



## Stewards of the Upper Mississippi River Refuge



# The Pelican Scoop

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### Message From The President

I know most people think I am crazy, but I really look forward to the start of winter. I love living where we have the changing seasons, and I truthfully look forward to the start of our most dreaded season for a lot of people. When I think of the start of winter, I reflect on all of the thousands of Tundra Swans as they make their way down the Mississippi River, to areas to the south. Usually around Thanksgiving, you can stand at the Spring Lake Unit parking lot and hear hundreds of Tundra Swans calling and see them lining the edges of the marsh. It is such a beautiful sight to witness such a large concentration of these awesome birds. Another

sight to behold, is the last trail of the waterfowl migration as they stop to rest and feed, along areas of the refuge. Then, there is always the return of the Bald Eagles to our area, that can help brighten those dreary winter days ahead of you. Make sure to visit the Locks and Dams this winter for some exciting views of possibly hundreds of Bald Eagles as they feed in the open waters of the Mississippi River. Other great opportunities for Bald Eagle viewing are the Stewards Bald Eagle Viewing Van Tours that will be starting in January, along with the Clinton Bald Eagle Watch event on January 10th, 2015. Details on our Bald Eagle photo contest are again included in this issue of



Connie Zink - Savanna, IL

the newsletter. Next month we will give you the complete schedule for Bald Eagle Watch. Also, don't forget the "Owl Prowl" with Bob Walton this Sunday evening November 9th, at 6:00 pm at Thomson Causeway. Hope to see you there, and in the meantime enjoy the start of that beautiful season called winter!

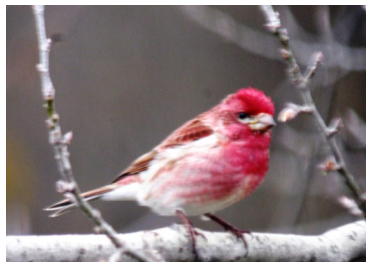


Golf Cart Tour



Watching Waterfowl at Spring Lake

### Anne's Birding Corner



Purple Finch by Anne Straight

Often confused with the House Finch, the Purple Finch has an overall raspberry or rose-color on the head, back, breast, sides, and rump with faint streaking on the sides. It has a heavy conical bill. The female and immatures are brown, and heavily streaked with a whitish eyebrow.

It breeds in various habitats including coniferous or mixed forests in northern North



Anne Straight - Forreston, IL

American, the Great Lakes region and the west coast. A winter visitor in northern Illinois south to the southeastern United States, it will often visit feeders.

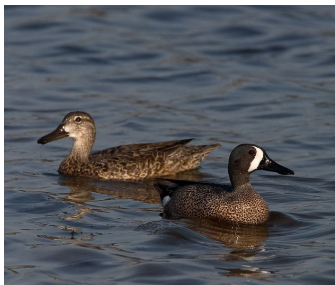
## Backwater Birding with Bob



Bob Walton - Zwingle, Ia,

### Blue-winged Teal

Blue-winged teal migrate farther south than any other North American waterfowl. A Blue-wing banded near Oak Lake, Manitoba, was shot by a hunter near Lima, Peru, more than 4,000 miles to the south.



Blue-winged Teal

Photo by Stan Bousson

As the colors of fall fade and strong northern winds strip off the majority of the river bottom foliage, the backwaters of the Mississippi are already taking on a very wintry appearance. In addition, the river bottom forests are now playing host to a variety of early arriving winter birds such as Dark-eyed Juncos, Purple Finches, and Tree Sparrows. November is a great time for birding the Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge.

Visitors are reminded that many areas of the refuge are posted and closed to any public access so that they may function as refuge for migratory waterfowl. Access for public waterfowl viewing is available at the two overlooks at Spring Lake, the Thomson Causeway and Campground, Sloan's Marsh parking lot, and the roadway to Lock and Dam 13. Already this fall there have been some unusual bird sightings in our tri-state area. A week ago, a pair of Snowy Egrets and a pair of American Avocets showed up at the John Deere Marsh near the mouth of the Little Maquoketa River, just north of Dubuque. While doing eagle surveys at Lost Mound with Bonnie and Larry Thoron, we had a great look at a pair of Golden Eagles hunt-

ing over the prairie besides seeing over forty Bald Eagles along River Road. Recently, Sandy and I observed a single Golden Eagle feeding on a dead raccoon on the road near Pleasant Creek. As we pulled over, it flew off the carcass into a tree only 20 yards away and patiently waited for us to deposit the animal well off the highway for the safety of the eagle. As we drove off the eagle quickly returned to feed.

On a recent trip to Bellevue we located a large raft of diving ducks above the dam. There were Ring-necked Ducks, Buffleheads, Lesser Scaup, several Long-tailed Ducks, and a half dozen scoters that we were unable to identify because of the distance and high waves.

Overall, I have been fortunate to spend a lot of time pursuing outdoor activities this fall. In addition to bird watching, I've had ample time for hiking, fishing, and hunting—all of which involved a large degree of bird watching. The addition of a good nose (i.e. Labrador Retriever) to my ears and eyes really increases the number of birds I discover in the marsh. Besides ducks, "Boomer" has become adept at sniffing out American Bitterns, Wilson's Snipe, Marsh Wrens, and even

Winter Wrens in the flooded timber of Green Island.

The most memorable times this fall have been spent mentoring youth in various outdoor activities including bird watching, youth pheasant hunting, and youth deer hunting. Their enthusiasm is contagious and hopefully they will become more aware and appreciative of our natural resources. The next time you venture outdoors see if you can take a youth along. You will enjoy their company and they may just remind you how beautiful our common birds like Northern Cardinals and Blue Jays really are.

Coming attractions for November are as follows:

November 1-10—winter sparrows, especially Dark-eyed Juncos, Tree Sparrows, and Purple Finches will arrive in large numbers.

November 10-20—diving ducks and immature Bald Eagles will peak in number.

November 20-30—migrating Tundra Swans, and puddle ducks such as Mallards, American Black Ducks, Gadwall, and Wigeon will be abundant. Also, large numbers of mature Bald Eagles will begin to concentrate below locks and dams.



Jr. Stewards  
harvesting  
and planting  
the milkweed  
seedpods.

## *Jr. Stewards Chatter*

On Saturday, October 4th, 2014, the Junior Stewards of the Upper Mississippi River Refuge went out in the chilly 44-degree weather to collect milkweed seedpods. We collected butterfly weed, whorled and common milkweed. We opened up the seedpods and took the fuzz off the seeds and put them in separate cups. Then we went back outside to plant the seeds.

If you would like more information about milkweed seed collecting visit <http://monarchwatch.org/bring-back-the-monarchs/milkweed/seed-collecting-processing>. The Monarchs will love you for it.



Logan Zimmerman –  
Clinton, IA 8th grade.



Collecting the butterfly weed, whorled and common milkweed seedpods.



De-fluffing the seeds from the pods.

## *Flash Point - "The Splendor of Fall"*

With the cool winds of October come the colorful leaves and the splendor of what is the fall season. I love going out and photographing the pallet of reds, oranges, yellows and greens. It is especially lovely when you add a water source, as the reflections double the beauty.



Connie Inskeep - Moline, IL.



When photographing the fall leaves, make sure you choose different perspectives. If you can get up high on a hill and look down over the color splashed trees, do it, and take pictures so you can keep that beauty forever. You can also take shots at ground level for a different look.



The color can be fleeting depending on the weather, so get out there when you see it. Winter will soon be upon us. Until next time, enjoy the colors of fall while they last. Connie

## *“Youth Deer Hunt Shatters Records” by Ed Britton*



The eighth annual Youth Deer Hunt was held on October 11-12 at the Lost Mound Unit of Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge and was a record shattering event. Lost Mound Site Manager Alan Anderson eagerly boasted “We had the highest number of youth with many first-time hunters, our first non-residents (MN, WI, IA) participated, and 40% of hunters were successful that resulted in the largest number of deer being harvested since our special hunt began in 2007. All of the hunters saw deer and expressed excitement at the special opportunity to hunt Lost Mound”.

Lost Mound provides a unique hunting opportunity for youth, ages 10-15. There are 45 hunt sites located within areas closed to public access due to ongoing environmental clean-up at the former Savanna Army Depot. The deer population is high because the area provides a sanctuary for deer. The percentage of large bucks is impressive and offers an outstanding opportunity to observe and harvest deer for a special group of hunters.

Thirty youths participated in the hunt and harvested 12 deer that included five bucks and seven does. Thirteen year old Carson Rice from Mount Carroll IL harvested the largest deer, an eight point buck with field dressed weight of 169 pounds. Twelve year old Marie Petersen from Spring Grove MN shot her first buck, an eight pointer that weighed in at 152 pounds dressed.

Lost Mound is also an important bald eagle wintering area. Many hunters observed eagles soaring overhead that were vigilantly searching for their next meal. Research conducted on Lost Mound showed that bald eagles feed on deer carcasses and discarded deer parts. The lead bullets used in hunting often fragment upon entering a deer. These toxic lead fragments may become embedded in the offal (gut pile) or waste parts that are discarded in the field. Bald eagles and other wildlife feed on the offal and eat the lead fragments. Examination of 168 dead bald eagles that were randomly collected in the Upper Midwest in 2011 and 2012 showed that 48% had lead exposure and 21% had lethal lead levels.

As part of a hunter awareness program on lead exposure in bald eagles, non-lead ammunition was provided free (by partners Saving Our Avian Resources and American Bird Conservancy) to Lost Mound hunters during the 2012 and 2013 deer hunts. During this two year period, 200 boxes of non-lead ammunition were provided to 162 hunters. The program was voluntary and some hunters shot lead ammunition. The offal from 25 lead shot deer were x-rayed and showed that lead fragments were present in 36% of the piles.

In an effort to reduce lead exposure to bald eagles, non-lead ammunition was required this year for the Lost Mound Youth Deer Hunt. For many youths, this was their first deer hunt and introduction to the bald eagle lead exposure issue. Several positive comments were received on the effectiveness of the copper ammunition that all of the hunters preferred. The ballistic quality of the copper ammunition was evident by the one-shot kills that occurred for 80% of the deer harvested.



Thirteen year old Carson Rice



Twelve year old Marie Petersen

## *“This Ol Walnut Tree” by Debbie Cram*

Here are some photos from October’s installment of “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”*



Bridge at Palisades State Park by Debbie Cram



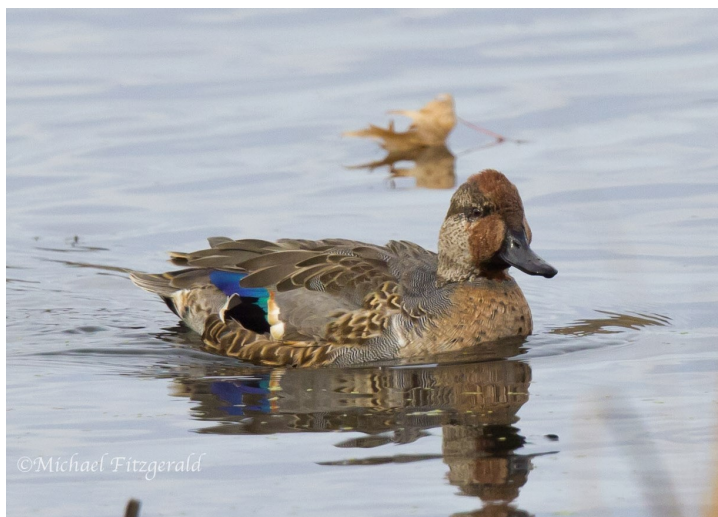
Downy Woodpecker by Connie and Wade Inskeep



Sandhill Cranes at Necedah NWR by Dave Watts



Snow Bunting by Steve Aram



Green-winged Teal by Michael Fitzgerald

*“More Sightings Around the Refuge”*



Spring Lake Resort by Connie Zink



Whooping Cranes at Necedah NWR by Dave Watts



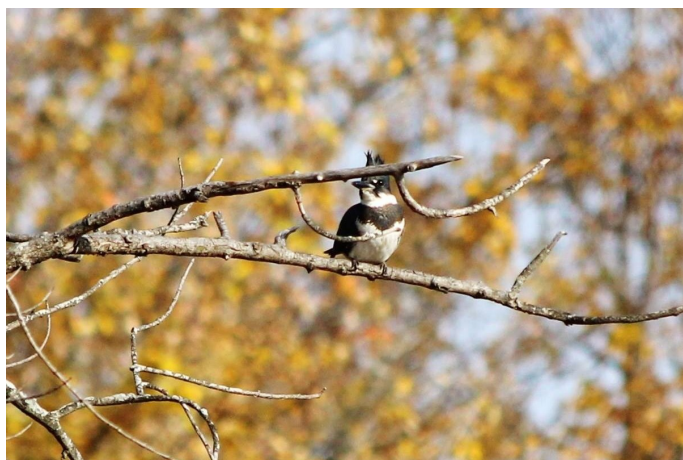
American Widgeon by Michael Fitzgerald



Hermit Thrush by Steve Aram



Fox Squirrel by Debbie Cram



Belted Kingfisher by Connie Zink



*“Even More Sightings Around the Refuge”*



Blue Racer by Connie Zink



Nature's Frozen Art by Debbie Cram



Downy Woodpecker by Connie and Wade Inskeep



Merlin by Steve Aram



Sandhill Crane by Michael Fitzgerald

### Schedule of Events



White-crowned Sparrow by Steve Aram

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)

Saturday, December 13th Bald Eagle Viewing Tour 9:00 am - 11:00 am (Meet at Ingersoll Center)

Saturday, December 13th "Lost Mound Birding Van Tour" 1:00 pm– 5:00 pm (Meet at Lost Mound Unit Office by 12:45)

Friday, December 19th Monthly Stewards Potluck Meeting and Christmas Party 11:00 am - 1:30 pm

Sunday, December 21st "Lost Mound Birding Van Tour" 1:00 pm– 5:00 pm (Meet at Lost Mound Unit Office by 12:45)

Saturday, January 10th "Bald Eagle Watch" Clinton, Ia.

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



Sandhill Cranes by Dave Watts



Deer at Lost Mound Unit by Connie Zink



### Stewards of the Upper Mississippi River Refuge

815-273-2732

Primary Business Address [stewardsumrr@gmail.com](mailto:stewardsumrr@gmail.com)



Like us on Facebook

Check out our Website:  
[www.stewardsumrr.org](http://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](http://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

### 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:

**WHO IS ELIGIBLE** Open to all photographers



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)

### TO ENTER:

Only digitally uploaded images can be entered, and only into one division. Digital files can be e-mailed to [Stewardsumrr@gmail.com](mailto: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.

**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:

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](mailto:Pam_Steinhaus@fws.gov)

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