

madison
AUDUBON



August 2021



Madison Audubon

Hey, nice teeth!

by Matt Reetz, executive director

These smiles. Wow! We missed seeing your smiles so much.

This summer, thanks to modern science, our nimble staff, and enthusiastic members like you, we were able to begin hosting in-person events again. I have to say, they are some of the sweetest and most fun activities we've ever held.

We banded American Kestrels and Purple Martins, counted butterflies, hosted a pollinator garden dedication, led bird outings, paddled through a marsh, celebrated successful citizen science programs with picnics, and so much more. It has been wonderful to see you all again, and to meet so many new folks.

For the rest of the summer and fall, we're working hard to:

- Create safe, fun, interesting in-person and online opportunities to learn about birds and meet fellow nature lovers;
- Build and strengthen partnerships with organizations to make the outdoors appealing and safe for diverse communities;
- Enhance our sanctuary properties with continued restoration, land acquisition, and advocacy.

I hope you enjoy reading about how much we've accomplished together in the last few months. We look forward to seeing your sparkling teeth soon!

madisonaudubon.org/events

| madisonaudubon.org/field-trips



Madison Audubon



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Tom & Kathy Luedtke

Birds need your help

by Kaitlin Svabek, communications specialist



Birds landed a big win in 2020, when the City of Madison passed Wisconsin's first Bird-Safe Glass ordinance. Unfortunately, five developer groups are now suing the city over this ordinance, which created environmentally-friendly requirements for large glass surfaces that are notoriously deadly for birds.

Birds face many threats, including habitat loss, pesticide poisoning, climate change, and free-range cats. This year has been especially tough.

The severe winter storm in the south this past February is suspected to have caused significant mortality in migratory bird populations.

A mysterious bird illness reported in the East Coast spread into the Midwest this summer, killing and sickening more songbirds.

Hundreds of millions—even up to a billion—birds die each year in the United States after colliding with windows.

But, there's hope!

Last year, Madison Audubon and our partners at American Bird Conservancy weighed in on the city's development of the Bird-Safe Glass ordinance,

which applies to large buildings, glass walkways, and glass railings.

The ordinance was celebrated and supported by the public. We need your help to uphold this protective law now. The lawsuit is unusual—actually, the first-ever to challenge an ordinance like this.

Unfortunately, this lawsuit could impact existing ordinances, stall ordinances in progress, or even end efforts to establish environmentally-friendly building measures around the state and beyond.

The city and concerned citizens are pushing back.

Madison Audubon, our members, and partner organizations are dedicated to supporting the city in the battle to uphold this important ordinance. Right now, we need your help. **Share** your support of the ordinance publicly on social media. **Advocate** for responsible practices by talking to your families and friends. **Sign** our online petition to stand up for wildlife. **Join** the Bird Collision Corps this fall to help document the problem.

Add your name to the petition and learn how you can help in other ways at madisonaudubon.org/bird-safe-glass.



Madison Audubon is your local Audubon chapter, serving 10 counties in southern Wisconsin

Together with our members, we work to protect and improve habitat for birds and other wildlife through land acquisition and management, education, and advocacy.



MADISON AUDUBON TEAM

STAFF

Matt Reetz, *executive director*
Becky Abel, *director of philanthropy*
Carolyn Byers, *director of education*
Drew Harry, *land steward (Faville Grove Sanctuary)*
Brenna Marsicek, *director of communications and outreach*
Mark Martin (*volunteer*) and Susan Foote-Martin, *resident managers (Goose Pond Sanctuary)*
John Minnich, *financial manager*
David Musolf and Roger Packard, *volunteer resident managers (Faville Grove Sanctuary)*
Graham Steinhauer, *land steward (Goose Pond Sanctuary)*
Kaitlin Svabek, *communications specialist*

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Bottle gentian | Arlene Koziol

Gentians, hidden gems of color

by MaryBeth Barker, 2020 Faville Grove Sanctuary summer intern

Fall in Wisconsin is a burst of colors, brightening and fading, with shades and textures unimaginable. Driving down the road, a fall scene plays outside the window; the prairie morphs from orange to yellow to brown and into red. Patches of color blend together, all warm, all losing their chloroplasts, anticipating a lack of sunlight in the coming winter.

It's not until you walk amongst the expanse of colors, looking down at your feet, that you see tiny splotches of purple. Gentians come in many forms—fringed, stiff, cream, prairie—and each has its own unique tiny flower, often a flash of bright purple life in a slowly browning world.

The first time I saw the prairie, my feet hurt. After a long winter I emerged from my cocoon of an apartment only to feel like I no longer could use my limbs, or stand for more than five minutes. The prairie was kind though, recently

burned, and the seedlings had just sprouted, which made for easy walking. It was a perfectly hot late-spring day. The dominant color was green. Photosynthesis was in overdrive. We were learning about our new job, and every plant called its name with help from our bosses. My body and brain were overwhelmed.

One thing I did not expect about this new job was that I would be observing such drastic changes over just one season. I especially did not expect the range of colors. Featured hues went from purple to yellow to purple again, all against a background of bright green. Summer days were hot and humid, but we were stewards of the prairie that summer, bearing the weight of a 3-gallon pack of herbicide to keep invasive weeds at bay, and keep the natural colors changing again and again through the seasons. Prairie plants grew taller and stiffer, and traversing the land became much more difficult. We made our

way through tall cattails, boggy mush, sweltering days—and what else was it for but the prairie? While being smacked in the face by cattails and having my boots fill with bog water, I wasn't thinking about my resume. I was thinking about all those colors I got to see and take care of every day.

At first we took the offensive, uprooting garlic mustard, spraying reed canary grass, attacking white and yellow sweetclover, and digging up wild parsnip and mullein. Dispersed between that work was education, seed collection, and dispersion. Drew, David, and Roger taught us about the geography, the ecology, and the funny stories of Faville Grove, not to mention constantly quizzing us about the IDs of various native prairie plants.

It went on that way: learning, digging, spraying, collecting. It seemed that by the end of the season, we went from pulling, digging, and spraying

to nurturing the prairie itself. Every afternoon, we would collect native seeds for future planting, future life. By the fall, seed collecting was all we were doing, all nurturing, no more pulling or digging. We would learn a plant, learn its seed, and spend the day collecting it, drying it, cleaning it, and storing it. Eventually, all that seed will be planted into new prairie restorations.

I saw the prairie go through its full life cycle: from first growth to seeding and dispersing, continuing its life for another year. A year ago, I would not have been able to say I even knew one specific prairie plant, let alone an entire prairie ecosystem's life. It's almost magical to be looking down on a browning fall day, and see a bright purple flower on the ground. Not what you would expect, right? Sometimes the best things in life are that way—that includes being a steward of the prairie, and gentians.



Stiff gentian | Madison Audubon



Cream gentian | Arlene Koziol



Prairie gentian | Joshua Mayer



Greater fringed gentian | Peter Gorman

Banding for the birds

by Mark Martin, Susan Foote-Martin, & Graham Steinhauer, Goose Pond team

For over 100 years, the US Geological Survey has been banding birds and distributing permits for partners to do the same. This is a big effort, with a huge database, many participants across the country, and a big goal: "To monitor the status and trends of resident and migratory bird populations. Because birds are good indicators of the health of the environment, the status and trends of bird populations are critical for identifying and understanding many ecological issues and for developing effective science, management and conservation practices." So far, about 77 million birds have been banded.

Here at Goose Pond Sanctuary, we spend a lot of time and energy contributing to this massive national research effort, and 2021 has already included many banding activities with more to come. All of these efforts have nice essays to go with them on our website. To learn more about each project, visit madisonaudubon.org/goose-pond-banding.

You may have previously read about our partnership with Project SNOWstorm, which studies Snowy Owl ecology and migration patterns. We have banded three Snowy Owls from the Goose Pond area since 2015. Most recently, "Columbia" was banded in January 2020. We expect to hear from her in November when she is back in range for her transmitter to upload.

Our American Kestrel banding efforts continue each year, thanks to partnership with Kurt Reed, Janet and Amber Eschenbauch of Central Wisconsin Kestrel Partnership, and Brand Smith who coordinates the program. (Learn more about all this great work on page 8.) The banding data are used to understand nest fidelity, migration, and more.



Purple Martins | Arlene Kozioł

Red-shouldered Hawks are another species we work with, assisting Gene and John Jacobs of Linwood Springs Raptor Center. We banded five chicks in 2019, and seven adults and chicks this summer. Gene and John have been studying and banding red-shoulders for over 50 years. It's a fascinating activity for a good cause, involving folks in harnesses, ropes, and helmets climbing the trees to access the chicks.

It seems like the hottest days of summer coincide with the dates we set for Purple Martin banding, and this year was no different. Under stifling 90+ degree July heat, we worked with Dick Nikolai to band 410 young Purple Martins at two Amish Farms in southern Wisconsin. This brings our banding total for this species to 2,243! We are interested in learning more about the population levels for this long-distance migrant and aerial insectivore.

We also partner with the WDNR to band Mourning Doves at Goose Pond (12 years and running), as well as to fit satellite transmitters onto Mallard hens (with WNDR and Ducks Unlimited), and place geolocators onto Wood Ducks (with WNDR and UW-Stevens Point).

We are also proud to share that our new Motus tower recorded its first bird. A Sora tagged on May 17, near Havana, Illinois and recorded 211 miles north at Goose Pond on May 19. The same Sora was recorded again and again through Canada, ending up just outside of Toronto on the north shore of Lake Ontario. What an incredible

journey that bird took, and one we would have never been able to track, explore, and discuss without banding technology.

Additionally, many of you have joined us for tagging monarchs each fall, which we plan to host again in September this year. We have placed tags on thousands of butterflies to help study their migration to Mexico.

Banding birds and tagging butterflies aren't just wonderful experiences for the many volunteers who help with the process. There's no doubt each close encounter with these species is unforgettable. But, these are also important and valuable conservation tools that help scientists find answers to critical questions.

Thanks to everyone, especially the banders, who helped with our citizen science projects. We look forward to providing project updates and hope to see you in September for monarch tagging.



Tagged monarch | Arlene Koziol

SANCTUARY INTERNS

Farewell and thank you!

As summer comes to a close, we want to extend a huge thank you to the 12 ecological restoration interns who spent their summers working on our prairies, in our woodlands, throughout our savannas, and beyond. Madison Audubon's 2,000+ acres of land flourish because of their essential work.

Below are the two 2021 summer intern groups, one dedicated to Faville Grove Sanctuary and the other the Prairie Partners group that rotates through Goose Pond Sanctuary and partner sites each week. Your donations make these internship opportunities possible. Thank you! You can learn more about each of the interns in this summer's program by visiting madisonaudubon.org/2021-interns.



FGS interns | David Musolf



PP interns | Mark Martin

Faville Grove Sanctuary crew: Isabell Labus, Nicole Klein, Aidan Tautges, Katherine Koehler, Zach Ausavich, and Ben Boerigter

Prairie Partners crew: Emma Raasch, Allison Sheldon*, Bill Davis, Kyle Hulbert, Cara Farrow, and Luke DeBiazio

*Allison was the intern for Sauk Prairie Conservation Allinace, not formally a Prairie Partner group. Allison spent her Fridays with us!

They grow up so fast

by Brenna Marsicek, director of communications & outreach

They hatch, they're cute, they grow, they feast, they're loud, then they leave. Sound familiar? July is a bittersweet time for Madison Audubon's nest monitoring volunteers. After spending weeks or months watching a bird family grow, it is both a thrill and a lonely feeling to watch the birds fledge or to arrive to find an empty nest.

The Bald Eagle Nest Watch program grew by leaps and bounds in 2021, almost doubling in size. Thanks to a new partnership with 1000 Islands Environmental Center in Kaukauna, over 20 nests were monitored by volunteers in Wisconsin's Fox Valley. We connected with a group of seven dedicated volunteers who had been monitoring eagle nests for years in southeastern Wisconsin, and formally invited them to the group (they said yes!). And the number of nests in south-central and southwestern Wisconsin continue to grow, and with it the number of passionate monitors. In total, 226 volunteers monitored 100 nests in 19 counties, and happily reported 147 youngsters took to the skies this summer. The eaglet shown above is one of them in Appleton.

These BENW volunteers do more than just passively watch nests; they are also great ambassadors to passers-by who are curious about what they're looking at, as well as critical watch-dogs for situations that require intervention. Just this year, our volunteers showed leadership in 13 situations, ranging from creating and posting signs to keep walkers back from nest trees, to notifying authorities and assisting eaglets that fell out of nests. This important work takes courage and commitment, and we are inspired by it.

Big thanks go to the site hosts, 1000 Islands Environmental Center, and WDNR for their great

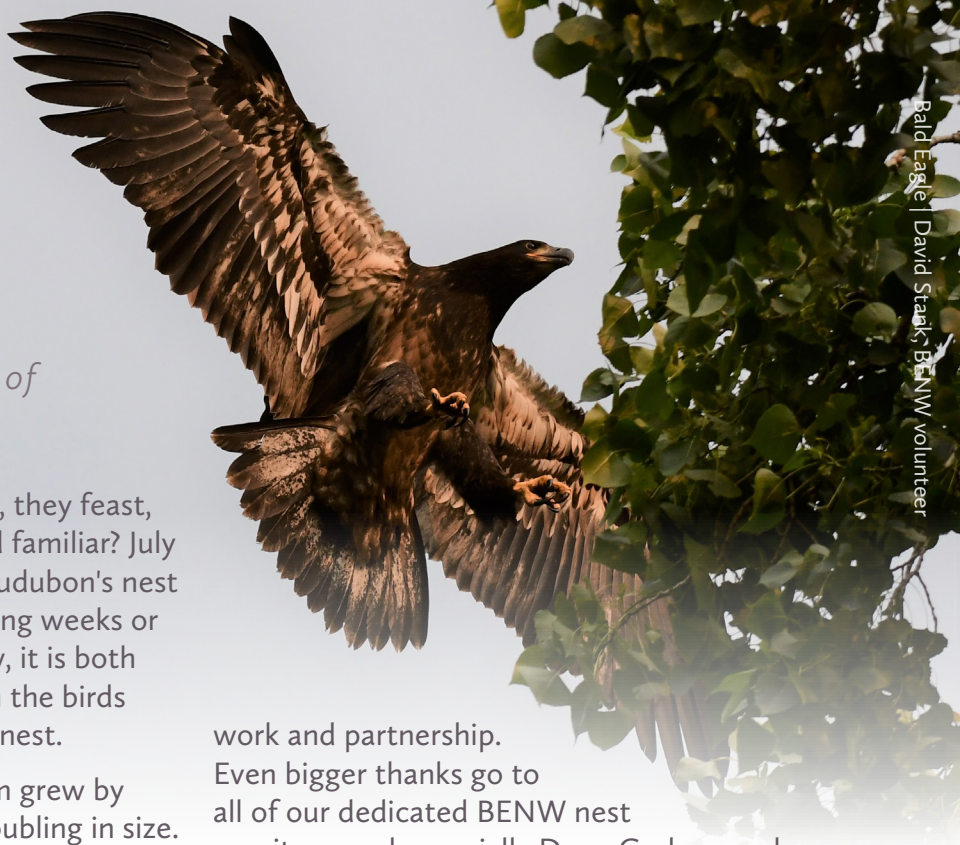
work and partnership.

Even bigger thanks go to all of our dedicated BENW nest monitors, and especially Drew Cashman who helps run the program on a volunteer basis.

The Kestrel Nest Box Monitoring program is another one of our lively citizen science efforts, made possible by the 66 volunteers (25 of them new in 2021) who monitor American Kestrel nest boxes in southern Wisconsin. Of all the kestrel nest box programs in North America, ours is the second largest with 208 boxes! For volunteers, the particularly fun time is April-June when the kestrels are back, eggs are laid, chicks grow fast, and fledglings fly. Our 64 occupied boxes fledged 232 kestrel chicks. Normal clutch size usually tops out at five young, but one of our boxes had six chicks this year.

This program is extra special because nearly all of the chicks in these boxes are banded, with help from banders Kurt Reed, as well as Janet and Amber Eschenbauchs from Central Wisconsin Kestrel Research, and volunteers. In 2021, we banded 160 chicks and 33 adults, and caught 9 adults that had already been banded. Our first year of 200+ kestrels in hand! Thank you to all of these amazing volunteers, especially Brand Smith who coordinates this project.

You can volunteer with these programs too. We begin recruiting for the 2022 season in late fall—keep an eye on your email and our newsletter.



Bald Eagle | David Stank's BENW volunteer



Operation Fresh Start activity | Taylor Houghton



Nature art | Madison Audubon

EDUCATION

Time is fleeting, learning isn't

by Carolyn Byers, director of education

Somehow it's already August—this year has absolutely flown by. It seems like just yesterday that we were celebrating Black Birders Week (May 30-June 5), a week dedicated to celebrating Black voices in birdwatching, science, and conservation. During that week, with help from members like you and donors from all over the country, we were able to secure over 40 pairs of binoculars for two of our partner community centers, Bayview Foundation and Vera Court Neighborhood Center. These centers are excited that their kids will be able to get close-up views of birds any time they want now. Thank you to everyone who contributed!

Our Forces of Nature virtual summer camp has been a wonderful way to connect with families through the pandemic. This year, camp for grades 2-6 was all about exploring nature through our senses. If you're looking for something fun to do, all of our summer camp activities are free and available for anyone to try any time: madisonaudubon.org/forces-of-nature. As another connection with our partner community centers, Bayview and Vera



Court are using the camp activities we designed for some of their summer activities too.

We're very excited to continue our summer partnership with Operation Fresh Start, a Madison-based nonprofit that provides a path toward self-sufficiency for disconnected young adults through education, mentoring and employment training. Our Conservation Academy program brings OFS conservation crews out to natural areas, introduces them to professionals in the wildlife ecology field, and explores career paths to get there. OFS participants get hands-on experience (literally—see the top left photo) to help them narrow down which career paths they might be interested in pursuing.

It may still be summer, but we're already thinking about the 2021-22 school year. We'll be meeting weekly with at least six classrooms and two community centers next year, and our fingers are crossed that we'll get to see them in person. Our priority is safety, but there is no Zoom equivalent to seeing the sparkle in a kid's eyes and grin on their face when they find their first bird through binoculars.

So while time flies fast, we're making sure there are lots of ways for people of all ages to enjoy nature this summer!



DONOR TESTIMONIAL

Easy way to give to birds—through your IRA

featuring Marcia MacKenzie, Madison Audubon donor, member, & volunteer



I love the work Madison Audubon does, and I have been donating to them regularly for a long time.

Since I have been required by tax law to take payouts from my IRA, I have been sending donations directly to Madison Audubon from the IRA, because then I don't have to pay taxes on the withdrawals—otherwise they are taxed as regular income.

It's super easy.

Just ask the financial institution that holds your IRA do it for you! They will simply ask you to sign an authorization form, and your donation will go directly to Madison Audubon. When I want to give more than the withdrawal required by tax law, I still take it from the IRA, because of the tax benefit. Then I take the same amount as my donation from my regular account and invest it elsewhere.



Voila! Tax free donations from me. And the satisfaction of knowing I am protecting birds and land.



To learn how you can make tax-free donations to Madison Audubon from your IRA, speak with your financial advisor or contact Becky Abel, Director of Philanthropy, at babel@madisonaudubon.org or 608-255-2473 x 5.

It's Make-a-Will Month: leave a legacy for & of birds

by Becky Abel, director of philanthropy

Whether you are 29 or 99, it is never too early or too late to plan for the legacy you want to leave. Will your love for nature carry on?

The members of Madison Audubon's Kestrel Legacy Circle have named Madison Audubon in their will or estate, thereby strengthening our organization well beyond our and their lifetimes. We are honored and inspired by it!

If your estate planning includes birds and Madison Audubon, please let us know. We

would welcome the chance to thank you for honoring Madison Audubon and for helping secure our future and the future of birds and land protection in southern Wisconsin.

Speak with your financial advisor about leaving a planned gift to Madison Audubon, learn more at madisonaudubon.org/legacy or contact Becky Abel, Director of Philanthropy at babel@madisonaudubon.org.



American Kestrel nest | Madison Audubon
American Kestrel adult | Mick Thompson

Thank you to our donors

New Madison Audubon donors May-July 2021

Donors like you help make Madison Audubon thrive, and we are grateful for your contributions. Below is the list of brand-new Madison Audubon donors since our last newsletter. You can find the full list of donors on our website at madisonaudubon.org/2021-donors. On paper or online, we appreciate YOU and your support. Thank you!

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*by Tim and Linda
Eisele*

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by Beverly Schwantes

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I would like to find out more
about Madison Audubon's Kestrel
Legacy Circle. Please contact me!

TWO ORGANIZATIONS

If you are a member of National
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would be grateful for your additional
gift to Madison Audubon as well!

If you are a member of Madison Audubon
only, your gift of \$20 or more will
renew your membership for one year.

PLEASE RETURN THIS
FORM TO THE ADDRESS ON
PAGE 12, OR GIVE ONLINE AT

madisonaudubon.org

Have you heard?

Madison Audubon and National Audubon are two separate organizations. We would appreciate your support! Your membership dues and donations to Madison Audubon support local land restoration, bird protection, youth education, and community engagement. Thank you.





Great Blue Heron | Arlene Koziol

REGISTER NOW FOR EARLY BIRD PRICES

Our Birds, Bikes, & Brews event has something for everyone! Join us for an afternoon of exploring natural areas in Middleton, ending the day with fun at Capital Brewery.

Sept. 26, 12-5pm, Middleton

MORE INFO & REGISTRATION AT
MADISONAUDUBON.ORG/BBB

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Cover photo: American Kestrel banding
volunteer | Madison Audubon

Monthly twitterings, in your mailbox

No computer? No problem!

Madison Audubon is now offering limited, monthly paper updates mailed to your home. These printed updates provide all the information that comes to email-receiving members, so you can stay in the loop on the great things that happen in between these quarterly newsletters.

To enroll, check the box below, cut out this entire page, and mail it to the address at the top of the page.

Yes! Sign me up for paper updates.

Your phone number: _____



Black-capped Chickadee | Brenna Marsicek

Volunteers needed: Join the Bird Collision Corps this fall

Help document the trends and patterns of bird-window collisions in the Madison area. The fall survey period runs Sept. 13-Nov. 1. Sign up for a weekly survey at the site of your choice, and be part of the solution in preventing unnecessary bird deaths. Training and materials are provided. Join in at madisonaudubon.org/bcc.

