

The Northeast Wisconsin Birder

Recreational Birding + Bird Conservation + Applied Birding



Volume 8, Issue 2

March—April 2009

Special points of interest:

- Whooping Cranes
- Peterson Biography

Inside this issue:

Upcoming Programs	3
Upcoming Field Trips	3
Upcoming Programs	3
Migration Routes	4
State of the World's Birds	5
Lifers—2008	5
Field Trip Reports	5

Whooping Crane Habitat Selection

Reprinted from ICF newsletter by Kelly Maguire

Research on habitat selection often pertains to the type of habitat a species utilizes, how they are using it, and how much of the habitat is available to the animal. This research typically estimates the carrying capacity of an area. Researchers can also study what actually influences a species to select a certain habitat.

Because the Whooping Cranes released by the Whooping Crane Eastern Partnership (WCEP) are so closely monitored, there was a unique opportunity to analyze the mechanisms that influence their habitat selection. Researchers studied several mechanisms including: Habitat imprinting—a learned action in which animals select the same habitat in which they were reared;

- **Philopatry**—the propensity for animal to return to the exact area it was reared;
- **Site tenacity**—an animal

returning to its home range;

- **Environmental stochasticity**—the influence of an environmental change on an animal's action.

By beginning to understand the mechanisms that influence habitat selection by cranes, WCEP researchers have the opportunity to modify reintroduction techniques to reinforce their natural tendencies and obtain outcomes beneficial to population establishment.

WCEP researchers collected data on locations, habitat, and the behavior of reintroduced birds at Necedah National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) since the beginning of the program. Home ranges for all of the individual Whooping Cranes was mapped through each of the years. The home ranges were used to study possible effects of habitat imprinting, philopatry, and site tenacity on the birds. In order to determine if other mechanisms affected site selection, a life history for each

bird was developed. Factors such as storms and geographic barriers such as the Great Lakes were also inventoried to explain any oddities in areas or habitat chosen by some individuals.

Several factors play roles in habitat selection. Habitat imprinting and philopatry play strong roles. All of the cranes selected habitat similar to the rearing site. Rearing habitat consisted primarily of open fields, emergent wetland vegetation, and open water. Almost 90% of juvenile cranes returning to Necedah NWR for the first time selected habitat within 12 miles of the rearing area. Juveniles birds tended to disperse shortly after arrival.





Whooping Cranes (cont.)

Site tenacity becomes more important as birds age and find a mate.

Where environmental factors such as storms push birds off their typical migration pattern, site tenacity can play a greater role than other mechanisms. In 2004, eight cranes migrated to lower Michigan. Only three migrated back to Necedah NWR, while the remaining established territories in Michigan. Several of

the five who spent the initial summer in Michigan return to similar habitats in the eastern United States despite several attempts to transport them to Wisconsin.

The preliminary research has provided a glimpse into the complex interactions and influences that reintroduced Whooping Cranes use to select habitat. Current rearing methods do result in most of the released birds return-

ing to designated areas within Necedah NWR. As future populations grow, researchers will gain additional insight to which mechanisms most strongly influence habitat selection by whooping cranes. This information, in turn, will enhance efforts to establish a self-sustaining breeding population of cranes in the Midwest.

NWBC Book Borrow Club

Elizabeth J. Rosenthal's biography *Birdwatcher: The Life of Roger Tory Peterson* recounts the life and scientific career of one of the 20th century's greatest ornithologists. The author thoroughly reviewed Peterson's life through a series of personal communications and notes from Peterson, his peers, and protégés. The skill at which each journal entry details a characteristic of Peterson is astonishing. Through this journey the breadth of Peterson's contributions to ornithology are revealed. This work is substantive and encompasses several professional and per-

sonal aspects of Peterson.

Unlike many other biographies, Rosenthal's work allows the reader to be an active part in history. Detailed accounts describe specific skill sets and character flaws. The biography paints a complete picture of Peterson as a person and not an idyllic revolutionary.

The book is separated into distinct chapters that chronicle specific time periods of Peterson's life. Personal biographical entries detail all stages of Peterson's life. The author provides an in-depth

glimpse into how Peterson was influenced to pursue ornithology as a career to his accomplishments as a painter, sketch artist, lecturer, and educator. The author even included a chapter on how Peterson was able to utilize the knowledge he acquired through ornithology to devise camouflage patterns which were essential in protecting troops during World War II.

Although not a primary focus of the biography, the author provided insight to how Peterson has influenced and changed our hobby of bird watching.



Upcoming Programs

NWBC

March 7

Janet Eschenbauch

Kestrels on the Buena Vista

Researchers have been monitoring kestrels since well-known naturalist Frances Hamerstrom began in 1967. Janet has continued this important research. Our March program will discuss the status of the Ameri-

can kestrel at Buena Vista and show some of the latest techniques in raptor research.

April 4

Don Baumgartner

A Bird in the Hand.

Don Baumgartner is an assistant at Feathers Rehabilitation Center. Don will bring several raptors to the Hill for a live demonstration.

Neville Museum

March 11 6:30 PM

Tom Erdman

Return of the Pelicans

Have you noticed the increase of pelicans around Green Bay? Tom Erdman from the UWGB Richter Museum of birds will present how pelicans are affecting the lower Bay ecosystem. The results may surprise you.



Upcoming Field Trips

NWBC

March 28

Buena Vista Grasslands. Leaders: Todd and Cindy Ward. (920)-779-0747 Meet at Wild Bird & Backyard at 6:00 a.m.

April 18

Madison Area. Leaders: Keri Otte (262) 396-8759 Meet at Wild Bird & Backyard at 6:00 a.m.

May 8—10

Wyalusing. Leaders: Group Trip.. Meet at Wild Bird & Backyard at 4:00 a.m.

On the Lighter Side

Wisconsinites pride themselves on the ability to survive harsh conditions. Tonight's late season blizzard is just an example.

Relax as spring is almost here!



Peterson (cont).

Peterson's involvement and dedication to public education changed the overall demographics of birders. Anecdotes from founder's of the Audubon Society and fellow members of local bird clubs indicate that Peterson was passionate about educating everyone about birds and the importance of their habitat. Due to Peterson's influence, bird watching has transformed from a collegiate scientific endeavor to a broad based citizen science monitoring approach.

I was privileged as the editor to have been asked by the author to read and review this

book. The book provided a thorough background about Roger Tory Peterson. After reading the book, I have a much better appreciation for Peterson's contribution to ornithology. I hope each of you will be intrigued or inspired to check this book out of the NWBC library in the near future.



Migration Routes Revealed

For the first time, scientists have tracked entire migration routes of individual songbirds, following them thousands of miles further than in earlier studies and revealing birds fly two to three times faster than previously known. The new information will aid future conservation efforts.

The researchers equipped 14 wood thrushes and 20

purple martins with tiny geolocators—the first tracking devices small and light enough for songbirds to carry—to map their round trip between North America and the tropics with unprecedented accuracy.

They tracked two purple martins for about 9,300 miles round trip from Pennsylvania to the Amazon basin. In addition,

researchers tracked five wood thrushes between Central America and Pennsylvania.

This is a breakthrough study as it is the first time researchers have accurately tracked the specific migration route and track the exact wintering location. The entire project is detailed in the most recent issue of *Science*.



State of the World's Birds

In 2002, the world's governments took an unprecedented step, committing themselves to achieve a significant reduction in the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010. The recent State of the World's Birds report details the status of the 9,856 living bird species.

What can birds tell us

about our current chances of achieving this ambitious but vital goal? The messages are mixed. We know much more about the state of biodiversity. And the world has become more aware of the environmental challenges that we face, particularly in the light of climate change.

Despite this, our data show that the state of the world's biodiversity, as reflected by its bird has been strongly influence by different environmental pressures. To learn more, read the entire report at <http://www.biodiversityinfo.org/sowb/default.php?r=sowbhome>.



2008 Lifer Report

The 2008 calendar year proved to be productive for NWBC birders once again. Life birds were located in the continental United States, Hawaii, and internationally. Lucky individuals saw piping plovers, Eurasian skylarks, Nutmeg nannikins, and

Kirtland warbler's. The totals for the year include:

Larry Riedinger—5 in Florida, Tennessee, and Wisconsin

Carol Elvery—45 in Hawaii, Wisconsin, and abroad

Lynn Koss—11 in Wisconsin, Maine, Florida, Texas, and Hawaii

Jon Motquin—11 in Nebraska and Wisconsin

Anne Motquin—25 in Nebraska and Wisconsin

Field Trip Reports

December's record snowfall yielded to the coldest winter on record in 15 years in January and February. As a result, the January field trip to the Lake Michigan shoreline was cancelled.

A cold morning in February greeted five birders on the Fox River. Despite the cold, it was a productive trip. Twenty-two spe-

cies were seen in the Fox Cities. Common goldeneye and common mergansers were the most common waterfowl. The finch invasion was incredible at Heckrodt was incredible as birders were treated to many pine siskins. Although not confirmed, birders were perplexed by a possible Oregon subspecies dark-eyed junco.

The trip was also a successful nature appreciation venture. A short break was taken to "pet" a 90 lb sturgeon.

For those birders who braved the cold, Manderfield's Bakery was a welcome treat. Just an enticement for next year.



**NORTHEAST
WISCONSIN
BIRDING CLUB**

Editorial Office
c/o Jon Motquin
W2254 Raspberry Lane
Appleton, WI 54913

Phone: 920-687-1599
E-mail: jmotquin@new.rr..com

We're on the Web!
www.newbirdclub.org



Northeast Wisconsin Birding Club

Monthly Gatherings (first Saturdays)

- >>> Pre-program bird hikes around Mosquito Hill Nature Center,
New London (April, May & September)
- >>> Highly entertaining and informative programs
- >>> Food and fellowship time

Field Trips

- >>> Most months have trips to birding "hot spots" in Wisconsin

Annual Events

- >>> Birdathon fundraiser each May
- >>> Christmas social and dinner

***Promoting Recreational, Social, and Scientific Aspects of
the Sport of Birding!***