



Stewards of the Upper Mississippi River Refuge



The Pelican Scoop

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New Members

- Carol Farris
- Jack Denger
- Scott Nagel
- Joe Maciejko
- Jay Brooks
- Penny Thatcher
- Cathy Hutchcraft

Renewed Members

- Jane McCarthy
- Marion Gieskecke
- Anne Straight
- Anne Swan-Johnson
- Bob and Sandy Walton
- Brian Bielema
- Larry and Bonnie Thoren
- Stan Bousson
- Joseph Tollari
- Ed Britton
- Betty and Pete Hagglund
- Jaci Lewis

Message from the President

Happy Fall! I know it is hard to believe but summer is now behind us. I personally am glad those 90 plus degree days are over. The fall migration and the beginning of the cooler days of autumn are now in full swing, with just a hint of the fall colors beginning to make their debut. One of the first things I miss in the fall season is the endless stream of Ruby-throated Hummingbirds flying from feeder to feeder. You know it is autumn when they fill their little tummies for the last time and head south. I think the last of our resident ones left last week so I guess it is time to wash up the feeders and save them for next year's returning visitors. Even

though it is always sad to see the summer visitors go, I know the fall migrants have taken their place in the endless stream of the wonders of nature that pass us by daily. I was thrilled to look out my window a month or so ago and see my Carolina Wren is back for his fourth season. He usually stays around each year until the end of January and then disappears. The Carolina Wren's song sure can brighten your spirits on a cold winter day. I have noticed the Blue Jays, Black-capped Chickadees, Northern Cardinals and American Goldfinch have returned to visit the feeders. Interesting birds visiting our yard have been a little slim the last month, so I am looking forward to the renewed interest



Connie Zink - Savanna, IL.

in the bounty we have to offer. Until next time, get out and enjoy some of the wonders that surround you every day and check out what might be stopping by to visit you this fall season!

Anne's Birding Corner—Louisiana Waterthrush

A warbler, the Louisiana Waterthrush has a broad white eyebrow, brown streaks and buffy flanks. The legs are usually pinker than the Northern Waterthrush. The throat is unstreaked. Best identified from the Northern by habitat and the loud voice.

It is found in the woodlands, where it breeds along faster moving water. A ground forager, it bobs its tail in a circular motion, feeding on insects

and other arthropods. It returns in our area in early spring and usually leaves by September.

It breeds through the middle and eastern North America to Canada.

It winters south to Central America to the West Indies.



Anne Straight - Forreston, IL.



Louisiana Waterthrush
Anne Straight

Backwater Birding with Bob



Bob Walton - Zwingle, Ia,



Cormorant Island
by David Watts



Monarchs
by Bonnie Thoren



Osprey
by Larry Thoren

With recent summer high temperatures and humidity descending upon us with the vengeance of a blast furnace, I'm sure most of us have suspended many of our outdoor activities and have taken refuge in cooler surroundings. In spite of the oppressive mid-day heat, late summer is still a great time to head out to your favorite wetland and witness some very exciting bird-watching. To beat the heat, I always like to arrive at my marshland destination near sunrise, which is usually around 6:30 am at this time of year. Just the sight of a rising sun burning its way over the eastern bluffs and through the hazy backwater is well worth the cost of a few lost hours of sleep.

Last week, I made a sunrise journey to Green Island in hopes of seeing some Black Terns that have been fre-

quently sighted there this summer. I arrived at the Blake's Lake parking lot, and was greeted by an American Bittern standing on the end of the boat ramp—the first one I've seen this year. Flanking the bittern were two Great Blue Herons, and there were over 120 Great Egrets spread along the edge of the channel for ¼ of a mile. Upon taking a short hike out the dike to Blake's Lake, I discovered a family of five Prothonotary Warblers, several young Common Moorhens, and a brood of Pied-billed Grebes that were just losing their zebra stripes. Overall, a very productive morning of bird watching that can be repeated at most of the Mississippi marshlands in our area.

In addition to visiting wetlands, this is also a good time of year to keep your

bird feeders full of seed. Feeding only black oil sunflower seeds, we have enjoyed watching families of Tufted Titmice, Black-capped Chickadees, White-breasted Nuthatches, and a summer record for us of 27 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks that were visiting our feeder on a daily basis.

Coming attractions:

September—Early September will feature the main migration of warblers, vireos, flycatchers, and blackbirds. Blue-winged Teals, Mourning Doves, and rails will peak in numbers. Late September will feature the arrival of more puddle ducks including Green-winged Teal, Northern Shovelers, Gadwalls, and Wood Ducks. Large numbers of migrating Broad-winged Hawks, Turkey Vultures, and American White Pelicans can also be observed at this time.

Membership Dues

Thank you all so much for being a part of the Stewards of the Upper Mississippi River Refuge, whether you are an active member, or a supporting member, you make a difference. Why do you join an organization? That can be different for different folks but most people enjoy the comradery with those that have the same interests and care about our resources. Many of our members are avid birders, photographers and nature lovers. There is something for everyone. Folks pay their memberships at different times of the year. If you joined in the fall last year or forgot to send in your membership, your not to late. Our monthly meetings are open to everyone and we encourage you to attend. We meet at the Ingersoll Wetlands Learning Center the 3rd Friday of each month, at 11:00 am for a potluck with a meeting to follow. Please fill out the membership card in the back and mail it in. Or if you want to pay your dues on-line please go to <https://www.razoo.com/us/story/Get-Involved-Today>. If you did not receive a membership pin, please let us know and will get it in the mail to you.

(October's meeting will be held at the Thomson Causeway Pavillion. Bring your own picnic lunch. Lunch begins at 11 am with meeting to follow.)

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.



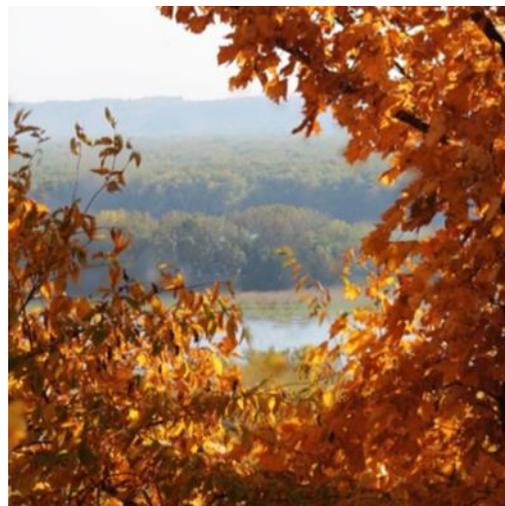
Connie Inskeep - Moline, IL.



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 National Wildlife and Fish 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!



“Flushing the Mighty Mississippi ” by Ed Britton



The prolonged period of high water has chronicled a miserable summer for river enthusiasts along Clinton’s Mississippi River paradise. The raging river currents of muddy water have carried many floating logs that have torpedoed unsuspecting boaters. Fortunately, record flood levels haven’t been reached but it may set records for seasonal high water events. The unseen impacts of prolonged high water are hidden below the murky depths of the river.

Prior to the 1930’s construction of locks and dams that impounded the Upper Mississippi River, there was seasonal flooding that was representative of a natural river system. After the Great Flood of 1965 many communities, like Clinton, built levees to control flooding and minimize property damage. Extensive development within the historic flood plain followed. The miles of additional concrete and other structures now push river flows higher and into areas that are far from the historic flood plain.

Clinton is geographically situated in a transition zone where the Upper Mississippi River changes its environmental character. The river north of Clinton extending to Minnesota contains extensive flowing side channels, islands, braided backwaters and a myriad of wetlands. The river south of Clinton down to St. Louis is more constricted with few side channels, backwaters and wetland complexes. The open Lower Mississippi River (no locks and dams) below St. Louis is a fast flowing channel mostly bordered by levees.

A major effect of high water is increased sedimentation in our backwaters. In a typical year, there is less than an inch of mud added to the backwaters by sediment deposition. We can potentially expect several inches of mud to be deposited this year due to the high flows of sediment laden currents.

Beaver Island is a prime example of the impacts of sedimentation. An aerial photo shows that water flowing from Beaver Channel into Upper Cut is the prime contributor of sediment being trapped within the island’s interior. These formerly deep backwater lakes are now filled with several feet of mud. During normal water levels, the majority of these lakes are only a few inches deep. The planned Beaver Island habitat restoration project’s goal is to restore these lakes to deep water and to improve forest diversity.

High water flows also carry increased amounts of nutrients that run off from agricultural fields and urban areas. These nutrients accumulate along the 2,300 mile Mississippi River length and are ultimately dumped into the Gulf of Mexico. The result is a nearly 6,000 square mile Dead Zone where low levels of oxygen make it uninhabitable for marine life.

Fish and other aquatic species take advantage of high water events to expand their range. Asian carp migrated north during the 1993 flood, leaving the Lower Mississippi River and venturing into the Illinois River and Upper Mississippi River, a journey of many hundreds of miles. These unwelcome invaders are now silently moving upriver through open dams and will undoubtedly be established in our area within a few years.

There are benefits resulting from high water. Organic material is deposited along low lying fields and shoreline areas to increase soil fertility. Powerful currents flush the river, sending trash and debris to our southern neighbors.

We are fortunate to live along the Mighty Mississippi. Its rewards outweigh its wildness. Come on down to the river, where vibrant fall colors are beginning to accent the borders of this marine paradise.



Jr. Stewards Chatter - Articles from the Jrs.



Ethan Brown, 8th grade Savanna, IL.



Field trip to Sandbluff Bird Observatory.

On May 21st our Jr. Stewards group loaded onto a bus and visited the Sand Bluff Bird Banding Observatory in the Colored Sands Forest Preserve in Winnebago County, IL. As the volunteers banded the birds, we got to see them up close and learn about them before they were released. The most important thing to remember; the only way to preserve birds is to preserve their habitat.

Geneva Zach, 7th grade Thomson, IL.



Reptiles of the Refuge

The Jr. Stewards of the Upper Mississippi River NWFR went to the Thomson Causeway on June 4, 2016, to learn about reptiles. First, the Stewards met a group called TREE (Turtle Research Exploration and Evaluation), then watched a nesting turtle mother. They talked about raccoons and how the raccoons dig up nearly every turtle nest and eat the eggs. TREE also spoke about how if a nest is warm, the babies would be girls, if a nest is cool the eggs are boys, and if a nest is just the right temperature for several days in July, the tiny baby turtles would be females and males. TREE took two baby turtles out of a paper bag and showed how each young turtle has a slightly different pattern on its stomach, like fingerprints.



The Jr. Stewards were split into groups and each group had a helper from TREE. These groups hoped to find another nesting turtle. None of the groups were successful, though after the search we examined the turtle they had noticed before. First, they carefully dug up the nest in order to weigh and count the eggs. Then, measured the mother and took some blood. The nest was marked with a flag, then released the mother.

Jr Stewards continued



Canoeing the Backwaters

Jacob McLuckie—8th grade, Savanna, IL.

Members of Junior Stewards met on Saturday, July 9 at Millers Landing, Savanna to go canoeing in the back waters of the Mississippi. Steward director, Pam Steinhaus, gave members a quick tutorial on how to use and hold canoe paddles. She taught them how to use a J-stroke, rudder, and how to turn around in a canoe. The Junior Steward members caught on quickly to the different strokes. Then juniors learned about the different life vests to wear. While out on the Mississippi, participants saw wildlife and learned the difference between lotus and lilly pads. As they were examining the lotus pads, they found the exoskeletons of dragonflies. Junior Stewards will meet again on August 6 and will be exploring waters of the Mississippi and the various species of mussels.



Jr Stewards continued



Jewels of the Prairie Ellie Hanviriyapunt, 4th grade, Lanark, IL and Tom Kocal—grandfather
The Jr. Stewards met on Saturday, Aug. 6 at the Ingersoll Learning Center for their monthly meeting. Pam Steinhaus talked about Monarch butterflies and how they are losing their habitat. Mexico had a BIG ice storm that destroyed half the Monarch population.

According to VisitMexico.com, “The annual Monarch butterfly migration is one of nature’s great spectacles and a top attraction for visitors to Mexico’s central highlands. Each year, as many as 60 million to one billion Monarch butterflies make journey from eastern Canada to the forests of western central Mexico, a journey that spans more than 2,500 miles. The Monarch butterflies spend their winter hibernation clustered in small areas of the Reserva de la Biosfera Mariposa Monarca (Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve), a national protected area and nature preserve that covers more than 200-square-miles.

“The Monarch butterflies arrive in Mexico each year in late-October and make their winter homes in the tops of the trees high in the mountains of the reserve. Their arrival coincides with Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead); one of Mexico’s most important holidays. During the annual Day of the Dead, deceased relatives are believed to return home where they’re honored with feasts, celebrations and elaborate ofrendas (offerings). According to local legend, the Monarch butterflies arriving in Mexico at this time of the year are believed to be the souls of the deceased returning to earth.

“Once within the confines of the reserve, the Monarch butterflies will spend the next five months clustering together and covering the tree trunks and branches in a blanket of orange and black. Each of the individual clusters is made up of thousands of Monarch butterflies and resembles a large swollen beehive. In many instances, the weight of the butterfly clusters is enough to cause tree branches to bend or snap. The habit of clustering together makes it possible for the Monarch butterflies to conserve heat and survive the cool nighttime temperatures common to this high-altitude region.”

After the presentation, the group took turns looking under a microscope and looked at a Monarch egg and also saw it hatch and eat its egg for its first nutrition.

After we looked under the microscope, we had snacks, courtesy of Shayla and Emma. Then the group split into two teams. My grandpa and I were on Jacquelynn’s team and we went to Spring Lake. Pam’s team went to the Thomson Sand Prairie. Jacquelynn’s team found 25 eggs and 13 caterpillars. Pam’s team found five caterpillars and 14 eggs. This was a very good hunting expedition because the day before, Pam and Jacquelynn had only found two eggs.

Since we had found so many caterpillars and eggs, anyone who wanted to have one got one to take home and raise. I got a larva and he got 10 times bigger after only six days. My mom and I went out on the side of the road lots of times to go get fresh milkweed and he ate a lot of it!

When the butterfly comes out of the chrysalis, we will be able to determine if it is a boy or girl. If it’s a girl, it has thicker veins on the bottom wings and if it’s a boy, it has thinner veins and two hormone sacks on the bottom wings.

Then we will bring the butterfly back to the Ingersoll Learning Center where Pam, and the staff will tag the lower wing and release it, hopefully finding its way back to Mexico.

It was a wonderful experience going to Spring Lake and the Sand Prairie searching for Monarch eggs and caterpillars and hope to continue searching under milkweed leaves for Monarch eggs and caterpillars.

GPS Adventure Shayla Roberts, 8th grade Savanna, IL.

On Saturday October 1 the Jr. Stewards of the Upper Mississippi didn't let the dreary weather stop them at their eight meeting of the year. At the Ingersall Wetland Learning Center refuge in Thompson Illinois, the Jr. Stewards under the direction of leader Pam Steinhaus learned how to use a GPS. After some technical difficulties and some practice the students were sent on their way. Using their GPS, we had to locate and identify various species of birds, plants and grasses.



“Smartphone Photography Workshops—Pam Steinhaus”

Clinton Bald Eagle Watch attracts several hundred folks from kids to retired folks. The one thing I noticed was when a raptor came by, most people were taking out their smartphones to take pictures. The lightbulb was lit and I decided to submit a grant to teach folks how to take better pictures with their phone. In March of 2016, My Phone, My Refuge was selected and various pieces of equipment were purchased.

In the workshop, we reviewed basic photography principles, pros and cons of a smartphone, an overview of some useful camera accessories and photo-editing apps to create unique and amazing photographs. We have held 7 workshops thus far and hope to continue it in the future. Here are some shots of what we did. If you're interested in attending a class please contact Pam Steinhaus at 815-273-2732 ext 116.



Schedule of Events

No scheduled tours for Lost Mound due to cleanup efforts that are under way.

There will be no Monthly Bird Walks from November—April.

Monday, October 10th “ Bald Eagle Photo Contest opened.

Friday, October 21st “Monthly Stewards Meeting” Picnic at Thomson Causeway. Meet at large shelter. Bring your own lunch. 11:00am - 1:30pm

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

Friday, December 2nd Bald Eagle Photo Contest closes.

Please check Calendar of Events on the Website for new events.

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



Trumpeter Swans—Debbie Cram



Prothonotary Warbler—Ethan Brown



Stewards of the Upper Mississippi River Refuge

7071 Riverview Rd Thomson, IL 61285 815-273-2732 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.

2017 Bald Eagle Photo Contest

Clinton Bald Eagle Watch

Sponsored by the Stewards of the Upper Mississippi River Refuge

CONTEST ENTRY PERIOD: October 10 to December 2, 2016

People Choice Awarded at Clinton Bald Eagle Watch, January 7, 2017

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. Winning photos from previous Clinton Bald Eagle Watch Contests are not eligible.

DIVISIONS:

WHO IS ELIGIBLE Open to all photographers

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

TO ENTER: (See website for examples and frequently asked questions)

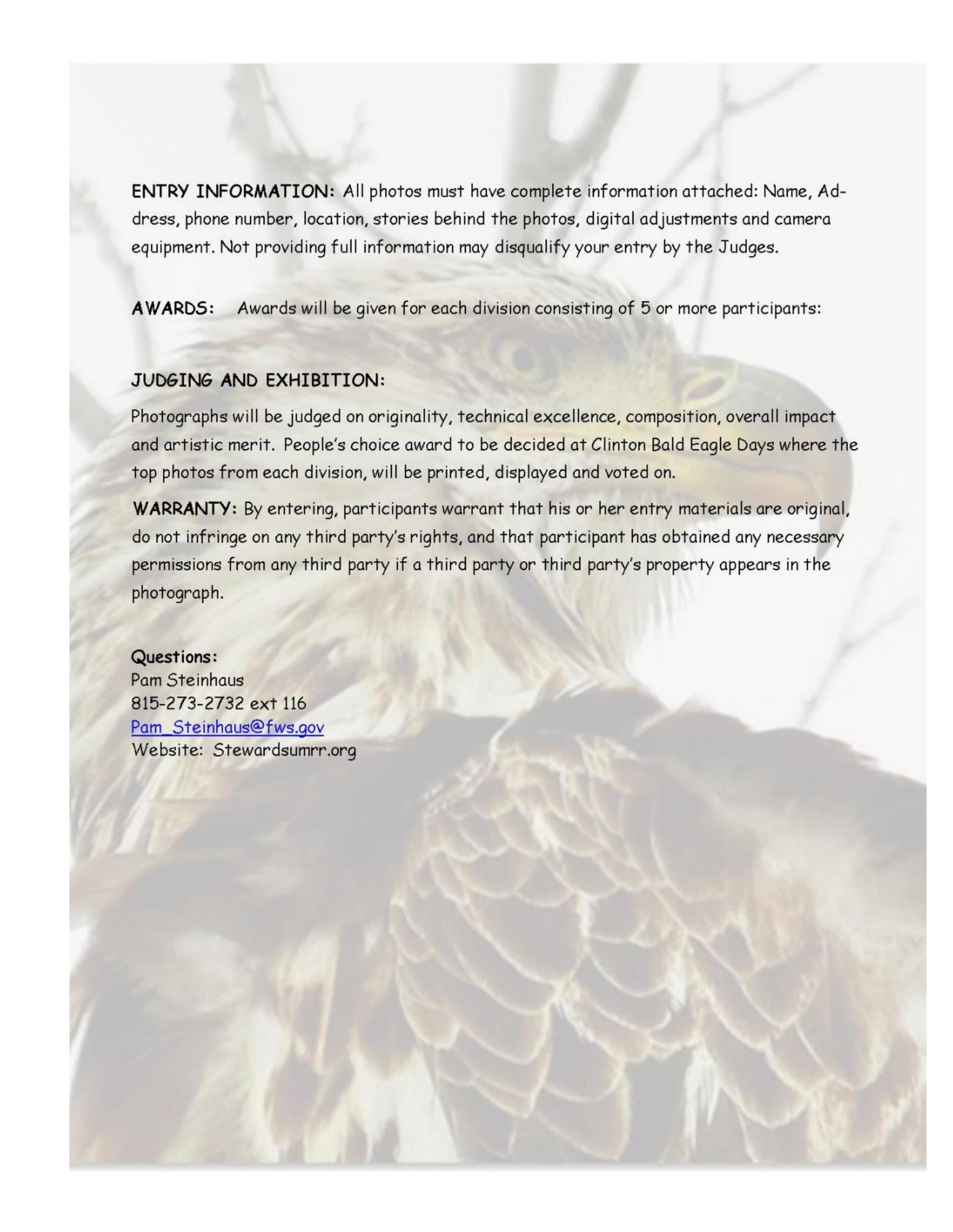
Only digitally uploaded images can be entered, and only into one division. Digital files can be e-mailed to Stewardsumrr@gmail.com and must be sized to 1400 pixels horizontally and 1040 pixels vertically. If the digital file does not meet these size requirements they will be automatically resized which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



ENTRY INFORMATION: All photos must have complete information attached: Name, Address, phone number, location, 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 5 or more participants:

JUDGING AND EXHIBITION:

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

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.

Questions:

Pam Steinhaus

815-273-2732 ext 116

Pam_Steinhaus@fws.gov

Website: Stewardsumrr.org