant's long-term success. The patchy landscape of today, combined with the decline in the moth that naturally pollinates

this species, made assisted pollination an important task. Prior to that day, I hadn't thought much about hand pollination, neither the process nor the need for it, and this experience blew my mind. In all of the time I'd spent in classrooms up until then, never had a lesson in conservation resonated so well.

This past July, 11 years later, I joined a wave of 15 or so other staff and volunteers to comb the same prairies and look for the same floral species. I brought my 16-year-old niece along, who had never walked in a prairie or seen a wild orchid before. Like my memories from 2007, seeing the wonder on her face upon finding her first orchid and hearing her think out loud about why one should care this much about a dainty, unassuming plant will stay with me for a long time.

Thanks to the efforts of our dedicated search team, we found 175 orchids on two prairies that day. Maybe even better, the new crew of

*See "Orchids", pg. 5*



# Have you peeked *Into the Nest*?

*Catch up on your grassland bird nesting blog series*

"A nest is impressive in and of itself, but when it is softly cradling a clutch of eggs—the combination is intrinsically perfect."

- Carolyn Byers, *Into the Nest* author

This summer's blog series on grassland bird nesting ecology has it all: stories, photos, videos, and artwork. Here's a way to expand your nesting IQ from the comfort of your computer or smartphone. Intrigued? Check out these topics:

**"Grasslands have a canopy too"** (grassland structure)

**"Home, home on the range"** (selecting territories)

**"Let's build a nest"** (nest design and construction)

**"There is nothing so beautiful as a bird's egg"** (egg laying)

**"An egg is just the beginning"** (incubation)

**"It's Hatch Day!"** (intricacies of hatching)

**"#Momlife"** (corralling crazy chicks)

**"Open wide!"** (feeding a brood)

**"What goes in must come out"** (yep, fecal sacs)



ABOVE: A collection of grassland bird eggs, shown life-sized here. From left to right; top to bottom: upland sandpiper, Henslow's sparrow, savannah sparrow, bobolink, grasshopper sparrow, eastern meadowlark, dickcissel, northern harrier. *Painting by Carolyn Byers*

Jump in at [madisonaudubon.org/into-the-nest](http://madisonaudubon.org/into-the-nest)

## *Orchids continued...*

enthusiastic summer interns got to spend the afternoon learning the science (and the art) of transferring genetics and empowering plants to thrive.

If you're like me, the best antidote for angst and ennui is to spend a day outside, remembering how much we love to be dazzled. Join us this fall for a new experience, and if you're lucky, you'll create a memory that will stick with you forever.

*Brenna*

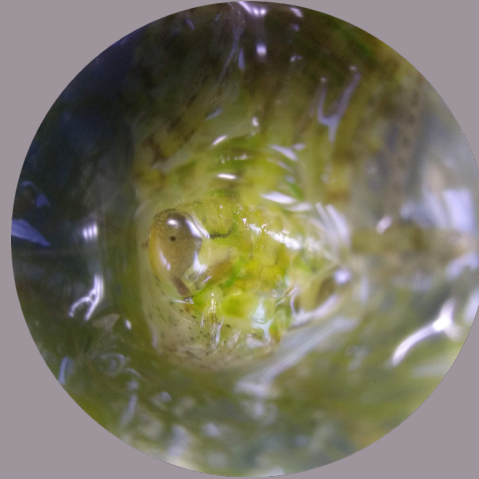
Brenna Marsicek, communications director  
 & former Faville Grove Sanctuary intern  
[bmarsicek@madisonaudubon.org](mailto:bmarsicek@madisonaudubon.org)



FAR LEFT: Brenna and fellow interns lend a hand (literally!) to wild orchids at Faville Grove in 2007. *Photo provided by Brenna Marsicek* | LEFT CENTER: The rare and stunning eastern white-fringed orchid is a privilege to see up close. *Photo by Brenna Marsicek* | LEFT: Lola, a young naturalist, spots her first wild orchid. *MAS Photo*

## Providing the nudge

*Our education programs kick-start lifelong learning*



Thank you to our major  
 education program  
 donors:



**Theda & Tamblin Clark Smith**  
 FAMILY FOUNDATION



Together with you, Madison Audubon is in the business of creating and supporting a thirst for discovery. We love to learn, and love people who feel the same way.

Our education programming focuses on creating experiences for kids (and adults!) that encourage them to ask questions, think like scientists, and find their own answers. We work hard not to simply present information, but to provide people with the skills they need to get to the facts on their own. Two of those “skills” we hope to spark are curiosity and excitement.

Recently, I was visiting Tenney Park with a group of kids from Goodman Community Center. At the start of the lesson, the kids wrote in their science journals about what they thought they might find in the water. Most kids wrote things like “gross, dirty, and disgusting.” Some even drew pictures of people with sad faces or dead fish. When they were finished with their journal entries, I brought out my buckets,

dip nets, and microscopes—and the fun began.

Kids were trying to catch fish, one made an attempt for a muskrat (fear not, the 'skrat was too quick by a mile), others came back grinning with buckets full of tiny moving critters. They enjoyed catching the macroinvertebrates and putting them carefully into petri dishes. We slid them under our microscope, and I watched their eyes open wide.

Amid the exclamations of “whoa!” and “look at its eyes!” I heard their teacher quietly say to one little girl, “I’ve never seen you so excited about something we found outside.” That made my heart absolutely sing. This child was full of questions for the rest of the day, and said an adorable farewell to her water critters before releasing them.

Though the lesson ended and she went back to her regular day, I feel confident that she will remember the way she felt holding her tub of

*See “Education”, pg. 7*

ABOVE LEFT: You never know what you'll find in a blob of pond scum! *MAS Photo* | ABOVE CENTER: A dragonfly larvae peers back at you through the microscope. *MAS Photo* | ABOVE RIGHT: A Goodman kiddo gets the thrill of discovery in a water critters lesson. *MAS Photo*

*Education continued...*

water friends. This new-found openness to slimy, weird, and hidden aspects of nature will set her up for more and more new experiences. Maybe next time she'll pick up a worm and wonder how it moves without legs. Then maybe the time after that she'll wonder why that bee has yellow dust all over it. Who knows what she'll learn next!

Perhaps there are kids in your life that need a little nudge to spark their

love of lifelong learning. If so, let them hear you asking your own questions, and then watch you go about finding the answers. Kids need nature role models, and the more enthusiastic they are, the better.

Carolyn Byers, education director  
[carolyn.byers@madisonaudubon.org](mailto:carolyn.byers@madisonaudubon.org)

Madison Audubon is a proud member of the following organizations:



# SUCCESS

## Madison Audubon earns Land Trust Accreditation

When Madison Audubon purchased its first piece of land at Goose Pond 50 years ago, it accepted the enormous responsibility to protect, restore, and manage that land for birds, wildlife and people—in perpetuity. The acreage of land we protect has grown a lot, and so has our commitment to stewarding it. Madison Audubon must honor that obligation by demonstrating sound business practices of responsible governance, accountability, financial strength, and more. That's why, back in 2012, Madison Audubon began the long and arduous process of applying for Land Trust Accreditation. The process required a lot—documenting just about every aspect of our operations, improving and developing new policies, and demonstrating sound land acquisition and management practices.

And now, we're proud to announce that all of that hard work (and a 525-page application) has paid off. **As of August 2, Madison Audubon is a nationally accredited land trust!** We are joining an elite group of organizations nationwide that can display this seal to show they meet national standards for excellence, uphold the public trust and ensure that conservation efforts are permanent. Indeed, we're only the second Audubon chapter (out of about 400) to be awarded this honor! We are so grateful to everyone who made this possible.

Madison Audubon will certainly display the seal with pride, but we won't be resting on these laurels. Forever is a mighty long time. We'll work hard to secure a bright future for Madison Audubon, the land we protect, and the birds we all love.



BACKGROUND: This Madison Audubon-owned prairie and its inhabitants are looking forward to a long, happy life as part of a land trust. MAS Photo

## The power of first-hand experience

*Goose Pond Sanctuary hosts and supports citizen science*

“Conservation is a cause that has no end, there is no point at which we will say our work is finished.”

*-Rachel Carson*



We have lived at Goose Pond for 40 years, and not a day has gone by that we haven't learned something new about the natural world. We enjoy the constant opportunity to discover and help others connect with nature. One of the best ways to do that is to participate in citizen science projects that benefit wildlife, especially birds.

Citizen science allows anyone, regardless of schooling and training, to help answer scientific questions, usually by collecting and contributing much-needed data to a larger research project. Programs provide training and the type of project can vary widely—from monitoring water quality to identifying new stars in the sky.

At Goose Pond Sanctuary, we both participate in and host citizen science projects. Some, like the Wisconsin DNR's Frog and Toad Survey, Bat Monitoring, and Bobwhite Quail / Cottontail Rabbit Survey, have been going on for decades and require only a few participants per county. Other projects, such as the Christmas Bird Count, Breeding Bird Atlas, and monarch tagging, require many more citizen scientists. From bird surveys to purple martin banding to butterfly counts and more, we are always looking for more eager volunteers.

One such opportunity is the Breed-

ing Bird Atlas II, the largest citizen science project in Wisconsin and an excellent learning experience. This summer, we are completing the fourth year of the five-year project. As our area's coordinators, our goal is to involve large numbers of people and provide a meaningful learning opportunity. In Columbia County, 141 birdwatchers, including many novices, have entered 1,442 checklists and confirmed 126 breeding bird species. Participants have worked 1,100 party-hours in the field, not including travel time to the survey blocks and data entry. Whether it's hearing your first prothonotary warbler and then spotting the nest, or listening to king rails and eagerly learning about their ecology, every day spent in the field is an opportunity to expand your horizons.

This fall we are looking for volunteers to collect prairie seed, tag 1,000 monarch butterflies, and welcome the fall waterfowl migration. We'd love to see you out here. Whatever your background, citizen science offers many choices for getting involved. It's a great way to meet folks with like interests, a fun way to learn something new, and an exceptional way to spend the day.

Mark Martin and Susan Foote-Martin,  
Goose Pond Sanctuary resident managers  
[goosep@madisonaudubon.org](mailto:goosep@madisonaudubon.org)

TOP: A volunteer cradles a purple martin chick, ready to be banded. *Photo by Arlene Koziol* | ABOVE: We help band hundreds of purple martin chicks each year, and it takes a keen eye to keep it all straight! *Photo by Arlene Koziol*



# HOW DO YOU EXPERIENCE GOOSE POND?

*Just a few of your favorite memories of Goose Pond from the last 50 years*

See more and share your Goose Pond memories at [madisonaudubon.org/gpsmemories](http://madisonaudubon.org/gpsmemories)



"Sitting on the hill, when there were still pine trees, listening to great horned owls hooting and watching all the activity in the Pond. Walking the Wood Family Prairie with blue sky, white clouds, and flowers everywhere."

*-Harriet Irwin, visiting since the late 1960s*

"About 12 years ago, I took my sons, a teen and a toddler to Goose Pond. We parked on the side of the road, between the two ponds, watching the dozens of tundra swans. The swans started to take off, and since there was a strong wind out of the east they took their long take-off runs towards us, some barely clearing the hood of the car. Fifteen minutes later we realized we had been barely able to breathe."

*-Glen Chism, visiting since 1993*



"I was at Goose Pond for an Audubon tagging event the first time that I held a monarch, and I will NEVER forget that initial feeling of awe and wonder! That experience is forever imprinted on my soul."

*-Sharon Brancel, visiting since 2016*

"Sitting in the blind, I've found true peace and relaxation. I've seen a very young fawn jumping around on new legs. A blue heron sitting majestically on an old log. Countless other birds and small mammals. But it's the peace, true inner peace that keeps bringing me back. It's been wonderful to watch it transform as the summer progresses. I'm looking forward to seeing it in the fall!"

*-Michael Jabs, visiting since 2018*



TOP TO BOTTOM: A prairie of goldenrod and asters attract all sorts of visitors. *MAS Photo* | Tundra swans gracefully soar overhead. *Photo by Monica Hall* | Sharon sends a newly tagged monarch back on its journey to Mexico. *MAS Photo* | Have you watched a great blue heron splash through Goose Pond? *Photo by Arlene Koziol* | BACKGROUND: Goose Pond shimmers in the sunlight of a summer day. *Photo by Arlene Koziol*



## Winding down and gearing up

*Two projects help us learn more about birds*



With the passing of summer, two of our new citizen science programs made it to different stages of completion.

Bald Eagle Nest Watch, involving over 40 fabulous volunteers watching 15 eagle nests in Dane, Sauk, and Rock Counties wrapped up in July when 17 eaglets fledged from 10 of the nests. The remaining five nests either didn't have eggs or failed in the April snow storms. We will begin asking for volunteers for

the 2019 nesting season in December—stay tuned! Learn more at [madisonaudubon.org/benw](http://madisonaudubon.org/benw)

In addition, the Bird Collision Corps program, in which volunteers survey high-priority buildings on the UW-Madison campus for birds injured or killed via window strikes, completed the spring surveys in June and will begin the fall surveys in September. We'd love your help! Join this effort by visiting [madisonaudubon.org/bcc](http://madisonaudubon.org/bcc)

## Follow the Friday Feathered Feature!

*Your weekly dose of bird knowledge*

Tune into our social media and website each Friday for short, timely essays by our sanctuary staff on the latest bird species to pique their interest. You are guaranteed to learn something new from the fascinating, poetic, and comical insights that Mark, Sue, and Drew share!

[madisonaudubon.org/fff](http://madisonaudubon.org/fff)



TOP: Birds found dead during the spring BCC surveys were a sad reminder of the perils birds face during migration. *MAS Photo* | ABOVE: This chatty eaglet is ready to leave the nest. *Photo by Michael Rausch*

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Thank you to those who donated May-July

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Your generosity funds important conservation and education programs throughout south-central Wisconsin\*

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I would like to find out more about Madison Audubon's Legacy Society. Please contact me!

## MEMBERSHIPS

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If you are a member of Madison Audubon only, your gift of \$20 or more above will renew your membership for one year.

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO THE ADDRESS ON PAGE 12, OR GIVE ONLINE AT [madisonaudubon.org](http://madisonaudubon.org)

\*Madison Audubon serves Dane, Columbia, Sauk, Iowa, Richland, Jefferson, Dodge, and Marquette counties.

Madison Audubon Society is a tax-exempt, not-for-profit organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

BACKGROUND: An eastern tailed-blue was just one of the spectacular butterflies documented at Goose Pond's annual butterfly count. Photo by Gail Smith

## FALL EVENINGS WITH AUDUBON SPEAKER SERIES

Get your learning on! Join us for these free, engaging presentations this fall.



### NATIVE BEES

Tuesday, Sept. 18, 7pm

*Christy Stewart, University of Wisconsin-Madison*

Goodman Community Center  
149 Waubesa St., Madison



### SPOTTED OWLS

Tuesday, Oct. 16, 7pm

*Gavin Jones, University of Wisconsin-Madison*

Capital Lakes  
333 W. Main St., Madison



### IN DEFENSE OF PUBLIC LANDS

Tuesday, Nov. 13, 7pm

*Steven Davis, Edgewood College and author of book*

VFW Post 1318 (aka Cranefield's)  
133 E. Lakeside St., Madison

TOP LEFT: Native bumblebees will be in the spotlight at our September EWA. *Photo by Arlene Koziol* | TOP MIDDLE: A pair of spotted owls wonders "Who will join us in October?" *Photo by Gavin Jones* | TOP RIGHT: Learn about the debate on who should own and manage public lands. *Photo provided by Steven Davis*

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-- **Birds, Bikes, & Brews 2018** --

Saturday, Sept. 29, 1-4pm

Which do you like best: birding, biking, or craft brew sampling? Well really, why choose? Register today to take part in the fun at **Birds, Bikes, & Brews!**

Register at [madisonaudubon.org/bbb](http://madisonaudubon.org/bbb) for limited time discounts!