



North Country Notes

The Newsletter of the Laughing Whitefish Audubon Society
Marquette and Alger Counties, Michigan

October 2011

Greetings from the chair,

LWAS began a new season of programming on September 14th, with 49 people in attendance for a presentation by Mark and Joannie Hubinger on their previous two winters spent as volunteers at the Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge, along the Rio Grande in Texas. As always, the Hubingers crafted a program that was equally appealing to those who were avid birders and travelers as well as those who were mostly just interested in learning about a part of the country that they had never visited. We miss the Hubingers every winter, but it's a real treat to see their pictures and hear their stories when they return.

In November, we will hold our third annual membership meeting. Everyone is welcome to bring refreshments if they would like (though it is not necessary), and we will have a computer projector set up for those who would like to share some of their favorite bird pictures or other nature pictures from the past year. Also, we will be voting on our LWAS board members for the next year. The November meeting is a good chance to chat with people without the usual time constraints.

In other news, the Keweenaw Raptor Survey is gearing up for its third and final year of counting raptors during the spring migration on Brockway Mountain. LWAS members have been very supportive of this project, and your support is much appreciated.

We are still working on our program schedule for the winter and spring. Any member is welcome to do a program. If you have visited an interesting birding spot, or if you have a collection of good photographs or some insights on birding that you would like to share, contact Ann Joyal or me. Most LWAS programs are given by members, including some by folks who previously had not done anything of this sort.

One program that we will definitely have this winter will be from Joseph Youngman of Copper Country Audubon, summarizing two waterbird counting projects that he led this year on islands in Lake Superior. I accompanied Joe on these trips, and I found it quite fascinating to explore some rugged, remote islands on the Canadian side of the lake, and to observe ducks, loons, and grebes flying past them in migration. In the spring, we spent six days on Edward and Porphyry Islands, which are located directly north of Isle Royale, and in the fall, we spent six days on Battle Island, near the northernmost part of Lake Superior.

For the past several years, Joe has been gathering data on waterbird migration at various points in the big lake, in an attempt to map out some of the more commonly used routes. The birds tend to follow shorelines, although often at such a distance that they cannot be seen without binoculars or spotting scope. The flow of birds past Whitefish Point is very impressive and has been well-documented, but the migration routes in other parts of Lake Superior are not well understood. At locations where the shoreline runs mostly east-west, birds are sometimes moving in both directions simultaneously.

As is so often the case, the study of birds leads to a deeper appreciation of nature in general. In this case, much can be learned about the geography of Lake Superior by focusing on the migration patterns of these ducks, loons, and grebes.

In addition to this program and others, don't forget about our annual field trip to the Peshekee Grade in November as well as the various Christmas bird counts in December. We plan on making this another productive year for LWAS.

Greg Cleary--

Changes in LWAS Executive Board

Our annual business meeting on Wednesday, November 9, will include the nomination and approval of one new Executive Board member. Carole Wooten will be leaving the LWAS Executive Board after more than ten years of service. Carole joined the board in 1999, serving as treasurer from 1999-2006 and as a general board member from 2006-2011. Carole and her husband Cliff plan to spend this winter in Florida, and Carole is looking forward to more time with her grandchildren and her garden. Both she and Cliff will continue attending LWAS meetings when they are in town. We sincerely thank Carole for her many years of service to the club.

Laurel Hill has applied for the Board vacancy left by Carole's resignation. Laurel lives in Skandia and attends Northern Michigan University, where she is majoring in Biology and minoring in Chemistry. She is the secretary and a founding-officer of the university's Northern Parulas Birding Club. Laurel has participated in Marquette's Christmas Bird Count, the Sandhill Crane Count, and several university wildlife studies. She's a regular attendee at our programs, and enjoys volunteering in a variety of activities including the National Audubon Society, the National Resource Conservation Service, Special Olympics, and the Marquette City Band.



A view of the lightkeeper's house on Battle Island (photo by Greg Cleary)

Donations Support LWAS Activities

The Laughing Whitefish Audubon Society has 73 members who supported the organization during the past year with dues and extra financial contributions. Dues totaled \$740 and were used to pay monthly program expenses, fund the newsletter, and help with club activities.

Members also donated an additional \$589, allowing the club to continue several community-based projects. Bird feeders at Presque Isle were stocked throughout the year at a cost of \$461, and we supported the Keweenaw Raptor Survey with a donation of \$500. Both of these activities were only possible because of the generosity of our members.

We would like to express our thanks to the following people who made extra donations to LWAS in the past year: *Arnold Aho, Robert*

Bolton, Pat Burke & Fred Rydholm, Beth Carpenter, Lou & Priscilla Chappell, Loren & Mary Clifford, Bill & Kathy Davis, June Davis, Zach Gayk, Roger & Alice Harbin, Jim Hayward, Jude Holloway, Sue Holtzman, Mark & Joanie Hubinger, Lois Hutching, Ann Joyal, Keith Kepler, Kate Teeter & Alec Lindsay, Jeff Knoop & Cindy Lynne, Clare Magee, Joan & Don Miller, Fred & Judi Mouser, Stan & Sally Niemi, Beth & Tom Olson, Ann Richardson, Randy & Jane Ryan, Thom Skelding, Mary & Don Snitgen, Joan & Martin Steindler, Bruce Ventura & Tina Hall, Cathy & Steve Waller, Tony Williams, Carole & Cliff Wooten, Marlene Woo-Lun.

Adopt-A-Highway

We would like to know how many LWAS members are interested in participating in the Adopt-A-Highway program. The program requires the club to adopt a two-mile section of a highway for at least two years. Litter would be picked up three times a year between April and October on dates designated by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

The program requires at least three people, including primary and secondary contact persons who will be responsible for organizing the cleanup. A safety meeting must be held at least once a year with literature and a video provided

by MDOT, and participants must sign a form acknowledging their training. MDOT will supply safety vests and bags to the group. After the pick-up, a report must be filed detailing the number of people involved, number of bags of liter, hours spent, etc. Pre-printed forms are furnished by MDOT.

If you are interested in participating in Adopt-A-Highway program, please contact Ann Joyal at 226-6749 or email ajoyal@nmu.edu. We need both volunteers and a primary and secondary contact person

Laughing Whitefish Audubon Society Membership Form for 2011

Your dues support local birding activities, bird feeding, and program costs

Name (or names) _____

Address _____

City, State and Zip _____

Phone _____ e-mail _____

(E-mail addresses are used to provide you with updates and newsletters; your address is not given to other groups or commercial entities)

Membership fees (please check one)

_____ Regular (Individual and Family) Annual - \$15.00

_____ Student - \$5.00

_____ Additional donation to support bird feeding at the Audubon supported feeding station at MooseWood Nature Center on Presque Isle \$ _____

Mail this form, along with your check (payable to LWAS), to:

Ann Joyal

346 W. Crescent St.

Marquette, MI 49855

Phone 226-6749

For you who are already members, check your mailing label on this newsletter to see when you last paid your membership dues. Dues are paid for a one year period.

If you are currently “paid – up”, consider giving this membership form to someone you know who might be interested in joining Laughing Whitefish Audubon.

Keweenaw Raptor Survey

A joint venture of the Copper Country Audubon Club and the Laughing Whitefish Audubon Society

Yes! I will support the Keweenaw Raptor Survey.

Enclosed with this form is a check for the following amount:

\$25 ___ \$50 ___ \$75 ___ \$100 ___ \$250 ___ Other (amount)



NOTE: This contribution is made on behalf of the Laughing Whitefish Audubon Society

Name: _____

Address: Line 1 _____

Line 2 _____

City _____

Zip _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Note: Please make checks payable to *Copper Country Audubon Club* and include in the memo line "**Keweenaw Raptor Survey.**" Copper Country Audubon Club is a 501 (c)3 non-profit organization, and so your gift is tax deductible.

Please mail this form with donation to:

Copper Country Audubon Club

P.O. Box 124

Houghton, Michigan 49931

Visit us online: www.keweenawraptorsurvey.org

LWAS is committed to raising \$3000 of the required funding cost. Using this form will ensure that your contribution is credited to our organization. Thanks!



c/o Beth Olson

5 Arrowhead Dr.

Marquette, MI 49855