



News Release

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Grants Awarded by Wisconsin Society for Ornithology for Bird Conservation Efforts in Wisconsin

Madison, March 12, 2026 — The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology annually awards up to \$3000 in grants for avian research and conservation efforts throughout Wisconsin. This year, the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology awarded grants include raptor and owl relocation, banding birds of prey, tracking Purple Martins, and monitoring bird productivity.

“We thank our donors for supporting our grant program. While relatively small, the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology grants provide modest funds to help projects grow and demonstrate their impact and importance for bird conservation. These grants are often leveraged with other opportunities pursued by our grantees.”, says grant program chair and Wisconsin Society for Ornithology Vice President Steve Holzman.

Project SOAR (Snowy Owl Airport Rescue) will receive \$1000 for their work rescuing and relocating overwintering Snowy Owls and other raptors from airport runways. These birds present a safety risk to airplanes during landing and take-off. Capture and relocation mitigate that risk. In operation since 2018, SOAR has captured and relocated 196 total birds, representing seven species: Snowy Owl, Great Horned Owl, Red-tailed Hawk, Merlin, American Kestrel, Cooper’s Hawk, and Rough-legged Hawk.

A grant of \$500 will be presented to the **Lake Michigan Bird Observatory** to continue their study of Purple Martins. The Lake Michigan Bird Observatory will place nanotags on Purple Martins to understand how investment in reproduction carries over into

pre-migration staging and migration, and identify premigration roost sites and migratory stopover sites.

John Jacobs has been studying the reproductive biology of Red-shouldered Hawks for decades. This year he will be working with a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin – Green Bay to determine the fledgling summer range, migration timing and routes, wintering areas, and natal site fidelity for some first year Red-shouldered Hawks that hatch in Wisconsin. The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology is providing \$500 to assist in this effort to understand more about this threatened species in Wisconsin.

Riveredge Nature Center has been operating a bird banding station for many years. Their projects are part of regional and national priorities like the Midwest Migration Network and the Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) program coordinated by the Institute for Bird Populations. The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology will provide \$500 to continue their banding program. Banding contributes to our scientific knowledge of bird populations and demonstrations provide an opportunity for adults and children to appreciate the wonder of birds up close. Riveredge has hosted 23 field sessions for schools and communities and participates in an annual bandathon at their Nature Center in Newburg, Wisconsin.

The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology will provide a \$500 Steenbock Award to licensed **raptor bander Danny Erickson**. Danny and other volunteers maintain over 70 nest boxes across Milwaukee, Waukesha, Ozaukee, Washington, Sheboygan, Fond du Lac, Calumet, and Manitowoc counties. Nest boxes are monitored throughout the season, and nestlings are banded by permitted banders. An annual (and extremely popular) Natural Resources Foundation trip takes participants to several boxes to watch and understand the banding process. This trip is popular with families, and experiences like these are crucial to providing joy and amazement on the faces of future bird conservationists.

In 2027, the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology will identify and provide funds for projects supporting grassland birds and other threatened state species. Grant applications must be received by January 31, 2027. More information can be found at <https://www.wsobirds.org/what-we-do/grants>

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The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology is a nonprofit organization established in 1939 whose mission is: promoting the enjoyment, study, and conservation of Wisconsin's birds. The Wisconsin Society for Ornithology sponsors birding field trips throughout the year, hosts an

annual birding convention, publishes a quarterly journal and monthly newsletter, offers research grants, and serves as an informational resource center on bird-related issues. The Society provides opportunities for all people to enjoy resident and migratory birds, while being a leading steward of and ambassador for Wisconsin birds. [Home - Wisconsin Society for Ornithology](#)