

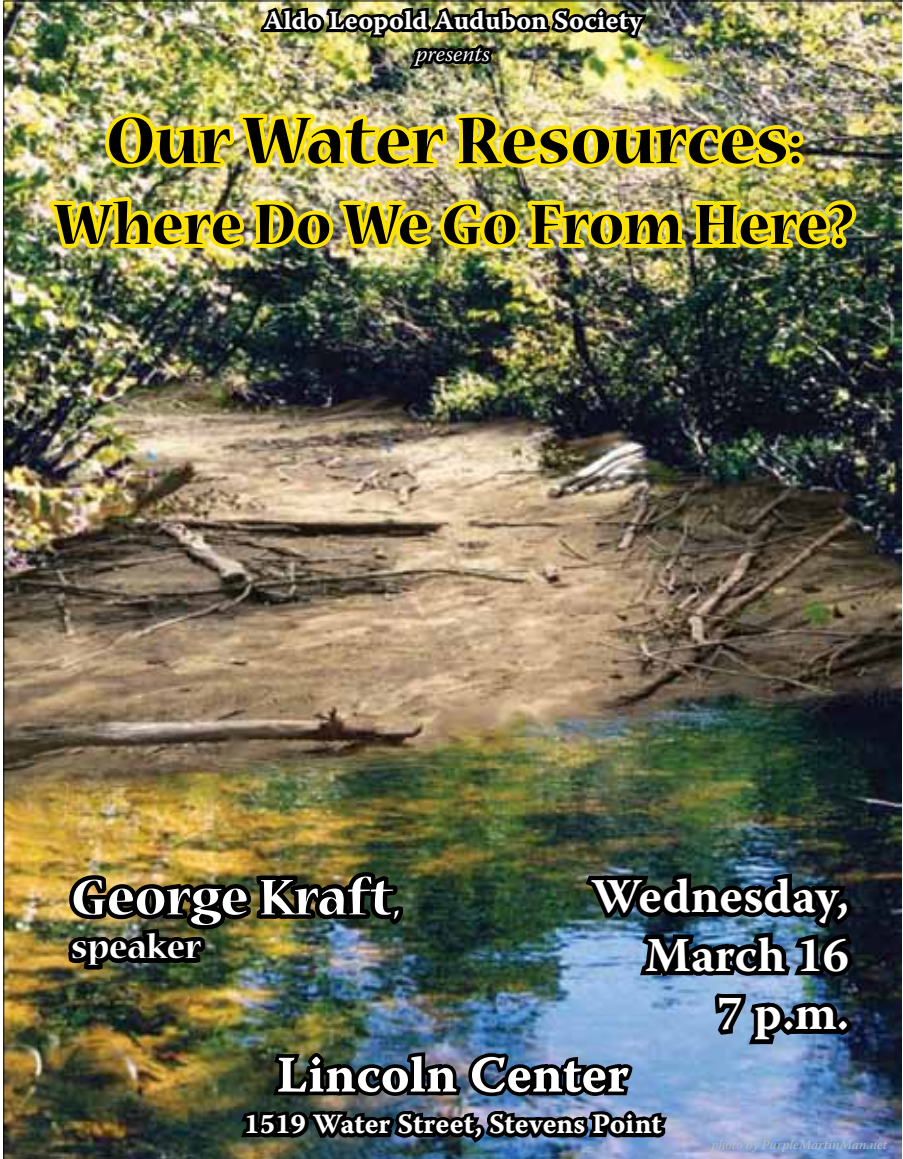


Newsletter of the Aldo Leopold Audubon Society, Inc.

March 2011

Aldo Leopold Audubon Society
presents

Our Water Resources: Where Do We Go From Here?



George Kraft,
speaker

Wednesday,
March 16
7 p.m.

Lincoln Center
1519 Water Street, Stevens Point

photo by Purple Martin Manner

Upcoming Events

- Apr 9 ALAS field trip *Spring at the Meed*
- Apr 20 ALAS program *The Baraboo Hills and Badger Army Ammunition Plant*
- Apr 23 ALAS field trip *Sunrise on the Buena Vista*

www.aldoleopoldaudubon.org

UPCOMING



photo by Gerry Janz

ALAS Field Trip

April at the Mead

Saturday, April 9 7:30 am

The Aldo Leopold Audubon Society is teaming up with the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology for an April birding trip to the Mead Wildlife Refuge. Birders of all levels are welcome to come along on this field trip which will primarily highlight the spectacular wetland habitat the refuge provides. We'll meet in the Chase Bank parking lot by Pfifner Park at 7:00 am for car pooling or you may join the group at 7:30 am at the Mead headquarters along County S. The trip will be co-lead by Dan Belter of the Wausau Bird Club and Gerry Jany of ALAS. For more information contact Gerry Janz at 341-6384.

GREEN FIRE



Green Fire, a one-hour documentary about Aldo Leopold and the evolution of his insights into conservation, will be shown in the Pinery Room at the Portage County Library Monday evening, April 18. The program is open and free for the public.

ALAS Field Trip

Sunrise on the Buena Vista

Saturday, April 23rd

Check for details regarding this annual event in the upcoming April newsletter.

UWSP College of Natural Resources

Spring on the Booming Grounds

April 1-30

If you haven't witnessed this rite of spring...or even if you have!...now is the time to sign up and reserve your space in the blinds.

http://www.uwsp.edu/wildlife/pchicken/2011_calendar.aspx

OUR GROUNDWATER, LAKES, STREAMS, AND PUMPING CONNECTIONS: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Our Groundwater, Lakes, Streams and Pumping Connections: Where do we go from here? will be the topic of the March 16, 2011 Aldo Leopold Audubon program.

Groundwater is the underground water that flows to lakes, streams, and wetlands. Without groundwater, the lakes and streams of the state would be dry except during the biggest storms. Groundwater also supplies the water that comes out of wells. When too much water is pumped from wells, lakes and streams start to go dry. Studies going back fifty years have warned that if too much groundwater were to be pumped from central Wisconsin aquifers, surface waters would be damaged. These predictions have come to fruition in the last decade with the dry-up of the Little Plover River, the headwaters of other streams, and Long Lake in Waushara County, to name a few.

George Kraft, a Professor of Water Resources with UW-Stevens Point and UW-Extension will discuss groundwater, surface water and pumping connections. Dr. Kraft has been a groundwater practitioner for twenty-five years and the Governor's representative on Wisconsin's Groundwater Coordinating Council. In 2010, he was recognized by his peers by being named recipient of the American Water Resources Association Distinguished Service Award. Dr. Kraft has worked extensively with the Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association, many lake and watershed groups, and statewide conservation organizations on groundwater issues.

The program will start at 7:00 p.m. at the Lincoln Center on Water Street in Stevens Point and is free and open to the public.



PRESIDENTIAL RAMBLINGS

Larry Graham

The last month or so has been pretty busy with ALAS activities – Board meeting, snow shoe hike at our place, regular monthly program. The purple martin program happened to coincide with my 70th birthday. When I was seven years old I thought that seven was a great number, and imagined what it might be like to be seventeen, twenty-seven and so on. No way could I have imagined seventy. Occasionally when we are in town late in the day and neither one of us wants to cook, we will get Chinese “take away,” which we both enjoy. The last time this happened, my fortune cookie read “Old age is always twenty years older than you are.” That’s the way I feel about it; we keep busy with fun and worthwhile activities.

You are familiar with our regular ALAS programs, field trips, and this newsletter but ALAS is much more. A major effort during the last year or so has been gaining Bird City Wisconsin recognition for Stevens Point. More effort will be required, as this is an annual recognition. We are co-sponsoring two local showings of *Green Fire*, a film celebrating the life and philosophy of Aldo Leopold. These showings are on March 5 at UWSP and April 18 at the public library downtown.

Our Audubon chapter has a strong interest in conservation and environmental education in Central Wisconsin. We provide “Audubon Adventures”, classroom activity materials, to a number of schools. We offer grants to classrooms and school forests for small enrichment activities. We sponsor a summer camper at CWES. We are able to provide a couple of scholarships for UWSP biology and natural resources students each year. The scholarship offered to a CNR student has been named to honor the memory of Friday Wievel.

Our chapter is interested in local research efforts. We continue to pay for gasoline for Janet and Amber Eschenbauch’s kestrel research project on the Buena Vista and also contribute to Gene Jacobs’ saw-whet owl research activities. Although the Christmas Bird Count is a fun activity, the data collected every year across the nation and even the world provide important insights into avian population trends and patterns.

We believe that habitats are important. For this reason we were able to help acquire the Erickson Natural Area adjacent to Koziczkowski Park, and are committed to maintaining this important migratory refueling stop for birds moving north for the summer. Our bluebird trails have helped increase bluebird populations. Bluebird houses have been set up at local grade schools to be monitored by students. A baby “bird in the

hand” is worth many hours of classroom conservation instruction. We are supporting the Wisconsin Natural Resources Foundation’s efforts to purchase and set aside land on the Osa peninsula in Costa Rica where many of our Wisconsin birds over winter.

I have touched on just a few of the activities and projects in which ALAS has an interest. Most of these require effort on the part of individuals as well as funds. We are fortunate to have established an endowment within the community foundation; income from this endowment as well as y our dues and bird feed sale purchases help us with our projects. A number of individuals make regular contributions to this endowment so that it grow and continue to enable us to be involved in worthwhile projects.



Osa peninsula rain forest

photo by Getty Images

DELIGHTFUL BIRDS I HAVE KNOWN

Sandhill Crane (*Grus canadensis*)

Alan Haney



Sandhill Crane to by Gerry Janz

I am not embarrassed to admit that I have been intimidated by a bird, more than once. The most recent experience was at Quincy Bluff and Wetlands in Adams County where I was doing a breeding bird survey for The Nature Conservancy. Wading slowly through the extensive wetland, I looked ahead to see a pair of Sandhill Cranes near a nest. The nest stood two feet above the water, and I easily could have curled up in it. I was eager to see if there were eggs or chicks, so pressed closer.

When I was still 50 yards away, the slightly smaller male crane came striding to meet me. His posture and purposefulness left no doubt that this was no invitation. His formidable beak appeared to be about my eye level, and led each stride as he quickly covered the distance between us. I didn't wait to see what he had in mind, and veered sharply away.

Sandhills are one of two species of cranes native to North America. The other, of course, is the slightly larger Whooping Crane. There are two subspecies of Sandhill Cranes, the Greater, which is the subspecies found in Wisconsin, and the Lesser, that migrates west of the Mississippi Flyway and nests as far north as the Arctic Coast. The Greater Sandhill stands over five feet, while the Lesser is half a foot shorter and has a much shorter beak.

The history of the Greater Sandhill Crane in Wisconsin is an exciting conservation story. They were very nearly extirpated by the mid-1930s, when as few as 25 pairs were thought to nest in the state. In his *A Marshland Elegy*, Aldo Leopold wrote of the tragedy of a Wisconsin without Sandhills as a result of human ignorance and greed. Remarkably, with protection of the birds and wetlands, the population has expanded 7-9% per year since 1960. They were removed from Wisconsin's endangered species list in

1973, and there now may be as many as 4,000 pairs nesting in the state. Nesting has been confirmed in all but four counties. One of Wisconsin's most reliable harbingers of spring is again the wild, triumphant call of the cranes back from the Southeast where they overwinter, mostly in southern Georgia and Florida.

Sandhills will begin to arrive in central Wisconsin as soon as snow-free patches appear in the fields. Adults, which pair for years, if not for life, will forage in upland fields until the marshes are free of ice and snow. During this time, the observer may be rewarded by witnessing courtship that consists of loud rattling cries, elaborate bowing, jumping into the air, tossing of grass, and running with wings expanded. Sandhills often return to the same uplands and wetland year after year. I have had a pair at my place for the last five years.

Nesting begins as soon as the wetlands are open, with 1-3 eggs by late March to early June. Clutch size is usually two, but more than one chick rarely survives. Incubation, shared by the parents, is about a month, and young can begin to fly about two months after hatching. By late summer, the young bird(s) can be seen with the parents throughout their nesting territory, which can cover a square mile or more.

Cranes begin to assemble in large flocks by mid-September. They remain until snow and ice make foraging difficult, at which time they move south toward staging grounds, where large numbers can often be seen. A similar return from wintering habitat to staging areas in the spring is less pronounced with the Greater Sandhills, but Lesser Sandhills offer a spectacular mid-March display along the Platte River in Nebraska.

Very soon, we will again acknowledge the return of one of Wisconsin's most delightful birds.

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN DOING MORE WITH AUDUBON?

During the next month a nominating committee will be working to fill vacancies and add to the Board. Our Board meets nine or ten times during the year to conduct business. We are in need of volunteers to serve as Secretary, and Publicity Chair. We are always interested in individuals who wish to participate as a member of the Board or work on a specific committee. If you have an interest or suggestion, contact Larry Graham at lgraham@uwsp.edu

A DISSIMULATION OF BIRDS

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Coot | a. charm |
| 2. Cormorant | b. descent |
| 3. Crane | c. flock |
| 4. Crow | d. host |
| 5. Eagle | e. congregation |
| 6. Falcon | f. herd |
| 7. gull | g. siege |
| 8. Heron | h. cast |
| 9. Hummingbird | i. murder |
| 10. Jay | j. exaltation |
| 11. Lapwing | k. convocation |
| 12. Lark | l. parliament |
| 13. Magpie | m. flight |
| 14. Mallard | n. deceit |
| 15. Nighthawk | o. cover |
| 16. Nightingale | p. fall |
| 17. Owl | q. bouquet |
| 18. Pheasant | r. colony |
| 19. Plover | s. kettle |
| 20. Raven | t. chattering |
| 21. Sparrow | u. spring |
| 22. Starling | v. congress |
| 23. Swift | w. tidings |
| 24. Teal | x. party |
| 25. Woodcock | y. flush |
| 26. Woodpecker | z. watch |

INTRODUCTION TO RAPTOR FIELD TECHNIQUES

A Five-day, Hands-on Workshop

Details at: www.RaptorResearch.com

Summer Sessions: 6-10 June, 20-24 June

Fall Sessions: 22-26 August, 12-16 Sept, and 10-14 October



American Kestrel

photo by Terry Sohl

Raptors...five days of just raptors! This workshop is offered every June with an emphasis on learning breeding season field techniques and again in October with an emphasis on learning migration and winter research techniques. Students will participate directly in real research projects, allowing them significant hands-on time with some of Wisconsin's finest raptors. Students learn new methods or hone their existing skills on bird capture and handling, including the use of mist nets, broadcast call surveys, tree climbing and rappelling, clutch counts, reading molt, video surveillance, drawing

blood samples, and more. Classes are limited to 8 students per session which allows for significant individual interaction, training, and hands-on time. The course can be taken for one credit from UW-Stevens Point Outreach Program, (contact us for UW-Stevens Point registration form) or students can inquire with their university or college regarding possible credit.

Cost \$435 US

An Uncanny Gregarian

He was my first true love.
I called him and he called me back.
We met on a farm on the Maryland Eastern Shore.
He was running from an old hound dog,
I was riding an old hack.

He was a handsome young guy-
with a body short, plump and round.
He had a rufous red crew,
a mocha mustache,
and dreamy eyes that were butternut brown.

He wore a white turtle neck sweater
under a red-brown mottled suit.
He had coat tails of grey,
such impeccable style,
he completed the outfit with pale yellow boot.

Sometimes a bit lofty,
he remained down to earth.
Although secretive, but without airs,
he seldom would quail, but fluttered in flush.
He was social with his kind, and precocial from birth.

At home in grasslands and open woods.
Fond of agriculture crops and brushy shrubs.
He had a hearty, gallinaceous-like appetite
an omnivorous palate
for fruits, tubers, protein, and grubs.

He was my first true love,
This uncanny gregarian I can not deny.
In pursuit of a game bird
“Bob White” I called out,
And “bob white” was his reply.

Linda C. Lyon

Aldo Leopold Audubon Society

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ALAS Audubon Chapter

Yes, I would like to join the Aldo Leopold Audubon Society of Central Wisconsin. I will receive *the almanac* newsletters describing chapter activities and events. My check for \$25 is enclosed. ALAS will notify you when your annual membership is to be renewed. Your dues will be used in their entirety to support the local ALAS chapter. **You will not receive Audubon magazine.**

National Audubon Society

Yes, I would like to join the National Audubon Society. Please send the Audubon Magazine and my membership card to the address below. My check for \$25 is enclosed. You will also receive membership in the Aldo Leopold Audubon Society of Central Wisconsin, but the majority of your dues will be used to support National Audubon Society events and activities. The National Audubon Society will notify you when your membership is about to expire.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Please send my newsletter via email _____

Please make all checks payable to:
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mail to:

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In this issue: When the Rivers Run Dry?
Sandhills
Field trips
and more....



the almanac

The mission of the Aldo Leopold Audubon Society is to foster appreciation and concern for all living things, and to protect and preserve their ecosystems.