

# **WBCI Annual Conference**

## **October 27-29, 2016**

### **PROTECTING BIRDS THROUGH ACTION & ART**

Presented by **Bird City Wisconsin** and **Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative**

Stoney Creek Hotel & Conference Center, Rothschild, Wisconsin

[Program Schedule and Speakers](#) (with links to PDFs of presentations)

The 2016 Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative (WBCI) - Bird City Wisconsin (BCW) meeting was a smashing success. This was the second BCW meeting (2014), with each drawing in excess of 150 people. This year's attendees included at least 56 people from 33 different Bird City communities as well as representatives from the Bird City programs that Bird City Wisconsin has helped to launch in Indiana, Iowa, and Minnesota.

The conference was titled "Protecting Birds through Action and Art" and featured a unique blend of action-inspiring presentations focused on science and art. The lineup of speakers was outstanding (see attached), and featured Kenn Kaufman, Tom Will, Sue Bonfield, Joanna Eckles, Bob Petty, and many more. Conference attendees also got a special treat: a hosted viewing of the Birds in Art exhibit at the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum.

Friday's sessions focused on the science behind major threats to birds, featuring presentations on the Migratory Bird Treaty, the primary causes of bird mortality, the reality of on-the-ground bird conservation, International Migratory Bird Day, collisions, cats, native plants, climate change, and Bird City Wisconsin. It was a jam-packed day that shared the current state of conservation with conference attendees. Friday's goals were to use current research to motivate people to action while providing them with the data and tools that they would need to be equipped to return home to advocate for conservation in their communities.

Friday evening featured a reception at the Woodson Art Museum where Andy McGivern and the museum's wonderful staff introduced conference goers to the world-famous Birds in Art exhibition. In addition to being a visually stunning and moving experience, our time at the Woodson was a great way to decompress following Friday's presentations and transition to the theme for Saturday: It's All about Art & Culture.

The mood in the room was different on Saturday, and rightly so. Presentations covered the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, the history of art in conservation campaigns, the use of art in modern conservation campaigns, the nexus of art, conservation, and education, the power of photography to illuminate both the importance of birds and conservation in general as well as the issue of window collisions more specifically, the use of writing as a conservation tool, and some specific techniques for using art to provide conservation education.

Follow-up surveys of conference attendees showed that people were very happy with the material that was presented to them, suggesting that conference organizers met their goal of using science and art to inspire attendees to take action in their communities.

Supported, in part, by the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin's C.D. Besadny Conservation Grant Program.

