

# The Lake Flyer

## Winnebago Audubon Society, Inc.

MAY 2007

All programs and activities are free and open to the public

VOL. 27, NO. 7

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Check our website for up-to-date information: [www.winaudubon.org](http://www.winaudubon.org)



## Birds, Flowers & Kids

Saturday, May 12 h 7:30 am-Noon

Waukau Creek Nature Preserve

Bird/Flower Walks 7:30 am & 10:30 am  
 Monarch Presentation 9:30 am  
 Amphibians 11:00 am



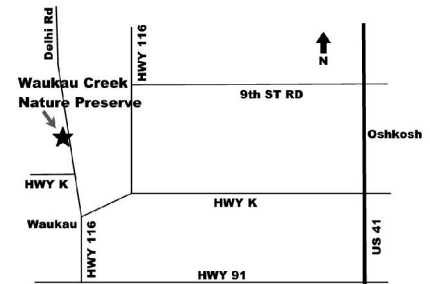
RANDY KORB PHOTOS

Winnebago Audubon is hosting a half-day community event for families and others on Saturday, May 12, 2007 at Waukau Creek Nature Preserve from 7:30 am to noon. Naturalists will walk the trails with parents, children and others on two morning hikes to identify migrant warblers, other birds, and wildflowers at 7:30 am and again at 10:30 am. We'll have 15 pairs of binoculars available for beginning birders from our birding kit that we purchased last year.

Participants will also learn about Wisconsin frogs and butterflies through hands-on experiences. At 9:30 am Randy Korb will talk about the monarch butterfly, milkweeds and other plants that butterflies love. Kids will learn about the life cycle by peering at butterfly eggs and chrysalises, watching caterpillars crawl, and holding and feeding adult monarchs. At 11:00 am Randy will bring out his live bullfrogs, peepers, toads and other amphibians. Kids may feed the frogs crickets and worms and learn how to safely hold them.

Waukau Creek Nature Preserve is a Winnebago County park located at 2987 Delhi Rd., north of Waukau off County Rd. K, 10 mi. west of Oshkosh. Free to Audubon members. Non-members: \$5 adult, \$3 children under 17. Non-members may join that day.

For more info on this event or the Frog Night Hike, contact Janet at 920-589-2602 or wiss@centurytel.



## "Calling All Frogs!" A Night Hike on Friday, May 25 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm

Winnebago Audubon is hosting a frog night hike, led by Randy Korb, on Friday evening May 25 from 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm in wetlands near Rush Lake.

An indoor orientation to Wisconsin Frogs starts at 7:30 pm at the Pickett Community Center. Participants will get to know the calls of our 12 species. Children may hold and feed frogs, toads and salamanders during the orientation. Once we're familiar with frogs we'll venture out at dusk to hear them. The eastern gray tree frog is in peak breeding in late May and we expect a lusty chorus. Other local callers at this time are American toads, spring peepers, and green frogs.

This event is free for Winnebago Audubon members and no pre-registration is required. The fee for non-members is \$5 adults and \$3 per child under 17. Non-members may join Audubon at the door. Participants should bring flashlights and old tennis shoes, boots or hip boots for possible wading into shallow water. The Pickett Community Center is 9 miles southwest of Oshkosh at 6687 State Rd. 44 in Pickett on the south side of the road just past the Co-op.

## Expo Planned for June 2

Plan to attend the first annual Natural Shoreline Expo at the Sunnyview Exposition Center in Oshkosh on June 2 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Hosted by the Winnebago County Land and Water Conservation Department, the Expo brings together in one place a broad range of information about vegetative buffers and shoreline restorations for waterfront property owners and others. Native vegetative buffers and shoreline restorations are important to protect water quality. They can control erosion, filter pollutants from run-off, and increase wildlife habitat.

To promote the event, Winnebago Audubon, with the Winnebago Lakes Council, Fox Valley Wild Ones, and the Citizens Natural Resources Association of Wisconsin, helped pay for a mailing to 7500 shoreland property owners.

More than 130 exhibitors have been invited to participate. Featured will be an exhibition hall where individuals can meet with shoreland restoration specialists, native plant experts, Wisconsin nurseries, and a variety of conservation organizations and lake groups. Winnebago Audubon plans to share a booth in the exhibition hall with Winnebago Lakes Council.

Information will also be available about sources of phosphorous-free fertilizer for homeowners.

Speakers are scheduled throughout the day: Mike Lizotte, UWO, at 10 a.m. on aquatic invasive species; Rob McLennan, DNR, at 11 a.m. on treatment of aquatic vegetation on shorelines and Jim Ryf, shoreline property owner, at 1 p.m. on restorations and plantings.

The Expo will be held indoors in the Sunnyview Exposition Center/ Winnebago County Fairgrounds, 500 County Road Y, Oshkosh. Food will be available for purchase. All events, including parking, are free. Call 920-232-1950 for more information.

## Birdathon 2007

Springtime brings the birds that we all enjoy watching. And it brings Birdathon and your chance to make a contribution to keep those great bird programs and activities happening at Winnebago Audubon. Just a few days ago, we had the pleasure of meeting John James Audubon. Soon we'll be featuring Birds, Flowers and Kids, and later in the month a Frog Night Hike. And we are always sponsoring Audubon Adventures in the classroom and supporting Sullivan's Woods for outdoor classroom experiences.

How can we do this? We can do this because of your generous support of our annual Birdathon. The money we raise is used for these and other programs sponsored by Winnebago Audubon. Now is your chance to make that donation to keep these programs a part of our local chapter.

Call Carla Hansen at 233-1129 to make your pledge. Donate an amount per bird or just a certain dollar amount. All your pledges are welcome. You'll get a report on the number of species that we see during a 24 hour period in May. Or join a team. Call Carla and you can be a part of a team that goes out in Winnebago County looking for those birds.

If you've already pledged, thanks for your support. We can't do it without you. If you haven't yet pledged, do so today. You'll be glad you did.

## Crane Count Wrap-up

Thank you to all of the volunteers who helped with the crane count survey on April 14. The International Crane Foundation couldn't do it without you. It was a beautiful morning for being outdoors. In Winnebago County we had 53 people covering 30 of the 45 designated sites. 590 sandhill cranes were counted and 69 were considered breeding pairs. Check out the ICF website for data from around the state: [www.cranecount.org](http://www.cranecount.org). Next year's count will be April 19.



*The students at Oakwood Elementary School were enthralled with storyteller Brian "Fox" Ellis as he portrayed a priest who traveled with the French voyageurs.*

## John James Audubon at Annual Potluck and Program

After spending the day at Oakwood Elementary School in Oshkosh, Brian "Fox" Ellis joined Winnebago Audubon for our annual potluck, held this year at First Congregational Church in Oshkosh. On Thursday night, April 19<sup>th</sup>, we welcomed him as 'John James Audubon' to tell stories of his life to a nice group of around 60 interested listeners. With his lilting French accent and dress appropriate for his time in history, he told us of his young life in the Caribbean where his father was a ship builder and how he moved to France and then was sent to the US to escape fighting in Europe. He met his "English" love whom he married and settled with in Kentucky. We were enthralled with the vistas he saw and the people who he met and who admired his work. His times were very different than ours. Wildlife was abundant with seemingly never ending supplies of all nature of birds and plants. He explained how his paintings were meant to capture the images of birds along with their native habitat. We all left with a much greater understanding of what this country was like during his lifetime nearly 200 years ago and a much better understanding of his art.



# Badger Tracks

by Anita Carpenter



## JUST WAVE BACK

I'm hiking in the Florida Everglades along Snake Bight trail, a path notorious for its hordes of tiny, pesky, blood-thirsty salt marsh mosquitoes. Today I'm spared their wrath and can enjoy the trail at a leisurely pace as I pass through tropical hardwood hammock on my way to Florida Bay.

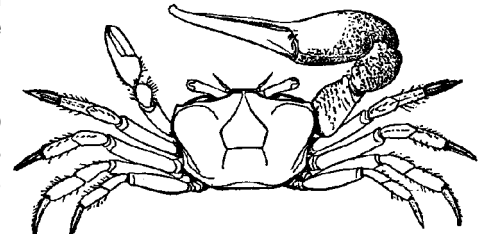
The lush hammock is an impenetrable jungle of sub-tropical trees, shrubs, vines and flowers possessing intriguing names like poisonwood (Do Not Touch!), gumbo limbo, pigeon plum, sea grape, cardinal airplant, passionflower, resurrection fern, barbed-wire cactus, coral bean and scorpiontail. Gulf fritillary butterflies float by, a southern blue racer snake basks in the warm sunshine, exotic brown anoles scamper from underfoot while northern parula warblers serenade. What a lovely morning in the hammock.

The trail emerges onto an extensive salt marsh and shallow Snake Bight. (Bight means a bay off a larger bay. Snake Bight is a small, comparatively speaking, named bay off Florida Bay.) I'm here at low tide. Because today is the vernal equinox plus a new moon, the tide is more pronounced than normal so I'm witnessing an extremely low tide called a low, low tide. The exposed mudflats extend as far as I can see and the wading birds I have come to watch, such as roseate spoonbills, herons, egrets and perhaps an elusive flamingo, are a long way off. I really need to be here at high tide to see the birds.

As I pan the salt marsh closer in, movement catches my eye. Through binoculars, I see crabs waving at me. Can this be? What is happening? Because of the distance, I'm not sure of the identity of the crab species but I do know these wavers are fiddler crabs because of their oversized claws waving at me. Only male fiddler crabs possess one enlarged claw, which can be either on the right or left side. Because females lack oversized claws, the presence or absence of the big claw is an obvious clue to separating male from female fiddler crabs. The enlarged claw is likened to a fiddle and his smaller, opposite claw is compared to a bow. Both seen together with the waving motion reminded early naturalists of a fiddler. Thus the origin of their popular "fiddler" name.

Fiddler crabs live in burrows which they excavate in the sand/mud in the upper reaches of the tidal zone. The crabs are active during low tide when they emerge from their burrows and scuttle about to feed on algae and other microorganisms. When high tide returns, the crabs seal themselves inside their burrows to wait until the water, once again, recedes.

On the mud flats, ideal burrow sites are at a premium and competition is fierce. Larger crabs with bigger claws claim the best sites. Like most creatures, male crabs defend their burrows and small territories from neighboring males. In defense of their homes, fiddlers rise up on their hind legs and wave their big claws, thus posturing and signaling to their neighbors to back off, this is my site.



Male fiddlers also wave to attract females. As I watched, one male began to wave frantically. Then I noticed a female cautiously approaching. She stopped a few inches from him. He continued to wave energetically, trying his utmost to impress her. A female fiddler crab selects her suitor by the size of his claw which translates into a bigger, older, more fit crab and a larger burrow. If she is impressed, she will enter his burrow. This female watched a few moments, then turned and walked away. The rejected fiddler stopped waving so enthusiastically. He was not undaunted though. Hope springs eternal. Another female will approach. He resumed the slower wave.

A nature watcher is always rewarded with unexpected surprises. How fortuitous to walk Snake Bight trail today and witness mating time in the life of fiddler crabs. Even in the heat of day, the ardent males were determined as they rhythmically waved their big white claws. Females were choosy. I could have watched these fiddlers for hours but I had to leave. As I left, I waved a parting salute. Soon the tide will return and fiddler crabs will reenter their burrows. Tomorrow the drama on the tidal marsh will repeat itself with another day of impassioned waving.

### Sturdy, Cedar Leopold Benches

Assembled: \$75.00

Kits: \$65.00

(Pre-drilled, hardware and  
instructions included.)

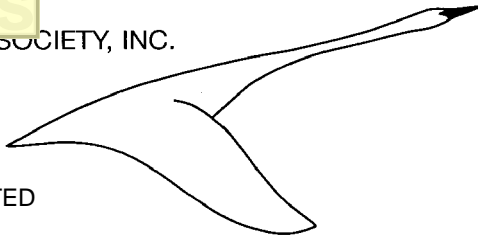
To purchase your bench, just contact Dave  
at 920-235-4429 or djmoon@northnet.

## Audubon Adventures in the Classroom

Winnebago Audubon, with the help of Louise Coumbe, Lois Eierman, Kathy Propp, Kay and Russ Rill, Jan Scalpone, Jeanne Shiras, and Frank Zuern, provided 11 classrooms in our area with a subscription to Audubon Adventures this school year. This classroom kit includes a teacher's resource manual and publications for each student, providing awareness of the environment and the importance of habitat preservation and restoration.

If you are a 4th or 5th grade teacher in our area and would like to receive this kit next year, please contact Zaiga at 920-233-5914 or zaigam@charter.net.

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**RENEWALS:** Your mailing label includes your membership expiration date above your name. If you are a "Chapter Only" member the word CHAPTER will appear after the expiration date. Please renew your chapter membership by filling out the application form below. Thank you for helping us save on the cost of renewal reminders.  
If you are a member of National Audubon, you will receive renewal notices from National or you may renew by using the form below.

Winnebago Audubon Society Mission Statement: Advance the mission of the National Audubon Society to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity through grassroots efforts of community outreach and advocacy.

**AUDUBON SOCIETY  
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

**YES**, I want to become a member at the **chapter level** and receive the Winnebago Audubon newsletter. I've enclosed a \$20.00 check payable to Winnebago Audubon.

**YES**, I want to become a member of the National Audubon Society, and the Winnebago Audubon Chapter. My membership dues entitle me to *Audubon* magazine, and all chapter benefits. I am enclosing a \$20.00 check payable to National Audubon Society.

I do not wish to receive correspondence or solicitations from National Audubon Society.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter Code: Z12 7XCH

Mail this form with payment to:  
Pat Nichols, Membership Chair  
P.O. Box 184, Oshkosh, WI 54903

*Welcome* *New National Audubon Society Members:* **Berlin** - Renee Davey, **Bonduel** - Judy Peters, **Menasha** - Mary Bach, **Oshkosh** - James Gaugher, Carol Gayhart, Frederic Kubsch, Connie Moran, Patricia Radle, Tom Rees, Jerome Tagatz, **Winneconne** - Sandy Nelson, Chester Urban, Mike Wicinsky

*Recent Audubon Society Renewals:*  
**Oshkosh** - Charles Beyer, Thomas Conley, Beth Haber, Carla Hansen, Barbara Kuenzi, B. Olejniczak, Richard Wolfgram, **Omro** – Donald Meton, **Redgranite** – Donald Johnson

Be sure to take part in the Winnebago Audubon Society events that appeal to you. As a member of National Audubon you receive membership in the local chapter. We are happy to have you and hope that you find new opportunities for supporting the environment through your membership. Please contact me if you have any questions regarding membership or interest in becoming more involved with the chapter.

Pat Nichols, VP, Membership Chair  
(email me at: jvnichols@earthlink.net)