

madison
AUDUBON



November 2020



Madison Audubon
is your local
Audubon chapter

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



A common bird during an uncommon time

Ode to the common yellowthroat

There have been a lot of things on my mind this year. One happy subject I'm always thinking about is birds (surprise, surprise). Given all that's going on, one bird in particular has been occupying more brain space than usual.

The common yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*) is a small songbird with a big personality. It is a neotropical migrant, spending summers in much of North America and winters in the southern U.S., Central America, and the Caribbean. The females are lovely olive brown with yellow in the throat and undertail. Males are bright yellow below with a spectacular deep black face mask framed in white. That unique plumage makes the species easy to recognize, great for introducing folks, especially kids, to the magic of birds.

So, why's it on my mind? Well, for one, that mask the male wears is just too darn topical, isn't it? But really, this beautiful little bird is tied into much of Madison Audubon's work.

Yellowthroats are abundant at our sanctuary properties where they can be seen flitting among the native plants, their *chuck* calls and rolling *witchety-witchety-witchety* songs filling the air from March to September. We're also thrilled that yellowthroats—and many other birds—will benefit from new lands at Goose Pond and Otsego Marsh (see pg. 6-7), where restored habitats will provide a bounty of food resources and nesting sites. (Not that many of us will ever *see* their nest sites because they are ridiculously well-hidden. I spent much of my graduate work finding and monitoring thousands of songbird nests. I found only ONE common yellowthroat nest. They are tucked, low to ground, in dense vegetation and often built with a partial roof. But, I digress!)

This amazing bird also reminds me that it, like most birds, still needs our help—it faces so many threats. For example, this species is one of the many victims our volunteers regularly

COVER: Gorgeous cedar waxwings add a welcome pop of color to the winter scene. *Monica Hall*

TOP: Masked and magnificent! *Arlene Koziol*

OPPOSITE TOP: A hosta flower looks magical to a young naturalist. *Madison Audubon*

OPPOSITE BOTTOM: The darling coloring of a female common yellowthroat is well balanced with her intense gaze. *Kelly Colgan Azar*

Inspiring a love for nature

Hands-on education in a screen-dominated world

Throughout the past summer, our online education programming had a big reach, streaming videos online and engaging thousands of viewers from all over the country. We loved interacting with that enthusiastic community! However, as always, our focus is quality over quantity, so we are bringing it back home to our local kids this school year.

We're making lots of new friends. We're partnering with 10 Madison classrooms for weekly lessons, and with two more for monthly meetings. That's a lot of kids! While lessons take place online, they focus on getting kids exploring in nature as much as possible—even if they are exploring through a window. Our kids all have a “sit spot”—a special place in nature that they visit weekly to sit and observe. They've investigated insects and gone on scavenger hunts in their homes and in their

neighborhoods. The kids tell stories of things they've seen, and share big feelings in gratitude circles.

This year, each child also received a Nature Exploration Kit from our education department. The kids were excited to unpack their kits together on screen, and delighted to find they ALL had the same supplies.

...continued on page 8



find in our bird-window collisions monitoring program. While it can use a lot of different habitats, it still faces the same problems of loss and degradation of habitats that afflict all birds. And common yellowthroats will also be impacted by continued climate change. Yes, it's a common bird (heck, it's in the name), but it

will take us all working together to keep it common.

So, as we head into the end of the year and whatever lies ahead, I'll keep thinking of wonderful birds like the common yellowthroat. It's such a beautiful, charismatic, and cheeky little bird—it simply brings me a lot of joy. And we can all use a little more of that!



Matt

Matt Reetz, executive director
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David Musolf, *volunteer resident manager*

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Graham Steinhauer, *land steward*

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Madison Audubon is a proud member of the following organizations:



Fat geese at Faville Grove

With a little help, even the rarest wildlife can bounce back

In the mid-1930s, when Aldo Leopold began advising farmers at Faville Grove about wildlife management, giant Canada geese, the subspecies that originally bred from Kentucky to central Manitoba, were nearly extinct. And they weren't alone among once-common species that struggled mightily in the mid-20th century, following decades of habitat loss and overhunting.

Professor Leopold's student, Bob McCabe, included a few of Faville Grove's most notable wildlife sightings in a 1942 field season report:

- "one small raccoon was seen...in the middle of County Trunk G";
- "five or six sandhill cranes were seen to stop and rest on the Faville prairie";
- "several deer have been seen" and "verified," having first been observed in the area in the winter of 1940-41.

We laugh to think of such rarities today. Changes in land and wildlife management have brought many of these species back from the brink.

Leopold wrote "A Marshland Elegy" decriing the loss of sandhill cranes and their marshland habitat, but today, for nine months out of the year, one can hardly set foot outside at Faville Grove Sanctuary without hearing the bugling of sandhill cranes. Art Hawkins, Leopold's first student assigned to Faville Grove, remarked on several occasions late in his life how astonished and pleased Leopold would be to hear the cranes at Faville Grove.

Hawkins had a long, distinguished career with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, where he helped



Saying goodbyes and hellos

Three board members to sign off, three new candidates on the slate

The Madison Audubon board of directors consists of 13 members, three of whom are in the last stretch of their nine-year terms of service to the organization. Sue Knaack, Roger Packard, and Mareda Weiss have provided wonderful insight, creativity, and wisdom that has helped Madison Audubon achieve new heights of growth and impact—thank you!

Our nominating committee has developed a new slate of talented board candidates, who we believe will bring unique expertise, new perspectives and enthusiasm to our board. The candidates are Leakhena Au, Jeff Galligan, and Darcy Kind. You can learn more about each of them at madisonaudubon.org/board-statements.

Madison Audubon's bylaws allow for members to nominate additional candidates. You may do so by submitting a brief statement from each nominee signed by at least 25 Madison Audubon members in good standing as of Nov. 1, 2020. Member nominations are due to the Madison Audubon office no later than Dec. 7.

Watch for ballots to appear in the February newsletter and please vote!

Thank you!

lay the groundwork for the waterfowl surveys used to set annual duck regulations. In the late 1950s, he and a couple of fellow waterfowl enthusiasts discovered a small flock of pinioned, giant Canada geese on a farm where they had been used as live decoys. He purchased the flock, bred them, and gradually farmed them out to others who raised more birds for release into the wild.

To say that this reintroduction was a wild success is a wild understatement. This summer at Faville Grove Sanctuary, Madison Audubon rented a newly acquired tract of land surrounding the north end of Faville Marsh to a local farmer who planted 36 acres of soybeans. After the beans emerged, hundreds of geese and goslings—descendants of Art Hawkins' birds—marched up out of the marsh every day for weeks on end and ate 22 acres of the plants down to a stubble.

Our renter said he wasn't excited

about planting crops for geese and we should hurry up and plant the site to prairie, so that's our plan for early December. We have good quantities and diversity of seed collected this summer and fall by many volunteers and interns. "Fat Goose Prairie" is the name this summer's student interns gave the site, in anticipation. Not only will the new planting enhance the already stunning vistas of the marsh, but it will expand habitat for many species that haven't done as well as geese and raccoons since Hawkins worked at Faville Grove, including grassland birds and waterfowl, and perhaps even a few goose predators.

Because if you give them a chance—and enough habitat—they will come.

David Musolf and Roger Packard, Faville Grove Sanctuary resident managers
dmusolf@uwalumni.com, rpackard@uwalumni.com

Drew Harry, Faville Grove Sanctuary land steward
faville@madisonaudubon.org

HELP PLANT FAT GOOSE PRAIRIE

We need lots of volunteers (masked and well-spaced) on a weekend morning in early to mid-December to hand plant about 40 acres north of Faville Marsh. Contact David (dmusolf@uwalumni.com) if you are interested in helping.

OPPOSITE TOP: Canada geese are incredibly common now, but weren't always so. *Arlene Koziol*

OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Two sandhill cranes trumpet their resonating call. *Monica Hall*

Good news for birds and people

Goose Pond Sanctuary grows again

As board member and volunteer Topf Wells says, "Good news these days has the status of cold water in the midst of a desert hike." And we have some cold, refreshing water for you: Madison Audubon added 70 more acres to our Goose Pond Sanctuary this fall!

The property, previously owned by neighbor and friend Judi Benade, includes 24 acres of restored diverse prairie, a two-acre pond, 29 acres of grassland habitat, and 15 acres of soybeans waiting to be planted this December to native prairie.

Many of the original seeds scattered in the 24-acre restoration in 2004 came from Goose Pond Sanctuary. Baseline monitoring was conducted in 2018 by Tyler Gatti, UW-Madison masters student who conducted field work at our sanctuary. In that survey, Tyler found 56 species of prairie plants, including density counts of 247 prairie dock and 43 compass plants per acre. Both species are host plants for the state-endangered Silphium borer moth, which has a significant population at Goose Pond Sanctuary and is being studied by UW-Madison masters student Kaylee

Nelsen. Kaylee documented Silphium borer moths for the first time at the Benade property this summer.

To say there are strong connections between this property and the larger Goose Pond Sanctuary complex is an understatement!

In addition, we have confirmed nesting on the property for a wide variety of grassland birds including turkeys, harriers, sedge wrens, meadowlarks, and willow flycatchers.

We are grateful to Judi for helping Madison Audubon protect this property. In this time of light speed land conversion and development, this land could have been sold for building sites. Instead, it is now protected for birds, wildlife, people, and plants forever.

The property will be open to members and the public in the spring of 2021 and we hope to have a dedication ceremony in the summer.

Mark Martin and Sue Foote-Martin, Goose Pond Sanctuary resident managers
goosep@madisonaudubon.org

Graham Steinhauer, Goose Pond Sanctuary land steward
gsteinhauer@madisonaudubon.org



Funding for the purchase was made possible by the Arnold and Katherine Jackson Remainder Trust, the William and Jean Damm Land Acquisition Fund, the Jerry and Jill Martin Goose Pond Land Acquisition Fund and a donation by Jerry Martin.

Thank you!



You did it!

A picture made complete

With your help, the Otsego Marsh Puzzle fundraiser is completed! More than 75 donations ranging from \$20 to \$50,000 have refilled our land acquisition coffers, allowing Madison Audubon to respond quickly to potential land acquisition projects if the opportunity arises. Thank you for your support and engagement. See the full list of puzzle donors at madisonaudubon.org/puzzle.



OPPOSITE TOP: An Eastern meadowlark spreads the good news. *Arlene Koziol*
 OPPOSITE MIDDLE: The sunny flowers of compass plant are a cheerful sight. *Madison Audubon*
 OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Judi Benade stands in Madison Audubon's newest parcel of protected land. *Mark Martin*
 LEFT: The Otsego Marsh Puzzle is complete, thank you! *Madison Audubon*

Take a virtual stroll

Otsego Marsh's StoryMap is live

If getting to Otsego Marsh is appealing but difficult, check out our new StoryMap of the area. This interactive website allows you to learn about the property, see beautiful images of plants and wildlife there, explore the map with trails and landmarks (shown right), bird lists, and more. You can enjoy this experience from your desktop or laptop computer, tablet, or smartphone at home or even in the field.

Visit madisonaudubon.org/otsego-storymap to get started with your virtual tour. And, if you are excited to visit the area in person this winter, plug in 3382 Old Cty Rd F, Rio WI into your navigation app and explore in person!

	Parking Lot There is a small gravel parking lot with informational signage located at 3382 Old...
	Woodland Trailhead 1.5 mile loop on a wide, flat, mowed path. Two rustic benches are placed along the route.
	Wetland Trailhead You can explore this area freely, or follow a suggested 0.6 mile out-and-back route betwe...
	Canoe and Kayak Access Canoeing and kayaking are permitted at Otsego Marsh from May 1 through Septembe...
	Hawks Pond Hawks Pond is a 32-acre marsh brimming with native wildlife. The pond is dotted with...
	Photography Blind Access to the photography blind at the back end of Hawks Pond is by permission only...
	Wetland Restoration On the west side of Old County Rd F is 4.5 acres of gorgeous wetland, recently acquired...
	2020 Addition As you look west from Old County Rd F, you'll see wetland, cropland, and distant woodland...



Education programs, continued from p. 3

Thanks to Alliant Energy Foundation for funding the kits for us! The kids will use them all year as they grow as scientists.



The kids (like many of us) are also learning new words like “breakout session,” “mute/unmute,” and “screenshare.” But they also regularly use fun words like “phenology,” “biotic,” and “abiotic.” For Indigenous People’s Day in October, we learned another new word: “ki.”

In the Potawatomi language it means “Earth being.” Instead of using “it” when talking about a plant or animal, we’re going to try out “ki.” By referring to living beings this way, we hope to change the way we and the next generation think about and respect nature.

Our new Nature Mentor series launched this fall too, to make space for more voices in natural science, a field which has been historically dominated by white voices. The scientists, naturalists, and nature-

lovers we interview in this series are Black, Indigenous, People of Color, folks from the LGBTQ+ community, or people with different physical abilities—and all excited to share a love of nature. We want the diverse community of kids we work with to see and hear from people who reflect diverse walks of life too. Nature is for everyone!

This year has pushed us to grow in so many ways, and we’re excited to see our programming continue to evolve to meet the needs of our communities.

Carolyn Byers, education director
carolyn.byers@madisonaudubon.org

P.S. Find our Nature Mentor videos and many other free, educational resources at madisonaudubon.org/education-resources.

Thank you to our major education donors:



Theda & Tamblin Clark Smith
FAMILY FOUNDATION



Tune In!

Access the recording of our Nov. 17, 2020 *Evenings with Audubon Online* program, “Boomers fledgling Zoomers: Engaging the Younger Generations in Birding and Nature Appreciation” by STEM educator and game inventor Chidi Paige at madisonaudubon.org/events



ABOVE: Kits for kids make learning more fun. *Madison Audubon*
RIGHT: A student enjoys her sit spot in the sun. *Madison Audubon*



Leave a Legacy Gift for Birds

Remembering Madison Audubon in your will or estate plan is a lasting commitment and gift to protect our local birds and landscapes in your lifetime and beyond. Your legacy gift helps ensure that future bird choruses will remain diverse and that our beautiful sanctuaries remain permanently protected.

Speak with your financial advisor about leaving a planned gift to Madison Audubon or contact Becky Abel at 608-255-2473 or babel@madisonaudubon.org.

If you have already named Madison Audubon in your estate plans, please let us know. We'd love to thank you and welcome you to the Kestrel Legacy Circle.

MADISONAUDUBON.ORG/LEGACY

Making your list

Ways to give back this giving season

This past year has highlighted the value and restorative benefits of birds, nature, and our work together. In 2020, Madison Audubon provided many gifts of nature to our members and nature explorers: free virtual programs; miles of trails for hiking, bird-watching, photography and reflection; citizen science programs; and much more.

The gift of birds is invaluable. When you give back to birds, you can feel confident that you are making a difference. **YOU are making our corner of the world a better place.** Thank you!



Nature has given you gifts.
There are lots of ways to
give back this season:

Support Birds

You have already received a mailed letter from Madison Audubon asking for your support. **This year-end drive is always important in making our work together possible**—especially this year.

If you already donate to National Audubon, we hope you will consider a separate, direct donation to Madison Audubon. *All* of your gift will stay right here to support conservation in south-central Wisconsin.

You can also give using the envelope provided in this newsletter.

MADISONAUDUBON.ORG/DONATE

Share the Love

An annual membership to Madison Audubon is a gift that keeps on giving! Give a loved one a gift membership and they will get early access to activities, classes, trips, and more.

Dress to Impress

Advertise your love of birds with Madison Audubon shirts and hats, perfect for your day on the trail. Get one for yourself or a friend.

Bundle Up

Ideal for the local bird lover, our adult holiday package includes a t-shirt, winter bird notecards, and an annual membership. The kids' edition includes two ID guides for kids, a t-shirt, and a patch. Cheers!

FIND THESE GIFTS AT
MADISONAUDUBON.ORG/STORE



Thank you to our donors!

New Madison Audubon donors August-October 2020

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 August-October donors on our website at madisonaudubon.org/2020-donors.

We will include a list of all 2020 donors in our annual report issue in February. On paper or online, we appreciate YOU and your support. Thank you!

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Join the Frequent Flyers Club

The Frequent Flyers are members like you who have committed to making regular, ongoing contributions to support our work together. As a Frequent Flyer, your donations can be automated based on how often, how much, and from which account you'd like to contribute. Thank you to our current FF members—you help Madison Audubon soar!

More information is available at madisonaudubon.org/give

GIVE TODAY!

Your generosity funds important conservation and education programs throughout south-central Wisconsin

Yes, I'd like to support Madison Audubon, my local chapter

Gift amount: _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Email _____

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Email _____

Check to Madison Audubon enclosed

Pay by Visa MasterCard

Name on card _____

Card # _____

Expiration Date _____

Three-digit code on card back _____

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

MEMBERSHIPS

If you are a member of both Madison and National Audubon (One Audubon), please renew at audubon.org/take-action or call 1-844-428-3826. Thanks for your additional gift to Madison Audubon!

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 IN THE INCLUDED ENVELOPE OR GIVE ONLINE:

madisonaudubon.org

LEFT: A collection of fabulous Wisconsin winter birdst. *Monica Hall*



#GIVING TUESDAY

MADISONAUDUBON.ORG/GT

12/3/2020

Celebrate the generosity season with a day of online giving to charities like ours!



SMILE.AMAZON.COM

If you already shop on Amazon, choose MAS as your charity and they'll donate while you shop.

Birdy ideas for winter

Ways to independently enjoy birds this season

BACKGROUND: Snack anyone? *Monica Hall*
CIRCLES, clockwise from top left: *Project Feederwatch/Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Monica Hall, Madison Audubon, Patrick Ready, Madison Audubon*



Project Feederwatch

Nov 14-Apr 9 | Your backyard

Watch your bird feeders for two consecutive days and record the birds that visit. More info at feederwatch.org



Christmas Bird Count - TBD

Variable dates and locations

Due to COVID-19, each CBC area will decide on Nov. 15 whether to host a count. Learn more at audubon.org/cbc



Bald Eagle Nest Watch (pg. 9)



Kestrel Nest Box Monitoring (pg. 9)



Sanctuary hikes (pgs. 4-7)

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