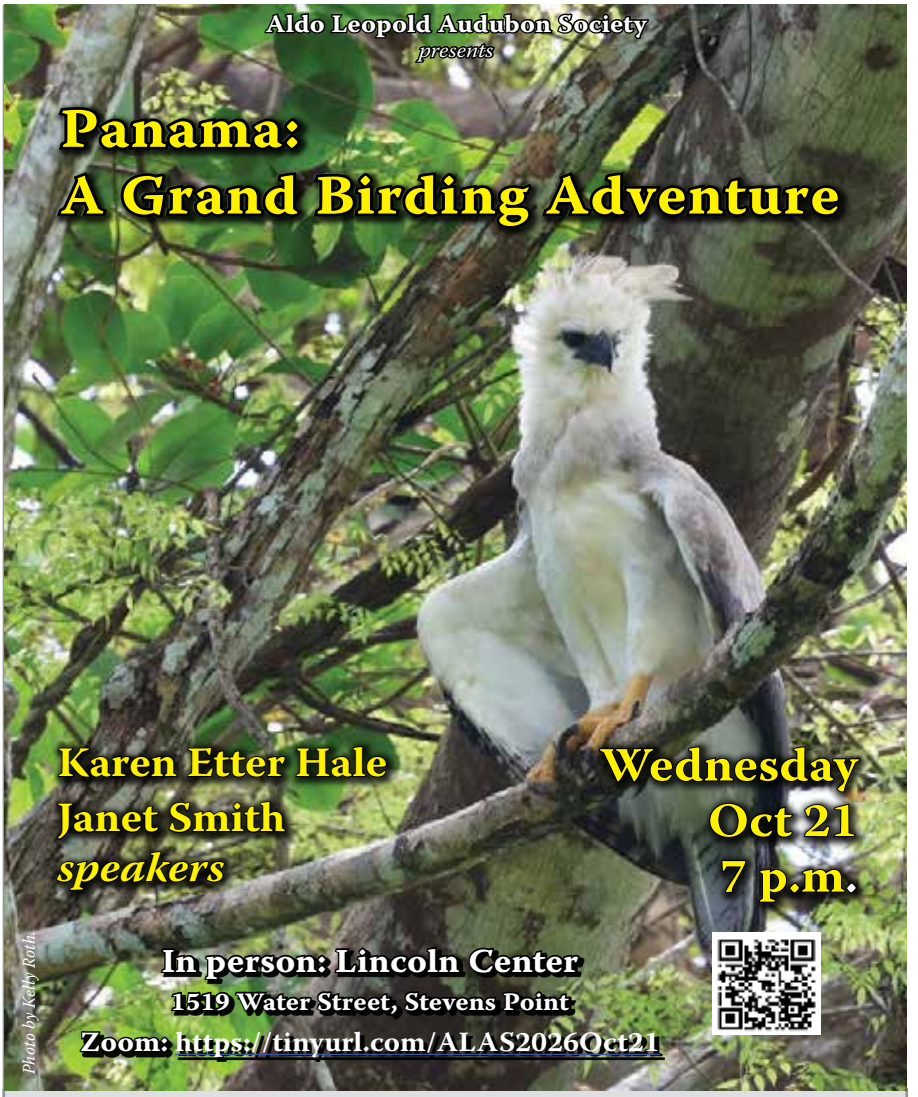
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Newsletter of the Aldo Leopold Audubon Society, Inc. October 2026



Upcoming Events

Oct 14	ALAS	*September board meeting*
Oct 16-17	ALAS	*Birdseed Sale—walk-ups welcome!*
Oct 17	ALAS field trip	*Birding by Boat on the Waupaca Chain*
Nov 18	ALAS program	*Wisconsin Native Orchids and Their Pollinators*
Nov 7	ALAS field trip	*Migration on the Mississippi*

Upcoming Events



ALAS Field Trip

Birding by Boat on the Waupaca Chain of Lakes

Saturday, October 17

Join us for a fall paddle along the Upper Chain of Lakes in Waupaca; explore these quiet lakes in a canoe or kayak. We will meet at Knight Lane Landing (N2417 Knight Ln, Waupaca, WI 54981) at 10AM for a few hours out on the water. The lakes of the Upper Chain do not allow motors and are perfect for a canoe or kayak. These crystal clear lakes are home to many turtles, fish, and water birds. Experience the fall colors and clear lakes.

No experience necessary. Adults and kids are welcome. If you do not have a canoe or kayak, contact Scott Reilly at 920-636-6299 and he can bring a canoe along with life vests and paddles. We will be back to the landing by about 1 PM.

ALAS Field Trip

Migration on the Mississippi

Saturday, November 7

On November 7, we will be meeting for a "Migration on the Mississippi" Field trip at 7:30 AM. We will meet at the Chase Bank parking lot along the river in Stevens Point to carpool to a variety of sites along the Mississippi River, visiting overlooks, parks, and a national wildlife area around La Crosse. We will be doing some walking along trails for those who are able. We will return to Stevens Point at approximately 5 PM. Contact Scott Reilly for more information at 920-636-6299 or scottjreilly@gmail.com.

Stevens Point Weekly Bird Walk Schedule

Please visit https://www.aldoleopoldaudubon.org/weeklywalks

Need help identifying those confusing fall warblers?
Check this website: https://www.birdwatchingdaily.com/beginners/birding-faq/which-warblers-are-passing-through-right-now-and-how-to-spot-them/

Aldo Leopold Audubon programs and field trips are free and open to the public.

Dates are correct as of press time.
Always be sure to check the ALAS website before you leave!

Panama:

A Grand Birding Adventure



Karen Etter Hale.



Janet Smith.

Join Janet Smith and Karen Etter Hale for a look at the incredible birds, landscapes, and conservation experiences they encountered during their birding adventure in Panama.

Both Janet and Karen have spent decades pursuing their passion for birds and conservation. Janet Smith holds a master's degree in Natural Resources with an emphasis in Wildlife from the University of Michigan, where she studied the impacts of human activities on Bald Eagles. After retiring from North Central Conservancy Trust in 2020, Janet has continued to support conservation through volunteer work with local organizations and her service on the ALAS board, where she currently serves as Treasurer. Her passion for birding has taken her to five continents.

Karen Etter Hale has devoted more than three decades to avian conservation in Wisconsin. She holds a degree in Wildlife Ecology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and served for nearly 25 years as executive secretary of the Madison Audubon Society. Karen currently chairs the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Partnership, co-chairs the Wisconsin Chimney Swift Working Group, and serves on the steering committees of Bird City Wisconsin and the Great Wisconsin Birdathon, among other conservation efforts.

Together, Janet and Karen will share their experiences exploring Panama, a country renowned for its remarkable diversity of birds and habitats. Through photographs and stories from their travels, they will highlight the birds they encountered, the landscapes they explored, and the conservation efforts that help protect Panama's rich natural heritage.

Join us Wednesday, October 21 at 7 pm for "Panama: A Grand Birding Adventure" and experience the sights and sounds of one of the world's premier birding destinations through the eyes of two passionate birders and conservationists.

Programs will be held in-person at the Lincoln Center (1519 Water St., Stevens Point, WI) and remotely live via Zoom. To view via Zoom, register here https://tinyurl.com/ALAS2026Oct21

Find this link on our website under the Events-Presentation tab.

From the President

New Chapter Name Announced!

Susan Schuller

Over the summer, a subcommittee met to discuss and make recommendations of a new chapter name. The board voted to adopt the name

Bird Conservation Alliance of Central Wisconsin

I want to make one point about this. There were several suggestions from members to keep the name Aldo Leopold in the chapter name. Through this naming process, we reached out to the Aldo Leopold Foundation. They informed us that the name Aldo Leopold has been trademarked since our formation of our chapter and asked us not to use Aldo Leopold in our chapter name. Therefore, in an effort to reduce confusion to other conservation organizations and respect the wishes of the Foundation, we also removed the name, Aldo Leopold, from our chapter name.

I want to thank everyone for the hard work, difficult work, and dedication to this organization. A special thank you to the subcommittee members both from summer of 2025 and this past summer. I am proud of the work and focus that was put into the process. We didn't take this issue lightly and it wasn't easy. We had deep critical conversations that will help this organization grow.

What doesn't change is the commitment, focus, and passion for the work we do for the protection of birds and all species and work on important conservation issues. We remain the official, local Audubon Chapter, but now operating under a new name.

The official news release won't take place until 2027. This fall we will be working on the process of rolling out and putting this change into place. You will start seeing BCACW or our full name being used, Bird Conservation Alliance of Central Wisconsin.

To start the next phase of this process, there is a Call for Logo Designs posted on our website and on our socials. We have information included in this newsletter as well. Thank you!

Call for Logo Designs

Help shape our chapter. Create a logo that represents our organization's new name



Bird Conservation Alliance of Central Wisconsin

Our Three Pillars - Conserve • Educate • Advocate

1. Your logo should be:

- Symbolic of our new name
- Representative of our mission and three pillars: **Conserve • Educate • Advocate**
- Visually appealing

Mission: Our mission is to foster appreciation and concern for all living things, and to protect and preserve their ecosystems.

2. Style considerations:

- Adaptable for both vertical and horizontal layouts
- Complementary to our primary brand blue: [HEX #0c3c60, RGB 12, 60, 96, CMYK 87%, 37%, 0%, 62%)

3. Submission requirements:

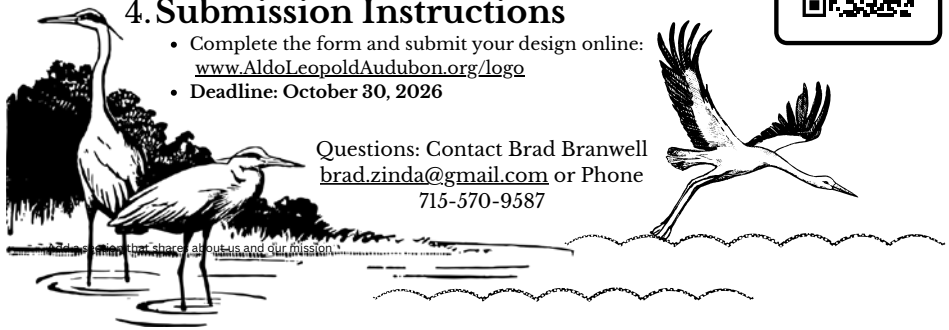


- Must remain clear and recognizable at 1 inch wide
- Usable in both digital and print formats
- Effective in full color and black-and-white
- Accessible and readable, with strong color contrast where text is used; aim for WCAG AA contrast of 4.5:1 for standard text and 3:1 for large text
- Must be original artwork
- The size should be at least 2,000 pixels on the longest side
- Submit as a PNG file

4. Submission Instructions

- Complete the form and submit your design online: www.AldoLeopoldAudubon.org/logo
- **Deadline: October 30, 2026**

Questions: Contact Brad Branwell
brad.zinda@gmail.com or Phone
715-570-9587



Silent Spring Revisited

Alan Haney

For Christmas 1962 my parents gave me a gift that would have a significant impact on my life. It was newly published book that used a dramatic depiction of a world in which birds did not herald the advent of spring. The author explored the complicated interdependence of all life and the environment that sustained it, and explained how persistent pesticides were leading to a decline in bird populations, pesticides then being widely promoted and used. The book, of course, was Silent Spring, written by Rachel Carson.

Although the chemical industry mounted a vicious attack on Carson's credibility, the book, in spite of the technical subject material, was masterfully written at a level even high-school students could easily grasp, and it became a New York Times best seller. I was at that time just beginning to pursue my interest in ecology, a subject that had not yet attracted widespread attention among the general public. Silent Spring did much to change that; it is often cited as the beginning of the environmental movement. Environmental historians often credit the book for political decisions leading to the Environmental Protection Agency and the Endangered Species Act, and similar political and social developments here and abroad.

Now, more than 60 years later, we can take some comfort from strict regulations governing use of chemicals, whether pesticides, food additives, or any of the approximately 80,000 chemicals commercially sold in United States. Rachel Carson was ahead of her time, and rightly concerned that the declining population of birds was a harbinger of the threat chemicals represented for human health and the environment. But she was wrong to place so much of the blame on pesticides.

In March 2025, the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources conference released a report prepared in cooperation with dozens of leading scientists and conservation organizations, including the National Audubon Society. The primary conclusion of the exhaustive report was that North American bird populations had declined by nearly 30% since 1950 (Silent Spring was released September 27, 1962). Of the 2,069 known species of birds in North America, 229 were in urgent need of conservation action according to the report. Some 112 species had declined by more than 50% in the past 50 years and would likely become extinct within the next 50 years.

We now know that this decline is 1) not just the effect of chemicals in the environment, 2) not just occurring in bird populations, and 3) even more of a concern now than it was in 1962 when Rachel Carson called it to world attention. For example, it is estimated that global insect populations have declined by 45% in the last 40 years. One study in Germany estimated a 75% decline in populations of flying insects in just the last 26 years, a loss of about 5.2% per year. Of course, the decline of insects is one of the contributing causes for the decline in bird populations, and one of the contributing causes of insect decline is our continuing use of insecticides. Here we must tip our hats to Rachel Carson.

There are several other reasons bird populations are going down, however. Loss or damage to critical habitats is perhaps a greater cause than pesticides. Additionally, climate change is a huge contributing factor. We are just seeing the beginning of climate change that will continue to intensify in coming decades. Climate change is also one of challenges to insects as well as other organisms. Among other things, it throws insect population dynamics out of phase with bird migration and nesting activity, in addition to direct effects on insect populations, especially given the more extreme weather events and associated disturbances such as more extensive wildfire.

Marshall Johnson, chief conservation officer of the National Audubon Society, may have understated it when he wrote that "Birds tell us that we have a full-on emergency across all habitats." One might argue that decline of insects is even more alarming, but in either case, the trends suggest that ecosystems upon which we depend for maintaining a sustainable environment for humans, not to mention all other species, will begin to collapse as these trends continue. One example is invasion of exotic species. As native species decline, opportunities for non-native species increase. Most non-native species do not fit well in essential niches vacated by the native species which co-evolved in our ecosystems over thousands of years.

Rachel Carson was many decades ahead in her warning, and writing at a time when we more poorly understood the many complex ways in which species are interconnected. Partly because birds are such conspicuous and admired members of our ecosystems, we are quicker to recognize their decline. Birds have long been an early-warning system for environmental change or threats. We would do well to heed their warning.

One way to open your eyes is to ask yourself, "What if I had never seen this before? What if I knew i would never see it again?"

Rachel Carson
The Sense of Wonder

Avian Kids' Corner

Scott Reilly

Cool, moon-lit nights with the sound of leaves rustling and the distance call of "Who-cooks-for-you". Frosty mornings where caws are heard over fields of dry corn stalks. Ah, it is Autumn, where Wisconsin prepares for a winter's rest and we celebrate with many customs. And of course, some birds are very much a part of the customs of the season.

The Raven:

"Quoth the raven, 'Nevermore.'" says the famous raven from Edgar Allen Poe. A group of ravens is classified as "unkindness." This large, often solitary, all black Corvid is incredibly smart at solving problems and using tools. Found in our area, Ravens can have a wingspan of more than 2 feet. The raven's call, color, large size, and Poe's famous poem make it a perfect symbol for the fall.



The Crow:

Not to be confused with its larger cousin, the American Crow is often seen in large familial groups in empty fields called a "murder". This all black Corvid is smaller than ravens, crows are intelligent and adaptable birds. They are found throughout the state and are able to eat anything from meat and roadkill to berries and trash. Common throughout the year, their black silhouette will be found throughout this time of year!

The Owl:

Off in the distance, high in a tree, in the dark night you hear the call of an owl. Seeing an owl can be a rare and magical experience, many of us are more apt to hear them at night. Although owls call less in Autumn, you may get lucky and hear the familiar "Who-cooks-for-you" of the barred owl, the deep "hoo-hoo" of a great-horned owl, or the shrill scream of a distant barn owl.

Pumpkin Bird Feeder

Materials:

- Small to medium sized pumpkin, up to 10 pounds
- Small sticks
- Twine or rope
- Birdseed



1. Cut off the top of the pumpkin (or the top of your previous Jack o'latern).
2. Poke your small sticks through the pumpkin.
3. Cut the twine into four equal lengths. Tie a strand to each stick. Then tie the loose ends together in a large knot at the top.
4. Fill the pumpkin with seed and hang it in your yard.

First Field Trip of the Season:

Birds in Art with Guest Speaker Dexter Patterson

The fifty-first annual Birds in Art exhibit at the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum in Wausau is excellent! Ten of us met at the museum on September 26. Our tour guide began with the history of Birds in Art. The first exhibit in 1976 was a tribute to Leigh Yawkey Woodson after her death. The exhibit was called titled "Birds of the Lakes, Fields, and Forests," and was organized with the help of Wisconsin wildlife artist Owen J. Gromme. It was so popular Birds in Art became an annual show. Our group marveled at the intricate Tupelo wood sculptures, paintings and even a quilt all depicting marvelous birds found around the world.

Following our tour Dexter Patterson, in collaboration with the Central Wisconsin Book Festival, discussed his new guidebook *Birds of the Great Lakes*, inclusive birding practices, and how to get started birding with sustainability and conservation at the forefront. Dexter's own photographs were much appreciated by the crowd, along with his sense of humor and antics. Dexter is now the first person of color to have published a field guide and it is a best seller! Dexter is co-founder of the BIPOC birding Club and the Bird Joy Podcast.

The Birds in Art exhibit runs through January 3, 2027





Birdseed Sale Pick-up

Seed distribution will be from 3-6 pm on Friday, October 16 and from 10 am-1 pm on Saturday, October 17 at the Pineries Bank parking lot, 3601 Main Street, Stevens Point. ***Walk-ups are welcome, but availability is not guaranteed.*** This birdseed sale is the most important fundraiser for our organization, and we hope you will continue to support the group with your birdseed orders.

Aldo Leopold Audubon Society

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Vice-President
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Your dues support local chapter activities and environmental projects exclusively in Central Wisconsin. You will receive *The Almanac* newsletter and invitations to ALAS programs, field trips, and educational events. ALAS will notify you when your annual membership is due.

☐ $25/year Supporter Local Chapter Membership. ***The date your* Local *membership***

☐ $50/year Sustainer Local Chapter Membership. ***expires is on the back cover!***

☐ ***I'll help conserve resources, protect the environment, and save postage!***
Please send my newsletter via email.

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PO Box 928
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More Ways to Give

We appreciate your additional donations supporting the work of ALAS.
☐ $_____ ALAS Endowment Fund.
Managed by the Community Foundation of Central Wisconsin.
☐ $_____ ALAS Chapter Operations Fund.

ALAS will not distribute your contact information to any other organization.
ALAS and the Community Foundation are 501(c)(3) organizations.
Your donation will be tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

Please remember ALAS in your estate planning!

Aldo Leopold Audubon Society
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Bird Seed Sale



the almanac

The mission of the Aldo Leopold Audubon Society is to foster appreciation and concern for all living things, and to protect and preserve their ecosystems.