



Stewards of the Upper Mississippi River Refuge



The Pelican Scoop

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Welcome New Members

Thomas Snow

Renewing Members

Richard and Kathleen Weber

Message From The President

Happy December everyone, first off I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the Stewards. A lot of this issue of “The Pelican Scoop” will be devoted to our National Symbol, the Bald Eagle. It is Bald Eagle time here again at the “Upper Miss” Refuge. Bald Eagles have been showing up in record numbers at Lock and Dam 13 so far this season. Our Jr. Stewards field trip on December 7th yielded views of more than 850 Bald Eagles at the Lock and Dam at one time. It is definitely nature at it’s best! On Saturday morning we even had an added bonus of a Glaucous Gull feeding at the dam along with the Ring-billed and Herring Gulls. December 7th was the last meeting of the

year for the 2013 Jr. Stewards group. We finished off the morning with a “Christmas Bird Count”, we were teaching the kids how an actual “Audubon Christmas Bird Count” works. Applications are now being accepted for the 2014 Jr. Stewards program. If you a have a child that may be interested please contact Pam Steinhaus, Visitor Services, for more information. Please mark your calendars for Saturday, January 4th! The 30th annual “Bald Eagle Days” will be taking place at Clinton Community College and Lock and Dam 13 from 9:00am until 2:00pm. The National Eagle Center from Wabasha, Mn. will be presenting the main program at 10:00am and 1:00pm. There will also be photo opportuni-



Connie Zink - Savanna, Il.

ties with a live Bald Eagle. Also, Native American Rudy Vallejo will be returning to do his Bald Eagle Dance. It is a great family fun-filled day and free to the public. Also in this issue we have included the dates for some of our upcoming Bald Eagle Viewing Tours. Please check out the dates in our events section and join us on one of our outings to celebrate our National Symbol, the Bald Eagle. Until next month, Happy Holidays!

Anne’s Birding Corner



Fox Sparrow by Anne Straight

A large sparrow with a rufous tail and plumage gives the Fox Sparrow its name. The Fox Sparrow is heavily marked with rufous streaks that merge into a central spot. The Fox Sparrow is highly variable with four subspecies: Red, Slate-colored, Thick-billed and Sooty. Our visitor during the winter and migration, is the “Red” species. The Fox Sparrow nests in Can-

ada, Alaska, and the western mountains of the U.S. Some migrate short distances to lower elevations from the mountainous regions. The longer migration is to the central or southeastern United States. When feeding, it scratches with its feet to uncover debris for insects. It has the most melodious song of all the sparrows.



Anne Straight - Forresteron, Il.

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.

Winter is a difficult time for all wildlife, including eagles. To survive, they are inactive to conserve energy. The only time that they move is during social interactions, finding food, bathing and flying to the night roost. In fact, eagles spend about 92% of their winter days just sitting.

As I fumbled with numb fingers to adjust the focus on my spotting scope, the lyrics of Bob Dylan's tune, "The times they are a changing," kept drifting through my mind. Just last week I had stood in the same spot along the Thomson Causeway, wearing only a windbreaker, as I watched coot and hundreds of puddle ducks including Green-winged Teal, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, and lots of Mallards. There were warm season puddle ducks last week and this week there is nothing but hard core, cold weather, diving ducks. Now that December has arrived, the birds and the weather are definitely "a changing." Struggling against the cold northwestern winds, my bird watching efforts in this frigid weather were quickly rewarded with the sight and sounds of almost one hundred Tundra Swans landing in a patch of open water within seventy-five yards of the shoreline. Scanning beyond the swans, I discovered another, larger patch of open water that held a raft of over a thousand Canvasback Ducks! I then drove out to the northern most point of the campground to

Jr. Stewards Chatter

On Saturday, November 5th, the Junior Stewards of the Upper Mississippi River Refuge took a trip to Spring Lake to study waterfowl. They looked at ducks, geese, and swans. They marked down the types of birds they saw. Later, they took a trip to the pond near the Ingersoll Wetlands Learning Center to try to find different species. In the end, they found several species of

scan some more open pockets of water. Utilizing my car as a windbreak, I set up the spotting scope to scan over the hood of the car at some open stretches of water nearly one quarter of a mile away that was filled with at least another 600-700 Tundra Swans. They were surrounded by hundreds of Common Goldeneyes, Lesser Scaup, and Ruddy Ducks too numerous to count—a site well worth the discomfort of the -40 wind chill! As the river continues to freeze up during the first week of December, I anticipate that the majority of the Tundra Swans and Canvasback Ducks will abandon the Mississippi and migrate east to Chesapeake Bay on the Atlantic Coast to overwinter, until returning once again in early March. The remainder of December should offer excellent viewing of winter diving ducks and even some sea ducks. Winter ducks utilize the open water areas above and below Lock & Dam 13 and 14, and any pockets of open water in the main channel in the Thomson, Big Slough, and Lost Mound Refuge area. Winter ducks currently found in large numbers will remain until early March and include Common Goldeneyes, Common Mergansers, Hooded Mergansers,

birds that live near water.



Brennon Cavanagh 5th grade
Savanna, IL

and Buffleheads. We were fortunate to see several of the rare "sea ducks" that often overwinter in Pools 13 and 14. While searching a small patch of open water in the Big Slough area we discovered three Surf Scoters, and a single White-winged Scoter. Later that morning at Lock & Dam 13 we saw several more Surf Scoters and a Long-tailed Duck. "Sea ducks" normally frequent the Great Lakes and the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. They include scoters, Long-tailed Ducks and eiders. The following is a summary of December bird viewing opportunities: December 1-10th-- Look for gulls, diving ducks and Bald Eagles concentrating around Lock & Dams. Large numbers of Dark-eyed Juncos and Tree Sparrows will be in fence rows and thick grassy areas. December 10-20th— Check thickets of evergreens for Long eared Owls and Saw-whet Owls. Shoulders of snow free roadways will have large flocks of Horned Larks, Lapland Longspurs, and Snow buntings. December 20-30th It is a good time to search marshlands for Northern Harriers and Rough-legged Hawks. I encourage everyone to grab your binoculars, and enjoy the great birding opportunities that the Upper Mississippi River Refuge has to offer.



Flash Point - It is Time for the Eagles Again!



Connie Inskeep - Moline, IL.

I am always so excited for this time of year, when the eagles begin to show up along the Mississippi River. It is November 29th and I have been hearing talk of Bald Eagles being spotted along the river. We have our batteries charged and are ready to brave the cold to get some spectacular shots of these wonderful creatures.

If you have never seen a Bald Eagle in the wild, I encourage you to visit the Lock and Dams along the Mississippi River for a view of something amazing. You will forget all about your frozen fingers and toes when you watch an eagle fishing right in front of you at Lock and Dam 14 in Pleasant Valley (between Bettendorf and LeClaire, IA) or Lock and Dam 15 in downtown Davenport, IA. You will be up close and personal with one of the largest avian predators in the area. It is awe inspiring to watch them dive from the air with talons outstretched to grab a fish from the water. There are times when the fish is so large you wonder how they can fly away with it.

There is a plethora of photo opportunities and with the closeness of the action, you do not need a huge zoom lens (although you will see several there). The photos you see here were either taken with a 300mm or 400mm zoom lens, handheld. However, if you have a point and shoot with a sport setting and a small zoom, you can come away with some great shots.



Until next time, plan a trip to see the Bald Eagles in action. I can guarantee it is a sight you will not soon forget.

Amazon Smiles - Your Chance to Help!

For those who are already AMAZON customers please consider logging in at smile.amazon.com when you make your purchases. Doing so, allows you to designate a favorite registered non profit group as a recipient of AMAZON donations. Thanks to your purchases, as the picture suggests, “YOU SHOP, AMAZON GIVES”.

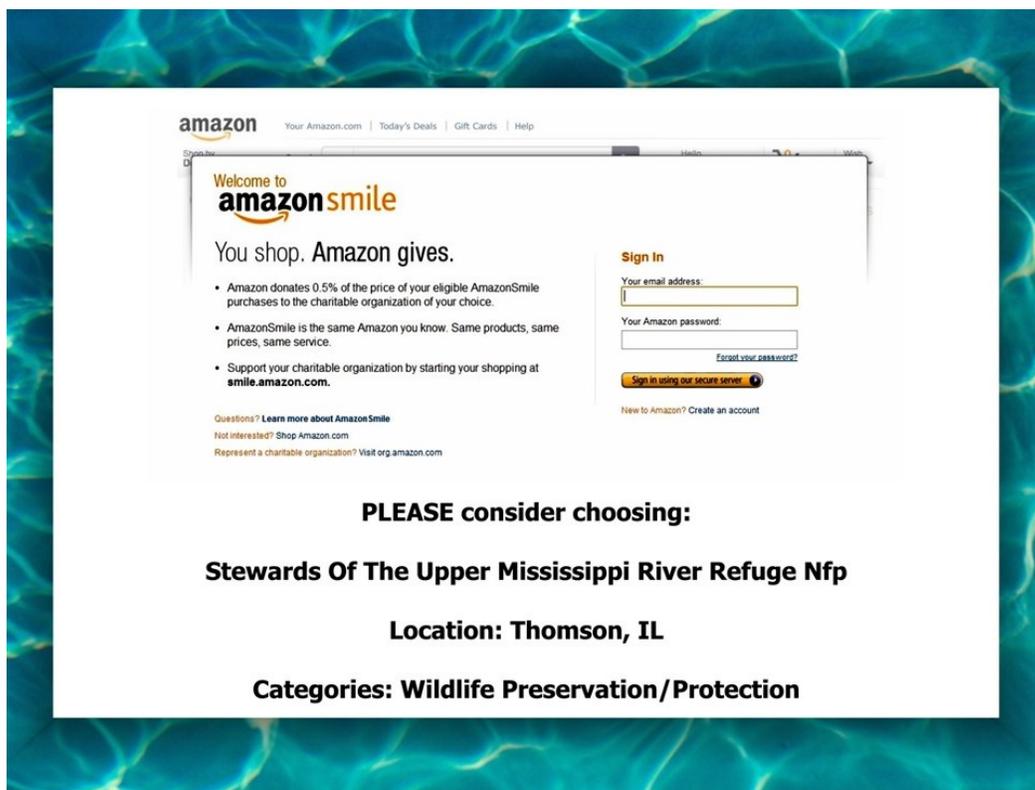
We are listed as Stewards Of The Upper Mississippi River Refuge NFP

Location: Thomson, IL

Categories: Wildlife Preservation/Protection

We would appreciate your consideration.

You use your existing Amazon log in. You do not need to establish a new account. You do need to use the smile.amazon.com link to allow your non profit group to receive a donation from Amazon.



The image shows a screenshot of the Amazon Smile website. The page features the Amazon logo at the top left, followed by navigation links for 'Your Amazon.com', 'Today's Deals', 'Gift Cards', and 'Help'. The main heading reads 'Welcome to amazon smile' with the tagline 'You shop. Amazon gives.' Below this, there is a list of bullet points explaining the program: Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to a charity of choice, the service is identical to the main Amazon site, and users can support charities by shopping at smile.amazon.com. To the right, there is a 'Sign in' section with input fields for 'Your email address' and 'Your Amazon password', a 'Forgot your password?' link, and a 'Sign in using our secure server' button. At the bottom of the sign-in section, there is a link for 'New to Amazon? Create an account'. Below the screenshot, there is a white box with a blue border containing the following text: 'PLEASE consider choosing: Stewards Of The Upper Mississippi River Refuge Nfp Location: Thomson, IL Categories: Wildlife Preservation/Protection'.

PLEASE consider choosing:

Stewards Of The Upper Mississippi River Refuge Nfp

Location: Thomson, IL

Categories: Wildlife Preservation/Protection

“Sightings Around the Refuge”



Bald Eagles by Michael Fitzgerald



Bald Eagles by Michael Fitzgerald



Bald Eagles by Michael Fitzgerald



Bald Eagle by Larry and Bonnie Thoren



Bald Eagles at Lock and Dam 13 by Connie Zink



Bald Eagle by Larry and Bonnie Thoren

Photos by Stan Bousson: Bald Eagles



Schedule of Events



Mallard by Michael Fitzgerald



Northern Shoveler by Michael Fitzgerald

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 Pot-
luck Meeting and Christmas Party 11:00am -
1:30pm

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

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

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)

Sunday, January 19th “Lost Mound Birding Van
Tour” 1:00pm – 5:00pm *

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

Friday, February 7th “Bald Eagle Viewing Tour”
9:00am - 12:00 pm (Destination Subject to Change)

Saturday, February 8th “Monthly Bird Walk” 9:00am
- 11:00am (Meet at Sloane Marsh)

Saturday, February 8th “Lost Mound Birding Van
Tour” 1:00pm – 5:00pm *

Sunday, February 16th “Bald Eagle Viewing Tour”
2:00pm - 5:00 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



Like us on
Facebook

Check out our Website:
www.stewardsumrr.org

Membership Form

All members receive a 10% discount at the Inger-
soll 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.

30th Annual Clinton Bald Eagle Watch

Saturday, January 4, 2014

Stan Bousson

Clinton, Iowa & Fulton, Illinois

Schedule of Events

- 8:30 a.m.—2:30 p.m. *Eagle Watching at Lock and Dam #13, Fulton, IL., five miles north of Fulton, IL. off Highway 84.*
- 9:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m. *Free Educational Programs & Exhibits
Clinton Community College, 1000 Lincoln Blvd., Clinton, IA.*
- 9:45 a.m. **Welcome**—Ben DeRoo, US Corps of Engineers,
Pam Steinhaus US Fish and Wildlife Service
- 10:00 a.m. **"The American Bald Eagle"**—National Eagle Center,
Wabasha, MN
- 11:15 a.m. **Native American Dance**—In honor of the Bald Eagle
Rudy Vallejo, Kickapoo Eagle Dancer
- 11:45 a.m.—12:45 p.m. Live eagle will be available for photo opportunities
- 12:30 p.m. **"Listen to the Eagles' Message"** DVD produced by S.O.A.R
- 1:00 p.m. **"The American Bald Eagle"**—National Eagle Center,
Wabasha, MN

Programs and Exhibits will feature: A Live Bald Eagle, Exhibits, Film, Door Prizes,
Food and Drinks.



- *Free Courtesy Bus Service from the College to Lock and Dam 13 viewing area. (Wiersema Charter Bus Service)*
- *Refreshments available at the Dam.*



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CALL:

US Fish and Wildlife Service (815)273-2732
US Army Corps of Engineers—(815)259-3628

