



Stewards of the Upper Mississippi River Refuge



The Pelican Scoop

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Message From The President

As the old saying goes, "It's all about being in the right place at the right time". This has been so true for me in the last month or so. Some of us have been very fortunate lately, to be able to view many of nature's greatest sights. While birding Lock and Dam 13 awhile back with Bob and Sandy Walton, we saw a group of seven Semipalmated Sandpipers turn into six, as right before our eyes a Merlin swooped through, and grabbed one for lunch. A little farther down the road in a grove of trees, the warbler migration was in full swing. We had twelve different species of warblers in the same tree in a ten minute time span.

The trees were full of busy little warblers chasing after the buffet of insects available. However, the high point was on one of our recent Lost Mound Unit tours, when six of us had the privilege to witness a Bobcat running down the road in front of the van being pursued by a very angry pair of American Kestrels. Needless to say we were all in awe, no one got any photos, we were too busy savoring the moment. Thanks to Stan Bousson, we do have a Bobcat photo to include in this month's issue, however this was not the one we saw at Lost Mound Unit. Stan had taken this photo somewhere else but shared it with me anyway. Last Sunday's tour at Lost Mound Unit there were



Connie Zink - Savanna, IL.

also signs that the warbler migration was ending. I have been told that the last warblers to go through are the Yellow-rumped. If that is true, then they are ending in fine style, as we had hundreds of Yellow-rumped last Sunday. The trees were alive with them everywhere. I hope all of you can get out this weekend and just see what wonders await you!

Anne's Birding Corner



Trumpeter Swans by Dave Watts



Pine Warbler by Anne Straight

A wood warbler, the Pine Warbler prefers forests and especially pine trees for foraging and nesting. The male is olive-green with a yellow throat and breast with dark streaks on sides and white wing bars. Overall, females are much duller. Pine Warblers nest in the pine forests of the eastern United States and southern Canada, except in the central Midwest. The Pine Warbler is the only warbler that regularly eats seeds. It will also visit feeders and forage on the ground. Pine Warblers in the



Anne Straight - Forreston, IL.

north are very early spring migrant and late fall migrants. In the southern United States it occurs year round. It is also a casual visitor in the west. The song is a musical trill like a Chipping Sparrow's or a Junco's.

Backwater Birding with Bob



Bob Walton - Zwingle, Ia,

Monarchs Need Your Help.

Be part of the Pod Squad. Milkweed pods are ready for the picking and in many cases they have already burst. Collect only the grayish pods, not the green ones. The seeds will be nice and brown when mature. Plant them for next year's Monarchs. More information: <http://monarchwatch.org/bring-back-the-monarchs/milkweed/seed-collecting-processing>.

As the color transformation of our river bluffs slowly begins, the fall bird migration is well underway, adding another colorful dimension to the autumn landscape. The unseasonably cold temperatures have certainly sped up the pace of the migration with the majority of the warblers, vireos, hummingbirds, wrens, and swallows already departing for warmer climates. On a recent outing to Green Island we observed that the hawk migration is also well underway with hundreds of Broad-winged Hawks, Sharp-shinned Hawks, and Cooper's Hawks slowly kettling their way southward on the warm thermals created by limestone bluffs of the Mississippi River. Other fall highlights have been two Golden Eagles and the numerous Bald Eagles in Lost Mound. October is also a

great time to search the brushy edges of wetlands and prairies for migrating sparrows. Our summer sparrows (Chipping, Field, Grasshopper, Lark, Swamp, and Savannah) will be replaced with our winter sparrows (White-throated and Tree Sparrows, and Dark-eyed Juncos). Passing quickly through on their southern migration will be Fox, Harris, Le Conte's, and White-throated Sparrows—all beautiful sparrows that are well worth even brief glimpses. River Road in Lost Mound and the bike trail between the Ingersoll Nature Center and Savanna are great places to view many of these new arrivals.

Here is a list of coming attractions:

October 1-10—Look for Ruby and Golden-crowned King-

lets, Brown Creepers, Red-breasted Nuthatches, and Yellow-rumped Warblers, as well as migrating sparrows.

October 10-20—Wood Ducks should peak in number. Red-tailed Hawks, Northern Harriers, and Cooper's Hawks will be migrating in large numbers.

October 20-30—Large numbers of diving ducks and migrating Bald Eagles will be appearing.

I encourage everyone to visit their favorite natural areas this fall and enjoy all the beauty nature has to offer. With the thinning of vegetation, birds are much easier to see, the mosquitoes and gnats are finely abating, and the temperatures are pleasant for hiking. These all make for memorable outings with family and friends.

Jr. Stewards Chatter

On September 6th, the Jr Stewards went to the Frog Pond near Savanna, to celebrate Kids Fishing Day. We learned how to tie fishing knots such as the Palomar knot and the Figure 8 knot. We caught bullhead, bluegill, turtles, yellow perch, and largemouth bass. Then we had lunch courtesy of US Fish and Wildlife Service. We had a great day! We would also like to thank Todd's Tackle – bait, Eagle River Liquor – pop and Milo and Beaver's for fishing tackle.



Brennon Cavanagh
6th grade Savanna, IL



Jr. Steward Seed Collecting



Flash Point - "Those Awesome Colors of Fall"

Fall is upon us and with the changing of the leaves, comes the opportunity to take some spectacular fall foliage shots. The reds, yellows, oranges, greens and browns lend a beauty to the landscape that can be very fleeting. On a sunny day you can capture spectacular pictures of colorful trees and bushes that will take your breath away. Whether you shoot a close up or a landscape, the splendor of fall surrounds us here in the mid-west.



Connie Inskeep - Moline, IL.



When shooting the leaves as a close up, keep the sun behind you so it illuminates the leaves and shows the beautiful colors. It can be tricky to shoot into the sun and still show the colors of the leaves because in some cases it will cause the leaves to silhouette. You can shoot towards the sun as it peeks through the leaves, but keep in mind that this can cause "lens flare" (the bluish blob you see here).



The Upper Mississippi River Refuge is a great place to visit and take some fall foliage shots. It provides not only a bounty of colorful trees, but the Mighty Mississippi River, as well.



If you get a chance, get out and enjoy the awesome colors of fall. Remember that you can always take pictures and keep those memories forever.

Until next time, enjoy your local refuges!
Connie



“Bald Eagles and Deer Hunting” by Ed Britton



Thousands of bald eagles migrate in winter and hundreds of eagles nest in spring along the Upper Mississippi River corridor. Their journey in America’s Heartland may be a dangerous one. Dead eagles are randomly collected by state and federal conservation agencies. The eagles are sent to the National Eagle Repository in Denver, Colorado where the feathers are distributed to Native American tribes for religious ceremonies.

Researchers with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service began a study on bald eagle mortality in the Upper Midwest in 2011 and collected 168 dead eagles from conservation agencies in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa and Illinois. The U.S. Geological Survey’s National Wildlife Health Center in Madison, Wisconsin was a partner in this study. A necropsy was performed on each eagle and livers were analyzed for lead concentrations to determine a cause of death.

Forty-eight percent of the bald eagles had detectable concentrations of lead and 21% had lethal levels. Researchers investigated potential sources of lead in the environment to determine how eagles were being exposed. Bald eagles are predators and scavengers that hunt and fish, their diet consists entirely of animal matter. Ammunition used in hunting wild game became a focus for the lead source.

Lead is the traditional ammunition used by hunters. It is a soft metal that fragments into tiny pieces upon impact. Hunters often discard animal parts, especially entrails, in the field. Lead fragments embedded in discarded animal parts or in fatally wounded but not retrieved game are available to scavengers. Many scientific publications report that ammunition, especially used for deer hunting, is an exposure pathway for lead poisoning in several wildlife species.

Managed deer hunts are conducted on the Lost Mound Unit of Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge in Savanna IL. These hunts provided an opportunity to investigate lead ammunition as an exposure pathway to bald eagles. During 2012 and 2013, 57 white-tailed deer were harvested that included 25 deer shot with lead. The entrails from the 25 lead shot deer were radiographed and showed that 36% contained lead ranging from 1-107 fragments per entrail.

Spent shotgun shells were collected to quantify the amount of lead that was shot. The lead weight for each shell was determined from specifications provided at the manufacturers’ websites. The total weight of lead shot to harvest the 25 deer was 9,938 grains (644 grams).

Laboratory studies show that 1.27 grains (82.5 milligrams) of lead is a lethal dose for a bald eagle. The 9,938 grains of lead contained an equivalent 7,825 lethal doses. The amount of lead contained in each shot showed: a 20 gauge slug averaged 344 grains, equivalent weight to 271 lethal doses per slug; a 12 gauge slug averaged 421 grains, equivalent weight to 331 lethal doses per slug; and a .50 caliber muzzleloader bullet averaged 328 grains, equivalent weight to 258 lethal doses per bullet.

Bald eagles were frequently observed circling above the hunt area. Road-killed deer and their entrails were placed in the hunt area to simulate wounded but not retrieved deer and discarded entrails. Motion sensor cameras documented a variety of scavengers dining on the deer carcasses and entrails including bald eagles, red-tailed hawks, crows, raccoons, opossums and coyotes.

Hunters are important conservationists and provide millions of dollars in license fees and excise taxes that fund wildlife programs annually. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service researchers are promoting awareness to hunters about the potential exposure pathway from lead ammunition to bald eagles and other wildlife. Please share this story with others and encourage the voluntary use of non-lead ammunition.



“This Ol Walnut Tree” by Debbie Cram

Debbie is on vacation this month but the Stewards still continue to follow her beautiful pictures from “This Ol Walnut Tree”

Please continue to follow the progress on Face Book of Debbie’s “This Ol Walnut Tree”.
[https://www.facebook.com/pages/This Ol Walnut Tree/1484600211756249](https://www.facebook.com/pages/This+Ol+Walnut+Tree/1484600211756249).



“Sightings Around the Refuge”



Sunset Reflections at Palisades State Park by Debbie Cram



Merlin by Larry and Bonnie Thoren



Trumpeter Swan Family at Spring Lake by Debbie Cram



Cedar Waxwings by Steve Aram



Bobcat by Stan Bousson

“More Sightings Around the Refuge”



Sandhill Cranes at Spring Lake by Connie Zink



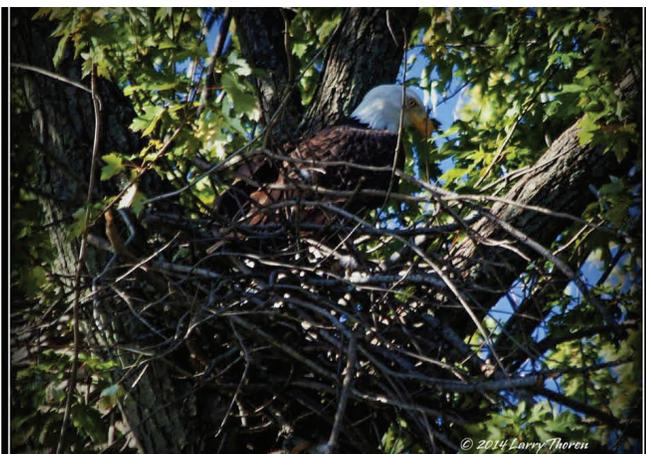
Wood Duck by Dave Watts



Dennis Zink and Stan Bousson working on the cameras on Cormorant Island by Larry Thoren



Bald Eagle at Lost Mound Unit by Connie Zink



“Nest Rebuilding” by Larry and Bonnie Thoren



View of the Refuge from Palisades State Park by Connie Inskeep

“Even More Sightings Around the Refuge”



Osprey by Michael Fitzgerald



©Michael Fitzgerald

Black Saddlebags Skimmer by Michael Fitzgerald



Mushrooms on Tree by Ethan Brown



© Debbie Cram 2014

Turkey Vulture by Debbie Cram



Phoebe at Spring Lake by Jr. Steward Ethan Brown



Canadian Kayaker by Larry Thoren



Debbie Cram with Bull Snake

Schedule of Events

Saturday, October 11th "Monthly Bird Walk" 9:00 am- 11:00 am (Meet at Sloane Marsh)

Thursday, October 16th "Golf Cart Tour of the Refuge" 8:00 am- 10:00 am

Saturday, October 18th Golf Cart Tour of the Refuge" 8:00 am- 10:00 am

Sunday, October 19th "Lost Mound Birding Van Tour" 2:00 pm- 6:00 pm (Meet at Lost Mound Unit Office by 1:45)

Friday, October 24th Monthly Stewards Potluck Meeting 11:00 am - 1:30 pm

Saturday, November 8th "Monthly Bird Walk" 9:00 am- 11:00 am

Sunday, November 9th "Lost Mound Birding Van Tour" 1:00 pm- 5:00 pm (Meet at Lost Mound Unit Office by 12:45)

Sunday, November 9th "Owl Prowl" Meet at Amphitheatre at Thomson Causeway 6:00 pm -?

Friday, November 21st Monthly Stewards Potluck Meeting 11:00 am - 1:30 pm

Sunday, November 23rd "Lost Mound Birding Van Tour" 1:00 pm- 5:00 pm (Meet at Lost Mound Unit Office by 12:45)

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



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Sunset with Train by Debbie Cram



Stewards of the Upper Mississippi River Refuge

815-273-2732

Primary Business Address stewardsumrr@gmail.com

Check out our Website: www.stewardsumrr.org



Like us on Facebook

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.

Bald Eagle Photo Contest

Clinton Bald Eagle Watch

Sponsored by the Stewards of the Upper Mississippi River Refuge

CONTEST ENTRY PERIOD: November 1 thru November 25

People Choice Awarded at Clinton Bald Eagle Watch, January 10, 2015

CONTEST RULES:

1. All photos must be taken of Bald Eagles along the Mississippi River Flyway. Photos not meeting this rule will be disqualified.
2. No computer composites accepted. Photographs must be the original work of the person submitting.
3. All photos will be submitted digitally
4. You are allowed to enter THREE photos per person.

DIVISIONS:

-  Youth ages 16 and under
-  Open Point & Shoot - point and shoot cameras and cell phone cameras (any age)
-  DSLR division - Digital DSLR or scanned film cameras (any age)

WHO IS ELIGIBLE Open to all photographers

TO ENTER: (See website for examples)

Only digitally uploaded images can be entered, and only into one division. Digital files can be e-mailed to Stewardsumrr@gmail.com and must be sized to 1400 pixels horizontally and 1040 pixels vertically. If the digital file does not meet these size requirements they will be automatically resized which may reduce their quality.

Please copy and paste the Copyright Release in the message section of email.

* Copyright Release Form:

I hereby grant permission to the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge (Service) and to Stewards of the Upper Mississippi River Refuge (SUMMR) to reproduce my photographs in official Service and SUMRR publications and signs for educational, informational and promotional purposes. The photographs shall be credited to the photographer by the legend: © 'Photographer Name'

I do hereby release Service and SUMRR from any and all claims related to the display of my photographs submitted herewith, including but not limited to, claims which may result from the loss or damage to those photographs.

WARRANTY: By entering, participants warrant that his or her entry materials are original, do not infringe on any third party's rights, and that participant has obtained any necessary permissions from any third party if a third party or third party's property appears in the photograph.

ENTRY INFORMATION: All photos must have complete information attached, locations, stories behind the photos, digital adjustments and camera equipment. Not providing full information may disqualify your entry by the Judges.

AWARDS: Awards will be given for each division consisting of 3 or more participants:

Youth:

1st place: Promaster Taskmaster UT25 tripod
2nd place: Vortex Raptor 6.5X32 binocular
3rd place: 32GB SD Card

Open Point and Shoot:

1st place: Promaster Zoom Spotting Scope
2nd place: Promaster Vectra 8X21 pocket binoculars
3rd place: Vortex Raptor 6.5X32 binocular

Open DSLR

1st place: Promaster Gimbal Head
2nd place: Vortex Pro-GT Tripod
3rd place: Vortex Raptor 6.5X32 binocular

People's choice

Eagle Optics Denali spotting scope with camera attachment (1 award - all divisions qualify)

JUDGING AND EXHIBITION:

Photographs will be judged on originality, technical excellence, composition, overall impact and artistic merit by the Quad City Camera Club. People's choice award to be decided at Clinton Bald Eagle Days where the top three photos from each division, will be printed, displayed and voted on.

Questions:

Pam Steinhaus

815-273-2732 ext 116

Pam_Steinhaus@fws.gov

Website: Stewardsumrr.org

Photos will be digitally displayed at the Ingersoll Wetlands Learning Center from January 14, 2015 – January 31, 2015.

Owl Prowl



Sunday, November 9, 2014

Time: 6:00 pm—8:00 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 07.014 W.



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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Thomson, IL 61285

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www.stewardsumrr.org