

# The Badger BIRDER



WISCONSIN  
SOCIETY for  
ORNITHOLOGY

Newsletter of the WISCONSIN SOCIETY for ORNITHOLOGY

## Wisconsin Society for Ornithology's Annual Report for 2019

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

#### Myles Hurlburt

Who could have predicted the environment we are living in today? While the COVID-19 pandemic has forced WSO to cancel our annual convention and all field trips through July, I hope everyone is staying safe and enjoying your loved ones, as well as our feathered friends while abiding by social distancing guidelines.

*In a normal year, WSO's Annual Report is distributed to the small percentage of our membership who attend the Annual Meeting during the yearly convention.*

*In this "novel" year, with no convention, things are much more virtual for our annual election and the Board of Directors has decided to distribute an illustrated Annual Report to the entire membership in this special edition of The Badger Birder.*

It has been a great honor to serve as president of this great organization these past two years. As my presidency is ending, I wanted to share some of the accomplishments during my term.

- Strategic plan review
- Updated our bylaws
- Continued expansion of Honey Creek

-- New board members (Membership/Honey Creek/ Members at Large/Passenger Pigeon Editor)

Given the importance of our bylaws changes, I thought it was important to review those changes as they position the WSO for a strong

future and provide greater flexibility for potential board members who are considering becoming more involved in our organization. A special thank you to attorney **PETER MCKEEVER** and all the WSO board members who participated in this process. The changes:

#### **1. Remove the requirement that the Board of Directors be composed of officers and chairs of standing committees.**

As McKeever has pointed out in presentations to the WSO Board, the work being done by the chair of a committee does not necessarily lead to the work done by the board. The executive team desires to have the standing and ad-hoc committees be accountable to the board. This could be through the chair being on the board of directors and/or by requiring the committee chair to report to the board. This change removes the requirement that a board member chair a committee, and vice versa; We no longer need the term board member at large.

#### **2. Set staggered three-year renewable terms for board positions.**

The executive team would like our board and committees to become more robust and engaged. We hope to increase the size of committees to bring new energy and ideas onto committees and foster future board members. Additionally, adding terms will appeal



to newer board members so they have an idea of the commitment they are making. Term limits on board positions also require us to engage our members and search out future leaders of WSO before we have an empty seat to fill. Again, these three-year terms are renewable.

#### **3. Length of Special Meetings Notice for Board of Directors to 48 hours.**

The ability to hold meetings electronically allows for a shorter notice when calling a special meeting, which will allow the board to make major decisions efficiently. Considering that WSO owns land in the Buena Vista Grasslands and the Baraboo Hills, our status as a land management organization means that time sensitive issues could develop that require the entire board to weigh in and decide.

#### **4. Immediate Past President will become an officer**

This change ensures that the historical knowledge of the position remains on the board in an advisory role.

#### **5. The Treasurer will be appointed by the president with the consent of the board.**

The executive team feels that since this position requires experience and skill, rather than being elected the board should appoint a qualified individual to this position (Treasurer Dani Baumann is continuing in this position.).

I'm excited for WSO's future. With the bylaws' changes, I'll be staying involved with the WSO Board. I'm most proud and grateful for the executive committee, our board members and current and future membership. We have a great organization. Now, it's time to pass the torch to incoming **PRESIDENT MARY KORKOR** and new **VICE PRESIDENT SUNIL GOPALAN** and board members. I am confident

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WSO will continue to thrive under Mary and Sunil's leadership. I'm looking forward to working with them and the rest of the WSO Board.

In closing, I was told this would be a challenging position, and those words from my predecessors proved correct. However, with the support and cooperation of the WSO Board and our membership, we continued to be successful in advancing WSO's mission and improving how we represent ourselves to other bird and conservation organizations and the broader statewide birding community.

When this COVID-19 pandemic passes, I hope to see you out there at WSO events enjoying our Wisconsin birds.

## VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

### Mary Korkor

**Development Report:** To develop is to create or produce by deliberate effort over time, to promote growth. And that is what we did to enhance the strength of the WSO Board in 2019.

The resources that benefit an organization should include, but not be limited to financial assets. The quality and commitment of those that are committed to carrying out the mission of an organization will directly impact and inform how successful it is. We are fortunate to have added several new board members to our fold this past year and anticipate that 2020 will see a renewed focus and prioritization of goals. We are excited to welcome **SUNIL GOPALAN** as Webmaster, **TIM HAHN** as Passenger Pigeon Editor, **MARY MURRELL** as Membership Chair, **DAN PICKARTS** as Honey Creek Chair, and **JACK COULTER** (Communications Committee member) and **DAVOR GRGIC** both as Members-at-Large. All of these individuals bring a wealth of talent and knowledge to the WSO Board and we are fortunate to have them.

In addition to the depth of talent on the board, we have a generous and committed membership that provided over \$11,000 to the Honey Creek Birdathon/Bandathon last May. While the weather was once again a disappointment, it didn't dampen the spirit or determination of those that counted and those that banded. Thanks again to Professor **ANNA PIDGEON** and her students for banding the 10 species that were captured and released with such care, and to those hardy souls that started the count at 3:30 a.m. to include the night birds.

Looking ahead, 2020 promises to be a year of growth and challenge. Challenge creates opportunity and we welcome the inspiration our feathered friends give us each day as they overcome the odds of survival. Everything we do at the WSO is to increase those odds!

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

### Jenny Wenzel

My primary duties continue to be taking the minutes of WSO board meetings and organizing/updating documents. Minutes and important WSO documents continue to be stored on a Google drive.

I work on various issues as a member of the executive committee as needs arise. Each year, I prepare the WSO annual report by collating reports submitted by officers and committee chairs.

A significant amount of time was spent this past year by the entire

board working on updating and amending the WSO Bylaws.

I'm very thankful to have this continuing opportunity to work with WSO!

## Nominating Committee

### Tim Hahn, Chair

**JENNY WENZEL** is being nominated to continue her role as Secretary, adding her reasoned voice to the conversation of the executive committee and the WSO Board.

We nominate **MARY KORKOR** to move from her current role as vice president to the role of WSO President. Mary's passion for the organization and its future is obvious to anyone she works with. As

VP, she has helped to guide WSO through the past two years recruiting many members to serve the organization in various capacities. The energy and dedication to WSO that Mary exhibits will be vital as our organization continues to grow and change.

As our new addition to the executive committee, we nominate **SUNIL GOPALAN** for WSO Vice President. Sunil has been a member of WSO for several years, serving in various capacities. He is Spring Seasonal Editor for *The Passenger Pigeon*. WSO's quarterly journal. He is webmaster for our [wsobirds.org](http://wsobirds.org) site and lends his technical expertise to many

other aspects of the organization. Sunil also has been serving as a Member at Large on the WSO Board.

Outside of the organization, Sunil is an avid photographer whose work has been featured by National Geographic, Audubon and the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History. As an addition to our executive committee, Sunil will bring a well-reasoned approach and excellent organizational skills. As another member of the board stated, he is "hard-working, thoughtful, professional, uncommonly intelligent, and great to work with."

We look forward to electing these excellent candidates in May and appreciate their willingness to serve the WSO in such integral roles.

## ANNUAL CONVENTION

### Dar and Cathy Tiede 2019 WSO Convention Chairs

The 80<sup>th</sup> annual convention of the society was held May 24-27, 2019, in Altoona, Wis., with an attendance of 131. The River Prairie Center served as convention headquarters. The center is located on a beautiful bend in the Eau Claire River with convenient access to lodging, restaurants, groceries, a coffee company, and other travel conveniences. Our co-host was the Gaylord Nelson Audubon Society with President **STEVE BETCHKAL** serving as the local contact.

Friday kicked off with a member appreciation cook-out picnic organized by our co-host organization. The picnic was held in a covered pavilion along the Eau Claire River in the River Prairie complex and featured locally sourced fare. The activities then moved inside for the presentation of the society's annual Passenger Pigeon awards to eight worthy recipients. There was also a moment

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Photo by Tom Schultz

*The 2019 Honey Creek Birdathon Bandathon offered members their first opportunity to explore the recently completed trail through the new 105-acre Dischler acquisition, which includes majestic forest.*

of special recognition for the attendance of three previous winners of the prestigious Sam D. Robbins Lifetime Achievement Award: **DR. CHARLES KEMPER** (2004), **DARYL TESSEN** (2012) and **BETTIE HARRIMAN** (2014).

The Eau Claire area had been hard hit with rain prior to the convention and area rivers were at flood stage. We reluctantly and disappointedly had to abandon the advance plans to visit two of the prime birding sites in the area -- Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge and the Dunnville Wildlife Area. A special hats-off to all the field trip leaders for making last-minute adjustments in their Saturday and Sunday routes to accommodate the flood stage conditions. These include **STEVE BETCHKAL**, **ANNE GERAGHTY**, **BRIAN COLLINS**, **TOM SCHULTZ**, **JEFF BAUGHMAN**, **JAN LUEPKE**, **RYAN CHROUSER**, **RACHAEL BUTEK** and **PAULA KLEINTJES-NEFF**.

The Saturday morning local field trips visited the Chippewa County Forest (95 species), Beaver Creek Reserve (76 species), Augusta Wildlife Area (102 species), and Wetlands West (109 species). The combined field trips checklist for the morning totaled 149 species, including 24 species of warblers.

Participants were treated to a "South of the Border" tortilla soup and taco bar luncheon after returning from the Saturday morning field trips. The Saturday afternoon paper sessions covered a range of topics, including bird banding and the bird school at the (local) Beaver Creek Reserve, Sandhill Crane life history, Wisconsin's Important Bird Areas, and the challenge of identifying recently fledged birds. The evening featured a plated banquet followed by a keynote address by Betchkal, an award-winning journalist, about promoting birds in the media.

Sunday morning it was back to the field for more birding. The all-day bus trip focused on the Tiffany State Wildlife Area where the Chippewa Valley Motorcar Association made a special train run for the WSO group into the Tiffany Bottoms. This trip, led by **BRIAN COLLINS**, ended with 107 species including Olive-sided and Acadian Flycatchers, Lark Sparrow, and 18 species of warblers.

**ANNE GERAGHTY** led one of the car caravans into the Dunnville and Tiffany Wildlife Areas where the waters had receded somewhat for limited access. This group totaled 111 species for the day including Olive-sided, Yellow-bellied and Acadian Flycatchers as



The WSO Convention was honored to have on hand all three living recipients of its Samuel D. Robbins Lifetime Achievement award. From left: **DARYL TESSEN** (2012), **DR. CHARLES KEMPER** (2004) and **BETTIE HARRIMAN** (2014). The award honors those who actively contribute to WSO above and beyond having previously received the Silver Passenger Pigeon Award (for service to WSO) and the WSO Certificate of Appreciation (for continued service).

highlights of a 10-flycatcher day, plus 19 species of warblers including Worm-eating and Cerulean.

**JAN LUEPKE** led a smaller group into the Clark County Forest where they compiled 83 total species, including 20 warblers.

The other Sunday trip was scheduled for Trempealeau NWR, but this location was not accessible due to the high-water. **TOM SCHULTZ** and **JEFF BAUGHMAN** stepped up to design a new route to bird the St. Croix Corridor towards Crex Meadows. That group compiled 24 species of warblers along the way including Connecticut, Kentucky and Louisiana Waterthrush with a total of 115 species for the day.

Sunday night was a nice time to relax and enjoy the beautiful evening weather and fellowship at the Birds & Beers event. This was held outside on the second level patio and deck of Cowboy Jack's Saloon overlooking the Eau Claire River in Altoona. Field trips left in various directions towards home on Monday morning (Memorial Day). Thank you to **TIM HAHN**, **DAN BELTER**, and **PAUL HUNTER** for leading those outbound trips. The combined species total for the Monday trips was 118 species including 25 warblers.

The combined total for all field trips during the convention weekend was 179 species, including 31 warblers.

Thanks to all who attended the convention! A special word of thanks to the following: **STEVE BETCHKAL** for helping with local arrangements, **MICHAEL JOHN JAEGER** for recruiting speakers and moderating the speaker session at the convention, **CHRISTINE REEL** for serving as convention registrar, **NANCY NABAK** for serving as the official photographer, and **ANN FERRELL** for her assistance with registration. Special thanks to my wife, **CATHY**, for serving as convention co-chair, handling the on-site check-in/registration for the weekend, and making that well-received bean-bacon-burger hot dish for the picnic.



Photos by Nancy Nabak and Anne Geraghty

The 80<sup>th</sup> annual WSO convention over the 2019 Memorial Day weekend in Altoona was a collection of events, ranging from the kickoff picnic at the River Prairie Center to the Passenger Pigeon Awards Ceremony to a collection of predawn half-day and full-day field trips that visited a range of habitats, with some trips reporting 135+ species.

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## **AWARDS**

### **COMMITTEE**

#### **Wendy Schultz, Chair**

The Awards Committee received a number of worthy nominations toward the end of 2018, and in January the Board of Directors met to select the slate of 2019 award recipients. They were recognized during the awards presentation at the WSO Annual Convention held on Friday, May 24, 2019, at the River Prairie Center in Altoona (just east of Eau Claire).

The **SILVER PASSENGER PIGEON AWARD**, presented to members of WSO for distinguished service to the Society, was awarded to **MARY UTTECH**, of Saukville. Mary served for 13 years (2001-2014) as editor for *The Badger Birder*, using her

graphic arts background to help shape the newsletter from a simple 4-page bulletin to the sophisticated document is today.

The **BRONZE PASSENGER PIGEON AWARD**, presented to individuals who have made outstanding contributions in their local communities (or state) to promote the field of ornithology went to four very deserving people: **STEVE BETCHKAL, JEB BARZEN, JIM KNICKELBINE and ANITA CARPENTER**.

**BETCHKAL**, from Eau Claire and a longtime member of WSO, is board president of the 13-county Gaylord Nelson Audubon Society chapter, a retired broadcast journalist, experienced birder, author of birding guides, and leader of birding travel groups. **BARZEN** hails from Spring Green and was nominated for his work at the Ferry Bluff Eagle Council, a non-profit organization formed in 1988 to promote the conservation of Bald Eagles in Central Wisconsin. **KNICKELBINE** is from Two Rivers and the director of Woodland Dunes Nature Center. Under his leadership, Jim provided incentive for reshaping the lakeshore into a wildlife friendly area and the pride of the lakeshore communities. **CARPENTER** was a volunteer leader/instructor at the UW-Oshkosh Biology Department, reaching hundreds of college students over the years. She wrote a column for the Natural Resources Magazine and was a member of the original group that formed Bird City Oshkosh and their bird festival steering committee for 9 years.

The **NOEL J. CUTRIGHT CONSERVATION AWARD** recognizes outstanding contributions to bird conservation in Wisconsin, and was awarded to **MARK and SUE MARTIN**, resident managers of Goose Pond, and to **BRIAN RUSSART**, Natural Areas Coordinator for the Milwaukee County Department of Parks, Recreation & Culture. When the Martins began their tenure as the resident land managers, Goose Pond was only about 100 acres in size and included just part of the west pond. Since that time they helped Goose Pond grow to more than 660 acres, including hundreds of acres of restored prairie and native habitats. **RUSSART** oversees the department's 10,000-acre Natural Areas Program with a focus on ecological restoration, wildlife research and community engagement.

The Awards Committee also created an online nomination form that can also be printed from a link on the WSO website and was available by November 2019. The template helps capture key criteria needed in the nomination process. WSO looks forward to selecting the next round of award winners for 2020.

## **THE PASSENGER PIGEON**

#### **Tim Hahn, Editor**

By the numbers - we published four issues of the journal, with summer and fall combined, resulting in three publications. In total there were 312 pages including five articles, none of which were peer reviewed, annual reports from the 80th WSO convention, a comprehensive index to the 81st edition, and heartwarming tributes to **JIM HARRIS** and **NEIL HARRIMAN**.

**Transition:** **MICHAEL JOHN JAEGER** assumed the editor's role late in 2018, taking over for **CHUCK HEIKKINEN** and **DELIA UNSON** who had served for four years. Unfortunately, as Michael John states, it was a case of "the eyes being bigger than the stomach" and, in part due to outside complications, he was unable to fulfill the duties. This led to a new editor being recruited.

The search took some time, during which Michael John completed the Spring 2019 issue of the *Pigeon*, which was mailed in mid-September. At the request of **MARY KORKOR**, I assumed the role of editor in late September. The transition included meeting extensively with Michael John in person and over the phone. We decided to buckle down and do summer and fall in a combo issue. The summer issue was mostly complete, but several pieces were still missing from the fall issue, and the coordination between Michael John and I was a bit slow. The combo issue finally hit mailboxes in mid-December.

The final issue of 2019 was complex, as it included two articles, one of which involved extra coordination with the writers, the annual report from 2019, minutes from the annual meeting, the *Passenger Pigeon* awards, and an index of the entire 81st edition of the journal, which presented some technological struggles. It was delivered in early March.



*Participating in the annual Passenger Pigeon Awards ceremony at the 80<sup>th</sup> WSO Convention in Altoona on April 24, 2019, were (from left) JEB BARZEN (Bronze Passenger Pigeon), BRIAN RUSSART, SUE FOOTE-MARTIN and MARK MARTIN (Cutright Conservation Awards), JIM KNICKELBINE (Bronze) MARY UTTECH (Silver Passenger Pigeon), and STEVE BETCHKAL (Bronze).*

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**Changes:** As I mentioned in the summer/fall issue, we have eliminated the **By the Wayside** column due to increasing use of eBird, which results in far fewer interesting and useful write-ups than we used to receive. Also, in agreement with Audubon, WSO's historic role in the Christmas Bird Count has been reduced, so we no longer have a separate article in the *Pigeon* about CBC results.

We are currently without an art editor, and Michael John will be stepping away from his role as peer review editor very soon, so I will be searching for replacements for both positions.

Thank you to our roster of editors who compile our seasonal reports, which continue to be an excellent summary of bird sightings in our great state.

Lead Editor	Tim Hahn	Pewaukee
Peer Review Editor	Michael John Jaeger	Madison
Spring Editor	Sunil Gopalan	Middleton
Summer Editor	Dar Tiede	Appleton
Fall Editor	Bob Domagalski	St. Nanzia
Winter Editor	Dan Belter	Wausau

## THE BADGER BIRDER

**Carl Schwartz, Editor**  
**Barbara Dembski Schwartz, Designer**

In May, I will have completed my 6th year as editor of *The Badger Birder*, WSO's monthly newsletter, working in tandem with my wife, Barbara, who does the design and layout. We are pleased that we have been able to continue to broaden the *Birder's* content and maintain a substantial page count for 11 issues a year (July/August is a combined issue). It has become almost a monthly magazine for our members and, I hope, adds value to people's membership in WSO.

*The Birder's* principal goal is to inform WSO members on the work of WSO and other major bird conservation organizations, including the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II, the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Partnership, the Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory and Bird City Wisconsin.

*The Birder* averages 20-24 pages a month and has reached a high of 32 pages with simultaneous publication in March of the convention registration package and **BOB DOMAGALSKI's** annual "Lists of Lists." The strength of our newsletter is founded on the contributions of many WSO members, and I continue to encourage our Board of Directors and our rank-and-file to send me ideas for topics we should be pursuing or offers to contribute articles themselves.

We deliver the newsletter to more than 70% of our members via an email link to our secure members' web site at <https://wso.wildapricot.org/>. This version includes color photos and graphics. *The Birder* also is available in printed form for a \$10 surcharge, but it is in black-and-white and mail delivery is slower. Many longtime members have switched to the *eBirder*, while new members are defaulted to the *eBirder* option unless they opt to pay the surcharge.

This year we completed our series of articles profiling local birding groups and launched a series profiling new members of WSO. This feature is coordinated by member **DEB TURSKI** and Membership Chair **MARY MURRELL**.

The addition in 2018 of well-known nature writer **ANITA CARPENTER** with her bimonthly column *Flight Feathers* has proved to be a treat for readers and the perfect rotational pairing with **JIM KNICKELBINE's** inspirational *Call Notes* columns.

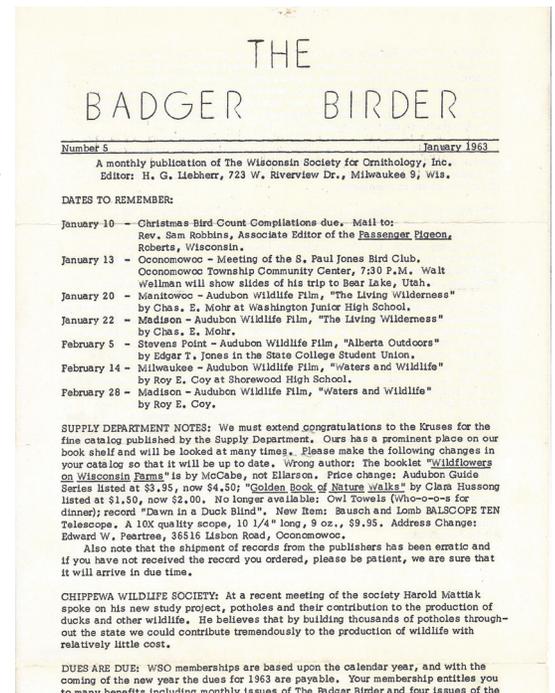
We continue to feature monthly field trip reports and photos from **TOM SCHULTZ** (with an occasional report from Field Trips Co-chair **JEFF BAUGHMAN**), **MARK KORDUCKI's** monthly Rare Birds Report, along with regular columns by **DIANA HIERLMEIER** (*Bird of the Month*), **NANCY NABAK** (*Found in Our Archives*) and **KATE REDMOND** (*Kate's Quotes*).

**NICK ANICH**, **CARRIE BECKER** and **CHARLIE LUTHIN** updated our members on the progress of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas, which WSO has helped lead and finance.

Advertising volume is even smaller than in 2018. It seems surprising that most members fail to consider using the *Birder* if their small business or birding-related festival or event needs to reach the state's core birding audience.

Current rates took effect five years ago after the first increase in at least 14 years. These rates (**B&W/color**) are in effect for camera-ready ad copy. We offer a 10% discount for any subsequent insertions of the same ad.

Business card (3.5 x 2"): **\$25/\$35**  
 ¼ page (3.75 x 5"): **\$45/\$65**  
 ½ page (7 x 5"): **\$85/\$115**  
 Full Page (7 x 10"): **\$160/\$200**



*The Badger Birder* celebrated publication of its 700<sup>th</sup> issue in December 2019 with a look at its history all the way back to 1962-'63.

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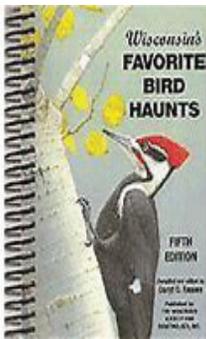
Finally, it should be noted that there has been no movement in 2019 on previous discussion of changes in *The Birder*, no doubt due at least in part to the board's focus on resolving the resignation of *Passenger Pigeon* Editor **MICHAEL JOHN JAEGER** and resulting publication delays. There was some thought a year ago that the new Communications team would review content delivery questions and conduct a member survey, guided by *The Birder* editor and designer.

After discussion with incoming President **MARY KORKOR**, Editor **CARL SCHWARTZ** agreed to extend his and **BARBARA**'s tenure by one year and leave the position and the board after the June 2022 issue. (That would be 12 years on the board, 8 as editor.) This suggests that whatever changes in *The Birder* are contemplated be taken into account in recruiting a successor(s) who could implement them with the mid-summer 2022 issue.

## WSO Bookstore

### **Dar Tiede, Manager**

The WSO bookstore filled 77 orders during 2019 with about half of those orders falling in the three-month period of March to May. Customer orders were close to equally split between WSO and non-WSO members. A WSO membership brochure is included with each order that is shipped to a non-member customer. In addition, the bookstore provided promotional merchandise for WSO new-member packets and other bird-related events.



The fieldwork for the second breeding bird atlas ended in 2019. The Scarlet Tanager logo caps are no longer available. All remaining caps were turned over to the atlas team to use as thank-you awards at last April's final field season kickoff meeting in Stevens Point.

Three dozen of the first-atlas books were also sold there, and three dozen more were sold during the year, leaving end-of-year inventory at about 60 books.

The most recent printed edition of the Wisconsin Birding Haunts book continued to sell well in 2019 (49 copies). There are about 80 left in inventory at the end of 2019. This likely will be the last printed edition of this book.

The WSO Passenger Pigeon logo caps continued to sell at a steady pace during 2019. The bookstore has two available as of year-end from our original order of six-dozen in 2017. The Passenger Pigeon visors have been an extremely poor-selling item. Only six have been sold since the addition of this new item in 2017. No visors were sold during 2019 even after a price reduction. The bookstore will be looking for ways to liquidate this item in 2020, perhaps as a new-member incentive.

Sales of the WSO Field Checklist of Wisconsin Birds continued at a steady level for the year.

The bookstore will look at adding new books to our offerings on a case by case basis. Feel free to contact me if you have suggestions for new merchandise or other ways to promote and improve our society's bookstore offerings

## Communications Committee

### **Jennifer Rutten, Chair**

The Communications team continues to meet once a month via Zoom and posts pertinent, timely and engaging birding posts to all social media platforms. Throughout the year the team continued to support execution of key communications for the annual convention, Honey Creek Birdathon and the Holiday Giving Campaign with a target of raising funds for Honey Creek property. Response to COVID-19 cancellations and safe birding appeals have taken priority in the second quarter of 2020. (Please see Page 7 for a full report.)

The Comm team continues to grow the social media platform  
SPECIAL EDITION

audiences even though a lot of our members may not be on social media. The team continues sending out the monthly e-Badger-Birder to our members and highlighting specific articles on the website. It continues to revise and update content on the website.

The Comm team lost two of its volunteers but gained one wonderful volunteer to fill in. We currently have six team members. Special thanks to **SUNIL GOPALAN** for additional website work during **ERIN GIESE**'s pregnancy leave.



Photos by Tom Schultz

The March 2019 Sheboygan field trip visited Port Washington.

## Field Trip Committee

### **Tom Schultz and Jeff Baughman, Co-chairs**

In 2019, we continued to plan and run field trips to various parts of the state for WSO. Our 2020 field trip schedule was completed and released in December and published in the January *Badger Birder*. We also worked with the Communications committee to get our outings posted in the events calendar on the WSO website. We also work with them to announce upcoming field trips (including any weather postponements) as well as publishing trip reports on the website and social media. We also submit field trip reports and photos to *The Badger Birder*.

We worked with the Two Rivers Convention Committee to develop plans for their all-day field trips, which unfortunately were canceled, along with the convention and the entire regular field trip schedule from March through July in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We also planned and conducted WSO's 2020 Costa Rica Tour Feb. 23 to March 8, 2020. **TOM SCHULTZ** led the tour, working in cooperation with Costa Rica Gateway – a bird tour agency. Twelve birders accompanied Tom. This event is break-even for WSO, with participants covering all the expenses – and with **DANI BAUMANN** (our WSO Treasurer) handling our financial account and payments. This is the 10<sup>th</sup> time we have run this tour.

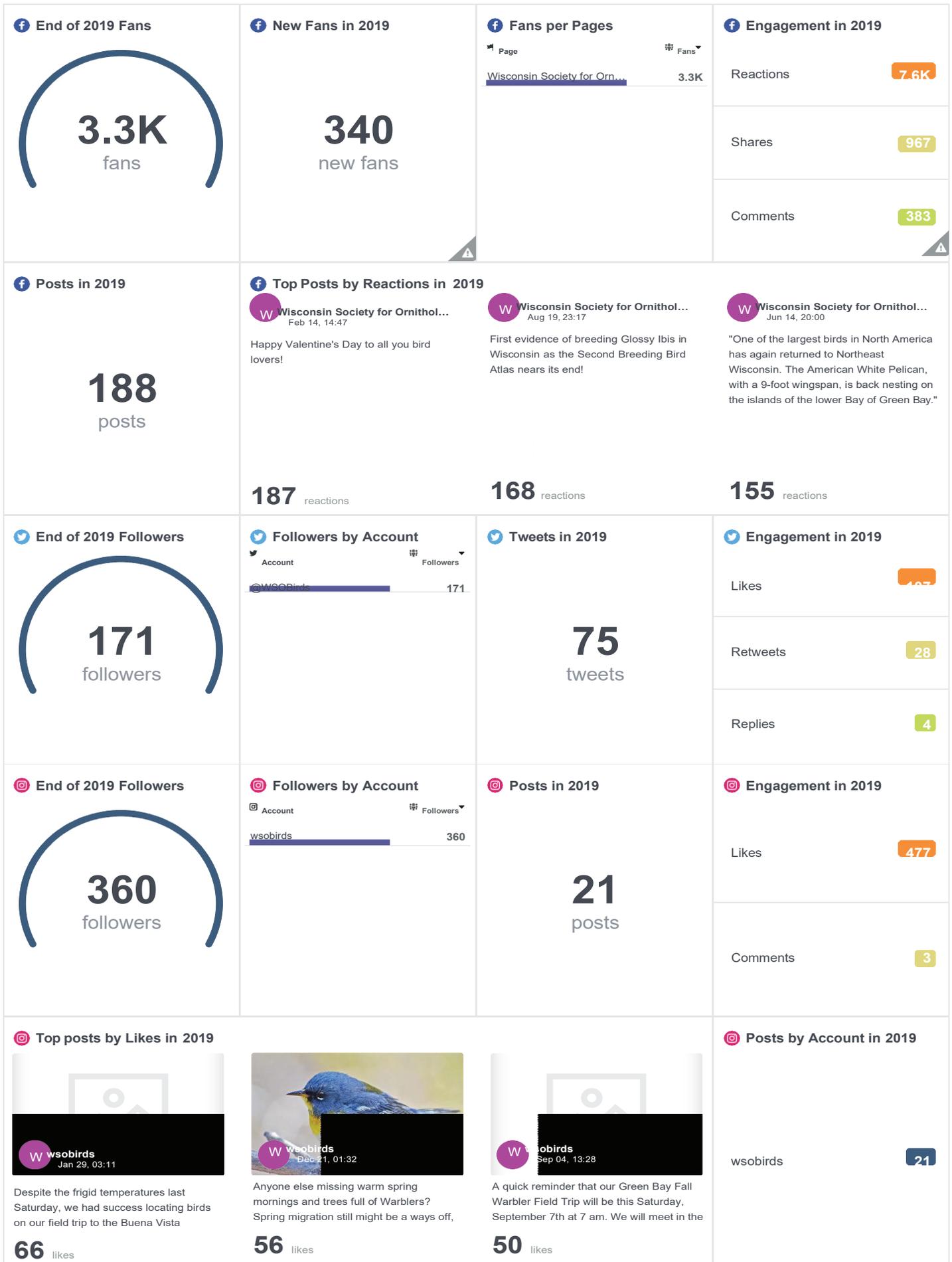
As always, we invite individuals or bird clubs to host a WSO field trip in their local area once local corona virus strictures allow. Please contact one of us to set one up!

We are also looking for anyone who may be interested in joining our Field Trip Committee. Our newest committee member is Wendy Schultz.

## Honey Creek Committee

### **Dan Pickarts, Chair**

The Cox property and vacant house have been acquired by WSO and added to the adjacent Cox Nature Center land and other society holdings that make up the Harold and Carla Kruse Honey Creek



Nature Preserve in Sauk County.

The trails are in good shape and have been kept up nicely by volunteers from among hunters who use the property. We had multiple work parties last spring and fall to clear fallen trees and brush and make repairs to the existing board walks. The trail system is easy to follow with newly placed white and red reflective markers.

There have been some improvements on the Dischler tract, such as adding some crushed limestone to the old roadway that had a lot of erosion. Some of the old fencing has been removed and trail markers have been put up. More improvements are scheduled for this spring and summer to shore up more of the erosion.

I have been in touch with the DNR to make sure the proper signage is up and in compliance with their regulations, listing all the allowed activities. More of our property boundaries have been marked where there haven't been any distinct boundary markers before.

The hunting season on the property went well and a great experience was had by all our hunters. We have some younger hunters and they had a great time. I would like to thank them all for their help in maintaining the trails and assistance with restoring electrical service to the Cox Nature Center, which was a lot of work.

Last summer the light pole at the center broke, which also fed the electricity to the building. I was able to acquire a new pole from Sauk County and with help of our volunteers we were able to dig a new hole and put it up. Once the pole was up and braced, I helped an electrician rewire a new fuse box and outlets to the pole as well as run a power supply to the Nature Center. Upon completion of all the repairs, I scheduled hookup from the electric company. Now we have a new outdoor light and multiple outdoor outlets for any future gatherings at the nature center.

Last August we had a campout at the nature center. The forecast was a little iffy, so turnout wasn't what we had hoped for. The weather held and it turned out to be a nice day.

## Membership Committee

### Mary Murrell, Chair

In 2019 we saw a decline in membership by about 5% from the year before. Our membership has declined annually for the last four years, and we are ending the decade a bit below where we began it.

Our overall renewal rate for 2019 was 87%. Our renewal rate for new members was 47%.

We had 119 new members in 2019, which is an increase of 14% over 2018.

Despite the decline in membership, our revenue from membership dues increased, to an average of \$44.74 per paying membership in 2019 versus \$35.60 per paying membership in 2018.

## 10-Year WSO Membership Comparison

Membership Level	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Conservation Advocate*	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	8	11	20
Sustaining	38	39	44	42	49	66	63	73	78	66
Household**	683	680	735	726	739	741	742	628	551	516
Senior	142	145	143	152	161	189	183	250	264	239
Student	16	15	65	46	43	62	47	57	19	24
Life***	135	138	135	132	132	136	136	138	148	147
Life-Couple***	13	13	13	17	18	20	21	22	23	23
<b>Total***</b>	<b>1041</b>	<b>1044</b>	<b>1151</b>	<b>1131</b>	<b>1157</b>	<b>1232</b>	<b>1208</b>	<b>1190</b>	<b>1094</b>	<b>1035</b>
New Members	51	52	155	109	134	174	121	140	104	119

\*New membership category as of 2017

\*\*Single and Family memberships from 2008-2016 were combined into Household category for comparison purposes

\*\*\* Life memberships of all levels were discontinued in 2017. Discrepancies in the totals here between 2010 and 2017 are due to different methods of data presentation between membership chairs. For years 2010-'17 the totals in bold include in-progress life members and honorary life members, even though they are not included above. For 2018 and 2019, all life members are included in the figures for life or life-couple.

### Membership activities throughout the past year include:

- Managing membership renewal activity via post and online
- Welcoming each new member
- Providing member support and communication as required
- Continued oversight of the printing and mailing of the print-edition of *The Badger Birder*
- Continued oversight of *The Passenger Pigeon* mailing lists and print orders in cooperation with our publisher, Allen Press
- Monitoring and managing library subscriptions to *The Passenger Pigeon*. (For 2020 we have 15 library subscribers, down from 17 in 2019.)
- Monitoring and managing the publication exchange program. (We have 14 exchange partners for *The Passenger Pigeon*.)

## **RECORDS COMMITTEE**

### **Quentin Yoerger, Chair**

The WSO Records Committee evaluated the following records by season, with an overall acceptance rate of 68.6%.

Season	Reviewed	Accepted	Not Accepted
Fall 2018	63	42	21
Winter 18-19	48	36	12
Spring 2019	49	34	15
Summer 2019	12	6	6
TOTAL	172	118	54

One species new to the state was found during this period: Hammond's Flycatcher. This brings the state list to 441 species. Another species, the Plumbeous Vireo, was added as a new hypothetical species for Wisconsin. This bird was seen by a single individual without photo documentation, so it will remain on the hypothetical list.

I continued as Committee Chair with **MARK KORDUCKI, AARON STUTZ, TOM PRESTBY** and **TED KEYEL** as the other committee members.

The committee updated the species review list, removing several species increasingly found in the state.

The committee reviewed 172 records during this period. Of those, only 19 were submitted not utilizing eBird.

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

### **Dani Baumann**

1) WSO's Policies (adopted April 2005) state that annual dues payments shall cover the cost of membership services – that is, all costs in providing *The Badger Birder*, *The Passenger Pigeon*, and other direct membership benefits, and the costs associated with maintaining membership and soliciting renewals and new members. The breakdown of those costs during 2019 is as follows:

Pigeon (2 issues).....	\$10,961
Birder (11 issues).....	\$ 5,955
<b>Total publication costs.....</b>	<b>\$16,916</b>
Membership expenses (including brochure).....	\$ 4,521
Administration expenses.....	\$ 4,562
<b>Total cost of membership services.....</b>	<b>\$21,436</b>
Membership dues received.....	\$38,701
Library subscriptions/back issues.....	\$125
<b>Total membership-related income.....</b>	<b>\$38,826</b>

During 2019, costs associated with membership services were lower than membership income due mainly to a delay in printing of Passenger Pigeon issues, which will be printed in 2020.

2) Your generous support of WSO continues, and donations from members, friends and supporting groups during 2019 amounted to just over \$141,500. Of that amount, over \$15,000 supported the continued management of our Honey Creek property in Sauk County, as well as funds towards another addition to the property coming in 2020, and over \$101,000 supported the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II project. It is owing to your generosity that WSO can undertake amazing projects for the good of our birds. THANK YOU!

3) WSO has a long history of supporting individuals by administering grant funds to help finance ornithological research and other non-budget projects. These amounts do not appear in the financial summary below because they are financed for the most part by sources outside of WSO. Current non-budget projects include the following:

**SAM ROBBINS SHOREBIRD ENDOWMENT FUND.** SRSEF, which was established in 2000, is managed by its own board to provide support for education and habitat preservation to benefit shorebirds. An endowed fund, the earnings are to be used in a way that honors Sam Robbins' bird conservation legacy. **Wisconsin Bird Conservation Partnership.** WSO serves as treasurer for WBCP's annual meeting.

4) Of the total assets as of 31 December 2019 (\$1,039,473 – see **II. WSO Balance Sheet as of 31 December**), the amount available to cover general operating expenses is \$97,887; the remainder is restricted. All the amounts listed as received in **Restricted Revenue** in Part I, as well as for grants and other non-budget projects administered by WSO, must be reserved for their intended use.

## **WSO ARCHIVES**

### **Nancy Nabak, Historian**

Highlights of the year seem to be few, but important. During last year's convention, **TOM SOULEN's** son returned his father's seasonal records to be filed with the rest of the records in the WSO Archives at UW-Green Bay. This helps complete seasons' and years' worth of records with the rest of the reports.

On a down note, **TOM ERDMAN**, WSO file keeper, retired as the curator of the Richter Museum last year. His wisdom and knowledge about the main players and previous WSO generations is no longer at our access as it was when I became historian. This loss is felt and obvious.

If you have items or photographs that you'd like submitted to the archives, make sure they are dated, labeled with names of people, and add the location of the photo.

I continue to write regular articles for *The Badger Birder* regarding an item of interest "Found in the Archives."

There are times when our archives pieces, photos or research/documentation assist in the writing of a book or help piece together a professional presentation.

"50 Years Ago" articles are still written based on Passenger Pigeon articles 50 years previous to the current year and Passenger Pigeon season.

Discussion still continues on what should be digitized and saved electronically only.

**FINANCIAL SUMMARY**

**I. WSO Statement of Revenue and Expenses, 2016–2019**

	2019	2018	2017	2016
<b>Unrestricted Revenue*</b>				
Birder Adv/Back Issues	518	603	753	674
Donations-Unrestricted	12,664	9,139	6,885	4,408
Wisconsin eBird Portal	0	0	125	2,001
Interest/Dividends	155	140	172	197
Membership Dues	38,701	32,890	36,617	32,243
Pigeon-Subscr/Back Issues	125	646	1,020	549
WSO Pubs/Bookstore	539	573	955	1,795
Miscellaneous**	0	90	123	1,034
<b>Total Unrestricted Revenue</b>	<b>52,702</b>	<b>44,081</b>	<b>46,650</b>	<b>42,901</b>

\* Unrestricted revenue includes some amounts that are actually restricted as to use (e.g., donations for Wisconsin eBird portal and color printing in the *Pigeon*). They are included here because if donations do not completely cover the costs, the Board of Directors is committed to covering them from general operating funds.

\*\* Miscellaneous unrestricted revenue during 2019: None

	2019	2018	2017	2016
<b>Expenses (Unrestricted Revenue)</b>				
Administration	6,201	5,763	7,374	5,228
Awards	592	692	581	751
Birder	5,955	5,428	5,902	6,382
Communications	514	1,074	1,165	986
Conservation	0	0	100	200
Historian	0	0	28	0

Membership	4,206	4,320	4,136	2,332
Brochure	315	290	0	588
Pigeon	10,961	19,430	27,726	27,447
Scholarships/Grants	2,500	2,500	2,500	3,000
Website	0	182	261	375
WSO Pubs/Bookstore	1,278	1,258	3,037	2,133
Miscellaneous*	2,500	4,610	6,024	5,068
<b>Total Expenses (Unrestricted Revenue)</b>	<b>35,022</b>	<b>45,547</b>	<b>58,834</b>	<b>54,490</b>

\* Miscellaneous unrestricted expenses during 2019: Continued Motus Network support, \$2,500

	2019	2018	2017	2016
<b>Restricted Revenue</b>				
Atlas II	101,222	116,508	156,855	142,430
Conservation Projects	2,545	1,100	5,990	634
Convention	11,728	13,111	11,523	15,198
Duck Stamps	638	782	611	937
Endowment-Donations	0	0	0	0
Interest/Dividends/Cap Gains	5,931	9,399	6,170	4,426
Life/Patron Memberships	150	475	1,950	4,800
Field Trips*	38,000	23,520	19,500	14,590
Honey Creek-Donations	15,349	17,482	2,825	8,571
Dischler Land Purchase	0	0	308,640	270,361
Mems/Bequests (unallocated)	10,000	0	0	0

Scholarship/Grants-Donations	0	0	0	0
Interest/Dividends	23	24	25	33
Youth Fund Donations	20	1,688	723	356
WSO Pubs-Haunts Sales	688	742	508	1,049
Miscellaneous**	0	149	173	404
<b>Total Restricted Revenue</b>	<b>186,294</b>	<b>184,980</b>	<b>515,494</b>	<b>463,789</b>

\* Field trip income during 2019: Costa Rica

\*\* Miscellaneous restricted revenue during 2019: None

	2019	2018	2017	2016
<b>Expenses (Restricted Revenue)</b>				
Breeding Bird Atlas II	157,877	148,048	165,992	146,905
Conservation Projects	5,000	0	0	40,000
Convention	10,944	11,121	13,523	15,056
Duck Stamps	634	778	603	943
Field Trips	12,268	43,173	0	29,590
Honey Creek	12,253	16,132	9,957	28,680
Dischler Land Purchase	0	0	358,933	155,842
Website Redesign	0	0	855	0
WSO Pubs-Haunts Sales	0	0	0	0
Youth Fund	2,230	1,850	2,750	4,041
Miscellaneous*	89	160	284	336
<b>Total Expenses (Restricted Revenue)</b>	<b>201,296</b>	<b>221,262</b>	<b>552,897</b>	<b>421,393</b>

\* Miscellaneous restricted expenses during 2019: Sales tax paid in 2019 for sales during 2018

**II. WSO Balance Sheet as of 31 December**

	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>
Cash	320,914	327,087	381,107	432,554
Inventory for Sale	5,138	9,272	12,507	12,928
Land*	522,901	522,901	522,901	171,663
Mutual Fund Investments	138,695	115,854	119,367	105,980
Assets Held by Another Organization**	51,826	44,423	47,515	44,407
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,039,473</b>	<b>1,019,537</b>	<b>1,083,397</b>	<b>767,532</b>

**\* Land carried at cost:**

**Prairie-chicken land in Portage County**, 60 acres, \$1,491 (leased in 1962 to WDNR for 99 years)

**Honey Creek property in Sauk County:**

264 acres purchased 1960-'73, \$20,791

61 acres purchased 2016 ("Dischler"), \$288,018 (includes DNR Stewardship program interest)

44 acres purchased 2017 ("Dischler"), \$213,455 (includes DNR Stewardship program interest)

Honey Creek nature center and outbuilding:

Upon recommendation from our accounting firm, the buildings on the original Honey Creek property were fully depreciated in 2016; in prior years they were valued at \$8,928, and in 2016 they were valued at \$0

**\*\* Assets held by another organization:**

**Important Bird Areas Fund**, an endowed fund held by the Natural Resources Foundation since 2007, \$13,596

**Sam Robbins Shorebird Endowment Fund**, an endowed fund held by the Natural Resources Foundation since 2013, \$38,230

**Submitted by Dani Baumann, Treasurer**

# Help WSO take care of Honey Creek

During this Covid-19 pandemic, one interesting fact has emerged. People need natural spaces as much as wildlife. We may not recognize that fact in our “normal” lives, but based on the urgent need to get outside, exercise and seek solace people have visited parks in huge numbers. WSO’s membership has understood this need to protect and provide wild and natural space, not just for the birds, but for all of us.



That is why we conduct a Honey Creek Birdathon/Bandathon each year. Unfortunately, this year will be different. We won’t be able to gather, but a couple of individuals, practicing social distancing, will go out and count birds. And Prof. Anna Pidgeon plans to band, but just with the help of her husband and daughter. While we won’t all be able to ford the stream or hike up the new Dischler property to find Cerulean Warblers, we will be maintaining our data and still need support to protect and maintain this State Natural Area, home to vulnerable nesting and migrating species.

This pandemic has impacted all of us in different ways, and if you are facing hardships, we understand the need to take care of family and friends first. If, however, you have the ability to show your support for Honey Creek with a tax-deductible donation, we would be grateful and assure you that your gift will be put to work protecting one of the most critical habitats in the state. We have additional projects planned in the coming year as we have just recently completed the purchase of the old farmhouse across the driveway from the Cox Nature Center, using funds that we reserved from the recent Dischler addition.

Our goal for 2020 is to raise \$10,000 and with your help we will be successful. In the meantime, stay safe, wash your hands frequently, and we hope you will join us when we can take inspiration from walking the trails at Honey Creek.

**I enclose \_\_\_\_\_ as a donation for the 2020 Birdathon/Bandathon**

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS** \_\_\_\_\_

**CITY/STATE/ZIP** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-MAIL ADDRESS** \_\_\_\_\_

*Your tax-deductible contribution will go directly to the annual insurance and maintenance expenses for WSO’s Honey Creek Preserve. We will publish a narrative and results summary.*

**Thank you!**

Please mail your completed donation form to:

**WSO BIRDATHON/BANDATHON  
P. O. BOX 217  
NORTH LAKE WI 53064**

*For additional information, please contact Mary Korkor at (262) 442-7530 or [Development@wsobirds.org](mailto:Development@wsobirds.org)*

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**PHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**EMAIL:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**County (WI orders only):** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**SHIP TO**  
**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **ZIP:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>WSO BOOKSTORE ORDER FORM</b>		<b>Price/Unit</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b><i>Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Wisconsin</i></b> Covers 214 species in depth. Hardcover, 624 pages. Edited by Cutright, Harriman, and Howe. 2006	\$20.00	_____	\$ _____
	<b><i>Wisconsin's Favorite Bird Haunts</i></b> Describes birding hotspots in every Wisconsin County. Spiral bound 556 pages. Compiled, edited by Tessen. 2009	\$15.00	_____	\$ _____
	<b><i>Wisconsin Birds, Field Checklist</i></b> Three-panel card. 2017 update. <b>Pack of 25.</b>	\$5.00	_____ # of packs of 25	\$ _____
	<b><i>Wisconsin Birds: A Checklist with Graphs (Bluebook)</i></b> <b>Supply is limited!</b> Depicts monthly abundance. 19 columns. 36 pages. 2003.	\$0.48	_____	\$ _____
	<b><i>WSO Passenger Pigeon Visor</i></b> <b>Price reduced!</b> Stone-colored visor with embroidered WSO logo. Adjustable. 2017	\$12.00	_____	\$ _____
	<b><i>WSO Passenger Pigeon Cap</i></b> Olive-colored cap with embroidered WSO logo. Adjustable. 2017	\$16.50	_____	\$ _____
	<b><i>WSO "We Brake for Birds." Bumper Sticker</i></b> Blue with white lettering. 3" x 12". 2013	\$2.00	_____	\$ _____
		<b>Item Total</b>		\$ _____
\$2.00 and less = \$1.50, \$2.01-\$20.00=\$5.00, \$20.01-\$40.00=\$6.50 \$40.01-\$55.00=\$8.00, \$55.01-\$70.00=\$9.50, \$70.01-\$85.00=\$11.00 Over \$85.00=call or email for amount		<b>Shipping and Handling</b> (refer to left for \$)		\$ _____
<b>Item Total plus Shipping and Handling Charges = Taxable Subtotal</b> <b>Figure tax (below) based on your county rate on this taxable subtotal.</b>		<b>Taxable subtotal</b>		\$ _____
<b>All counties 5.5% except as follows: Brown, Calumet, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Menominee, Outagamie, and Winnebago=5.0%; Racine and Waukesha=5.1%; Milwaukee, Ozaukee, and Washington=5.6%</b>		<b>Sales Tax</b> (refer to left for %)		\$ _____
<b>Include payment made payable to WSO Bookstore and mail with form to: WSO Bookstore, c/o Dar Tiede, 2809 Schaefer Circle, Appleton, WI 54915</b> <b>Questions? Contact Dar at 920-997-9418 or bookstore@wsobirds.org</b>		<b>TOTAL</b>		\$ _____

# The Badger BIRDER

P.O. Box 3024  
Madison, WI 53704-3024

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## **WSO MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**City/State/Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-Mail** \_\_\_\_\_

## **PLEASE CIRCLE APPROPRIATE MEMBERSHIP LEVEL:**

Include a \$10 surcharge in all categories if you want mail delivery of The Badger Birder.

**Student/\$25**

**Senior/\$25** (No Passenger Pigeon)

**Household/\$40**

**Sustaining/\$100**

**Conservation Advocate/\$200**

Make check payable to WSO and send with form to: **WSO Membership / P.O. Box 3024 / Madison, WI 53704-3024**