



Woodland Dunes Nature Center Dunesletter

Winter 2012 ☻ Volume 150



*Retired membership chairperson
Helen Bleser at Owl Fest.*

From the Director

First off, you will notice a different look to our newsletter from now on. The Dunesletter, which has been lovingly nurtured for the past decade or so by Susan Knorr, will now be tended by others, staff and volunteers. Susan has rightly elected to nurture herself a little more, in her garden at Winghaven and on the road with her husband Jim. The Dunesletter has seen many changes over the past nearly 40 years, and we will do our best to continue the tradition of this publication being an important part of our education program, presenting to you much more than just a schedule of events. Like those before her, Susan has set the bar very high, and we appreciate everything she has done and continues to do for our nature center.

Another high bar was set by our membership chairperson, Helen Bleser. For more than 30 years Helen has sent out membership renewal notices, thanked our new and renewing members, and painstakingly tracked our membership information. Helen has also decided to spend more time attending to other aspects of her busy life, and so will be handing over the membership responsibilities, many of which will be overseen by Geri Berkovitz of our staff. Helen reached out in a very personal way to our membership with her handwritten notes and by watching for significant events in our members' lives, and made people feel appreciated. Her concern for people in this organization is genuine, as is our gratitude for all she has done.

Dr. Don DeBruyn is also retiring from our Board of Directors after serving for six years. Don has been our Vice Chairman and is also a member of our Property Committee, and he and his wife Brenda have been generous supporters of Woodland Dunes for many years, and have helped at many events as well. We will miss Don's great attitude and keen intellect on our Board, and wish him well as he continues to work with many worthy causes in our community.

Sue Crowley a forester with the Wisconsin DNR who has worked with Manitowoc Co. landowners for years is also making a move. Sue has been an incredible resource for Woodland Dunes, helping as a volunteer on our property committee, assisting our staff with forest management information, presenting programs to the public and leading hikes, and helping at events. Sue is incredibly knowledgeable and is a great friend to Woodland Dunes, and we wish her well at her new position within DNR in the western part of the State. We'll miss you, Sue!

Director's report continued on pg. 11.

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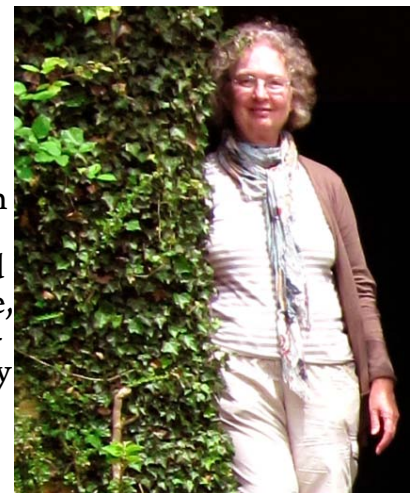
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Stay in touch every season

Become our fan on facebook.

Renew your membership to continue receiving the Dunesletter.

Join our monthly email list to receive program information and updates by emailing Jessica at jessicaj@woodlanddunes.org.



*Retired Dunesletter editor Susan
Knorr in Geveryn near Paris.*

Coming Events

To confirm events and register for classes, call (920) 793-4007 or email kellye@woodlanddunes.org.

Snowshoe Rental

Weekdays

9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Enjoy exploring the winter landscape on snowshoes. Snowshoes will be available during business hours Monday through Friday at the main headquarters on Hwy 310. Check our special events for evening and weekend opportunities. Snowshoe rental is \$5 a pair, snowshoes must be used on Woodland Dunes Trails. A variety of adult and kid sizes are available.

Invasive Work Days

Saturday, December 15, 1-4:00

Sunday, January 13, 9-12:00

Saturday, February 9, 1-4:00

Help eradicate invasive plants. These plants lower diversity and are a threat to the ecological health of the preserve.

Bring work gloves and dress for the weather, meet at the headquarters on Hwy 310. **Call or email to let us know the date(s) you can help.**

Kid's Christmas Bird Count

Friday, December 28

9:00-12:30 a.m.

Cost: \$5 per participant

Learn birding basics at binocular boot camp then enjoy a friendly bird competition guided by our experts. Small teams will go out to see who they can find. Lunch for all participants and prizes awarded. Kids ages 8-16. Kids ages 4-7 join us for Budding Birders while your older siblings are on the trail. Kids must be accompanied by an adult.

Registration required by Dec. 17.

The Wonder of It All Plants of the Arctic: A glimpse of the beauty and life of the Far, Far, North

Monday, January 7

10:00-11:30 a.m.

This program will look at the unique environment and beauty of the Arctic through the lens of the many specially adapted plants which bloom in the intense summer season. Judy Lasca follows the Northeast passage along the top of Russia, the Northwest passage across Alaska and Canada, the coasts of Greenland, and touches on Ellesmere Island, Svalbard, and the Franz Josef islands, to present an overview of the wide and fascinating array of plants, landscape and life, human and animal, found in some of the most magnificent and remote parts of the globe. **Registration required by Dec. 28.**

Animal Tracking and Signs

Saturday, February 2

9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

\$15.00 per participant

Learn how to read animal signs and tracks with expert Kyle Koch from Medicine Hawk Wilderness Skills. In this 3-hour Animal Tracking workshop you will learn to identify critters by the footprints they leave on the earth and the pattern of their gaits. Time will be spent both indoors and outdoors. **Registration and payment required by January 18, class size is limited.**

The Wonder of It All Snowshoe Walk

Tuesday, February 19

9:30-11:00 a.m.

Enjoy a walk through the preserve. If snow we will snowshoe, stopping to discuss winter ecology and look for animal signs. **Registration app. by Feb. 12.**

Candlelight Night

Saturday, February 9

6:30-8:30 p.m.

Member, \$5; Family \$15

Non-member, \$8; Family \$20

Enjoy an evening stroll along a candlelit trail, live music and warm beverages. A fun, relaxing evening with friends and family. Held at the nature center. Adult and kid's snowshoes available for use. Baked goods available for purchase.

The Wonder of It All Trail Camera Discoveries

Wednesday, March 13

10:00-11:00 a.m.

Enjoy a look at some of the little seen wildlife living at Woodland Dunes. Through trail cameras we made some surprise discoveries as to who is living in and traveling through the preserve. Photos will be viewed and natural history discussed of the animals caught on camera. Presented by Jim Knickelbine, Woodland Dunes director. **Registration appreciated by March 6.**

Timberdoodle and Frog Hike

Saturday, April 13

7:30-8:30 p.m.

Member, \$4; Family \$10

Non-member, \$5; Family \$15

Join Woodland Dunes naturalists on a night hike to search for the elusive sky dancing Timberdoodle and listen and look for the frogs that live on the preserve. **Registration by April 1st is appreciated.**

Check our events calendar at woodlanddunes.org for additional programs and updates.

Coming Events

Email jessicaj@woodlanddunes.org for monthly program reminders and updates, a great way to stay connected.

Dash at the Dunes 5K Trail Run/Walk

Saturday, April 27th

Enjoy a 5K trail run/walk through Woodland Dunes. More details coming soon. Watch website for registration and additional information.

Birding by Ear, learning the songs of spring

Thursdays, May 30 and June 6
6:00-8:00 p.m.

Member: \$20; single class \$12

Non-member: \$25; single, \$15

Begin your journey into bird song with this two-part birding by ear series. Dr. Sontag will share his 65 years of birding experience in this introductory class focused on learning bird songs. A mix of indoor and field time will give participants a chance to practice with the trained ears of Dr. Sontag and Woodland Dunes naturalists by their side. **Registration and payment required by May 20.**

Please Register for Programs

Registration is required when our presenter is coming from far away or the cost of the program is high. If registration is low, these programs will be canceled.

Registration is appreciated for programs we will run if registration is low. However if no one registers these programs will be canceled.

No registration is required for festivals and larger events. For programs that do not require registration you can join us without prior notice.

If you forget to register do not hesitate to call us to check if the program is still running or to see if there is still space.

To register, 920-793-4007, or kellye@woodlanddunes.org

Stan Tekiela at Woodland Dunes

Friday, May 10 7:00-8:00 p.m., \$8

Program plus Bird Breakfast \$12

Saturday May 11, Bird Breakfast, 8:00-11:00 a.m

Kids \$5, adults \$6, under 4 free

Naturalist, wildlife photographer and writer Stan Tekiela will be speaking at Woodland Dunes Friday, May 10 on Uncommon Facts about Common Birds, an entertaining glimpse into the lives of the birds we see at our feeders and in our yards. Stan will also be leading a bird hike at our Bird Breakfast celebration the following day from 8:00-9:00 a.m. followed by a book signing until 10:00 a.m.

Registration is required for both Stan's talk on Friday night as well as the bird hike Saturday morning. Space is limited.



Getaway with the Dunes

The Getaway with the Dunes fundraiser was a success and raised **\$10,000** for Woodland Dunes.

Thank you to all who contributed. We'd like to extend a sincere thank you to our major sponsor, Thrivent

Community - West Shore, for matching \$3,000 of the auction income! They also sponsored the \$250 Visa card drawing. Above, winner Jean Vareka is presented the card by Linda Kalies (left) and Kay VanSluytman. We will see you next year at the Getaway! More information to come in future Dunesletters.

Holiday Shopping New Items in the Nature Shop

Are you looking for a unique gift that gives back? Before you head to major department stores, check out what we have at the Nature Shop! We now offer owl art from local artists! "Owl Alphabet" created by Heidi Dalberg, features the alphabet and owls such as screech owl and barn owl. Purchase a smaller Northern saw-whet owl print as an accent and you've got a great gift for a nursery or owl lover. We also have Kim Geiser's "Night Owl Trio" and a saw-whet owl art tile created by Careaux du Nord.

Do you need a gift for a child who can't get enough of the outdoors? A bug net, bug box and insect guide specifically for young naturalists makes a wonderful gift. We also have finger puppets and Audubon birds that pair well with our children's books.

The shop also offers Woodland Dunes t-shirts, fleeces, mugs, waterbottles and more! You can feel good knowing your purchases help support Woodland Dunes. Happy Holidays!



Student Poets

These poems were written by 6th graders from Valders Elementary. At the beginning of our forest ecology program students are given time to make observations about the forest. Several students turned these observations into poems.

I ponder about the things that are beyond this door, that I have never seen before.

Though the leaves and trees are cool, I cannot stop thinking about that awesome worm hole.

Author: Caroline Berge

When I look all I see is red, orange and yellow. When I listen all I hear are the birds singing and animals walking.

I just lay by this tree and wonder. I wonder about the rain on my face and the fog in the sky. I wonder.

By: Kolten Johnson

Here I am
I hear
Birds chirping
I hear
Twigs breaking
I see
Trees, many trees,
I see colorful plants
I see what my eyes want to see
Oh it is so beautiful
Here I am.

By: Nina Horstink



northern shrike (Lanius excubitor)

The Winter Butcher Bird

A predatory songbird is among the irregular residents of our area in winter. The northern shrike (*Lanius excubitor*) migrates from northern Canada into the United States when food is scarce in its normal winter range. It feeds on small mammals and birds up to the size of blue jays and mourning doves.

All shrikes are predators. Some feed only on insects, but others prey on vertebrate animals. They lack the grasping talons and the size and power of hawks, eagles, falcons, and owls. They have proportionately large heads and strong bills, which they use to stun their prey. A small hook at the bill's tip is used to tear prey apart. Shrikes have a habit of impaling their prey on a thorn or a barb of a barbed-wire fence to hold it while dismembering it. From this habit they have been called "butcher-birds." Sometimes they leave their impaled food and return to eat it later.

Shrikes are lone hunters. They perch at the top of a tree or bush, or on a wire, at the edge of a forest or in an opening, searching for prey. If something is sighted, the shrike takes off in pursuit. Birds are stunned in the air by a blow from the bill. Mammals are attacked on the ground or in a tree. Normal shrike flight is undulating and close to the ground. They swoop downward from their perch, then swoop upward again to the next perch.

Though classed as songbirds, shrikes are not known for their songs. The song of the northern shrike, heard primarily in the nesting season, is a series of mixed chatters, squeaks, and musical phrases. When not nesting, they are usually silent.

The northern shrike is the larger of the two species that occur in North America. It is robin-sized, gray above and whitish below, with a black mask from the base of the bill through the eyes. Its wings and tail are black, with white patches that flash in flight. Young birds are light brown where the adult is gray.

The northern shrike nests in trees or shrubs in open areas in the taiga, the band of conifer forest just south of the tundra in northern North America and Eurasia. The nesting period is the only time shrikes socialize. After raising their four-to-six young, all disperse and assume solitary lives. In spring, summer, and fall their diet includes large insects, but in winter they are dependent on small mammals and birds. Their chief prey animals in the north are lemmings and voles, whose abundance fluctuates significantly in four-to-five-year cycles. In years of lemming scarcity, the shrikes may migrate southward as far as the middle United States.

In their years of irruption, northern shrikes may begin to arrive in Wisconsin in mid-October. They inhabit open areas with scattered trees, and are frequently seen along roadsides. A few birds may still be found until mid-April, but most begin the return journey to their nesting area in March.

*John Woodcock
Board Member and first Woodland Dunes Naturalist*

Haiku Contest

Haiku is a form of creative writing from Japan. Follow the instructions below.

1. Pick a theme; haiku often includes nature and everyday things and situations. Write down some words that come to mind when you think of your theme.
2. Roughly organize your thoughts into three lines. Set the scene, expand on your theme by expressing a feeling, making an observation or recording an action. Keep it simple.
3. Polish your haiku, the first line needs five syllables, the second line seven and the third five. Play around to make things fit.
4. Submit your haikus to kellye@woodlanddunes.org, or call them in, some will be printed in the next issue!

Example:

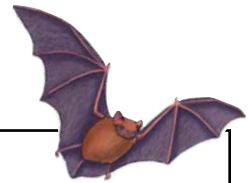
Little jumping mouse
 Quiet in peaceful, slumber
 Snuggled under snow

Winter Birds

Many people who maintain birdfeeders don't look forward to winter. They believe that winter brings a lull in the bird population here in Wisconsin. However, while their favorite summer species, such as ruby-throated hummingbirds and Baltimore orioles, have long since flown south, there are still plenty of birds hanging around that deserve some more attention. It seems that these less boldly colored patrons of the birdfeeders are forgotten as soon as their more flashy competition leaves. If anything, the birds that decide to weather the common snows deserve even more attention.

There are several kinds of familiar birds that stay in our yards, or perhaps even migrate to Wisconsin to escape the biting northern cold. Black-capped chickadees and dark-eyed juncos can be found investigating every last seed. American goldfinches stick around, though they exchange their bright yellow feathers for olive colored ones, which confuse some people. Accompanying them are northern cardinals, American tree sparrows, pine siskins, house finches, house sparrows, and mourning doves. Throughout the chilly days, downy and hairy woodpeckers still drill into the trees. Occasionally, these gathered birds will attract some predators. Cooper's hawks and northern shrikes sometimes swoop in and swipe smaller birds. Out above farm fields, rough-legged hawks pick off mice and other small rodents with their talons. Every once in a while, a snowy owl is spotted in this area as well.

So, while some people are deceived by the disappearance of some of the summer visitors, the winter birds will still come to well-stocked feeders. Be sure to keep plenty of birdseed on hand for the faithful birds who endure the freezing winters here, and see if you can identify all these in your yard!



Bats in Winter

To humans, bats disappear as the winter months begin. Many people are left wondering: where do they go?

There are eight bat species that live in Wisconsin. Big brown bats hibernate through the winter in caves, crevices, or in buildings. The eastern pipistrelle is easily frozen, and is one of the first species to go to the caves where they hibernate. Indiana bats also choose to hibernate in caves, almost all of them retiring to one of nine locations for the winter. Likewise, the long-eared bat and the little brown bat prefer to hibernate the cold months away in caves. Unlike the others, the hoary bat migrates, like some birds, to tropical places in the south. There are also bats that prefer to hibernate in hollow trees, like silver-haired and red bats. However, red bats have a special way of hibernating, too. Sometimes, they burrow underneath the leaf litter on the forest floor. As the weather gets colder, so do the bats. Their body temperature lessens, at times even as low as 23 degrees.

While we don't see them, most of the bats of Wisconsin aren't really gone at all. They simply find safe places to spend the winter, and when spring comes, they're ready to go back to eating their fill of many bugs we humans can't stand!

C H O U R N I N G D O V E O P H V X A
 G L W T M A B H T M B I B Q P U N R M
 O A T R U F F L E G G E D H A W K E E
 L E U I J D D P A P Q R H X T Z V K R
 D G D Y Z W V B C I A J U N C O Q C I
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The Plants of Christmas

Woodland Dunes and the Plants of Christmas

Christmas is the time of many of our most cherished traditions. Whether the symbols used in these traditions are of color, food or object, they give us a sense of comfort and purpose. When we think of the plants of Christmas, holly, mistletoe, Poinsettias, and, of course, the Christmas tree (Balsam Fir) and the Yule log immediately come to mind. Plants and human activity have gone hand in hand since before the dawn of civilization. Neanderthals buried their dead with flowers, suggesting that plants were significant beyond their nutritional value. It should be no surprise that plants have been incorporated into many aspects of human life, including our system of beliefs and their traditions. Whether the plants are recent additions, or are from the past, they were selected for their color, and the colors of Christmas have remained: red for blood, green for hope and life everlasting and white for purity. The unique habitats of Woodland Dunes provide a place for several of the interesting plants associated with Christmas to thrive.

Club Moss, (*Lycopodium* sp)

In my first botany course at Carroll College, I was surprised to learn that the Christmas wreath, which stands for eternity, or the circle of life that is forever, was originally made from Club Moss, (*Lycopodium* sp), also called ground pine or running pine. The club moss was crafted into wreaths because it was green and alive at Christmas time even in the harshness of winter.

Club Moss origin

Lycophytes first appeared in the late Silurian period, about 400 million years ago. Their heyday, however, was in the Carboniferous period, about 345 million years ago, when many of these plants became tree-like reaching heights of over 100 feet, or 35 meters.

The plants today are usually small and grow close to the ground looking more like large moss plants. In addition to their use in wreath making, the Club Mosses have been used in the treatment of many human maladies since the middle ages. More recently, herbalists have used the spores to treat gout, urine retention, wounds and eczema, digestive disorders, respiratory problems and even anxiety. I am surprised it wasn't also used to treat baldness. If that had worked, it would be one useful herbal!

(*Lycopodium* is a common plant found in the lakeshore area, especially at Woodland Dunes and Point Beach.) Originally, this plant was harvested in the late autumn, and local industries crafted the plants into the living wreaths. And, when it was garnished with "red berries," the *Lycopodium* wreath was truly the symbol for hope and life everlasting. However, with increasing popularity, the club mosses were overharvested, causing the wreath crafters to use alternatives to these plants. Evergreen clippings from the Christmas tree business were in turn easily recycled into the wreaths we currently purchase.

Winterberry Holly (*Ilex verticillata*)

Late autumn and early winter is the time to look for Winterberry Holly because the red fruit is easily seen, as the leaves have been lost. The bright red berries remind us of the Christmas season. These plants reach a height of 3 to 15 feet and are often used in landscaping. Many cultivars are available addressing issues of different soil types and plant size requirements. Because the plant is dioecious, a male plant must be incorporated into the area to pollinate the female plants that produce the red fruit. If the plant is to be used for holiday decorations, it is harvested in November, before the fruit is eaten by wildlife. Like the Club Mosses, Winterberry Holly is fashioned into various decorations. Because of the plant's versatility, it is crafted into wreaths, window box decorations, and kissing balls.

It isn't just the remembrance of Christmas that makes this plant popular. The fruit is attractive to many birds and wildlife. Songbirds, turkey, quail and even the White-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) gladly dine upon the fruit. Native Americans found a medicinal use for the plant, using the bark of the plant in the treatment of cuts and bruises.



Dark-eyed junco on winter berry holly

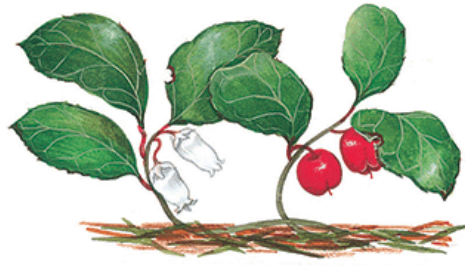


Christmas Trees/Balsam Fir

For many, the Christmas tree is the symbol of Christmas, adorned with its many colorful ornaments. The Christmas tree seems to have originated with the Druids and their worship of plants and trees. At Christmas, evergreens were incorporated into the Christmas celebration, including holly and mistletoe. These early Christmas trees were often garnished with “ornaments” such as apples, nuts and dates. Candles were added in the 18th century and electric lights in the 20th century. Bits of string, ribbons and things have been added through the years, as part of family traditions.

The Christmas tree standard in this country for years was the Balsam Fir (*Abies balsamea*), also called the balm of Gilead, which comes in several varieties. The tree provided not only the perfect symmetry for trimming, but also the bright green in winter for hope. And, especially, it also came with its wonderful spicy-scented resin that filled the room with its own sense of the Christmas season. Unfortunately for us, the Balsam fir wasn't very long lasting after it was brought into the home with its dry warmth, and the tree would shortly lose its leaves or needles, looking much like the Charlie Brown tree with the ornaments hanging on bare branches. Woodland Dunes retains the Balsam Fir in its landscape, and the memory of this popular symbol of recent Christmas past.

The tree is also used for its resin products, which include cold remedies, and optical glues. The oils from the tree are also used as



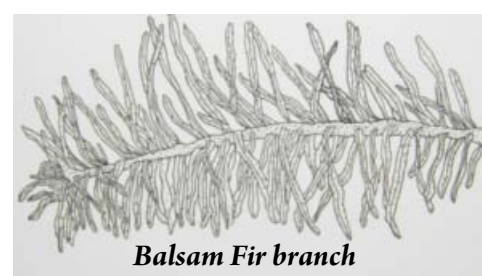
Wintergreen (Gaultheria procumbens)

rodent repellents. Today, the Fraser Fir is #1, and the Balsam fir occupies the 3rd spot as “fresh cut” Christmas Trees. But, the artificial Christmas tree is quietly cutting into the Christmas tree business, and the living tree tradition is being replaced with the clean, “pop up” store bought product which is ready to display.

Celebrations of Christmas

We all celebrate the traditions and symbols of Christmas in our own way. Whether the symbols are special foods, colors or plants, each provides the necessary signals that give us comfort, and reassures our tradition. Colors are a most important signal, and whether the color red comes as Santa's uniform or the fruit of a plant, it seals the connection with the tradition. Woodland Dunes provides us with many of these cherished plants and their colors, and the role they play in the tradition of Christmas.

Charles Sontag, Board Member and professor emeritus, UW-Manitowoc



Balsam Fir branch

Wintergreen and pain relief

Wintergreen contains a variety of compounds including phenols, salicylic acid, volatile oils, resins, tannins and mucilage. In the 1800s, pharmacologists determined that oils extracted from Winter Green leaves contained salicylates, or aspirin like compounds. This explains its anti-inflammatory effectiveness. Because of its anti-inflammatory properties, it certainly did not go unnoticed by the Native Americans. They used it to treat their aching muscles and joints brought on by their demanding physical activities.

Luckily for the Wintergreen plant, the chemical compound in aspirin can be more easily synthesized, than the expense of extracting it from the Wintergreen leaves and the plant wasn't overharvested. Especially since we consume over 68 million aspirin tablets a day in this country alone.

Because the Wintergreen is permitted to grow with only minimal harvest, the plant remains for the wildlife to use. Perhaps, wildlife uses the plant for many of the same medicinal purposes that we do. We know that “non-human” animals also use plants for their medicinal value.

Colonialists also used Wintergreen as a substitute for tea when the original Tea Party disposed of the English tea into the harbor. Today, many teas incorporate the soothing benefits of the Wintergreen leaf into the ingredients of the tea mixture.

From the Field

Bird Banding & Citizen Science



Bird Banding: Opposites Attract

Blue-Winged and Golden-Winged Warblers

Along with the banding done in fall we banded several times in early summer in an attempt to determine the presence or absence of golden-winged and blue-winged warblers at Woodland Dunes during nesting season. Golden-wings were not caught but one female blue-wing was captured that had a noticeable brood patch indicating it was, indeed, nesting nearby.

Golden-wings are a species of concern in our area since the more southern blue-wings are slowly “pushing” the golden-wings north. Recently we have seen and heard golden-wings in our banding area. Blue-wings are more common and eight have been seen or heard near our headquarters on State Highway 310. These two species hybridize and the dominant offspring is called a Brewster’s warbler. This “not-often-seen” bird was seen, photographed and heard (with a very different song) several times by different people at the headquarters site on Hwy 310.



Golden-winged Warbler



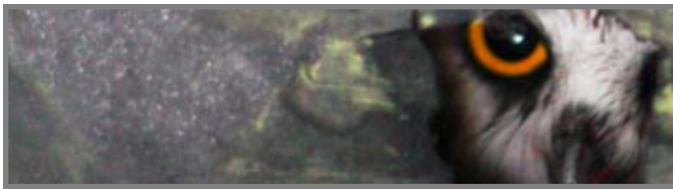
Blue-winged Warbler

Birds banded in 2012:

Northern saw-whet owl	65	Orange-crowned warbler	3
Red-bellied woodpecker	1	Common yellowthroat	3
Yellow-bellied sapsucker	1	American redstart	11
Downy woodpecker	1	Magnolia warbler	10
Alder flycatcher	3	Blackburnian warbler	1
Least flycatcher	1	Yellow warbler	4
Eastern phoebe	1	Blackpoll warbler	1
Red-eyed vireo	2	Yellow-rumped warbler	1
Black-capped chickadee	16	Wilson’s warbler	2
Golden-crowned kinglet	1	American tree sparrow	1
Ruby-crowned kinglet	2	Fox sparrow	2
Veery	1	Song sparrow	9
Gray-cheeked thrush	4	White-crowned sparrow	6
Swainson’s thrush	7	Swamp sparrow	6
Hermit thrush	19	White-throated sparrow	12
American robin	1	Dark-eyed junco	2
Gray catbird	3	Scarlet tanager	1
Ovenbird	2	Northern cardinal	2
Northern waterthrush	1	Brown-headed cowbird	1
Blue-winged warbler	1	American goldfinch	3
		Total: 40 species, 214 individuals	

Christmas Bird Counts volunteers needed

The 2012 Christmas Bird Count dates have been finalized, and again we will do four counts covering almost all of Manitowoc County. Each count area consists of a circle 15 miles in diameter. The southwest count, centered just west of St. Nazianz, will be December 15. The southeast count, centered near Newton, will be December 16. The northeast count, centered at Mishicot, will be Friday, December 28, and the northwest count centered at Menchalville, will be on Saturday, December 29. Anyone who can identify birds can participate, either counting in the field or at bird feeders. If interested, please contact the nature center and we will supply the required forms and maps.



From the Field Saw-whet Owl Banding

Above Photo by Steve Wagner.

Saw-whet owls banded at Woodland Dunes in 2012

Since we started banding birds more than 40 years ago, we've banded more than 5,000 Northern Saw-whet Owls. They migrate from the north in October, and although many have been banded much remains to be learned about their movements and life history.

We made some changes to our owl banding program this year to make it more manageable. We used one net site instead of two, and only opened on nights when the weather was optimum for owl migration. Such nights were at a premium this year, and we opened nets on only 16 nights in October and November, but we caught owls on almost all of those nights.

This year we caught a total of 73 birds, eight of which were banded at other locations or were birds that we had already banded. We banded 65 owls in total. We also had two recoveries of birds that had previously been banded at Woodland Dunes. Birds that we banded in 2010 were captured at Sandhill Wildlife Area in Wood County and at Cedar Grove WI. The one caught at Cedar Grove was an owl that had been "adopted" through our Adopt-An-Owl program. Preliminary results indicate that about 67% of the owls caught were females, 21% of unidentified gender, and 11% males. About 58% were hatched this year, while 41% were more than 1 year old.

Teams of volunteers assisted with the owl program, some licensed as sub-permit banders, and others who helped remove birds from the nets. The people who helped with this year's program were (in no particular order): Tim and Chris Hamburg; Kevin and Diane Hagerty; Anne Schuette and Mona Moen; Glen Mella and Mark Gadke; Mike and Pat Wiegert; Casey and Kelly Vorrion; Jim Knickelbine; Dave Wanek; Bernie Brouchoud; Louise Trickel and Mary Madison; Barb Vandevort and Teri Vopat; Barb Vorrion and Mary Ann Duebner. We owe the volunteers a big "thank you"! The owl program ended with the start of the gun deer season, so now we'll review our numbers from this year and plan for the next.

Adopt an Owl

For \$25 you can adopt a saw-whet owl caught and banded at Woodland Dunes. Funds raised from this program support Woodland Dunes education and preservation efforts. Contact Jessica at jessicaj@woodlanddunes.org for more information.

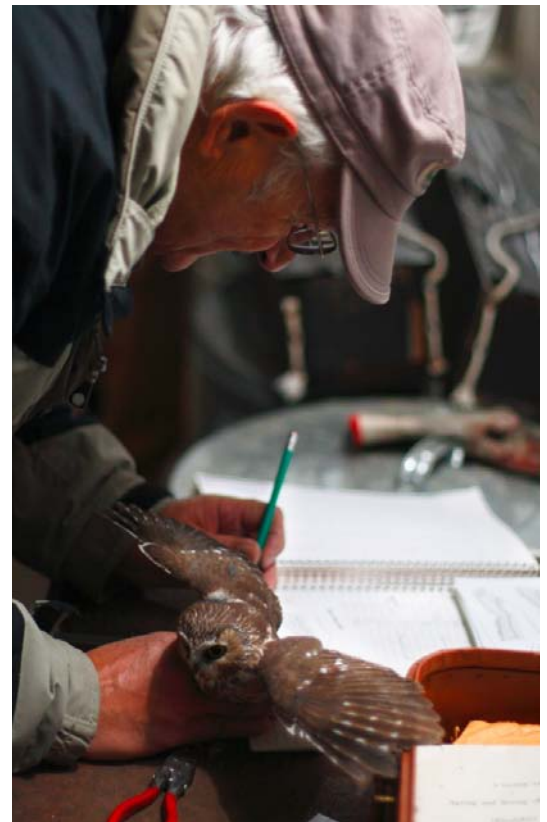
Recent Owl Adoptions

Diane Baumann
Amanda & Jason Bavinck
Sonora Binkley
Gibson Dullea
Shirley Griffin
Marina Helein
Hannah Henry
Jacob Henry
Linda Koenig-Huske
Sheree Jackson

Jenny & Andy Knickelbine
Hayden Kupsh
Jackie Liebel
Luz Morgan
Jim O'Keane
Lisa Pykstra
Amanda & Hayden Smith
Tonissa VerHaagh
Drew Wellnitz

Owl Fest 2012

A crisp fall evening, warm apple cider, the smell of burgers and brats in the air and the opportunity to meet one of the smallest and most elusive owls in the country, Owl Fest. Visitors at this year's event enjoyed night hikes, musical fun with educator and entertainer Bill Kehl and meeting Wildlife of Wisconsin's raptors. All forms of wildlife came out for the evening, one group of owl prowl hikers heard an Eastern Screech Owl and another group Coyotes. Volunteers and visitors agreed being out at night in the forest made the event even more memorable.



Master Bander, Bernie Brouchoud recording banding data. Photo by Steve Wagner.

The Living Classroom

Another great year in education

This year our school program numbers grew with almost 3500 school children visiting Woodland Dunes. More important to us than quantity of children walking through our doors is quality. We not only want them to visit but to have an enriching educational experience when they are here and leave with the interest to visit again and continue learning about the natural world. With an education staff for school visits of 1.5 we rely heavily on our group of volunteer Teacher Naturalists to make sure the programs received at Woodland Dunes are top quality. To ensure our programs are hitting their mark we ask teachers to evaluate the programs. Here are a few of the many comments received from teachers in the later half of 2012.

"Our guide did an excellent job! I actually even learned some new things though I've been here many times. My class could recall more than 30 events about their afternoon."

"Thank you for the experience! We appreciate your time, talent and dedication."

"Wonderful field trip, every year great knowledgeable guides - great rapport with the students."

"I was very pleased with the content and presentation. It corresponded well with my curriculum. It was enjoyed by the students and they showed that they acquired information."

"The day was super! The kids learn a lot and have fun. Love the hands on activities. See you next year!"

"Your lessons were awesome and you did a great job of getting the kids involved. We really appreciate that you share your time and expertise with us!"

"Thank you for making our trip to Woodland Dunes a fun and memorable one, your activities were age appropriate, attention captivating and hands on! We learned and remembered so much from our visit!"

"Everything was interesting, the time flew. Thanks for all your hard work preparing for this wonderful adventure."



A successful apple bobber at Enchanted Forest. This event is not all fun and games, visitors also learn about the importance of wildlife, even those some people find less desirable.



A visitor to this year's Owl Fest learning about owl wingspans, compared to her own. Kids also enjoyed learning owl origami, kid focused night hikes and participating in the the kid's owl hooting contest.

With kids from 2 to 101

This year we spanned the ages with program participants. Many 2 year olds joined us for summer programs and one 101 year old enjoyed a pontoon tour on the West Twin River. We are excited to continue this range of education into 2013 with the continuation of the Wonder of It All adult education series, along with our school, summer and family programs and festivals.

Mark your Calendar today: Bird Breakfast: Saturday, May 11, 8-11:00 a.m., Butterfly Fest: Saturday, August 24, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Enchanted Forest: Saturday, October 5, 4:00-8:00 p.m., Owl Fest: Saturday, October 19, 4:00-10:00 p.m.

Volunteer Spotlight

Director's report continued from page 1

Our observation tower continues to progress, and will be complete in a few weeks. I am really pleased with the project, and grateful to Jack and Laurel Alyea for the funding that is making it possible. Unfortunately, Jack passed away a few weeks ago, and our best wishes go out to Laurel and everyone in his family. With permission from the Krivacek family, we will be moving the viewing scope presently mounted on Cattail Trail to the upper level of the tower, which will enhance the outstanding view from there. Although the tower will be completed in a few weeks, we will have a grand opening next May as part of our annual Bird Breakfast event.

Wisconsin Public Service has asked our permission to replace an old natural gas pipeline that runs beneath our marsh. The existing pipeline is very old and in need of replacement. After consulting with our State Natural Areas ecologist, our Board, and our attorney, we reached an agreement with WPS to allow an easement to install the pipeline using horizontal boring 40 feet below the surface of the marsh. No excavation or disturbance to the marsh will be needed, and the easement pertains to an area of about 1.5 acres. Woodland Dunes will be compensated for granting the easement.

In 2012, more than 5,000 people attended school programs, festivals and education programs at or provided by Woodland Dunes. These research-based programs are taught by everyone on our staff plus a small army of volunteers. Many others visited the center and preserve to experience the rich diversity of wildlife, on trails and boardwalks again built and maintained by staff and volunteers. More than 120 species of birds were recorded on Cattail and Willow Trails alone, and we found at least one new mammal species. Woodland Dunes is much more than the sum of these statistics, or just a place to be visited. It is a community of people and wildlife interacting toward the betterment of each. It has been a remarkable year, and I see no reason that 2013 shouldn't be as well. Thank you, everyone, for being a part of this community.

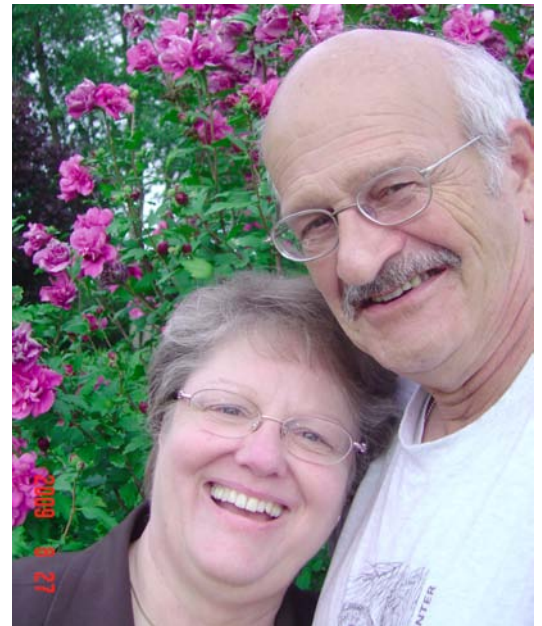
Best wishes for the Holidays and New Year,
Jim Knickelbine



Sue Crowley, forester, advisor, teacher and friend. Good luck on your new adventure.



Don DeBruyn, hard at work as usual. From fixing door handles, advising operations to serving food he is always willing to lend a hand where needed.



Winter Volunteer Spotlight Lyn Brouchoud

She's the smiling face you meet at the admission table for special events and fundraisers. She's the lady who says a cheery hello at the front desk in the gift shop. Lyn Brouchoud has been involved with Woodland Dunes since its inception.

Lyn married founder Bernie Brouchoud in 1972 and since the couple enjoyed doing things together, she got involved with the organization. Lyn serves as secretary on the Board of Directors and volunteers at special events, fundraisers and in the gift shop. Lyn says she volunteers because she enjoys watching Woodland Dunes grow, making new friends and helping out when needed.

When she's not at Woodland Dunes, Lyn spends her time reading, sewing, crocheting or whatever makes the day fun! Lyn also said, "I love being with family especially our six grandchildren." Thank you Lyn for your 40 years of service to Woodland Dunes!

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In memory of Dorothy Bugs

Aegolius Bird Club

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Lucy Zeldenrust's Birthday
Sid and Genny Levy

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