

# ***Making Our Private Lands Count for Birds***

Thursday-Saturday, March 19-21, 2015

Avalon Hotel & Conference Center, Chippewa Falls, WI

## **Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative**

### **2015 Annual Meeting**

<http://www.wisconsinbirds.org/annual-meetings>

#### **Thursday, March 19** – evening

5-8 p.m. – *Flying Wild* (separate registration \$25.00) – WBCI Education Committee

5-8 p.m. – *Birds & Beers Social* (free, but please register) – Fill Inn Station, 104 W. Columbia St., Chippewa Falls

#### **Friday, March 20** – all day – main conference

##### ***Morning – General Session***

7:30-8:30 a.m. – Registration. Snacks and coffee/beverages (for those not staying at the hotel).

8:30-9:00 a.m. – Welcome from the WBCI team – Karen Etter Hale, Yoyi Steele, and Ryan Brady

[WBCI news/happenings – Yoyi Steele](#); [The State of the Birds 2013: Birds on Private Lands – Ryan Brady](#)

9:00-9:30 a.m. – [The Importance of Private Wetlands to Birds – Tracy Hames, Wisconsin Wetlands Association](#)

9:30-10:15 a.m. – [The Importance of Private Forests to Birds – Dr. Amber Roth, Lecturer, Michigan Technological University and Midwest Landbird Migration Monitoring Coordinator](#)

10:15-10:30 a.m. – BREAK (With snacks/beverages)

10:30-11:00 a.m. – [Cost/benefit economics of implementing conservation practices on a working farm– Jeff Gaska](#)

11:00-11:30 a.m. – [The Importance of Private Grasslands to Birds – Dave Sample, WDNR](#)

11:30-12:00 p.m. – [Birds in Your Backyard – Bryan Lenz, Bird City Wisconsin director, and Kim Grveles, WDNR, Wisconsin Stopover Initiative](#)

12:00-1:00 p.m. ***Buffet-style Lunch (provided with registration)***

***Friday Afternoon Track 1 – The Importance of Private Forests***

**Moderator:** Yoyi Steele, WDNR wildlife biologist/planner and WBCI IBA/Southern Forests Coordinator

1:00-1:40 p.m. – [Value of privately-owned forests: Southern Forests example – Yoyi Steele, WDNR](#)

1:45-2:25 p.m. – [What we know about private forest landowners – Tricia Knoot](#)

2:30-3:10 p.m. – [Management options for forest landowners: A Wisconsin perspective – Mike Mossman, WDNR](#)

3:10-3:30 p.m. – Break

3:30-4:10 p.m. – Work with private forest landowners ([The Young Forest Initiative – Callie Bertsch, American Bird Conservancy](#); [My Wisconsin Woods – Steve Swenson, Aldo Leopold Foundation](#))

4:15-5:00 p.m. – Landowner stories (Active management/timber production – Steve Thaler, Chippewa Falls; Preservation/restoration – Jon Schultz, Arcadia; urban birdscaping – Steve Betchkal, Eau Claire)

### ***Friday Afternoon Track 2 – The Importance of Private Grasslands***

**Moderator:** Bill Hogseth, WDNR wildlife biologist for Eau Claire and Chippewa counties

1:00-1:40 p.m. – [Understanding grassland birds – Bill Hogseth, WDNR](#)

1:45-2:25 p.m. – [Grazing as a grassland habitat management tool – Laura Paine, SW Badger RC&D](#)

2:30-3:10 p.m. – [Making the Farm Bill work for you – Scott Stipetic, WI Farm Bill Biologist](#)

3:10-3:30 p.m. – Break

3:30-4:10 p.m. – [Wisconsin DNR landscape scale Grassland conservation areas – Missy Sparrow and Maureen Rowe, WDNR](#)

4:15-5:00 p.m. – Landowner stories (Floodplain prairie restoration – Kathy Ruggles, John Thomas; Managing hayfields for grassland birds – Terry Balding; Conservation grazing – Kevin Mahalko)

### ***Friday Afternoon Track 3 – The Importance of Private Wetlands***

**Moderator:** Jason Fleener, WDNR Wetland Habitat Specialist

1:00-1:40 p.m. – [Recognizing restorable wetlands on private lands – Jason Fleener, WDNR](#)

1:45-2:25 p.m. – [Caring for private wetlands: What do you want and how will you get there? – Tracy Hames, Wisconsin Wetlands Association](#)

2:30-3:10 p.m. – [Wetland habitat improvement options for private landowners – Kurt Waterstradt](#)

3:10-3:30 p.m. – Break

3:30-4:10 p.m. – [Urban wetland restoration example: Mequon Nature Preserve – Peter Ziegler, Wisconsin Waterfowl Association, and Kristin Gies, Mequon Nature Preserve](#)

4:15-5:00 p.m. – [Successful restorations on private lands – Katie Rowe, WDNR, and Caitlin Smith, USFWS](#)

**Dinner on your own** (A list of restaurants will be at the registration table.)

**Saturday, March 21**– 8:30-11:30 a.m. *Field trip caravans leave at 8:30 a.m. from the Avalon Hotel*

Please be prepared for any kind of weather, and bring your own snacks or drinks (some snacks *may* be provided)

[Resources for Conservation-Minded Forest Landowners – prepared by Mike Mossman, WDNR](#)

### **Forest Field Trip**

Visit a complex of forested private properties in northern Chippewa County that were slated for intensive residential and vacation home development but were permanently protected with conservation easements established by West Wisconsin Land Trust. We will meet with a landowner to discuss his personal experience with the land protection process. We will also discuss conservation easements, how they are implemented, and how they are maintained in the long-term by land trust staff. The properties are located in an area defined by glacial topography that includes pothole lakes, depressional wetlands, and extensive hardwood forests. The permanent protection of these properties has contributed to a significant landscape-scale conservation impact resulting in 10,000+ acres of contiguous forest as well as a mosaic of public-private ownership. Silviculture practices have aimed to maintain continuous canopy, multiple age classes, and large diameter trees. Breeding bird species documented in the area include Cerulean Warbler, Wood Thrush, Golden-winged Warbler, etc.

*Trip leader:* Yoyi Steele (DNR) and Bill Hogseth (DNR) or Rick Remington (WWLT) \*TBD based on WWLT staff availability

### **Grasslands Field Trip**

Visit the rolling farm country of southern Eau Claire County where multiple landowners have implemented grassland management practices. First, we will visit a family farm where Terry Balding (former UW-Eau Claire ornithology professor) has actively managed the surrogate grasslands to benefit nesting grassland birds by delaying the timing of hay cutting to accommodate breeding activity. Annual bird counts have been conducted on the property for more than a decade and have detected Henslow's Sparrow, Grasshopper Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, Bobolinks, etc. Then, we will visit another nearby property where the landowner has used the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) to implement grassland restoration practices on former agricultural fields.

*Trip leaders:* Steve Betchkal (local birder) and Terry Balding (landowner)

### **Wetlands Field Trip**

Visit wetlands that were restored on private properties using the government cost-share programs such as the Wetland Reserve Program and DNR private wetlands program through state waterfowl stamp funding.

Located in central Chippewa County, the properties will showcase multiple different techniques used to restore hydrologic function including scrapes, ditch plugs, drain tile breaks, and dike construction. Trip leaders will discuss how to identify degraded wetlands, how to design wetland projects, and how to implement restorations (i.e. materials and equipment). Management of adjacent uplands will also be discussed.

*Trip leaders:* Scott Stipetich (Farm Bill biologist) and John Dunn (retired DNR wildlife biologist)