



Stewards of the Upper Mississippi River Refuge



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Welcome New Members

- Bob Retzel**
- Eric Ollie**



Whooping Crane

Message From The President

It seems so long ago that I sat down to put together the last issue of the The Pelican Scoop. With the government shut-down on October 1st, that also put a halt to all Steward's activities and tours along with the October issue of the newsletter. Now that things are back to normal, we are looking forward to this Saturday's Monthly Bird Walk, another great Owl Prowl with Bob Walton on Saturday, Nov. 16th, and Lost Mound tours on Nov. 24th, Dec. 14th, and Dec. 15th.

I would also like to remind you that several months ago we created our new website. You can now find all of our Stewards events, lots of great photos, and all of the back issues of The Pelican Scoop at www.stewardsumrr.org. Our email address also changed to stewardsumrr@gmail.com. We have set up dates for our Bald Eagle Viewing Tours for January, February, and March and they are posted on the new website. The Bald Eagles are starting to arrive back in our area for the winter. Speaking of

Anne's Birding Corner

A tall white bird with a red crown, red face, and black primaries, the Whooping Crane was classified as an endangered species in 1967. They were on the verge of extinction in 1940 with only around 15 known individuals from a wild population in marshes of the Wood Buffalo National Park in Alberta, Canada. This wild population continues to exist with over 250 individuals. These birds migrate through the Great Plains and winter in the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge and surrounding areas on the coast of Texas. The effort to bring the Whooping Crane back from the verge of extinction has been a cooperative

effort of groups in the U.S. and Canada. Since 2001, Operation Migration has played a lead role in the reintroduction and migration of Whooping Cranes in Eastern North America. This fall, eight young cranes will be led by ultralight aircraft from White River Marsh Wildlife Area, WI to St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge, FL. You can check their progress and learn more at: <http://operationmigration.com/>. The International Crane Foundation in Baraboo, WI has nine Whooping Crane chicks for this year's (2013) Direct Release Program. These chicks will be released in Horicon National Wildlife Refuge this fall so they



Connie Zink - Savanna, IL

Bald Eagles save this date, January 4th 2014! The 30th annual Bald Eagle Watch in Clinton, Ia. and at Lock and Dam 13 will be held on the first Saturday in January. Complete info will be in the December newsletter!



Anne Straight - Forresteron, IL

may follow older cranes south. In a U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service report dated April 10, 2013, there were around 445 birds in the wild, with around 108 individuals in the eastern population including 84 confirmed in Wisconsin. Non-migratory flocks of around 20 birds in Florida and 14 in Louisiana were included in the report.

Backwater Birding With Bob



Bob Walton - Zwingle, Ia,

Do you have a birding question?? Ask Bob! Please email Bob at stewardsumrr@gmail.com and your question will be answered in future issues.

The Tundra Swan used to be called the "Whistling Swan." The species' former name referred to the sound made by the slow, powerful beating of their wings in flight.



As we ease into November, there is a bite in the northwesterly winds that serves as a chilly reminder that winter weather is rapidly approaching. With most of our trees now shedding their colorful foliage, the majority of the fall bird migration has been completed. In contrast to spring and summer, November birders can sleep in because peak passerine bird activity corresponds to peak insect availability, which is usually between 8:00 am and 10:00 am, and between 3:00 pm and 5:00 pm. As the sun warms the brushy edges of marshes and reaches the riparian forest understory, thousands of midges and other small insects emerge, serving up a nutritious smorgasbord for our remaining insect eating birds. By November, our summer sparrows (Chipping, Field, Grasshopper, Lark, Vesper and Savannah) will be replaced with winter sparrows (Tree Sparrows, White-throated Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos, and lesser numbers of Song Spar-

rows). Most of the warblers still around at this time of year will be Yellow-rumped Warblers along with a few Palm and Pine Warblers. Resembling small warblers, the most abundant small birds at this time of the year are Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Golden-crowned Kinglets. This is also a great month to view migrating raptors. Overwintering migrants that can commonly be observed in the marshes include Bald Eagles, Northern Harriers, and Rough-legged Hawks. Both native and reconstructed prairies are great places to scan for Short-eared Owls. Green Island, Thomson Prairie, and Lost Mound are good areas to search for them, mostly at sunset when they abandon their ground roosts, in the prairie and begin their low swallow like flights in search of mice. The fall waterfowl migration will be peaking in mid-November. The refuge areas of Spring Lake and Green Island will hold large

concentrations of geese, Green-winged Teal, Mallards, American Wigeon, and Gadwalls. Both of these areas are closed to pedestrian access, but viewing is available from the public overlooks at Spring Lake and from the county roadways at the west edge of Green Island. Lock and Dam 13, the Thomson Causeway, and Sloane's Marsh overlook offer excellent opportunities to view large rafts of diving ducks including Canvasbacks, scaup, and one of the largest concentrations of Tundra Swans found on the Mississippi. In contrast to other waterfowl, the Canvasbacks and Tundra Swans abandon the Mississippi flyway and head eastward from here, to overwinter at Chesapeake Bay. Mid-November until Thanksgiving is a good time to observe these majestic waterfowl. I encourage everyone to visit their favorite wetlands this fall and enjoy all the beauty and solitude our Upper Mississippi Refuge has to offer.

Jr. Stewards Chatter

Saturday, September 7 we had Kid's Fishing Day at the Frog Pond. 31 kids plus their parents and even some grandparents were there. We started the day with Exelon Fishery Biologist Jeremiah Haas talking about the equipment you need to go fishing, different kinds of lures and how to tie knots in your line so you wouldn't lose your hooks. He brought some live fish to show us what we might catch, then he released them into the pond and we started fishing.

Most all of us caught something even if it was just a big clump of algae or a pole bending stick! Thank you to Todd's Tackle for donating the bait, Bill Bates from Eagle River Liquor for the pop and water, Jeremiah Haas for the fish talk and prizes and the Stewards of the Upper Mississippi River for the food and a great day of fishing!



Jr Steward's Reporter Ethan Brown, 5th grader, Savanna, IL

Flash Point - Inspiration



Connie Inskeep - Moline, IL.

Where do you find inspiration for your photography? I find it everywhere I look. It can be as vast as a sprawling landscape or as minute as a single dandelion seed floating on the wind. Sometimes I just like to take my camera out and take pictures of whatever moves (or doesn't).



A couple of our favorite places to take pictures are Lock and Dam #13 in Fulton, IL and Mississippi Palisades State Park in Savanna, IL. Both locations have a plethora of photographic opportunities from the up close wildlife in Fulton to the bluffs that overlook the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge in Savanna.

Both places are excellent for birding, as well. The habitat makes a perfect home for our native species and also is very welcoming for the migrating species that pass through every year. It doesn't matter what time of the day you visit, you are guaranteed to see something spectacular in either of these two spots. Plan a visit sometime and see for yourself.



Until next time, grab your camera and get out there and enjoy what nature has to offer!

Lost Mound's 10 Year Anniversary by Ed Britton

In celebration of the 10th year that Lost Mound has officially been a management unit within the National Wildlife Refuge System, here is a time capsule glimpse of the area's history.

1917: Department of Defense established the Savanna Army Depot as an artillery test site.

1925: Savanna National Forest was established by the US Forest Service in the bottomlands.

1926: President Calvin Coolidge re-named Savanna National Forest to Bellevue-Savanna National Forest. The national forest designation was eliminated in 1956.

1950's: Over 7,000 employees worked at the Depot.

1995: Congress announced the 13,062 acre Savanna Army Depot would be shuttered within six years under the Base Realignment and Closure Act. The Depot's missions since its beginning included artillery testing, munitions production, prisoner of war camp, and one of the largest munitions storage areas in the U.S.

1996: Army approved an agreement that U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service would receive 9,870 acres to become part of Savanna District, Upper Mississippi River

National Wildlife and Fish Refuge.

1997: The name Lost Mound Unit was officially designated and named after the adjacent historic village of Lost Mound.

1998: Illinois Natural History Survey assigned two scientist level staff positions, a botanist and an avian ecologist, to begin natural resource studies. Due to departures by both staff and budget cuts, INHS no longer has staff at Lost Mound but University of Illinois researchers have ongoing projects.

1999: Site Manager Alan Anderson is first permanent Refuge employee assigned to Lost Mound. Cattle grazing was eliminated after decades of use to reduce the fire hazard and marked the beginning of plant restoration at the largest contiguous remnant sand prairie/savanna in Illinois. 47 species of plants and wildlife confirmed that have state or federal threatened or endangered status.

2000: The military mission officially ended on March 18. A small Army staff remains on site to conduct environmental clean-up. The Nature Conservancy identified Lost Mound as a Portfolio Conservation Site of National Significance for the Central Tallgrass Prairie Ecoregion.

2002: Crooked Slough was officially opened for public recreation for the first

time in over 50 years.

2003: On September 26, Department of Interior and Department of Defense approved a Memorandum of Agreement to officially establish Lost Mound Unit. The agreement identified that lands having no environmental contamination would transfer to Interior but lands with contamination would have overlay management.

2004: The National Audubon Society identified Lost Mound as a Nationally Significant Important Bird Area.

2005: Illinois Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service approved a Cooperative Agreement to jointly manage Lost Mound. At this time, no IDNR staff are working at Lost Mound.

2007: Illinois Natural History Survey initiated the Corps of Discovery program with 15 individuals completing a course of study on nature, plants, and wildlife at Lost Mound. Special deer hunts for youth and adults with disabilities began and currently attract national attention with quadriplegics, paraplegics, and amputees participating from 10 states in 2012.

2008: The first prescribed burn on the prairie was conducted for native plant restoration.

2010: Illinois Department of Natural Resources designated Lost Mound within four Conservation Opportunity Areas.

2011: A 17 inch rain caused a wall of water that washed out two of the three primary access roads. The BNSF rail line was washed out causing 21 rail cars loaded with coal to derail onto Lost Mound.

2013: Eighteen years have now passed with many accomplishments at Lost Mound including: 3,743 acres have transferred to the Refuge; active sand prairie restoration program; 30 deteriorated military buildings containing asbestos have been demolished; 100,000 square feet of lumber recycled; 30,000 pounds of metals recycled and; a solar array system is being installed on the administrative office.



“Sightings Around the Refuge”



Wood Duck by Michael Fitzgerald



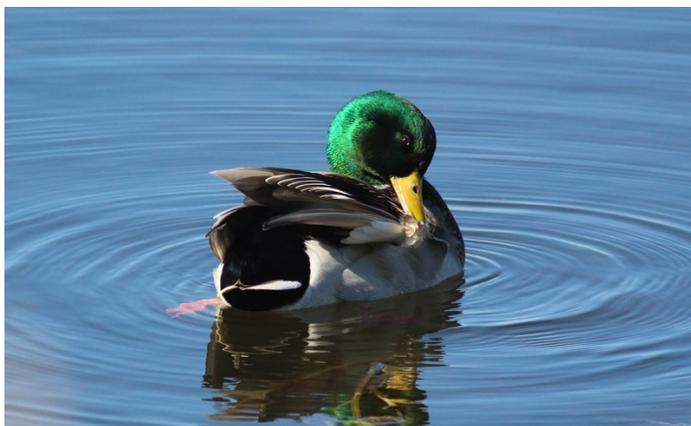
Praying Mantis by Debbie Cram



White Sphinx Moth by Michael Fitzgerald



Autumn Leaves by Debbie Cram



Mallard by Wade and Connie Inskip



Pied-billed Grebe by Wade and Connie

Photos by Stan Bousson: Whooping Cranes at Necedah NWR



Schedule of Events



Jr. Stewards Waterfowl Migration



Jr. Stewards Waterfowl Migration

Saturday, November 9th “Monthly Bird Walk”
9:00am - 11:00am (Meet at Sloane Marsh)

Friday, November 15th Monthly Stewards Potluck Meeting 11:00am - 1:30pm

Saturday, November 16th “Owl Prowl” with Bob Walton 6:00pm - ? Thomson Causeway*

Sunday, November 24th “Lost Mound Birding Van Tour” 1:00pm – 5:00pm *

Saturday, December 7th Jr. Stewards “Christmas Bird Count” 9:00am -12:00pm

Saturday, December 14th “Monthly Bird Walk” 9:00am - 11:00am (Meet at Sloane Marsh)

Saturday, December 14th “Lost Mound Birding Van Tour” 1:00pm – 5:00pm *

Sunday, December 15th “Lost Mound Birding Van Tour” 1:00pm – 5:00pm *

Friday, December 20th Monthly Stewards Potluck Meeting and Christmas Party 11:00am - 1:30pm

Saturday, January 4th “Bald Eagle Days” Clinton Community College and Lock & Dam 13

Saturday, January 11th “Bald Eagle Viewing Tour” 1:00pm - 4:00 pm (Destination Subject to Change)

Friday, January 17th Monthly Stewards Potluck Meeting 11:00am - 1:30pm

Saturday, January 18th “Bald Eagle Viewing Tour” 1:00pm - 4:00 pm (Destination Subject to Change)

Saturday, January 25th “Bald Eagle Viewing Tour” 1:00pm - 4:00 pm (Destination Subject to Change)

*** All events are free and open to the public but registration is required. Please call 815-273-2732 or email stewardsumrr@gmail.com**

For additional events see our website www.stewardsumrr.org



Stewards of the Upper Mississippi River Refuge

815-273-2732

Primary Business Address stewardsumrr@gmail.com



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www.stewardsumrr.org

Membership Form

All members receive a 10% discount at the Ingersoll Wetlands Learning Center Book Store.

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____
 Email: _____

Membership Categories

- Blazing Star (Student) \$5
- Yellow-headed Blackbird (Individual) \$10
- Ornate Box Turtle (Family) \$20
- Sandhill Crane (Supporter) \$100
- Osprey (Corporate) \$250
- Bald Eagle (Lifetime) \$1,000

Mail completed form to SUMRR:

7071 Riverview Rd

Thomson, IL 61285

www.stewardsumrr.org



Make a difference and join today.

Owl Prowl



Saturday November 16, 2013

Time: 6:00 pm—9:00 p.m.

Presenter: Bob Walton

Meet at the Thomson Causeway Amphitheater

Directions: Take IL Rt. 84 to Thomson, IL. Turn west onto Main Street, then turn south onto Lewis Ave. Follow this road until you reach the 1st set of campgrounds and turn right. Amphitheater is located near the shower house. GPS address: 41 56.952N 090 07.014W.



Join us as we travel into the night to listen for the hoots, wails, and shrieks of owls. Bob will converse with the owls, with a chance of drawing them closer.

The event will take place along the Thomson riparian corridor of the Mississippi River. Please come prepared to walk and dress for the weather.



To sign up or for more information:



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