



Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative Newsletter

WBCI is a cooperative partnership to deliver the full spectrum of bird conservation emphasizing voluntary stewardship.

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From the Editor

Welcome to the first edition of the WBCI newsletter. This newsletter is a project of the Outreach Committee and it is our intention to use it to provide updates on WBCI related activities and bird conservation in general for the benefit of our partners and the public. Each issue will contain announcements, upcoming events, featured columns, and other topics of interest. We will also provide information on the many ways you can contribute to conservation here in Wisconsin as well as on national and international fronts. With your help, we hope to make this newsletter a bi-annual feature. We invite you to submit articles, photos, upcoming events, and suggestions on how we can improve future issues of the newsletter to **Lynn Ratkowski** (lynn@typea.net), Editor. For more information about WBCI, please visit our website at: <http://www.wisconsinbirds.org>

Birds in the News

In late September, Congress approved legislation that will protect America’s native migratory birds when they travel south to Latin America and the Caribbean during migration.

Known as the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Improvement Act, its chief supporter, Wisconsin U.S. Rep. Ron Kind (D) introduced it last year. By updating six-year-old bird legislation, it passed through Congress without significant opposition. Its two main achievements are that it increases conservation program funding from \$5 million to \$6.5 million; and it allows Canada to apply for conservation grants.

Representative Wayne Gilchrest (R-MD), and Senators Lincoln Chafee (R-RI) and Jim Jeffords (I-VT) have also been strong supporters of the bill. The bill has the support of other prominent conservation groups.



Yellow-rumped Warbler.
Photo by Dave Herr.



Yellow Warbler.
Photo by Dave Herr.

WBCI Coordinator's Corner

After a long hiatus, WBCI will soon have a coordinator once again. The interview process has been completed and an announcement will likely be made by mid-February.

Announcements

- WBCI Partners Drive.** Help recruit more WBCI partners! We are giving away a one-year subscription (or renewal) to Birder's World Magazine (valued at \$26.95 each) to the three people who recruit the most new WBCI partners by June 1, 2007!

To sign up a new partner, simply have them complete the agreement form available on WBCI's website www.wisconsinbirds.org/agreement.htm and send it to Karen Etter Hale, WBCI Chair, at: Madison Audubon Society, 222 S. Hamilton St. Suite #1, Madison, WI 53703.

Winners will be posted in a future WBCI Newsletter. Make sure to review the current list of 155 WBCI partners (available on the website) before you begin.

- The Issues Committee** is currently working on or would like to develop new white or "issues" papers on the following topics: pesticides and birds, climate change, mute swans, and the effects of deer herbivory on ground-nesting birds. To learn more, contact Issues Committee Chair Bill Mueller at iltlawas@earthlink.net or any Issues Committee member. We are waiting to hear from you!
- Wanted - Outreach Committee Members.** Are you looking to contribute some volunteer time for a worthwhile cause? Are you recently retired and find yourself with some extra time on your hands? Are you a birder that would like to give something back? If so, please consider joining the WBCI Outreach Committee.

The Outreach Committee works to raise awareness and promote bird conservation in WI. We have created a WBCI communication plan, brochure, display, the WBCIng listserv, a Birds of Wisconsin placemat, and we have updated the WBCI website. The committee helps to get important information out to our partners and the public via newspapers, e-mail, radio, workshops, and conferences. Our newest endeavor is the

WBCI newsletter. Future goals include: communicating more with our partners and the public, recruiting new partners, and helping to raise awareness about the WBCI All Bird Plan once it has been completed. The Outreach Committee typically meets in Madison on a bi-monthly basis. If you are interested, please contact Jamie Nack, Chair jlneck@wisc.edu or 608-265-8264

- On Thursday, October 7, 2007 **Gathering Waters Conservancy** will hold their annual Leadership Awards Celebration to honor the outstanding accomplishments of individuals, policy makers, and land trusts who work together to conserve the places that make Wisconsin special. We invite you to nominate an individual or a land trust who has demonstrated leadership in protecting Wisconsin's natural resources. Individuals and organizations may submit nominations for themselves or for others. You must submit all nominations by Friday, May 26 for consideration. For further details see the following website: <http://www.gatheringwaters.org/awards>
- Doug and Karen Ruppert** recently donated 90 acres of land adjacent to the city of Superior through the West Wisconsin Land Trust, guaranteeing that the land will remain wild forever. The Rupperts' land includes over 1/2 mile of shoreline on Bluff Creek, a tributary to Allouez Bay. The property contains a unique combination of valleys and uplands, meadow and wetlands and its diverse natural features provide ideal habitat for a wide variety of wildlife including rare species like American Eel and Showy Lady's Slipper. The Ruppert property is the second Douglas County project completed by WWLT in 2006. For further information call 715-235-8850 or see www.wwlt.org
- In October 2006, Wisconsin Audubon Council was the primary host for two wonderful meetings at the Ho-Chunk facility in Baraboo, WI. The first meeting entitled **No Bird Left Behind** discussed the interactions of birds with tall structures and how to reduce the risks and the second meeting entitled **Making Time for Birds and Nature** discussed people, birds, and their future together. A copy of most of the presentations can be found at www.wisconsinaudubon.org
- Don't forget to pick up your copy of the **Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Wisconsin**. Copies are still available for this definitive guide. For further info see <http://www.uwgb.edu/birds/wso/>.

- **Riveredge Nature Center Bird Club** meets the first Tuesday of every month (except Dec). If you'd like to receive a calendar of bird programs for 2007, please contact Noel Cutright at noel.cutright@we-energies.com
- The **Wisconsin Society for Ornithology** will offer 13 birding field trips during 2007. For a pdf file of these trips, please contact either Tom Schultz at trschtz@vbe.com or Jeff Baughman at jbaughman@csd.k12.wi.us
- The new **Lake Michigan Birding and Nature Trail guides are now available!** Get your free copy online www.travelwisconsin.com/maps_guides.aspx or by calling 1-800-432-TRIP. These 70 page guides are full color, high quality books that include descriptions, directions and maps to 64 wildlife viewing destinations in the 11 counties that border the western Lake Michigan coast. The Trail is a project of the DNR Endangered Resources program and WBCI. The project website is: www.wisconsinbirds.org/trail
- **State Wildlife Grants to be available in early 2007.** There will be another round of State Wildlife Grant funding in early February, 2007. More information, including application materials and instructions for applying, will be available in on the WI Department of Natural Resources website: www.dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/swg. Application deadline will be early-mid March.
- **New Low Price for Birds of Wisconsin Placemats!** The price of the colorful Birds of Wisconsin placemats has been reduced to \$2.47 wholesale and \$4.99 suggested retail while supplies last. A collaboration of WBCI and About Place Consulting, the laminated placemat features colorful illustrations of 32 common Wisconsin birds on the front, and fun facts and educational information on the back. The placemat provides a fun and easy way for Wisconsin residents and visitors to learn about the birds they see on a daily basis. Order yours today! For further info see www.aboutplaceconsulting.com.



Join the WBCIng Yahoo Group!

WBCIng is a discussion group created for WBCI partners and other bird enthusiasts as a means to communicate bird conservation news, questions, events, etc. in real time. For more information visit the WBCI website: www.wisconsinbirds.org

Upcoming Events

Spring Events

- FEB 1-2** **LA CROSSE**
 Riverine Wetlands Conference: Connections, Corridors & Catchments
Don't miss this opportunity to hear some great speakers discuss the state of Wisconsin's water-rich landscape and what's being done to conserve these resources. For further information see: www.wiscwetlands.org/2007forum.htm
- FEB 3** **MILWAUKEE AREA**
 Wehr Nature Center Bird Festival
If you've always wanted to become a birder or just want to learn more about birds, feeding, attracting, becoming a citizen monitor, then this is the event for you! For further info see: www.county.milwaukee.gov/BirdFestival19668.htm
- FEB 23-24, 2007** **PORT WASHINGTON**
 Symposium 2007: Recent Developments in Ornithology.
Don't miss the chance to hear about exciting research and inventory projects involving WI birds. Sponsors: WBCI, WSO, WI Audubon Council, and the Citizen-based Monitoring Network of WI. For further info see: www.wisconsinbirds.org
- APR 21-22, 2007** **CENTRAL WI**
 Central WI Prairie Chicken Festival
Activities for all ages throughout Central WI, featuring birding tours and viewing, wildlife talks, children's crafts and nature art. For further info see: www.goldensandsrccd.org www.typea.net
- MAY 11-13** **GREEN BAY**
 Spring's Wings Birding and Art Festival
Experience outstanding field trips and interesting educational experiences for the serious bird enthusiast as well as engaging activities and demonstrations for the whole family such as banding demonstrations, artist led drawing classes, and bird house/feeder making projects. For further info contact Mike Reed, Bay Beach Wildlife Sanctuary at 920-391-3683.

MAY 17-20 RICHLAND CENTER
The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology will be hosting their annual convention in Richland County. For further info see: www.uwgb.edu/birds/wso/dates.htm#trips

Fall Events

AUG 21-SEP 1 ECUADOR
 Mindo Birdathon
This event will raise money to save habitat for birds in the Choco Bioregion of northwest Ecuador. Guaranteed to be an equatorial hoot! For further info contact Craig Thompson at 608.785.1277 or craig.thompson@wisconsin.gov

OCT 18-20, 2007 STEVENS POINT
 Midwest Environmental Education Conference
Urgent call to all Midwest environmental educators to help ensure that "No Child is Left Inside". For further info see: www.uwsp.edu/cnr/waee/Events/fall07.htm



Great Horned Owls begin nesting in February.
 Photos by Dave Herr.

WBCI Partner Profiles

Note: if you would like your organization's or agency's profile to appear in a future issue of the newsletter, please send a brief write-up to Lynn Ratkowski (lynn@typea.net), editor.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

The Green Bay Ecological Services Field Office coordinates recovery implementation for endangered species such as the whooping crane, piping plover,

Karner blue butterfly, and Hine's emerald dragonfly in the state of Wisconsin, provides information on species and their habitat for environmental reviews of federal development activities, assesses the impacts of environmental contaminants on fish and wildlife resources, and works with private landowners and other partners to restore wildlife habitat. More information on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the Great Lakes Region can be found at www.fws.gov/midwest.

Joel Trick of the Green Bay Field Office has participated as a member of WBCI since 2002, and currently serves as the chair of the Wetlands and Shorelines Subcommittee of the Habitat Assessment and Management Committee. His responsibilities with FWS include working to conserve migratory birds and endangered species, including the whooping crane, wolf, lynx, bald eagle, and Kirtland's warbler. Working as one of three members of a steering committee, Joel helped guide development of the recently approved Wisconsin Whooping Crane Management Plan. He is active in the natural areas conservation efforts in Door County and has extensive knowledge of Wisconsin's plant and animal communities. As we near completion of the All-Bird Plan, Joel's involvement in WBCI will be more focused on helping to implement the WBCI All-Bird Plan and the Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan through on the ground conservation actions that benefit Wisconsin birds.

BIRDlorian LLC

BIRDlorian LLC, a relatively new WBCI partner, is a new business specializing in a broad array of assistance with education, promotion, partnership development, grant writing, on-site monitoring, and habitat conservation will soon be available in Wisconsin. *BIRDlorian LLC*, will focus primarily on bird and biodiversity issues, and will begin providing professional products and services in the spring of 2007. *BIRDlorian* is pleased to be one of the newest endorsers and supporters of WBCI.

The concept of *BIRDlorian* originated with Ric Zarwell, (B.S. Wildlife Biology, M.S. Natural Resources with an emphasis on Environmental Education-Interpretation, both from UW-Stevens Point). Ric has been a birder since an epiphany in 1966, and was the Important Bird Areas (IBA) Coordinator in Iowa for the past five years. Prior to that, he retired from the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Ric has had extensive professional experience with watershed projects, wetland protection, developing public education

programs, creating public-private partnerships, recruiting and supervising volunteers, coordinating complex multi-county rural development programs, and successful grant writing – in Georgia, Washington State, Minnesota and Iowa. Ric is currently using his tool-box of knowledge, skills and abilities to create and hone new methods which will achieve more and better successes with his original passion: bird and biodiversity conservation.

In addition to providing high quality conservation products and services (using what some might call traditional methods), *BIRDLorian* will strive for heightened levels of success by emphasizing at least three additional methods. First, a very strong emphasis will be placed on using a maximum amount of personal, face-to-face time to assist clients with each step of planning, developing, funding and successfully implementing bird and biodiversity initiatives. Using an unhurried, carefully reasoned, one-on-one approach, will take precedence over quick-fix, overly-simplistic high-tech approaches that may be unproven. Second, *BIRDLorian* will view wildlife populations, landscapes, and other conservation issues from a historical perspective [“lorian” being derived from the word historian]. Using a deep respect for the history that underpins and supports modern birding, ornithology, wildlife management and biodiversity conservation, *BIRDLorian* will incorporate a historian’s sense of perspective and values when assessing problems and identifying solutions. Third, although every client will receive the personal attention that they deserve to have, *BIRDLorian* will develop and deliver new products and services for the rapidly increasing number of baby boomers and senior citizens – the demographic that is most capable of achieving significant near-term conservation successes.

BIRDLorian would like to be directly involved in the early planning stages of new bird and biodiversity education and conservation projects and initiatives. Ric Zarwell lives just west of the Mississippi River and Wisconsin border, in Lansing, Iowa; and can be reached at: Ric.Zarwell@mchsi.com or (563) 538-4991.

Wisconsin Society for Ornithology

The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology (WSO) is an educational and scientific non-profit organization founded in 1939 to “encourage the study of Wisconsin birds.” This goal has since expanded to emphasize all of the many enjoyable aspects of birding and to support the research and habitat protection necessary to conserve Wisconsin birdlife. Members in the WSO

include those who enjoy birds attracted to their homes by feeders and bird houses; those who pursue birding, field study, bird photography, or bird banding as a hobby; and those who engage in ornithology professionally.

WSO has active research, education, and conservation programs, offers grants and scholarships for worthy bird-related projects in Wisconsin, and also administers a separate youth grant program. They are also an active partner in the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative, and several WSO members provide leadership in several key areas.

The Society communicates with its members through a quarterly journal (*The Passenger Pigeon*), a monthly newsletter (*The Badger Birder*), and a web site www.uwgb.edu/birds/wso/

The first 66 years of *The Passenger Pigeon*, which now contains approximately 400 pages a year and incorporates color into many of the issues, are archived on-line at:

<http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/EcoNatRes/Search.html>

Use the search function “Title” and “Passenger Pigeon”. WSO members can receive the newsletter either electronically or as a paper copy.

Bird-related items can be purchased through the WSO Bookstore; information on ordering and the list of WSO-published items for sale can be found at www.uwgb.edu/birds/wso/bookstore.htm The most recent item published by the WSO is the *Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Wisconsin*, which was issued in May 2006, is finding a very receptive audience among Wisconsin bird watchers.

The Society also offers a variety of field trips and an annual convention. On February 23-24, 2007, WBCI and WSO are co-sponsoring “Symposium 2007: Recent Developments in Wisconsin Ornithology” in Port Washington. A symposium flyer is available at www.uwgb.edu/birds/wso/docs/symp_registration_web.pdf. The Symposium will be an excellent opportunity to hear about exciting research and inventory projects involving Wisconsin birds, including:

- current findings regarding Avian Influenza and wild Wisconsin birds;
- how birds cope with our winter weather conditions;
- what’s being done to conserve Wisconsin’s prairie grouse species;

- how Red-winged Blackbirds deal with cowbirds; and
- results from the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas project, with an opportunity to reminisce about great birds and great times and to celebrate the success of the entire project – the largest volunteer bird monitoring program in Wisconsin to date

Featured IBA: Greater Lake Koshkonong

The Greater Lake Koshkonong Important Bird Area (IBA) is located in southwestern Jefferson and northern Rock counties, encompasses Lake Koshkonong proper and surrounding wetland habitats, including Lake Koshkonong State Wildlife Area, as well as associated habitats at nearby Rose Lake and Red Cedar Lake State Natural Area. This area hosts a diversity of forested and open wetland habitats including emergent and submergent marshes of bulrush, cattails, sedges, and wild rice, and floodplain forests of green ash, silver maple, and swamp white oak. Shrub-carr, wet meadows, black ash swamp, vernal ponds, streams, open water, and small areas of oak savanna and prairie also are found here.

These habitats support a delightful diversity of birds, including significant seasonal concentrations and breeding populations of high priority species. Visit Koshkonong in April and you will find tens of thousands of migrating ducks, especially Ruddy Ducks, Scaup, and Canvasback, in the lake's open water areas. Explore the area during the summer breeding season and you'll be rewarded with Blue-winged Teal, Black Terns, Least Bitterns, Marsh Wrens, and Yellow-headed Blackbirds in the marshes, and Yellow-billed Cuckoos, Acadian Flycatchers, Cerulean Warblers, and Prothonotary Warblers in the floodplain forests. Lake Koshkonong truly is a southern Wisconsin treasure.

Greater Lake Koshkonong was nominated by the Lake Koshkonong Wetland Association (LKWA), a nonprofit group with a diverse membership of naturalists, hunters, anglers, bird lovers and others dedicated to protecting the wetlands, natural communities, and wildlife of Lake Koshkonong and the Rock River. Many of the members own property along the lake. LKWA spearheaded an impressive migration and summer bird monitoring effort in 2005 which documented the significant bird use of the area

and was instrumental in the site being approved as an IBA. LKWA received the Citizen-Based Monitoring Network's Monitoring Program of the Year Award in 2006 in recognition of this outstanding effort. Greater Lake Koshkonong was officially dedicated on September 16, 2006 at a ceremony hosted by LKWA. It is Wisconsin's 43rd IBA.



Photo by Gary Shackelford.

Issue of the Season: Tall Structures

Collisions with lighted buildings, communications towers, and other structures pose a tremendous hazard to birds. The "Issue of the Season" for the WBCI Issues Committee is Tall Structures and their Effects on Birds. To learn more about the October 2006, "No Bird Left Behind" Conference, sponsored by the Wisconsin Audubon Council, WBCI, and Madison Audubon, go to: <http://www.wisconsinaudubon.org> and see the box on the right. Click on "No Bird Left Behind and Upper Midwest Audubon Conferences" at this link, you can see the list of presenters, download PowerPoint presentations from the conference, and more.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is seeking comments on the possible adoption of measures that would reduce migratory bird kills at communication towers. They recently extended their deadline to **April 23**. All comments via mail need to include the agency name and be identified by WT Docket No. 03-187, FCC 06-164. To submit your comments electronically, go to: <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/ecfs/> (submit a filing) and type in 03-187 under "Proceeding".

Additional internet references on this topic include:

- www.towerkill.com
- Fatal Light Awareness Program:
www.flap.org/new/diurnalfr.htm
- Lights Out! in Chicago:
www.terrain.org/articles/15/kousky.htm
- WI Humane Society–Making Buildings Bird-Safe:
<http://www.wihumane.org/wildlife/wings/>
- Birds & Buildings Forum:
www.birdsandbuildings.org/index1024.html

Whooping Crane Management Plan Adopted!

The Wisconsin Natural Resources Board unanimously approved the Wisconsin Whooping Crane Management Plan. Development of the plan was led by Beth Goodman, Wisconsin Whooping Crane Coordinator at the DNR with help from Joel Trick (USFWS) and Mike Putnam (ICF). The Plan includes critical contributions from many folks in the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership. This is a guidance document specific to released and wild-hatched cranes, for use by those individuals and groups charged with maintaining habitat quality, assessing state population goals, monitoring and managing crane activities, addressing landowner interests, developing ecotourism opportunities and education initiatives. *Congratulations to all on a job well done!* Available electronically:
www.dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/birds/wcrane/wcraneplan.htm

Whooping crane highlights for 2006 include:

- First hatch and successful migration of wild whooping crane chick with parents
- Successful release/migration of isolation-reared chicks: Direct Release (4) and Ultralight-led (18)
- Wisconsin WC Management Plan and Monitoring Database development
- 83 total whooping cranes in Eastern Migratory Population

Whooping Crane Prospects for 2007 include:

- We hope there are more successful nests in Wisconsin
- Up to 30 released chicks (depends on captive propagation)
- New development of Multi-state Monitoring Strategy, with public component (stay tuned for more details in future WBCI updates)



This photo depicts 3 project highlights: First wild family (center), two 'Direct Release' chicks (brown-headed birds on left), and all 5 white birds are older, ultralight-led, released birds successfully adapted to wild migrations. *Photo by Richard Urbanek, USFWS.*

WBCI International Committee

Our website is under construction. It will feature: an ecotourism section, profiles of tropical bird conservation projects with connections to Wisconsin, neotropical migratory bird fact sheets, a "what you can do section", and a related links section.

We are developing a Sister Important Bird Area (IBA) program designed to couple a Wisconsin IBA with an IBA counterpart in Latin America. The purpose is to support site specific conservation in the tropics for the benefit of neotropical migrants wintering south of the United States.

At the Feb. 2007 WBCI-WSO Symposium, we will launch a Golden-winged Warbler Campaign to facilitate conservation of the species on its wintering grounds - montane oak forests stretching from Nicaragua to Columbia.

The first ever WBCI-sponsored Jocotoco Birdathon was a smashing success! (see photo below) In September, a group of twelve adventurous birders, well stocked with gorp and rain gear, headed to the Andes of Ecuador to do a bit of "conservation birding". It's difficult to accurately describe birding in Ecuador, but "sensory overload" somehow seems appropriate. When all was said and done, we heard or saw 390 species of birds. The tally included 47 species of tanagers, 33 species of hummers, myriad flycatchers, antbirds, ovenbirds, tapaculos, and a smattering of the rarest feathered denizens on the planet - Jocotoco Antpitta, Long-wattled Umbrellabird, and Golden-plumed Parakeet, to name a few of the headliners. We also raised more than \$14,000 to help purchase critical bird habitat in Ecuador.

We had so much fun, we're doing it again in August of 2007! If you're interested in world class birding and would like to help raise badly needed land acquisition funds for the Mindo Cloudforest Foundation, please click on the Long-Wattled Umbrellabird at www.wisconsinbirds.org and consider joining us for the second annual WBCI International Birdathon.



Photo contributed by Craig Thompson, International Committee Chair.

WBCI Committee Accomplishments (2002-2006)

Research, Inventory, and Monitoring

- Held a statewide monitoring meeting as part of the WBCI annual meeting in 2006. This meeting outlined long-term monitoring deficiencies for each species in Wisconsin and started the process of identifying short-term management issues in need of monitoring in Wisconsin. There was also a one-day session

highlighting existing and new citizen science opportunities for WBCI partners.

- Helped create and implement the Western Great Lakes Owl Monitoring Survey with Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory. This survey completed its second year of data collection in 2006.
- Assisted with the development of the Forest Bird Matrix project for Wisconsin. This project attempts to create a classification system for forest habitats across the state and a database to input point-count data from existing and future surveys into that habitat classification system. This project will assist with conservation planning and will help outline additional habitat-based surveys needed to complete our understanding of bird-habitat use.
- Sponsored the development of a Birder Certification Program with UW - Green Bay (<http://www.uwgb.edu/birds/certification/>). This project will help develop the capacity for citizen science in Wisconsin for existing and new projects needed to monitor bird populations in the state.
- Sponsored a number of local monitoring and inventory projects as part of the WBCI Small Grants program. These included surveys to gather more data for potential Important Bird Areas, Navarino Wildlife Area Bird Survey, research on housing impacts in the Baraboo Hills, and Black Tern surveys in southeast Wisconsin.
- Sponsored important conservation meetings on Shorebird Management and Golden-winged Warblers. The Golden-wing Workshop, presented by the Golden-winged Warbler Working Group, with major funding from WBCI and American Transmission Company, focused on development of a conservation strategy (research, education, and management) for the species throughout its range (breeding and wintering grounds).

Outreach

- Raised awareness and promoted bird conservation to citizens of Wisconsin through newspaper, radio, attending public events, conferences, and workshops.
- Produced a WBCI brochure describing WBCI's goals, work, opportunities to get involved, and ways you can help birds.
- Created a three panel WBCI display with interchangeable pieces that can be taken to events to recruit WBCI partners, highlight WBCI's work, and promote bird conservation.
- Developed a statewide communication plan identifying audiences, messages, and media contacts to help get

information out regarding bird conservation. The communication plan was designed to help guide the planning process for bird conservation related events, such as workshops, conferences, festivals, etc. The communication plan is available at:

<http://www.wisconsinbirds.org/CommunicationPlan.htm>

- ▲ Worked with About Place Consulting in the development of a Birds of Wisconsin Placemat, which has bright images of Wisconsin birds on the front and fun facts about them on the back. Check the About Place Consulting website for purchasing locations, prices, and ordering information. (<http://www.aboutplaceconsulting.com>).
- ▲ Added material to the WBCI website to make it more up-to-date with bird-related news, events, opportunities, and resources for WBCI partners and the public.
- ▲ Developed an e-mail listserv called WBCIng. WBCIng serves as a method for WBCI partners to communicate and inform each other about bird conservation related news, events, updates, etc. Membership is open to anyone.

Education

- ▲ Identified key bird education materials and programs appropriate to Wisconsin students preschool through college levels.
- ▲ Conducted a teacher survey to discover how best to deliver bird education to the schools.
- ▲ Developed a Mentor Program that will be initiated in each county to foster an interest in birds, birding, and bird conservation.
- ▲ Developed and began distributing a Bird Education Kit to assist Mentors and educators introducing birds and birding in the field or classroom. Each kit includes 15 pairs of binoculars, a spotting scope and tripod, three field guides, a PowerPoint presentation, a Birds of Wisconsin placemat, and poster of backyard birds.
- ▲ Planned and presented a workshop introducing some key bird education resources to educators.

Habitat Assessment & Management

- ▲ Have completed accounts of 32 priority bird species with another 136 accounts currently being finalized. These accounts will soon be available on this website and useful to managers, planners or anyone interested in Wisconsin birds.
- ▲ Developed the habitat page template used in the All-bird Conservation Plan.

- ▲ Reviewed habitat pages that have been prepared to date.
- ▲ Provided assistance on bird content in Wisconsin's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan (now known as the Wildlife Action Plan), including accounts for bird Species of Greatest Conservation Need.
- ▲ Supported the concept of a pilot Bird City, USA program in Wisconsin as developed by the Urban/Suburban Subcommittee.
- ▲ Planned by the Urban/Suburban Subcommittee, a "Wisconsin Urban Bird Workshop: Managing Birds, Habitat, and People in Urban Communities" was held at Havenwoods Environmental Center, Milwaukee, October 2004. The day focused on the recreational, economic, and conservation benefits that a community can realize from birds and birding.

Issues

- ▲ Planned and coordinated a Gull Management Symposium, "Planning for Gulls in Your Community", held in Milwaukee March 11, 2004, cosponsored by the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology. 67 persons from throughout Wisconsin, with a few attendees and presenters from Minnesota, Michigan, and Illinois attended. Scott Craven, UW Madison, Wildlife Ecology, facilitated the symposium. Management recommendations and other resources resulting from the conference are at <http://www.wisconsinbirds.org/gullresources.htm>
- ▲ Developed several Issues Papers, including: "*Wind Power and Birds*", "*Ethical Standards in Birding: Protecting Endangered, Threatened, and Rare Species*", and "*The Effects of Free-ranging Cats on Birds in Wisconsin*". These and a page about "Collisions" (including tall towers and building/window collisions) are at <http://www.wisconsinbirds.org/IssuesPapers.htm>
- ▲ Wrote a letter to U.S. F&WS, Horicon National Wildlife Refuge, and Wisconsin DOT regarding excessive wildlife and bird mortality caused by vehicle collisions along Highway 49 where it bisects the Horicon refuge. The letter, signed by 24 WBCI partners, asked for increased awareness of this problem of highway mortality and a decision on a management response. A written response from both agencies included management activities, some of which were implemented in 2006.
- ▲ Initiated, along with 20 volunteers and members of the Urban/Suburban Habitat Subcommittee, the first coordinated effort in Milwaukee in spring 2005 to assess the extent of building collisions during migration. This effort was taken over by The

Wisconsin Humane Society and their WINGS (Wisconsin Night Guardians for Songbirds) initiative, where it continues. See more at <http://www.wihumane.org/wildlife/wings/>

Important Bird Areas

- Formed a Technical Committee and developed criteria and nomination materials to advance the nomination and evaluation of potential IBAs.
- Developed a website, <http://www.wisconsinbirds.org/iba>, to disseminate information, facilitate submission of nominations, and publicize news and progress.
- 110 nominations received by the end of 2006.
- 99 nominations evaluated by the Technical Committee by the end of 2006; 43 officially dedicated IBAs, and 44 other sites approved as meeting the IBA criteria and awaiting dedication.
- Formed partnerships with a wide variety of groups including government agencies, universities, nonprofit organizations, county forests, private companies, and private citizens.
- Provided outreach to numerous groups including Audubon chapters, bird clubs, state ornithological conventions, and bird festival participants.
- Helped organize volunteer bird survey efforts (“bird blitzes”) at IBAs, including Bong State Recreation Area, Governor Dodge State Park, Greater Lake Koshkonong, and Rat River State Wildlife Area.
- Received a Citizen-based Monitoring Partnership Program grant to coordinate volunteer bird surveys at additional nominated sites.
- A private fundraising effort, the Quad 30 Campaign (<http://www.quad30campaign.org>), has raised over \$50,000 for the IBA program.

Bird-related Recreation

- Publication of the *Lake Superior/North Woods Birding and Nature Trail* guide.
- Publication of the *Mississippi & Chippewa Rivers Birding and Nature Trail* guide.
- Publication of the *Lake Michigan Birding and Nature Trail* guide.
- Publication of the *Checklist of Wisconsin Birds*.
- Formation of hundreds of diverse statewide partnerships.

- Creation of festivals and celebrations connected with completed regional Bird Trails.
- Creation of promotional opportunities for agencies, and NGOs to showcase their work, natural resources and more.
- Increased awareness of Wisconsin natural resources.
- Increased revenue for entities that provide amenities for nature-based travelers.
- Project website developed www.wisconsinbirds.org/traill.

International

- Created an annotated list of active bird-oriented projects with a demonstrable link between Wisconsin and the tropics.
- Compiled a list of “things to consider” when traveling to the tropics as an eco-tourist.
- Developed an International Committee page on the WBCI website (including development of a fact sheet on Neotropical migrant ecology and conservation)
- Worked with the Wisconsin IBA program to explore potential for developing a “Sister Reserve Program”.



February is the time to erect and prepare nesting boxes for American Kestrels, Wood Ducks, Eastern Bluebirds, and other cavity nesters.
Photo by Dave Herr.

Bald Eagle migration begins in early March.
Photo courtesy of USDA Forest Service.

