



Stewards of the Upper Mississippi River Refuge



The Pelican Scoop

Inside this issue:

<i>Backwater Birding with Bob</i>	2
<i>"Are You A Peeping Tom"</i> by Pam Steinhaus	2
<i>Flash Point - Connie Inskip</i>	3
<i>"Memories Shared About Beaver Island"</i> by Ed Britton	4
<i>Membership Renewal</i>	5
<i>Sightings around the Refuge by the Stewards</i>	6
<i>More Sightings Around the Refuge</i>	7
<i>Even More Sightings Around the Refuge</i>	8
<i>Schedule of Events and Mem- bership Form</i>	9
<i>Migratory Bird Day</i>	10

Welcome New Members

Elda Goodmiller

Maria Onak



Merlin by Anne Straight

Message From The President

Welcome Spring!!!! Except for a few days here and there that may return to cooler temperatures, I think we are finally on the threshold of the warmer days of Spring. As much as I love winter and snow, I must say I am so anxious for Spring gardening and the arrival of all of my warm weather, feathered friends back to my yard such as Baltimore Orioles, Ruby-throated Hummingbirds, Purple Martins, and Grey Catbirds. Recently, I have been spending a lot of time outside doing yard work. The other morning I was out raking the yard on a very brisk 34 degree morning around 7:30 am. when I noticed a pair of Wood Ducks landing in an old oak tree across the street from my house. They were hopefully checking it out as a nesting site for this season. Even though I live within Savanna city limits, our street borders a wooded area with some wetlands. Shortly after the Wood Ducks arrived, I had the pleasure of a lone Sandhill Crane flying over head on its way to the wetlands on the other side of the railroad tracks. The several hours I was in the front yard raking I also heard many times the call of a Red-tailed Hawk. I am pretty sure there are a nesting pair in the woods just down the hill. For the first time in the 42 years that I have lived here, I am excited about a pair of Ring-necked pheasants behind my house along the banks of the railroad tracks. I photographed the male walking through the neighbors front yard several weeks ago and



Connie Zink - Savanna, IL

heard him calling numerous times over the last couple days. You never know the wonders of nature that may be right out your back door. With the coming of Spring, I hope all of you have a chance to get outside and experience some of the great wildlife in your area. If you have a chance, please join us for Migratory Bird Day, Saturday May 17th at Lost Mound Unit. We can guarantee you a fun day, filled with nature!

Anne's Birding Corner

A small stocky, dark falcon, the Merlin has a powerful flight. The male is a slate gray or dark gray above with broad black tail bands. The female and immature are darker brown. Spotting prey from a perch, it closes in a burst of speed. It feeds mostly on small birds, but also on insects like dragonflies and small mammals. Plumage varies in the 3 subspecies, the dark "black" Merlin of the Pacific Northwest, the pale

"prairie" (richardsonii) of the northern prairies and the intermediate "taiga" or boreal, most common in Canada and eastern U.S. It nests in forest edges, wooded farmland, marsh and Coastal areas. It breeds in Canada and the upper Great Plains of the United States. It winters from the Great Plains, to the west and as far south as the northern part of South America.



Anne Straight - Forreston, 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.

Peregrine falcons feed primarily on birds they take in the air, which they pluck before eating.



A recent outing to Green Island has convinced me that in spite of the cold temperature and bitter cold winds, spring indeed is here! Opting for an evening visit to Green Island instead of our normal sunrise visit, Sandy and I ventured down Fish Lake Road around 7:00 pm to find the marshland and cropland fairly empty. We did manage to see several flocks of Northern Shovelers, a few Hooded Mergansers, lots of Mallards, and dozens of local Canada Geese that defiantly honked and created quite a fuss about our intrusion down their roadway. We also located several Greater Yellowlegs and a beautiful male Northern Harrier that criss-crossed the road in front of us as we drove out. Overall we were a little disappointed in the lack of large numbers of waterfowl. As we approached the Channel 4 parking lot the marsh sky suddenly exploded with life. We parked on the boat ramp nearest the observa-

tion deck and watched in amazement as over 4,000 Greater White-fronted Geese and well over 10,000 ducks—mostly Mallards, Northern Pintails, and American Wigeon descended from the sky and landed in Blake’s Lake directly in front of us. The sound was deafening as thousands of ducks continued to pour into the marsh for another half hour until sunset. Capping off our memorable outing was a large beaver that sauntered up the boat ramp and proceeded to chew down a small tree several feet from our truck door, totally oblivious to our presence. I encourage everyone to visit your favorite wetland this spring and rejuvenate your minds and spirits as you observe one of nature’s greatest spectacles on earth—the spring waterfowl migration. The following is a list of some coming attractions in the wetlands nearest your home:

April 1-10: Blue-winged Teal

and Wood Ducks will arrive in large numbers. Sandhill Cranes and American Woodcock will be performing their dancing rituals, and migrating sparrows, including LeConte’s, Harris, Fox, White-crowned, White-throated, Swamp and Lincoln Sparrows will be frequenting the marshland dikes and brushy shorelines.

April 10-20: Gulls and Bald Eagles will be abundant in backwater areas as ice out continues to expose winter-killed fish, providing them with easy feeding and photographers with great photo opportunities.

April 20-30: Shorebirds, including Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Least, Semipalmated, Pectoral, and Spotted Sandpipers will be abundant on any exposed mudflats. This is also a good time to look for kinglets and early arriving warblers such as Yellow-rumped Warblers, Palm Warblers, and Prothonotary Warblers.

“Are You A Peeping Tom” by Pam Steinhaus

Spring has finally sprung. Migratory birds are making their way back to their breeding grounds while many have already begun the process of nesting. Wildlife observation is one of the top pastimes that Americans participate in. Of course watching wildlife comes in many facets. Many people grab their binoculars and go outside while others view wildlife from their desktops. Thousands of people have become “Peeping Toms” as they watch nature unfold before their eyes. The Stewards are no different. We have several cameras in place that bring nature right to your desktop. The Peregrine Falcon cam is a great way

to watch Pebbles and Bam Bam raise their young. The Pelican cam provides a wonderful window to watch colony nesting birds like the White Pelican. If you enjoy watching these cameras, please consider making a donation to help keep them going. From time to time, equipment needs

to be replaced or updated and this can only be done with your help. Please go to <http://www.razoo.com/story/Help-Keep-Our-Cameras-Rolling> or send a check to SUMRR at 7071 Riverview Rd, Thomson, IL 61285. All gifts are tax deductible.



Flash Point - "Migration"

Migration is in full swing right now and we are beginning to see lots of ducks and colorful birds showing up in the area. If you can't get out to the wildlife refuges in the area, just keep an eye on your own back yard. You may see some great birds that are travelling through. Wade and I got a chance to go to Lock and Dam 13 in Fulton and Thomson Causeway last week and we saw some great ducks. There were rafts of Canvasback at Thomson Causeway.



Connie Inskeep - Moline, IL.



Canvasbacks

We are also seeing lots of Common Goldeneye, Ring-necked Duck, Wood Duck, Green and Blue-winged Teal, Black Duck, Lesser Scaup, Red-head Duck and others. Some were closer than others and you may need a scope to see what is further out, but you won't be disappointed at the variety that you will see. We have also been seeing Sandhill Cranes at Lock and Dam 13 and I have heard they are nesting now. If you get a chance, take a trip to your local wildlife refuge and see what is passing through.

Until next time, happy birding!



Common Goldeneyes



Wood Duck



Green Winged Teal and Gadwall

“Memories Shared About Beaver Island” by Ed Britton



The March 26 public scoping meeting for the Beaver Island habitat restoration project attracted a standing room only crowd that provided agency planners with many ideas on what the public would like to see. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Iowa Department of Natural Resources collected these ideas as the first step in a multi-year planning process to improve habitat conditions on Beaver Island.

This project is part of the Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program, a Corps of Engineers funded program that focuses on habitat restoration of Upper Mississippi River habitat. Beaver Island restoration has been on a prospective project list for 15 years. Other local habitat projects that have been completed include the Princeton Wildlife Management Area in Princeton IA, Potter's Marsh in Fulton IL, Spring Lake in Savanna IL, and Brown's Lake in Green Island IA.

The Sunfish Lake habitat restoration project in Galena IL is currently under construction. This project is similar to Beaver Island in that sedimentation has filled in much of the lake area and degraded its habitat. Excavation of sedimentation will restore some of the wetland qualities and provide for increased fish and wildlife use.

Beaver Island is one of the largest islands on the Upper Mississippi River. It lies in the Mississippi River floodplain and is subjected to annual high water events, flooding, and sedimentation. These factors have degraded habitat for fish and wildlife, especially the filling in of its backwater lakes and sloughs.

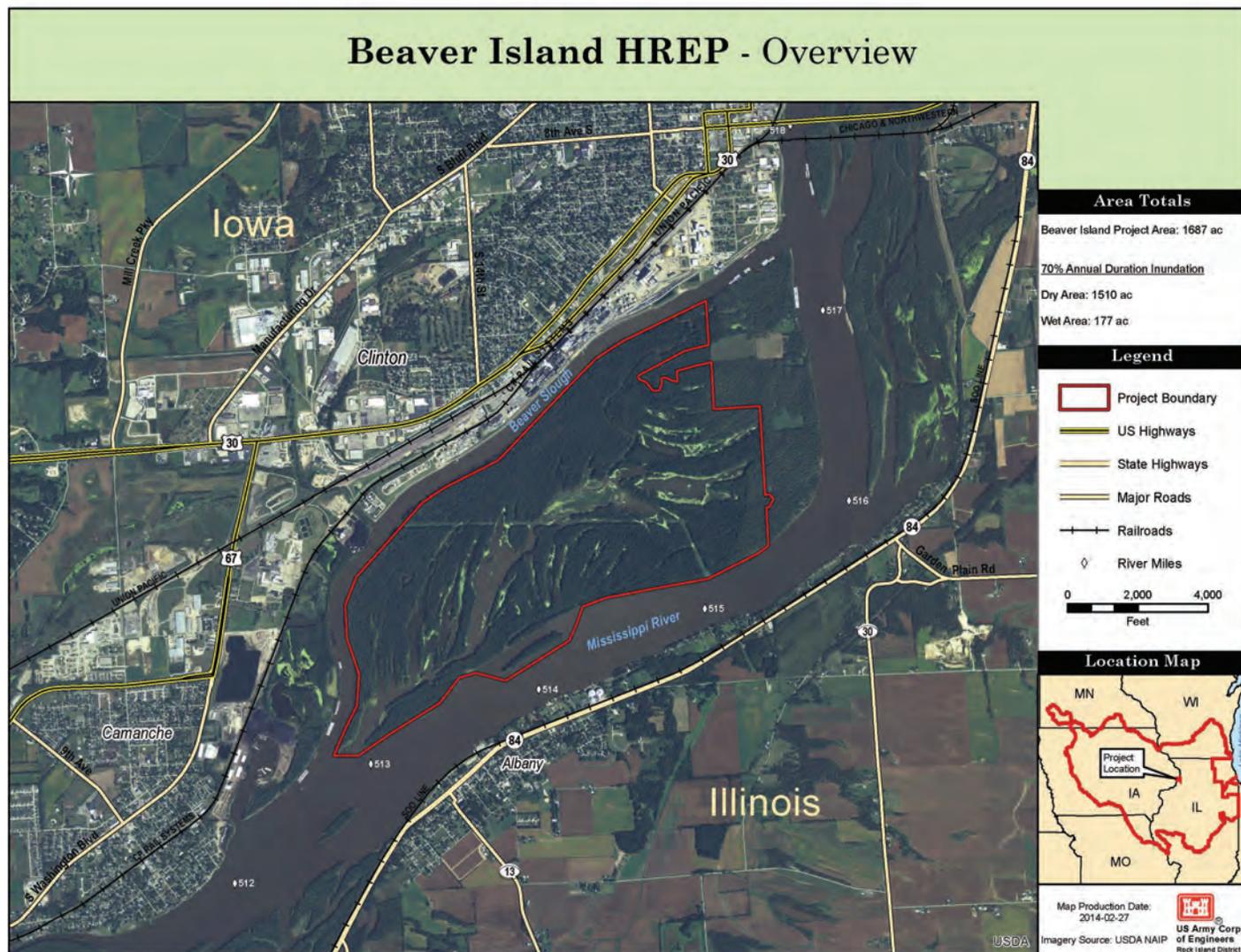
Many attendees at the meeting identified the loss of deep water habitat in the backwater lakes as the most important issue to address. Some of the old timers spoke about memories of Upper Lake and Lower Lake being eight feet deep but currently is only two feet deep. Others recalled the wide corridor and water depth of Deep Cut slough that allowed boat access from the north end of Beaver Channel south into Upper Lake. Deep Cut is now a narrow shallow slough with fallen trees and debris that prevents boat access.

Beaver Island holds many historic memories. The families that lived on the island in the early 1900's were a hardy group of frontiersmen. There was no connecting bridge to Clinton so it remained an isolated and relatively wild community. Many islanders rowed boats to Clinton or in winter would drive vehicles across the ice. Floods annually impacted the islanders with muck and debris left behind in the wake.

Horse drawn plows and sickle bar mowers were used to cultivate farm fields and cut hay for winter forage for cattle, horses and mules. There was the Farm House Grocery Store, Bryant School House, Community Club, an ice operation and reportedly a still. The island was a sportsmen's paradise for fishing and hunting, especially duck hunting.

Planning for the Beaver Island habitat restoration project is just beginning. As with most federal government projects of this magnitude, there is a long checklist of internal, external, policy, legal and public compliance reviews. Upon completion of these reviews that may take up to two years, the project must then compete for funding with other projects that are in the queue.

Progress reports on the Beaver Island habitat restoration project will be sent to those attendees that signed up at the meeting. If you weren't able to attend the meeting and would like to be put on the project distribution list, you can call 309-794-5648. You can also read about the project milestones at the Corps website: <http://www.mvr.usace.army.mil/Missions/EnvironmentalProtectionandRestoration/UpperMississippiRiverRestoration/HabitatRestoration/RockIslandDistrict/BeaverIsland.aspx>



“Time For Stewards Membership Renewal”



Spring is also a time of “renewal”, not only in nature, but also in your 2013 Stewards membership. Please mail in your renewal using the form on page 6 or you may pay online thru the website. Individual memberships are \$10.00 and family memberships are \$20.00. Deadline for renewal is May 1st, 2014. Please help support “Stewards of the Upper Mississippi River Refuge” activities through out the year with your donations.

“Sightings Around the Refuge”



Caterpillar by Debbie Cram



Three's a Crowd at a Bald Eagle Nest at Lock and Dam 13 by Stan Bousson



American White Pelicans by Connie and Wade Inskeep



Northern Shoveler by Larry and Bonnie Thoren



Trumpeter Swans by Larry and Bonnie Thoren

“More Sightings Around the Refuge”



Wilson's Snipe by Steve Aram



Painted Sunset Over the Refuge by Debbie Cram



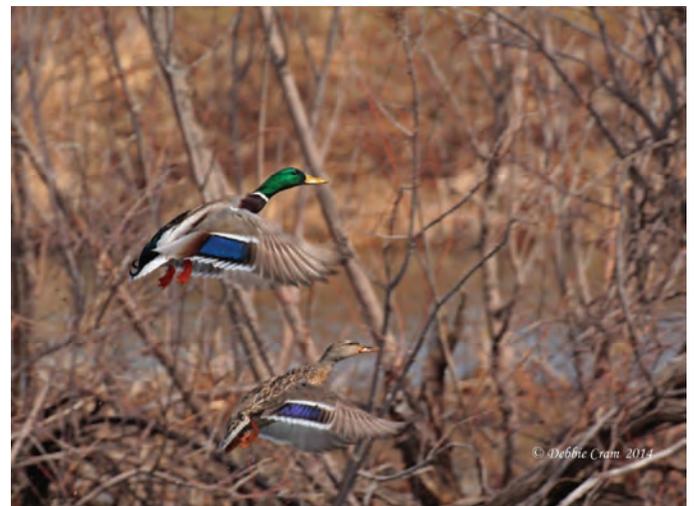
Chipping Away by Debbie Cram



Wood Ducks by Connie and Wade Inskeep



Trumpeter Swan by Richard Cox



Mallards by Debbie Cram

“Even More Sightings Around the Refuge”

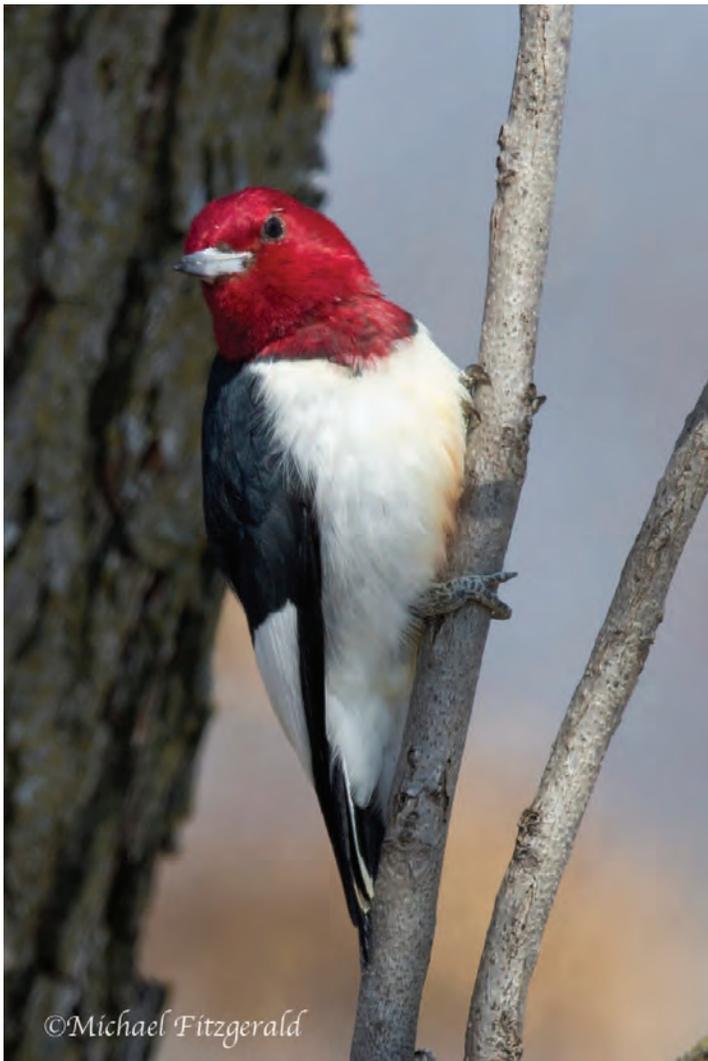


©Michael Fitzgerald

Great Horned Owl by Michael Fitzgerald



Common Loon at Lock and Dam 13 by Stan Bousson



©Michael Fitzgerald

Red-headed Woodpecker by Michael Fitzgerald



Great Horned Owl by Stan Bousson



Great Horned Owl by Stan Bousson

Schedule of Events



Greater Yellowlegs
By Richard Cox



American White Pelicans by Larry and Bonnie Thoren

Friday, April 18th Monthly Stewards Potluck Meeting 11:00 am - 1:30 pm

Sunday April 20th "Lost Mound Birding Van Tour" 2:00 pm– 6:00 pm (Meet at Lost Mound Unit Office by1:45)

Thursday, May 1st "Golf Cart Tour of the Refuge" 8:00 am- 10:00 am

Thursday, May 15th "Golf Cart Tour of the Refuge" 8:00 am- 10:00 am

Friday, May 16th Monthly Stewards Potluck Meeting 11:00 am - 1:30 pm

Saturday, May 17th Migratory Bird Day (See Schedule on Page 10)

Sunday, May 18th "Lost Mound Birding Van Tour" 2:00 pm– 6:00 pm (Meet at Lost Mound Unit Office by1:45)

Thursday, June 5th "Golf Cart Tour of the Refuge" 8:00 am- 10:00 am

Saturday, June 14th Monthly Bird Walk 8:00 am-10:00 am (Meet at Ingersoll Center)

Saturday June 14th "Lost Mound Birding Van Tour" 2:00 pm– 6:00 pm (Meet at Lost Mound Unit Office by1:45)

Saturday June 14th "Owl Prowl" with Bob Walton at Lost Mound Unit 8:00 pm– 10:00 pm

Thursday, June 19th "Golf Cart Tour of the Refuge" 8:00 am- 10:00 am

Friday, June 20th Monthly Stewards Potluck Meeting 11:00 am - 1:30 pm

Saturday, June 21st "Golf Cart Tour of the Refuge" 8:00 am- 10:00 am

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



Check out our Website:
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.



Discover Lost Mound Unit Migratory Bird Day

Upper Mississippi River National
Wildlife and Fish Refuge

Saturday, May 17, 2014

8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Schedule for the Day

8:00 a.m.— 9:30 a.m. **Wagon Tour of Lost Mound**

Participants will gather at the parking lot of the Lost Mound Office and board the wagon. You will travel through portions of Lost Mound Unit (formerly the Savanna Army Depot) and learn about the historical aspects of the area along with current activities. Registration is required due to limited space.

9:45 a.m. **Bracelets for Birds**—Refuge Ranger Cindy Samples

Experience songbirds up close. Learn about their movements and behaviors. Watch as a certified bander safely captures birds, processes valuable data, and places a numbered band on them. Depending on the number of birds caught, be prepared to handle and release one back to the wild!

11:00 a.m. **“Head Start”—Ornate Box Turtle Reintroduction Program**—Jeramie Strickland, USFWS Wildlife Biologist.

Lost Mound Sand Prairie historically supported a robust population of Ornate Box Turtles before decades of military activity eliminated all but a few individuals. Come and learn about our “Head Start” program to increase the population here. We will do some radio tracking and examine health conditions following this harsh winter.

2:00—6:00 **Birding at Lost Mound.**

Join us for an afternoon of birding in Lost Mound (formerly Savanna Army Depot). Participants are to meet at the Lost Mound Office parking area at 1:45 p.m. and will return around 6:00 p.m. There is no fee, but seating is limited.

For more information or to register for the tours, please call 815-273-2732. Space is limited to register early.

You may also send your registration by email at Stewardsumrr@gmail.com

Be sure to bring your binoculars and camera so you don't miss those “Kodak” moments.



Address: 3159 Crim Dr, Savanna, IL

GPS Address: 42° 10.898 N
090° 15.042 W