



madison
AUDUBON



May 2021



Forging ahead

New season, new faces, new experiences



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.



COVER: We are as determined as this Mallard ducking to forge ahead! *Monica Hall*
ABOVE: An eagle in motion is a force to be reckoned with. *Mike Williams*

Allow me to introduce myself as this year's president of the Madison Audubon board. My name is Galen Hasler; I have enjoyed eight years as a nature-loving board member, and am eager to serve my ninth and final year on the board as president. The board has elected Matt Fortney as vice president, positioning him to succeed me as

board president next year. With the next generation of leadership stepping up, our future is bright.

Our past president, Roger Packard, completed nine years of board service, providing wise leadership and accomplishing amazing growth in our mission. Thank you, Roger!

The last year wrote a story we will all tell in vivid detail to our kids and grandkids. Dare I say, I think many of our stories will include bird watching. Did you discover new natural areas to explore? Was this the time you added a birding app like eBird to your phone, and joined the citizen science movement? Did you surprise yourself by becoming a better birder, maybe especially so when birding alone? Did you get hooked chasing a rare bird? I did, and spent more time visiting more places than ever. This was our respite in a year of stress and change.

So it's time to celebrate emerging from a pandemic and our return to bird-watching together... albeit, in a different way. We still take care to follow the guidance of distancing six feet or masking if closer. If this new normal allows us to return to social

birding, it is something to celebrate indeed! Some of us have dearly missed being out with friends who can better hear and locate birds.

The year ahead is an exciting one for the people, birds, and habitats that Madison Audubon engages with. Land acquisitions and possibly even a third sanctuary are in the works, and we are bursting at the seams to tell you about it (alas, it'll have to wait!). More acres will be restored, and more young adults taught the skills of restoration work. Our gifted education staff will continue to have a nation-wide reach through virtual programming. The organization will continue to be a source for nature communications, as shown in our blog, website, and social media sites. Field trips and volunteer events will resume in some form, and joyfully at that. Our bird economy will continue to grow through generosity of members like you. And three new capable leaders have joined our board to share their expertise and energy to improve our corner of the of conservation world.

I encourage and invite you to plan monthly visits to our sanctuaries and watch the changing landscapes. The variety of bird, plant, and insect life you see will amaze you. I would be happy to arrange to meet you at one of our properties to chat more about birds, nature, and this great organization.

Happy spring!



Galen Hasler, board president

A clear need for change

Help make Wisconsin safer for birds

Birds need your help. Please sign the petition to support Wisconsin's first Bird-Safe Glass Ordinance, and share with your friends to do the same.

Here's why:

Up to one **billion** birds die from hitting windows each year in the United States alone. Warblers. Grosbeaks. Woodpeckers. Waxwings. Glass claims birds of all kinds.

This has been a known problem for a long time and is well-documented in the peer-reviewed scientific literature. Madison Audubon's Bird Collision Corps (BCC) program has studied this issue with our partners since 2018. It is likely that tens of thousands of birds die in Madison each year from hitting windows. The good news is this is preventable. So what can we do?

In August 2020, the City of Madison unanimously passed, with overwhelming public support, a city ordinance requiring bird-friendly glass for new building construction projects larger than 10,000 square feet, sky bridges, and ground-level glass features such as sound walls or glass screens. The ordinance creates a great example for other Wisconsin communities to build on or follow.

Then, in March 2021, the Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty (WILL) filed a notice of claim challenging the ordinance. WILL represents four developer groups that will sue the City, citing added costs and conformity with the state's uniform building code as primary objections. They state that one of their main goals is to stop any Wisconsin community from making similar

bird-friendly improvements to their communities' building standards.

These objections are far-fetched and short-sighted, to say the least.

Unlike WILL claims, the new ordinance will not be difficult for builders to implement. Dozens of these ordinances have been successfully implemented across the country, and the minimal upfront costs are far outweighed by the many benefits of bird-friendly glass, including energy savings.

Plus, the value of preventing bird deaths is tremendous. Birds provide essential ecosystem services. Birdwatching is a \$107 billion industry in the US, and offer mental and physical benefits. Birds are just plain great.

YOU CAN HELP!

- 1. Sign the petition today at madisonaudubon.org/bird-safe-glass**
- 2. Share about the issue** on social media.
- 3. Write a letter to the editor** expressing the need for this ordinance.
- 4. Explore bird-safe glass options for your home** or business at abcbirds.org/glass-collisions



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BACKGROUND: Victims of window strikes found during our Bird Collision Corps reveal a problem we can all help prevent. *Madison Audubon* | LEFT: This beautiful Indigo Bunting fell victim to a window collision this spring. *Jennifer Gottwald, BCC volunteer*



Diminutive diversity

Faville Grove Sanctuary's spring gems

Imagine a prairie. Most people conjure scenes of tall grasses swaying in the breeze. But prairies aren't always tall, and not all prairie plants are grasses. As I write, at Faville Grove many of our prairies have recently burned-over, and passing drivers might mistake the black earth for a plowed field. Within days of a burn, however, sprouts rise through the earth; this is no agricultural field. Post-burn, these sprouts produce abundant flowers and set loads of seed, providing terrific habitat for pollinators and wildlife. To observe a burned over prairie, we need to zoom in and sort out the details.



While woodland wildflowers gain notoriety in spring for their rich blooms, and rightfully so, the prairie offers its own spring delights. A keystone species, and one of the first to pop up after a burn, is wood betony, flowering in late April or early May. Wood betony is the key, and bumble bees play like Beethoven, nectaring in chords and diminuendos. In even a small patch, life abounds—but you'll need coordination to avoid stepping on the flowers, and flexibility to simply view them.

Early in the season, the pinnatifid leaves of wood betony are maroon,

though as the season progresses, they turn green. On hands and knees, we might observe four species of ants and nine species of bees visiting the corollas.

Nearby, small clumps of blue-eyed grass—a grass in vernacular only, it is actually a member of the iris family—will produce vibrant little blue flowers. Yellow-star grass, another diminutive grass imposter, could be a few inches away. Other late-spring species in the company of wood betony



TOP: A Faville Grove landscape comes to life after a prescribed burn. *Madison Audubon* | ABOVE: Wood betony in maroon splendor. *David Musolf* | RIGHT: Sweet yellow-star grass flowers. *Drew Harry*



Explore the Faville Grove Storymap! Access maps, photos, trails, and more.

madisonaudubon.org/storymaps

LEFT: A hoary puccoon's short-statured blooms draw viewers down to ground level. *Drew Harry* | BELOW: A couple of eagle-eyed volunteers monitor a nest. *Lyn Boyle* | BOTTOM: They grow up so fast! Two eaglets in the nest. *Lisa Frank*

include two-flowered Cynthia, shooting star, prairie phlox, bastard toadflax, Indian paintbrush, Richardson's sedge, pale-spike lobelia, and hoary puccoon. With all of these species, one thing stands out: you practically have to sit to see them, since none are taller than one foot.

Now we are prostrate in the prairie, with dozens of flowering species surrounding us, and we are wondering why this patch is so rich and so early to bloom. We circle back to the wood betony, our keystone plant. It's a hemi-parasite, which means it steals nutrients from the dominant plants nearby, often grasses, causing reduced growth and allowing more sunlight to reach the ground, making space for dozens of delicate spring companions. Those little maroon markers after a burn deserve close attention. In a few weeks you may find yourself performing an uncoordinated yoga



routine as you contort your body to take pictures of the diminutive diversity... though hopefully no one else will be nearby to take a picture of you.

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

A flourish of outdoor activity

Citizen science programs are active and growing

Hundreds of volunteers are working hard for birds and wildlife this spring in our citizen science programs. Here are a few quick updates on the various programs we've been working on, and some that we'll need your help with this summer.

Bald Eagle Nest Watch

Eagle chicks are making a racket all over Wisconsin this time of year. Out of 99 nests in our program monitored by 139 volunteers, there are at least 120 eaglets growing big and strong. Thank you to our volunteers, WDNR, and dozens of

private property owners for helping make this possible!

Bird Collision Corps

This spring, 56 volunteers are monitoring dozens of buildings for evidence of bird-window collisions. We are thrilled to work with four site partners this year: UW-Madison, American Family Insurance, Promega Corporation, and Urban Land Interests. We are also working hard on gathering support for the Bird-Safe Glass Ordinance in Madison (see page 3).

...continued on page 9





Life-giving fire

Prescribed fire keeps things hot at Goose Pond

Grasslands across the globe are maintained by three main factors: periodic drought, herbivory, and fire. Left unburned, grasslands and open woodlots in southern Wisconsin quickly grow up in dense woody vegetation, suggesting that drought is not the dominant driver of prairie maintenance here. American bison and prairies seem to go hand-in-hand (thanks old western movies), but archeological evidence suggests that bison were rare or absent in Wisconsin from the last glaciation 10,000 years ago until after the year 1500 when bison moved east of the Mississippi River. White-tailed deer and elk were present but in low numbers, so large herbivores were not responsible for the prairie landscape in Wisconsin. This leaves only fire as the dominant factor for prairie maintenance in Wisconsin.

Frequent fire encourages plant diversity, decreases the abundance of woody species, and delivers a short-lived but important nutrient pulse to

the soil. Indigenous peoples historically burned their prairies frequently to increase vegetative production (food and medicine), maintain hunting land, and provide more convenient travel.

At Goose Pond, we burn our prairies at least once every four years, with 220 acres burned this spring. Many organizations like WDNR, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and The Prairie Enthusiasts utilize prescribed fire throughout Wisconsin, but here are a few other factors we consider when conducting burns at Goose Pond.

Prescribed Fire Restrictions

Most counties in north, west, and central Wisconsin (including Columbia County) fall under the WDNR forestry zone. Each spring burn in this zone requires an approved plan that includes acreage, location, material, weather, and equipment use. At Goose Pond, we need at least two water pumper units, hand tools, six participants, road signs, and



Prescribed burns conducted by Goose Pond Sanctuary staff and volunteers help reinvigorate the landscape.

TOP: Flames advancing across a prairie provide a dramatic (but controlled) scene. *Carolyn Knorr* | ABOVE: Members of a burn party pay very close attention to a fire's progress in a grazed prairie plot. *Mark Martin* | OPPOSITE TOP: Function and fashion come together in the yellow suits worn by our dedicated volunteers. *Carolyn Knorr* | OPPOSITE BOTTOM: It doesn't take long for the green to spring out from a fire-blackened landscape. *Madison Audubon*

radios. Strong communication is essential for safety and efficiency. This year we also used a hay rake to remove fuel from our mowed fire breaks. Thank you to all prescribed burn volunteers who participated with burning and to the UW Arlington Farms for loaning us the rake.

Incidental Take

Goose Pond hosts the state-endangered silphium borer moth along with three other rare insects. It is well known that fire can temporarily reduce populations of some prairie invertebrates, even while improving habitat for them in the long run. To ensure that silphium borer moth populations remain strong, we follow incidental take guidelines recommended by the WDNR.

Arlington Farms Agricultural Research Station

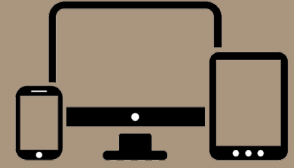
The Wisconsin Integrated Cropping Systems Trial (WICST) is a research project run by the UW-Madison that tries to answer questions about productivity, carbon sequestration, and climate change under different cropping strategies. The research project, in its 32nd year, covers over 60 acres. Plot types range from continuous corn and rotational crops to grazed and ungrazed prairie resto-



rations. This spring we burned two acres on grazed and ungrazed plots to help keep the WICST research on schedule.

The prairies are beautiful as they rebound from a prescribed burn. We encourage you to visit Goose Pond Sanctuary and explore the landscapes that are vividly green this time of year!

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



Explore the Goose Pond and Otsego Marsh Storymaps!

Access maps,
photos, trails, and more.

[madisonaudubon.org/
storymaps](https://madisonaudubon.org/storymaps)

The question I get asked the most is “Why?”

Read through photographer and volunteer Carolyn Knorr's essay on why she photographs prescribed burns at Goose Pond Sanctuary:
[madisonaudubon.org/
knorr-burn](https://madisonaudubon.org/knorr-burn)



A bright look ahead

Education programs evolve with changing seasons

The end of the school year is just around the corner. All of the classrooms we partner with are now teaching both in-person and virtual students at the same time, and we join both groups via video. We fondly call the groups of kids "Zoomies" (kids on Zoom) and "Roomies" (kids in the classroom). This new shift has come with some new challenges—our younger kids are a little too short



to share their nature journals on camera now—and new joys—we're SO excited for teachers to be able to do in-person demos!

Our first grade friends at Midvale Elementary are learning all about light and shadows in their science classes. We like to design our lessons to align, so we had them explore bird silhouettes. A bird can sometimes be identified based only on their body shape, which can be very helpful if you're birding at sunset or sunrise. Now, first graders recognize American Crows, Northern Cardinals, and woodpeckers using silhouettes alone. Bravo, kiddos!

Now, first graders recognize American Crows, Northern Cardinals, and woodpeckers using silhouettes alone. Bravo, kiddos!

You can make bird silhouettes at home too:

1. Cut out a bird image from a magazine or print-out.
2. Trace that bird onto another piece of paper. This is your silhouette.

3. Cut out the bird silhouette.
4. Glue both the bird and the silhouette onto a fresh sheet of paper or into your nature journal.

Sights on Summer

Are you looking for a fun, easy, and FREE way to keep your kids or grand-kids busy this summer? We're happy to announce that we'll be running another virtual summer camp! The activities in this four-week virtual camp will get your kids outside and exploring nature in fun, interesting ways.

Each week we will focus on a new topic: sight, sound, touch, and animal superheroes. We'll practice writing or drawing in nature journals, learning how to identify animals, and asking all kinds of questions. This is great for kids in grades 2-6, but we'll offer suggestions for older or younger kids too. There will be two identical sessions of camp: June 21-July 16 and July 19- Aug. 13, 2021. Learn more and sign up for free at madisonaudubon.org/forces-of-nature.

We look forward to a fun summer of learning with curious kids.

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



ABOVE: This friend explored shadows and shapes with our lesson about bird silhouettes. *Angie Mortenson*
RIGHT: Can you identify a bird by its silhouette? These first-graders now can! *Angie Mortenson*



Citizen science, continued from pg. 5

Kestrel Nest Box Monitoring

This spring, American Kestrels can take their pick of our 210 nest boxes in 12 counties, installed and monitored by 65 volunteers. Over the winter, volunteers moved several non-productive nest boxes to better habitats, and added cone-shaped predator guards to nest boxes that have had serious predator issues in the past. The first kestrel egg of the year was laid in one of the nest boxes on March 31! We plan to band kestrel adults and chicks this year, with the help of Janet and Amber Eschenbauch and Kurt Reed.

Songbird and Wood Duck Nest Boxes

With the help of ten volunteers, we are monitoring 115 songbird boxes and 39 Wood Duck boxes in the Goose Pond area. You never know which interesting species you'll find in these boxes, though we're careful to exclude birds like European Starlings and House Sparrows.

RECRUITING FOR VOLUNTEERS

To volunteer for the following citizen science projects, contact Graham at gsteinhauer@madisonaudubon.org.

Barn Swallow Nesting Study

We need two to four volunteers to help survey barn swallows nesting in the Jungemann Barn at Goose Pond.

We'll look at nesting phenology, success, and nesting placement from mid-May through July.

Breeding Bird Point Counts

Up to four volunteers are needed to survey management units in June and July at Goose Pond for breeding birds, as a follow up to 2016 surveys. Knowledge of bird calls and identification is necessary.

Monarch Tagging

Ten volunteers are needed to tag monarchs at Goose Pond and Erstad Prairie in September. Volunteers can work by themselves or in teams.

Odonate Surveys

We began surveying damsel and dragonflies last July in and around Goose Pond, Erstad Prairie, and Otsego Marsh. This year, we plan to complete the survey and add a couple additional wetlands. Surveys will run from May through September; up to 10 volunteers are needed.

Silphium Borer Moth Survey

Volunteers will help to monitor Silphium borer moth populations and survey their host plants, compass plant and prairie dock, this summer at Goose Pond.

Willow Flycatcher Survey

One or two volunteers could help JD Arnston survey willow flycatchers this summer at Goose Pond from before sunset until dark.

Madison Audubon is a proud member of the following organizations:



TOP, LEFT to RIGHT: A beautiful male kestrel incubates eggs in one of our nest boxes. *Pat Ready* | The emerald color of this club-tailed dragonfly was a welcome observation at Otsego Marsh last year. *Richard Armstrong* | Anyone home? A pair of bluebirds at home in a nest box. *Arlene Koziol* | A tagged monarch butterfly fuels up before its long migration to Mexico. *Arlene Koziol*



For the birds (and bird-lovers)

Gifts for birthdays, graduations, weddings, and memorials

Birds and peaceful outdoor spaces helped many of us as we navigated the challenges and uncertainties of this pandemic year, often alone or in small groups.

Now it's time to celebrate being able to enjoy the outdoors with friends and family again.

Looking for ways to honor your 2021 milestones by giving back to and celebrating birds? Here are a few ideas our members have shared with us.

Celebrate yourself! A Bird-day fundraiser is a great way to celebrate your birthday and support a cause you care about—like birds! Your support will lift the wings of Wisconsin birds and introduce your friends to the issues you care about.

Not your birthday season? You don't need a birthday to be a volunteer Madison Audubon fundraiser. Your personal fundraiser can promote all kinds of special days and events, whether it's Earth Day, Migratory Bird Day, World Wetlands Day, a personal accomplishment, or any specially designed celebration of birds and their habitats. If you enjoying flapping around social media, you can easily set up a fundraiser at facebook.com/MadisonAudubon/fundraisers.

Honor the marriage or anniversary of lovebirds or the fledging of a high school or college graduate!

More and more people are requesting donations to organizations in lieu of physical gifts for weddings, anniversaries, and graduations. Whether in honor of pairs or fledglings, your tribute gift to Madison Audubon will have special meaning. Or, if you are the honoree, you can ask friends, family and guests to contribute to Madison Audubon in honor of your big event.

Honorary donations also provide a non-material way for you to celebrate your favorite bird nerd, land steward, or relatives whom you can finally visit and hug. Your honorary donation and gift membership will remind the recipient that you recognize how important bird conservation is to them.

Honor the memory of someone who cared for the birds and landscapes of south-central Wisconsin. Memorial donations allow you to honor the memory of loved ones you've lost. Maybe birds brought joy to their life or perhaps they birded or hiked at Madison Audubon's sanctuaries. Maybe you even shared these experiences with them. By honoring the memory of your beloved family members and friends with a donation, you carry forward their conservation legacy.

We will list these wonderful honorary and memorial donations in our newsletter and annual report.

Thank you for your thoughtfulness and generosity!

With questions about making tribute and memorial gifts, contact Becky Abel, director of philanthropy: babel@madisonaudubon.org 608-255-2473 ext. 5



ABOVE: This Blackburnian Warbler knows how to dazzle, just like you do with a great tribute gift! *Monica Hall*

Thank you to our donors

New and tribute donors, January-April 2021

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

Elizabeth Abel
Ruth Adams
Stanley and Lorna Angell
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Alison and Gian Basili
Maryanne Bevacqua
Andrea Bolan
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Timothy Browning
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John Walker
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Elizabeth Whitesel
Katherine Wiggins
Carole Wilson
Marcel Wuethrich and Heather Inzalaco
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B. David Saunders
George Dreckmann
Glenn Teschendorf
Johanna Fabke
Mary Sutherland
Nydia and Steven Klein
Northwestern Mutual Foundation Volunteer Support Program
Brenna Marsicek
Levi and Janet Wood
Brand Smith
Alliant Energy Foundation
Urban Birds
Judy Siegfried

IN MEMORY OF...

Bill Albright by
George and Linda Albright
John Albright and Dianne Canafax
Allan Allweiss and Emily Corbett
Anne Colville and Steve Morrison
Yvonne Colville
Tim and Kim Hallock
Carl Horstmeyer
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Your generosity funds important conservation and education programs throughout southern Wisconsin. Thank you!

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Gift amount: _____

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I don't have email; please mail me monthly updates.

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 above will renew your membership for one year.

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM USING THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE, OR GIVE ONLINE AT

madisonaudubon.org

LEFT: The more hepaticas, the better. Thank you for your generosity. *Drew Harry*



ABOVE: Getting your ducks in a row has never been cuter or more meaningful. *Jeff Koziol*

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Are *your* ducks in a row?

It's never too early to plan for the future!

Whether you are 29 or 99, your love of birds can be part of your legacy and bring you fulfillment during your lifetime.

Madison Audubon's Kestrel Legacy Circle is made up of dedicated supporters who have named Madison Audubon in their will or estate. Membership in the Kestrel Legacy Circle is not binding in any way, but your statement of intent allows us to thank and recognize you. It also encourages others to make a similar commitment to protecting Wisconsin's birds.

Madison Audubon accepts planned

gifts, in any amount, in the form of:

- Wills and trust
- Real estate
- Appreciated stock and other assets
- IRA rollovers or life insurance policies
- Time machines (ok, maybe not those)

Speak with your financial advisor about leaving a gift to Madison Audubon or contact Becky Abel, director of philanthropy, at babel@madisonaudubon.org or 608-255-2473 ext. 5.

More information about the Kestrel Legacy Circle is at madisonaudubon.org/legacy.