

# The BogHaunter

the newsletter of the Friends of the Cedarburg Bog  
Volume 6, Number 1 Winter 2010-11

## WINTER BIRDS

It's said that animals deal with the rigors of winter by migration, adaptation, or hibernation. For the birds of the Bog, two out of three of those choices are do-able.

Birds, famously, migrate, but not for the reason most people think. It's not goose bumps, but the icing up of open water and the disappearance of food - earthworms, insects, and spiders - that drives fall migration. The Bog's woodcocks fly south, but only to southern states where they can probe for earthworms in unfrozen mud.

After the summer crowd leaves, the Bog's permanent residents are joined by the snowbirds - winter residents from the north for whom Wisconsin destinations *are* "flying south for the winter." Juncos, Tree Sparrows, Pine Siskin, and other finches from the northlands take the places of warblers and thrushes. The Ancients believed that one group of species had turned into the other and called it "transmutation."

Birds' warm-bloodedness is both a blessing and a curse. On the plus side, it bestows an "internal stability" that allows birds to grace a wide range of habitats from arctic to tropical. The down-side is that a certain amount of the food they eat daily goes toward maintaining a core temperature, which can be expensive. A Red-tailed Hawk can sit out a two or three day storm, staying put when hunting would be futile, but then it *must* find food.

Birds have many adaptations for winter survival. They insulate themselves by growing extra down feathers and by fluffing their feathers up to create a layer of air that is warmed by body heat. A bird that tucks its beak into its feathers at rest is insuring that the air it breathes will be warm.

Most birds are inactive during the long, cold night, and some species, like the Black-capped Chickadee, can lower their body temperature and therefore their energy use at night - an overnight hypothermia. They take advantage of the shelter and relative warmth afforded by the *microclimates* found in dense evergreens, near buildings, and, in the case of the Ruffed Grouse and Snow Bunting, in snowdrifts.

Like modern furnaces, some species like gulls and waterfowl, practice "zone heating." Standing on the ice or swimming in frigid water make for cold feet. Ducks have shut-off valves in the blood vessels in their feet that prevent large quantities of chilled blood from being pumped into their warm core. Vessels carrying warm blood from the heart to the feet lie next to vessels carrying cold blood from the feet and warm it as it re-enters the body.

Tireless defenders of their territories during summer, many small birds tolerate closeness in winter. Finding enough food to keep warm is *the* major job for winter birds, and in these loose feeding flocks many eyes can look for food. These same birds roost together at night, sharing body heat. With insects absent, some meat-eaters switch their diets to include fruit or seeds, which are easier to find



The winter scene is black, white and shades of gray, and so are many of its birds. Goldfinches shed their lemon-yellow for drab olive plumage.

The feathers of dark-colored birds absorb heat better than do light-colored feathers. Only Blue Jays and Cardinals stand out in Technicolor on the snowy landscape.

Bird song is an advertisement for a territory and mate. Since birds don't nest in winter (food is too scarce), they rarely sing in winter. Cardinals that sing on a warm January day are the exception, along with Great-horned Owls, which *do* nest as early as February. The sounds birds make in winter are short, ventriloquistic contact and alarm notes.



So, what about hibernation? The Ancients believed that swallows could, but observations of true hibernation in birds have been elusive. A variety of species, including some hummingbirds and bluebirds, can achieve a state of torpor, a daily mini-hibernation in which the temperature, breathing and heart rate decrease. It has been confirmed that the Common Poorwill, a nighthawk relative living in the desert southwest, *has* mastered it - hibernating in rock crevices for two to three month stretches.

For a list of the birds of the Cedarburg Bog and the seasons they can be seen, see: <http://www4.uwm.edu/fieldstation/datasets/species.cfm>

**The Cedarburg Bog:**  
Designated an  
Important Bird Area  
and a Wetland Gem

## **WE'RE AN IBA...**

In the spring of 2007, the Cedarburg Bog joined 85 other Wisconsin sites that had been designated as IBAs - Important Bird Areas. The Cedarburg Bog IBA includes three State Natural Areas and covers six square miles. The IBA program aims to identify and protect sites that are most important to birds. With the honor comes responsibility for on-going goal-setting, monitoring and stewardship of the site. For more information, see <http://www.wisconsinbirds.org/iba/>

## **...AND A WETLAND GEM, TOO!**

(We already knew we were, but it's great when others agree.) The Wisconsin Wetlands Association's Wetland Gems program was created to increase public awareness and pride in the state's wetlands and to encourage stewardship of them. Wetlands historically covered a quarter of Wisconsin's landscape. The sites recognized by the WWA are high-quality fens, bogs, marshes, shorelines, swamps, and rivers. See <http://www.wisconsinwetlands.org/gems.htm> for more information about Wisconsin's Wetland Gems. We'll be wearing both honors proudly on the pages of *The BogHaunter*.

## **A HIKE ON THE BOG**

The Cedarburg Bog is a fine destination for a winter hike. Whether you take to the trails at the Highway 33 end of the Bog, attend a Friends'-sponsored walk on the University boardwalk, or find your way around on the trackless southern edge of the Bog off Cedar Sauk Road, the rewards are great.

From the parking lot along Cedar Sauk, hikers, snowshoers and skiers can access the broad expanse of the Bog at Mud Lake (the first 100 yards are challenging). *Winter safety rules and Common Sense apply!* File a "flight plan" with a friend, and take a little food and water, a cell phone, flashlight, compass and/or GPS in case you get turned around. Not all ice is created equal, so *know your ice*. Find out what poison sumac looks like with no leaves.

Winter hikers get a chance to see a Bog that most people don't, peering through the ice at burgundy rosettes of pitcher plants; visiting a snow-

covered landscape dotted by islands and strings and bounded by conifer swamps; walking with (relative) ease over the top of a wetland; and finding the tracks and other signs that show that this place, even in the dead of winter, is hopping.



*Skunk tracks*

Want company on your trek? Try the Annual Winter Walk (and Chili Potluck) on January 30. Details are elsewhere in this newsletter.

## **PROWLING FOR OWLS**

An event that has drawn an enthusiastic after-dark crowd to the Cedarburg Bog in recent years turned out to be doubly successful this fall.

Thanks to the efforts of four volunteers from the Friends of the Cedarburg Bog, this past fall's "Owl Prowl" was held twice, on Wednesday Nov. 3 and Friday Nov. 12, allowing nearly 50 people to participate. With reasonable cooperation from the weather and three species of owls, both evenings turned out successful.

John O'Donnell, who helped lead both "prowls" and who also helps lead bird migration surveys at the Bog in spring and fall, recounted the first night's highlights:

"We had excellent looks at a Barred Owl giving a rendition of solo calls and duet calls with his mate. We also heard a distant Great Horned Owl, after which the group split up going either north of the bog or south of the bog. Carl (Schwartz) and I were able to call in and get a good look at a grey-phase Eastern Screech Owl at the south end of the bog near the corner of Horns Corners and Cedar-Sauk Roads."

Tom Uttech, former president of the Bog Friends, co-led that evening's trip and took his contingent north. He added this note:

"We had a Screech Owl on Center Road, but there was LOTS of farm noise. So we decided to come over to my place (on Highway O) and walk in the woods a ways and see if the pair that lives here would respond. The red one did. We had good close looks, below eye level."

Adding a second night of owling to the Field Station schedule not only dealt with a waiting list from the first prowling but also allowed John Tucker, biology teacher at Northern Ozaukee High School, to bring 10 of his students and some of their parents.

John O'Donnell was assisted that night by Mary Holleback, adult programs coordinator at Riveredge Nature Center and a member of the Bog Friends board. His summary:

"It was windy, which was a problem. However, we got one of our Barred Owls from last week to make an appearance in pretty much the same location; another Barred Owl gave us a vocal hoot further south along Blue Goose Road, and two Eastern Screech Owls gave us prolonged vocal responses at the Bog boardwalk entrance. Mary brought over a variety of owl specimens from Riveredge, which added a nice "hands-on" dimension!"



Mary offered her favorite anecdote from the second prowling:

"Just about the time John O'Donnell was telling the group that owls frequently respond to human calls more so than a recording, a Barred Owl flew within 100 feet of us in response to Dave Maleug's imitation of "who cooks for you, who cooks for you all."

Mary also asked the Friends Board to consider making Owl Prowls a quarterly event next year. So stay tuned.

*by Carl Schwartz*

## ARE YOU A MEMBER?

If you haven't renewed your membership for 2011 or if you're not a member, you can use the enclosed membership form and return it with your contribution (Your membership expiration date is printed on the mailing label). If you've already renewed your membership, THANK YOU! Consider inviting a friend to be a member too. The best way to support and protect the Cedarburg Bog is to join the Friends.

In 2010, memberships helped to complete the ADA accessible trail at the Highway 33 entrance and the design, manufacture and installation of 13 interpretive trail signs. (If you haven't had the opportunity to explore the trail and learn more about the Bog, plan to do it in 2011!) The Friends sponsored 14 events where people learned about and enjoyed the Bog. The Friends also coordinated the fourth year of research on the birds that use the Bog and beech-maple forest during spring and fall migration. With your support, 2011 will be another exciting and productive year.

Questions about your membership? E-mail [info@bogfriends.org](mailto:info@bogfriends.org), or call the Field Station, 262-675-6844, and let us know how to reach you.

## WISH LIST

- \* Large pots, pans and bowls
- \* Work gloves (large & medium)
- \* A good, working lawn tractor
- \* A good, working 4-wheeler
- \* 5 gallon jug-type cooler
- \* Chest-type cooler
- \* Old field guides (good condition)
- \* A few small back packs

The Friends of the Cedarburg Bog is a 501 (c) (3) organization; donations are tax-deductible.

## INVASIVE CONTROL WORK

The Friends organization has received grants totaling \$45,000 from the Wisconsin Energy Corp. Foundation and the Knowles Nelson Stewardship Fund. The grant money will fund an intensive effort to decrease the populations of three alien plants that threaten the Bog.

Seeds of glossy buckthorn (*Rhamnus frangula*) are spread by birds that eat its berries. It grows in all habitats –

sunny, shady, wet, and dry – and crowds or shades out native plants. Glossy buckthorn is easiest to “whack” in winter, when the trunks are cut and sprayed with herbicide.



*Asian bittersweet squeezing.*

The woody vine Asian or Oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*) also spreads with the help of birds. It kills its support tree by twining around the trunk tightly, cutting off the flow of nutrients between roots and leaves; by spreading over the top of its host and intercepting the sunlight; or by adding so much weight that the host topples in a wind or rain storm.

The third targeted species is reed grass or Phragmites or (*Phragmites australis*). Native to much of the world and historically present at low density in the Bog, its numbers are on the rise. An aggressive form of Phragmites arrived from Europe about 100 years ago. It grows in thick stands and displaces native wetland plants. Field Station staff have been eradicating European Phragmites from ditches around the edges of the Bog.

The Bog is a tough place to get around in, so the project will begin this winter when the ice is thick enough to walk on. Department of Natural Resources work crews that are experienced in invasive control will work in the wetland sections of the Bog during the next two winters.

## ANNUAL REPORT

Sometimes it takes a while for history to record the accomplishments of even a great year. And so it is that as we enter 2011, *The BogHaunter* is finding time and making room to summarize the 2009 highlights reported in the University of Milwaukee Field Station Annual Report.

The Field Station is used as a 2,000-acre outdoor laboratory by researchers from many disciplines. It encompasses not only the Cedarburg Bog State Natural Area, but also the Cedarburg Beech Woods State Natural Area (SNA), the Sapa Spruce Bog SNA and 100 acres of old agricultural fields. Research at the Station has produced 292 scientific publications and 136 theses since 1970.

## The highlights of 2009:

50 active research projects conducted at the Field Station, including 11 M.S. theses, 2 Ph.D.s and 15 studies by researchers outside UWM. 13 papers published. Over 10,000 hours of student instruction and group use.

8 workshops on advanced topics in natural history filled to capacity.

2 new workshops on invasive plant management for parks personnel and for right-of-way managers developed and taught in cooperation with the Southeastern Wisconsin Invasive Species Consortium.

Programs for the public held on winter ecology, spring frogs and woodcocks, spring flora, bog plants, Mud Lake ecology, bird banding, Cedarburg Bog ecology, beech-maple woods ecology, native orchids, owls, and the night sky.



*Nodding ladies' tress orchid*

Bat surveys initiated in the spring and fall using an Anabat detector and GPS.

Bridge on the main trail southeast of the office reconstructed.

## Bog Friends Board – 2011

Carl Schwartz, President,  
Kate Redmond, Vice President  
Joan Sommer, Secretary  
Bill Taylor, Treasurer

Gail Epping Overholt  
Mary Holleback  
Henry Klapproth  
Daniel C. Kline  
Andrew Krueger, DNR partner  
Mark Murphy  
William S. Niehaus  
Vicki Piaskowski  
Jim Reinartz, UWM partner  
Pam Resnick Ross  
Bruce Ross  
Susan Schumacher  
Nicole Sidoff  
Tom Uttech

Joanne Kline, *advisor*  
Gretchen Meyer, *advisor*

## CALENDAR

### *Riveredge Speaks Out*

Public programs on Natural History.  
Third Tuesday of the month –  
Cedarburg; and fourth Tuesday of  
the month – West Bend 7:00 to 8:30  
PM. For topics, contact 800-287-  
8098 or [www.riveredge.us](http://www.riveredge.us).

### *Riveredge Bird Club*

First Tuesday of the month.  
Feb 1 Lake Michigan Bird Migration  
Stopover Habitats  
Program – 7 PM

Riveredge Nature Center Barn. Free.  
The public is welcome.

### *Winter Walk and Chili Potluck*

Sunday, January 30, Walk 1 PM  
Chili supper 4:30 PM  
(see invitation on this page)  
Please RSVP at 262-675-6844 or  
[fieldstn@uwm.edu](mailto:fieldstn@uwm.edu)

### *Friends of the Cedarburg Bog*

Quarterly board meeting  
January 6, 7–9 PM  
UWM Field Station  
Members welcome

### *Winter Wonders Walk*

February 19, 1-2:30 PM  
A family hike to explore the wonders  
of the winter season. Dress for the  
weather.

Lac Lawrann Conservancy  
300 Schmidt Road, West Bend  
Admission free, no registration

### *Maple Sugarin' Open House*

March 26, 10 AM to 3 PM  
Travel back in time and see how the  
Native Americans and early settlers  
made maple syrup and sugar. Then  
eat pancakes at Riveredge's Sugar  
Inn. Pre-registration suggested for  
groups and troops at 800-287-8098  
or [www.riveredge.us](http://www.riveredge.us).

Fee: Adult \$10, 10 & under \$5  
Members: Adult \$5, 10 & under \$4

### *Owl Prowl*

Date and time to be announced.  
This spontaneous event will be  
announced by email. If you want to

hear about it, make sure we have  
your email address.

Search for owls at the UWM Field  
Station. Don't forget a flashlight.  
Please pre-register by contacting  
[fieldstn@uwm.edu](mailto:fieldstn@uwm.edu) or 262-675-6844.  
A \$3 donation is suggested

**Please join us for the  
Annual Winter Walk  
and Chili Potluck  
at the UWM Field Station**

**January 30, 2011**

**1:00 – hike**

**4:30 – eats**

**We supply chili and beverage.**

**You don't have to *get* chilly  
to *eat* chili. Join us for the walk or  
the potluck or both.**

**If your last name starts with A to M,  
please bring a side dish to share.**

**If your last name starts with N to Z,  
please bring a dessert to share.**

***No dogs, please***

**Please RSVP at 262-675-6844 or  
[fieldstn@uwm.edu](mailto:fieldstn@uwm.edu)**

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

UWM Field Station  
3095 Blue Goose Road  
Saukville, WI 53080



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