



**GAYLORD NELSON**  
**AUDUBON SOCIETY**  
*Earth Day, Every Day*

**Gaylord Nelson Audubon Society**  
**PO Box 1**  
**St. Croix Falls, WI 54024**

Name  
 Address 1  
 Address 2  
 City State Zip

## Presidents message

During the past year, the Gaylord Nelson Chapter of the National Audubon Society has continued to change and progress. A couple of key milestones during this time were becoming a Non-Stock Corporation and the development of a chapter website.

The upcoming year should be just as exciting as we broaden our efforts in pursuit of Federal 501 (C) 3 tax exempt status and by offering a variety of interesting and educational field trips and events to our chapter members and to the greater community as well.

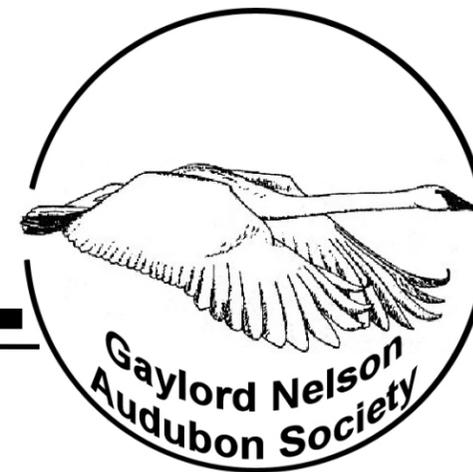
We would also like to extend our thanks to our chapter membership for your support and to extend an invitation to join us at our annual meeting on **Sunday, February 9<sup>th</sup> at the National Park Visitor Center in St. Croix Falls.**

We encourage you to check out the new website at [www.gaylordnelsonaudubon.org](http://www.gaylordnelsonaudubon.org), to follow us on Facebook, or to contact us directly via e-mail at [gaylordnelsonaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:gaylordnelsonaudubon@gmail.com).

Kathy & Paul Fredrickson, President, GNAS

# Gaylord Nelson Audubon Society

Annual Newsletter - 2014 Volume III



## Citizen Science: Wisconsin eBird

By Robin Maercklein

Strapping on my ice skates at 7:15 in the morning of December 2nd, I knew this would be my one opportunity to skate around the lake before the snow hid the areas of thin ice. I headed out with a notebook in my pocket and binoculars around my neck. The falling snow did not make for good bird watching that day. However, as I approached the extensive alder swamp where the creek entered the lake, I heard the familiar 'chek' call of Red-winged Blackbirds. Looking up I found a flock of seven of the birds flying just overhead with one circling back as if to give me a better look. Rarely found at this time of year, I was excited to be able to document the observation on my daily eBird submission. Thanks to eBird, anyone with a connection to the internet including scientists, would be able to look up this sighting on eBird ([www.ebird.org](http://www.ebird.org)) and find where and when Red-winged Blackbirds are found.

Wisconsin has hundreds of dedicated eBirders giving us more and better information about bird distribution than ever before. In 2012 these volunteer citizen scientists submitted 61,799 checklists 895,178 bird observations!



Red-winged Blackbird by Brian Collins

Launched in 2002 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, eBird provides rich data sources for basic information on bird abundance and distribution around the world. On August 8, 2012 12-year-old Liron Gertsman from Vancouver, BC

submitted the 100,000,000th observation in eBird helping to make the resulting database the largest citizen project in the world.

Participants in eBird can keep track of their own sightings and life lists whether it is from your yard, city, county, state, country or the entire world. At the same time the sightings add to the knowledge of birds world wide.

Wisconsin has its own portal into eBird in collaboration with Wisconsin Society for Ornithology and Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative. The Wisconsin eBird site promotes conservation and the study of birds in Wisconsin. It is easy to contribute by entering your own observations. For more information go to: (<http://ebird.org/content/wi/>)

## Come to the Annual Meeting!

Sunday, February 9, 2014, 1-3:30 pm

St. Croix River Visitor Center  
 401 North Hamilton Street  
 St. Croix Falls, WI 54024

1:00 Social  
 1:30 Announcements, Business, Elections, Bylaws Change  
 2:00 Speaker - Christopher Stein - Sister Parks

We are pleased to announce that **Chris Stein, Superintendent of the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway**, will be our guest speaker at our Annual Meeting. He will talk about the recently signed sister park agreement between several National Parks of the Upper Midwest and various parks in Costa Rica. This agreement opens the door to partnering for conservation along migratory pathways between the two countries.

# Bird Migration

By Brian Collins

A crisp, clear, calm and starry night sky stretches from horizon to horizon. It is a pleasant May evening with quiet neighbors, no mosquitoes, and perfectly comfortable temperatures. The grass beckons for a blanket and a long listening session. Rest with ease in such perfect conditions with ears turned skyward and eyes mesmerized by billions of stars, and you will hear the story of migrating birds as it unfolds above you. Tiny sounds suddenly appear, a variety of contact calls between night-migrant tropical birds. Keep looking skyward, and you will hear them up there seemingly just out of reach. Keep listening, and you will begin to identify thrushes, warblers, sparrows, and even shorebirds. It is a steady cloud of migrating birds, challenging the darkness of the night just a few hundred feet above the ground, hiding in the veil of night.

Daytime is stopover time, a time for migrating birds to feed up on insects, fruits, and nectar, building enough body fat for the next leg of the journey north. As the sun rises and the blue sky mingles with morning fog and dew, the zig-zag flights of warblers descend down to the tree tops. Mixed flocks of warblers, vireos, hummingbirds, flycatchers, orioles, tanagers, and other long-distance travelers mingle with local resident chickadees and nuthatches as they search the tips of branches and undersides of baby leaves for tiny insects or dart into sunbeams to gather up midges and gnats. The energetic frenzy spurs on similar enthusiasm in human birdwatchers.

Each tiny bird seems to convey a giant personality, and each is, in one way or another, a celebrity. So many species we have come to know and love in North America are known equally well in Central America, the Caribbean and some South American countries. These are birds without borders, International migrants, and often birds with two personalities as summer habitat requirements do not necessarily correspond to winter habitat requirements. Each species has an amazing collection of life history accounts, exciting vital statistics, and even a world record from time to time. Well more than 70% of "our" birds spend a significant amount of time in the stewardship of other nations. While it may induce a little anxiety to discover that all of the Cerulean Warblers in the world overwinter in a restricted portion of just four South American countries, it may pain our Columbian neighbors



Female American Redstart by Brian Collins

equally to learn that more than 25% of the world's population of Golden-winged Warblers are counting on Wisconsin's managed forest landscapes for breeding purposes.

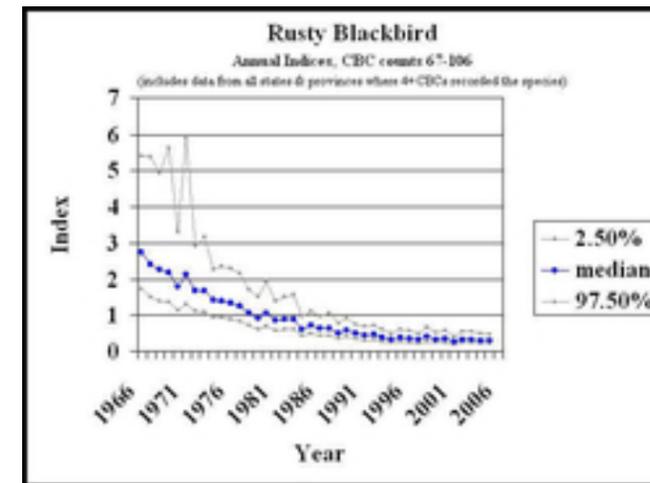
With even a brief introduction, it becomes impossible to take these seasoned world travelers for granted. Take, for example, the American Redstart. The vibrant orange and black colors of the adult male redstart are not acquired until the bird is into its second year. When you see this stunning plumage, you are witnessing a bird's testimony to life accomplishments. Perhaps hatched in Wisconsin, this male redstart has migrated to Central America and successfully overwintered. As it returned to Wisconsin nearly a year later, it retained a juvenile plumage with only a few spotty black feathers showing up here and there. In its second fall, it flew all the way back to Central America and spent another winter there. It was in that second winter that it finally molted into bold black and orange. Now, its arrival in Wisconsin marks its third Summer here, an accomplishment that requires at least eight thousand miles of flying and more than a year of total time spent surviving in tropical forests. It seems unlikely that anything so small could accomplish anything like this, and that makes it even more fascinating to realize that some of these birds are five or more years old! And this bird has another secret to reveal. The vibrant orange color cannot be "made" in the temperate climates. The American Redstart gathers those molecules in the tropical forests. It is a gift from the rainforest! When you see the orange and salmon patches of this bird, you are getting a glimpse of the tropics. See it enough, and you have a perfect excuse to make the migration yourself.

# Christmas Bird Count

By Robin Maercklein

The annual Christmas Bird Count began in 1900 as an alternative to seeing how many birds could be shot in one day. Those 27 participants counted 90 species at 25 counts that first year. Most of those counts were on the east coast with a few on the west coast and the Gulf states. Amazingly, the only count in between was in North Freedom, Wisconsin! Participation has swelled to over 60,000 counters last year in more than 2000 counts worldwide. The Audubon Christmas Bird Count is the longest-running citizen science wildlife survey in the world.

Researchers can use the data for determining trends in distribution and population of many bird species. For example the data shows decreasing numbers of Rusty Blackbirds between 1996 and 2006.



Participating in a Christmas Bird Count is one of the easiest

ways to contribute to science and our knowledge of birds. It can be as easy as keeping track of the birds at your feeder during the day of the count - provided you are within the count circle. Many folks take a more active role and join a team searching for birds in a set territory. Teams always include at least one experienced birder and can be an excellent learning opportunity!

The 2013 Luck CBC was the 29th year this circle has been run since being established in 1952. Gaylord Nelson Audubon Society sponsors this count. Watch our website or Facebook page to see the results of the count. The 2012 results can also be found there. Next year's Luck Christmas Bird Count will be on December 14, 2014. For more information or to participate, contact robinmaercklein@gmail.com.

# New Website Highlights Gaylord Nelson Audubon!

Check out our new website at [www.gaylordnelsonaudubon.org](http://www.gaylordnelsonaudubon.org)

## 2014 Events

**February 9, 2014**

**Annual Meeting**

**May 10, 2014**

**Bird Hike at Interstate State Park**

**December 14, 2014**

**Luck Christmas Bird Count**

Please visit our Facebook page or our website at [www.gaylordnelsonaudubon.org](http://www.gaylordnelsonaudubon.org) for updated information.

**Send your email address to [gaylordnelsonaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:gaylordnelsonaudubon@gmail.com) and receive updated event information.**

## Accomplishments

*July 1, 2012-June 30, 2013*

- Established as a permanent Audubon Chapter
- Filed as a non-stock corporation
- Hosted fourteen field trips including the annual Christmas Bird Count and monarch butterfly tagging

## Goals

*July 1, 2013-June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014*

- Begin the process of becoming a 501(c)3
- Establish a website for Gaylord Nelson Audubon
- Build partnerships with groups having similar goals

*\* At the time of printing, progress has been made towards meeting all goals!*