

# ANNUAL REPORT 2017

[wglbbo.org](http://wglbbo.org)

# The Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory

## OUR MISSION

To conduct coordinated research, monitoring, and education that advances the conservation of birds and bats in Wisconsin and throughout the Western Great Lakes Region.

## OUR VISION

We envision a day when knowledge of birds and bats is widespread, decisions affecting them are based on good science, and citizens care about conservation and participate in it so that common species are kept common and imperiled populations are restored.

### FOUNDER

Noel J. Cutright, Ph.D.

### DIRECTOR

William P. Mueller

### CHIEF SCIENTIST

Bryan Lenz, Ph.D.

### ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR

Michael Schlotfeldt

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Leakhena Au

Joanne Kline

Zoe Finney

Terry Knudsen

Glen Fredlund, Ph.D.

Jill Kunsmann

Shawn Graff

Kate Redmond

Joel Greenberg

Julia Robson

Charles Hagner

Sue Schumacher

Robert Holzrichter

Carl Schwartz, *Chair*



Preserve entrance-sign artwork by Don Rambadt, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

[www.wglbbo.org](http://www.wglbbo.org)

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Clubhouse at Forest Beach Migratory Preserve.  
© 2017 Kimberly Mackowski ([www.theparknextdoor.com](http://www.theparknextdoor.com)).

## HEADQUARTERS

The Observatory is located near the shores of Lake Michigan in the town of Belgium, Ozaukee County, Wisconsin. Its headquarters occupy the rustic clubhouse of an 18-hole golf course that in 2009 was converted into the Forest Beach Migratory Preserve, 116 acres of grassland, wetland, and other habitats used by migratory birds. The preserve is owned and managed by the Ozaukee Washington Land Trust, the Observatory's fiscal agent and partnering organization.

## ON THE COVER

Red-headed Woodpecker, a species of special conservation concern in Wisconsin, made itself at home at Forest Beach Migratory Preserve in 2016. A pair of woodpeckers nested successfully in a restoration area on the northern edge of the preserve, fledging several young. Photo by Mike Reese.

# About Us

The Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory was founded by Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame inductee Dr. Noel J. Cutright.

In July 2010, he emailed the following message to friends and colleagues: “My dream is to turn the Squires Golf Course clubhouse in Ozaukee County that is owned by the Ozaukee Washington Land Trust into the building that would house the Midwest Bird Observatory. You are the first persons that I’ve shared this dream with. Reaction?”

The response was overwhelmingly positive, and Noel went to work contacting potential funders and supporters and refining the Observatory’s geographic focus and mission. By October 2010, the organization had become the Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory, and the Riveredge Bird Club, now known as the Noel J. Cutright Bird Club, was sponsoring a Big Sit at Forest Beach to raise funds.

Noel penned the Observatory’s initial mission: “to advance knowledge of bird and bat populations and their conservation in Wisconsin and throughout the Western Great Lakes Region through coordinated research, monitoring, and education using good science.”

In its first years, the Observatory was successful in raising funds to conduct research and establish a headquarters in the former Squires clubhouse at the Forest Beach Migratory Preserve. The headquarters now contains offices, a library, housing for interns, and educational displays.

In fall 2013, a steering committee was formed to undertake the plan-

ning of the Observatory’s future. Committee members were Dr. Owen Boyle, Dr. Glen Fredlund, Shawn Graff (non-voting), Charles Hagner, Bettie Harriman, Observatory Director William Mueller (non-voting), Kate Redmond, Carl Schwartz (Committee Chair), and Joel Trick.

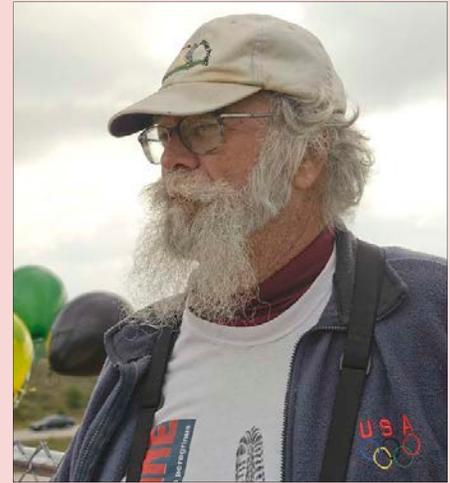
The steering committee analyzed the Observatory’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; drafted and adopted its mission and vision statements; set short- and long-term goals; and wrote a strategic plan. The committee also established four standing committees: Development and Finance, Governance, Outreach, and Science.

Dr. Gary Casper joined the Science Committee in December 2014. Dr. Bryan Lenz, state director of Bird City Wisconsin, was hired as chief scientist in 2015.

Joanne Kline joined the board in January 2015, strengthening the Science Committee. Atty. Terry Knudsen was added in August 2015 and took over as Governance chair, and Bob Holzrichter joined in November 2015 as Finance chair.

Julia Robson, Zoe Finney, Sue Schumacher, Leakhena Au, and Graff joined in May 2016. Graff had resigned the previous month as executive director of the Ozaukee Washington Land Trust to become regional director for the American Bird Conservancy. Joel Greenberg joined the board in September 2016. Jill Kunsmann, editor of the Observatory’s new newsletter, joined in March 2017. Along the way, Boyle, Harriman, and Trick retired from the board.

## ABOUT NOEL J. CUTRIGHT, Ph.D., FOUNDER



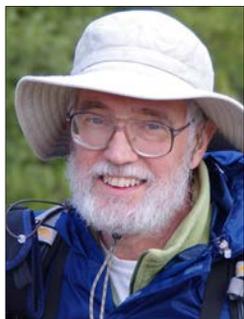
Noel devoted his life to bird conservation and citizen science. He served twice as president of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, he was the founder of the Riveredge Bird Club (now known as the Noel J. Cutright Bird Club), in Newburg, and he was instrumental in the creation of Bird City Wisconsin. He was also a co-author and senior editor of the first Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas.

Noel worked for We Energies as senior terrestrial ecologist for 29 years before retiring in 2006. He continued to serve We Energies in an emeritus position until his death in November 2013. He served on the boards of many non-profit environmental organizations, including the Ozaukee Washington Land Trust, Riveredge Nature Center, Urban Ecology Center, Mequon Nature Preserve, and Wisconsin Society for Ornithology.

On April 30, 2016, in recognition of his many achievements in the fields of bird conservation, citizen science, and ecological restoration, he joined Aldo Leopold, John Muir, and others in the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame. Learn more in the Hall of Fame’s spring 2016 newsletter ([wchf.org/news.html](http://wchf.org/news.html)).

## Letter from the Director

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Dear friends, 2016 flew by, and the Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory has been flying along as well. During the past year we accomplished the following:

- Advanced work on the Midwest Migration Network
- Expanded involvement in the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II
- Collected data on more than 170,000 birds per season during two seasons of our Waterbird Watch
- Continued work in the American Kestrel Partnership, sharing more nest boxes and data with our partners
- Analyzed data from the Offshore Waterfowl/Waterbird Surveys and started preparing a manuscript for publication
- Moved fund raising and grant writing into another phase in late fall to support the continuation of our work

- And, thanks to the help of our hard-working volunteers, completed two successful migration seasons of banding and point counts.

I encourage you to read more about these projects and others in the pages that follow, and to contact me if you have questions or want more information.

If you have helped us by volunteering, by donating to the Observatory, by participating in our public events, or in other ways, thank you. Please know how much I appreciate all that you have done. I look forward to continuing our work throughout 2017 and into the future.

William Mueller, *Director*

## Letter from the Chief Scientist

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2016 was a year of collaboration. The Observatory continued its leadership in the development of the Midwest Migration Network (MMN), formerly known as the Midwest Landbird Migration Monitoring Network. Migration is the portion of the avian life-cycle that is perhaps most difficult to study due to birds' high mobility and the vast distances that most species

cover. The MMN, a regional collaboration, will allow for new insights into migration ecology.

Development of the MMN took a quantum leap during a series of network workshops, co-led by the Observatory, at the State of the Stopover Symposium held at the Schlitz Audubon Nature Center in early October. Groups focused on the latter stages of the development of the three primary methods that the MMN will use to examine migration: banding, radar, and telemetry (using technology to track individual birds). The work on the MMN continues apace in 2017, as WGLBBO co-wrote one of two grant proposals to fund the initial on-the-ground work that will be conducted in the name of the MMN.

October featured another conference, the second Bird City Wisconsin-Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative summit, "Protecting Birds through Action and Art." The two-day event, held in Wausau, was put on in conjunction with the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum's world-famous "Birds in Art" exhibition and featured significant contributions from Director Bill Mueller, Chair Carl Schwartz, and board member Charles Hagner. Day 1 featured presentations by experts on threats to birds and solutions to those threats, while Day 2 considered art's influence on our relationship with nature and our desires to protect it.

I would like to close with a thank-you to the individuals and institutions that partnered with the Observatory so successfully this past year. I would also like to thank the dedicated volunteers who run WGLBBO's banding station, a group led by Al Sherkow, Vicki Piaskowski, Jana Viel, and Stephanie Beilke, as well as our Waterbird Watch technician, Calvin Brennan. Without the invaluable contributions of such partners, the Observatory would be a shadow of what it has become, the regional leader in avian research and conservation.

Bryan Lenz, Ph.D., *Chief Scientist*

# Letter from the Board Chair



Our Director and Chief Scientist have focused their letters on the important work that the Observatory has accomplished this past year and, more importantly, on the partnerships we have established to undertake even more challenging projects going forward.

My job, and that of the Observatory's entire Board of Directors, is to ensure that Bill and Bryan have the resources necessary to carry out those projects, and that has indeed been a challenge. Organizations like ours exist in a changing political and financial landscape. Government funding for conservation science has declined significantly — at both the federal and state levels — and this in turn has heightened the competition for support from large private foundations. As a result, we are working harder to communicate better with our supporters through a new bimonthly newsletter and our website ([wglbbo.org](http://wglbbo.org)).

We like to think of those friends as “investors” in conservation science, and we are especially grateful to two in particular: Lynde Uihlein, who seven years ago also played a major role in helping Dr. Cutright launch the Observatory, and Ron Horn, a longtime member of the Noel J. Cutright Bird Club and a good friend of Noel's. Their support in 2016 and early 2017 came at a critical time in the Observatory's maturation process.

Donations from additional investors early in 2016 allowed us to establish a fund through the Wisconsin Conservation Endowment of the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin to support the Observatory in perpetuity. Endowments are considered permanent sources of support because it is a percentage of the fund's value — not the principal of the fund — that is available to the Observatory each year, preserving the principal to provide support year after year. For the Observatory's most dedicated supporters, an endowment can be a valuable estate-planning tool. (See “How to Donate,” page 13.)

More recently, our annual winter appeal raised \$10,780, a record, from more than 60 investor-friends. While the total represents a welcome 10 percent of the Observatory's annual operating budget, it demonstrates the ongoing challenge the Board faces not only in securing the regular support of its friends, but also in cultivating larger donors and securing grant support from private foundations as well as state and federal agencies.

The Board's challenge for 2017-18, and my personal commitment, is to pursue all of those avenues of support while working toward establishing WGLBBO as an independent 501(c)(3) organization with a permanent corps of friends and investors committed to Dr. Cutright's mission of “advancing the conservation of birds and bats in Wisconsin and throughout the Western Great Lakes Region through coordinated research, monitoring and education.”

**Carl Schwartz, Chair**

## ABOUT WILLIAM MUELLER, DIRECTOR

Bill was Conservation Chair of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology from 2002 to 2012. He is actively involved with a number of ornithological groups around the state, including the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative, where he is co-chair of the Issues Committee and a member of the Steering Committee. Bill is also project coordinator for the Milwaukee BIOME Project. He earned his master's degree at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee after completing graduate research on the biogeography and recent decline of the Red-headed Woodpecker. In 2013, he walked 246 miles across the state of Wisconsin to raise awareness about bird conservation and to raise funds for the Bird Protection Fund of the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin. He received a Migratory Bird Treaty Centennial Stopover Award in October 2016.

## ABOUT BRYAN LENZ, Ph.D., CHIEF SCIENTIST

Bryan joined the Observatory and the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative Issues Committee in 2015, after becoming director of Bird City Wisconsin in 2014. Bryan has a Ph.D. in biological anthropology from Tulane University, where he studied the impacts of cattle ranching in the central Amazon. A Wisconsin native and long-time birdwatcher, he is the author of several academic publications and has conducted field research in Belize, Brazil, Costa Rica, and Peru.

## ABOUT CARL SCHWARTZ, CHAIR

Carl chairs the Steering Committee for Bird City Wisconsin as well as the Observatory's board. He also served for five years as project coordinator of Bird City Wisconsin. He is immediate past president and serves on the board of directors of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, and he is editor of its monthly newsletter, *The Badger Birder*. He is program chair for the Noel J. Cutright Bird Club, in Newburg. He also is past president of the Friends of the Cedarburg Bog and a member of the American Bird Conservancy, National Audubon Society, the Nature Conservancy, International Crane Foundation, the South-eastern Wisconsin Invasive Species Consortium, Gathering Waters, the Door County and Ozaukee Washington Land Trusts, and the Horicon Marsh Bird Club. He received a 2015 Partners in Flight award in March 2016.

# Recent Work

The initial geographic focus of the Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory has been Wisconsin, but the Observatory's work is expanding into the greater Midwest. Here are highlights of the Observatory's recent work:

## MIDWEST MIGRATION NETWORK

Director Mueller and Chief Scientist Lenz serve on the steering committee of the Midwest Migration Network, which was formed in 2014 to coordinate the efforts of monitoring stations, research programs, and stakeholders working to conserve landbirds that migrate through the Midwest. In October 2016, the Network hosted a workshop as part of the State of Stopover Symposium in Milwaukee. Breakout groups focused on banding and ground surveys, radar, and telemetry — three of the most important tools used in bird monitoring. Projects emerged from those breakout groups, and grant writing to seek funds to support those projects is under way.



Mississippi Kites in Janesville, Wisconsin, August 2016, by Scott Weberpal.

## WISCONSIN BREEDING BIRD ATLAS II

Dr. Cutright was a driving force in launching the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II, and the Observatory has been involved at every step of the five-year, \$1 million project. Director Mueller serves on five of the seven standing committees and has traveled around the state while helping lead more than 50 Atlas workshops since October 2014. A third round of presentations is underway for 2017.

Results from the first two seasons of the Atlas have been excellent. So far, 1,100 observers have submitted 54,000 checklists, describing observations of three million birds. As of the end of 2016, we have recorded confirmation of 220 species, close to the 226 confirmed species reported by the first Atlas. Eleven of the species had not been confirmed during the first Atlas.



### SPECIES CONFIRMED DURING SECOND ATLAS

- Bufflehead
- Canvasback
- Mississippi Kite
- Whooping Crane
- Eurasian Collared-Dove
- White-eyed Vireo
- Great Tit
- Kirtland's Warbler
- Yellow-throated Warbler
- Blue Grosbeak
- European Goldfinch

Blue Grosbeak in Spring Green, Wisconsin, July 2016, by Bill Grossmeyer.

## OFFSHORE WATERFOWL/WATERBIRD SURVEYS

The Observatory received funding to conduct five years of waterfowl/waterbird surveys over Lake Michigan via aircraft. The surveys focused on assessing the distribution and abundance of birds in deep waters up to 10 miles offshore, to assist long-term planning for offshore wind-power installations. Survey data may also help assess waterfowl numbers for management and harvest.

Director Mueller shared survey results in the Great Lakes Commission workshop “Informing Great Lakes Pelagic Bird Management,” held March 22-23, 2016, in Ann Arbor, Michigan. He and Chief Scientist Lenz also submitted a poster on observations of Long-tailed Ducks in western Lake Michigan at the Sixth Annual International Sea Duck Conference, held February 6-9, 2017, in San Francisco. They are working with Dr. Jill Hapner, of Geobotany Systems Consulting, on a publication incorporating our Phase 2 (2013-14) results, and they continue to seek funding to do additional surveys.



Red-breasted Merganser, 2016, by Kate Redmond.

## WATERBIRD WATCH

Every spring and fall since 2012, the Observatory has identified, recorded, and tallied all birds that pass its Waterbird Watch on the edge of Lake Michigan, in Harrington Beach State Park, in Ozaukee County. Technician Calvin Brennan has conducted the watch from March 1 through May 20 (spring) and from September 1 through November 20 (fall) during the past four seasons. In fall 2016, he recorded 179,449 migrants. (See box.) In the spring, he recorded more than 187,000 individuals, a new high count, including 171 species. A paper describing results of the 2014-15 Waterbird Watch appeared in the winter 2015 issue of *The Passenger Pigeon*, the quarterly journal of the Wisconsin Society of Ornithology.

## BANDING STATION

Forest Beach Migratory Preserve is an ideal location for banding, as much remains to be learned about how birds utilize the newly restored habitats. The Observatory's last four banding seasons have gone extremely well. Directed by master bander Al Sherkow and led by Vicki Piaskowski, Jana Viel, Stephanie Beilke, and Debbie Hartmann, teams banded 213 birds in spring 2016 and 120 birds in fall, and Jana Viel began banding during the breeding season. The results suggest that the preserve, as intended, is being used as stopover habitat by migrating warblers, thrushes, sparrows, and other species. Recapture data show some birds remain for a week or more. We expect the breeding-season data to indicate which migratory species are also breeding at the preserve. The Observatory thanks volunteers Danny Pirtle, Robin Squier, Diane Weaver, Judi Kistler, Lora Loke, David Sikorski, Katherine Macco-Webster, board member Julia Robson, Natalie Miller, and Amanda Carpenter for helping us cover two days a week during each migration season.

## BAT SURVEYS

Director Mueller and board member Robert Holzrichter participated in acoustic surveys as part of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' Wisconsin Bat Program. Using devices that detect bats' ultrasonic echolocation calls, they and other surveyors recorded bat activity while driving transects in diverse regions of the state between June 1 and July 15. Together, the surveyors recorded a mean of 33.4 calls per detector-hour, the lowest average since surveys began in 2013. Big brown bat, silver-haired bat, eastern red bat, and hoary bat experienced increases in mean encounters frequency, but encounters of the cave species most heavily affected by white nose syndrome (eastern pipistrelle, little brown bat, and northern long-eared bat) declined across all regions. The Observatory houses AnaBat detectors that volunteers can use to participate in monitoring program.

## AMERICAN KESTREL PARTNERSHIP

The American Kestrel is experiencing long-term declines not only in Wisconsin but also throughout North America. Because existing data are insufficient for understanding the causes, the Observatory joined the American Kestrel Partnership, spearheaded by the Peregrine Fund, and quickly surpassed a goal of erecting and monitoring 100 nest boxes in Wisconsin. The Observatory now collects data from more than 170 boxes in eight counties. Volunteers with Madison Audubon Society, coordinated by Brand Smith, program coordinator, and Mark Martin, resident manager of Goose Pond Sanctuary, have put up, maintained, and monitored the majority of the boxes from which the Observatory obtains data. Existing boxes are being incorporated into the program, and additional boxes are being constructed and will be erected and monitored.

### 10 MOST ABUNDANT SPECIES RECORDED AT THE WATERBIRD WATCH, FALL 2016

1.Red-breasted Merganser <b>125,173</b>	6.Mallard <b>2,122</b>
2.Ring-billed Gull <b>17,222</b>	7.Bonaparte's Gull <b>2,063</b>
3.Double-crested Cormorant <b>8,940</b>	8.Lesser Scaup <b>2,061</b>
4.Canada Goose <b>5,012</b>	9.Blue-winged Teal <b>1,833</b>
5.Herring Gull <b>4,681</b>	10.Barn Swallow <b>1,147</b>



Mourning Warbler at Forest Beach Migratory Preserve by Kate Redmond.

# Outreach and Public Events

The Observatory participated in the following outreach activities and public education about birds:

## BIRD CITY WISCONSIN

Director Mueller serves on the Steering Committee of this thriving eight-year-old partnership, which works to ensure that Wisconsin's urban residents maintain healthy populations of birds and grow an appreciation for them. Chief Scientist Lenz's other job is director of Bird City Wisconsin, a program of the Milwaukee Audubon Society. In January 2017, he welcomed Osceola and Sturgeon Bay as the 100th and 101st communities in the state to be recognized by the program.



## WISCONSIN BIRD CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

Director Mueller serves on the Steering Committee of the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative and as co-chair of its Issues Committee. Since 2004, the committee has created a series of Issues Papers on various topics important to bird conservation in Wisconsin. The finished papers, links to information about birds and building/window collisions, and a downloadable poster about shorebird conservation are at [www.wisconsinbirds.org/issuespapers.htm](http://www.wisconsinbirds.org/issuespapers.htm).



## NEWSLETTER

The Observatory launched a bimonthly newsletter in fall 2016. Delivered by email, the newsletter contains news about WGLBBO, updates from Forest Beach Migratory Preserve, research and monitoring reports, details about upcoming events, and volunteer and citizen-science opportunities. Subscriptions are free. To sign up, visit our website ([wglbbo.org](http://wglbbo.org)) or send your email address to [friends@wglbbo.org](mailto:friends@wglbbo.org).

## PRESENTATIONS

Director Mueller helped lead 22 workshops for the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II during 2016, and he also made the following presentations:

- Informing Great Lakes Pelagic Bird Management (Great Lakes Commission workshop), Ann Arbor, Michigan
- Ecology of Wisconsin Bats, Mequon Nature Preserve (6/8/16)
- Prairie Fest, University of Wisconsin Fond du Lac (7/30/16)
- Ecology of Wisconsin Bats, Harrington Beach State Park (8/27/16)
- Changing Bird Populations, Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Wausau (10/13/16)
- Using Wildlife Monitoring to Assist with Project Area and Land Management Planning, with Shawn Graff, Andrew Struck, and Dr. Gary Casper, Land Trust Alliance rally, Minneapolis, Minnesota (10/30/16)
- The Mostly Airborne Life of the Chimney Swift, Mosquito Hill Nature Center, New London (11/5/16)
- Forest Beach Migratory Preserve: From Golf Course to Bird Preserve, Wild Ones Chapter meetings at Schlitz Audubon Nature Center and the Hales Corners Public Library (11/12/16)



Kenn Kaufman at Bird City Wisconsin-Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative summit, October 2016, by Ryan Brady.

The Observatory hosted the following successful public events:

## PUBLIC EVENTS

*International Migratory Bird Day:* At Forest Beach Migratory Preserve on May 14, events included guided bird hikes, a photography workshop led by board member Kate Redmond, a live raptor exhibit, and “For the Birds,” featuring tours, locally built bird houses, a silent auction, a luncheon, and an address by Chief Scientist Lenz on the state of birds. *Treasures of Oz:* Visitors to Forest Beach Migratory Preserve on June 18 enjoyed docent-led birding hikes, a live raptor show, presentations, exhibits, and a silent auction.

*State of the Stopover Symposium:* More than 200 representatives of partner groups from across the Great Lakes region met October 5-7 at the Schlitz Audubon Nature Center, in Milwaukee, to summarize information about existing stopover initiatives and establish the framework for a new regional initiative that would elevate markedly the importance of protecting and acquiring stopover habitat. To plan the event, Director Mueller met monthly with Kim Graveles and Sumner Matteson, of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Diane Packett, of the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, Dr. Amber Roth, coordinator of the Midwest Migration Network, and Katie Koch, of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

*Big Sit:* Dani Baumann and other members of the Noel J. Cutright Bird Club and interested friends spent October 8 at the Bill Cowart Memorial Raptor Watch Platform. Among the species tallied during the annual event were seven Ross’s Geese leading a southbound flock of Canada Geese. The goose was the 252nd species recorded at Forest Beach Migratory Preserve. The Big Sit was organized at this location by Dr. Cutright, founder of the Observatory.

*Bird City Wisconsin-Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative summit:* Director Mueller, Board Chair Schwartz, and Chief Scientist Lenz were heavily involved in planning this two-day event, held in Rothschild, October 27-29, 2016. More than 150 people attended, including delegates from 33 Wisconsin Bird City communities and representatives of programs that Bird City Wisconsin has helped to launch in Indiana, Iowa, and Minnesota. Speakers included Susan Bonfield, executive director of Environment for the Americas, Joanna Eckles, coordinator of Minnesota Audubon’s Project BirdSafe, author and naturalist Kenn Kaufman, and Tom Will, of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Partners in Flight. Attendees also enjoyed a special viewing of the “Birds in Art” exhibition at the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum.

## Awards and Honors

Members of the board and the Observatory's founder received the following awards and honors in 2016:

- Chair Carl Schwartz received a 2015 Partners in Flight Award on March 17, 2016. He was recognized for activities that “contribute significantly to increasing the public’s awareness and appreciation for birds, their habitats, or the need for conservation.”
- Dr. Noel J. Cutright, founder of the Observatory, was inducted into the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame in Stevens Point, Wisconsin, on April 30, 2016. Director William Mueller, board member Sue Schumacher, and former board member Bettie Harriman were presenters, as was naturalist and wildlife educator Bill Volkert.
- The Board of Directors received the 2016 Arthur E. Schait Volunteerism Award from the Ozaukee Washington Land Trust. Board member Kate Redmond accepted the award, presented for “outstanding achievement in volunteering,” at the trust’s annual Fly-In Feast at Forest Beach Migratory Preserve on August 21, 2016.
- Director William Mueller was recognized for making “exceptional contributions to the conservation of migratory birds in the Great Lakes” with a Migratory Bird Treaty Centennial Stopover Award. He received the award at the State of the Stopover Symposium on October 6, 2016.

# Financial Report

The Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory likes to think of its friends and supporters as investors in conservation science, and we are enormously grateful for the support they have shown for our work.

Most significant for the Observatory's future in the past year was a three-year commitment from Lynde Uihlein, who seven years ago also played a major role in helping Dr. Noel J. Cutright launch the Observatory. The renewal of her financial support comes at a critical time in the Observatory's maturation process.

Her 2016 gift helped us to guarantee employment for both the fall and spring seasons of 2017 to Calvin Brennan, the highly experienced and talented ornithologist who has led our Waterbird Watch for the last several years. It also provides support for Bill's key role in training participants in the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II and for Bryan's work in bolstering the bird-banding program at Forest Beach Migratory Preserve. Her pledge for 2017 and 2018 gives us a secure launching pad for our continuing fund-raising work.

The Observatory also received a large unrestricted gift in early 2017 from Ron Horn, a longtime member of the Noel J. Cutright Bird Club and a good friend of Noel's, which will go toward general operating expenses.

The Observatory also wishes to acknowledge and thank Atty. Stephen M. Fisher and the Arthur J. Donald Family Foundation for a significant grant that, among other things, will afford Bill and Bryan the time to complete a research paper documenting extensive offshore aerial observations of waterfowl conducted to inform decision-making on potential wind-farm locations in Lake Michigan.

WGLBBO also has received a new grant from the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, which had been a significant investor over the Observatory's first five years, and from the Pieper Power Co. and the Besadny Grant Program of the Natural Resources Foundation (NRF) of Wisconsin.

From January 1, 2016, to March 1, 2017, other individual investors donated an additional \$30,000-plus in amounts ranging from \$25 to \$1,000. I am proud to report that

nearly \$7,000 of that total was donated by members of the WGLBBO board in a strong demonstration of their personal commitment to our work.

Early in 2016, our investors' donations allowed the Observatory to establish an endowment fund through the NRF's Wisconsin Conservation Endowment to support the Observatory in perpetuity. For the Observatory's most dedicated supporters, an endowment can be a valuable estate-planning tool. (See "How to Donate," page 13.)

More recently, our annual winter appeal raised \$10,780, a record, from more than 60 investor friends. While the total represents a welcome 10 percent of the Observatory's annual operating budget, it demonstrates the ongoing challenge the Board faces not only in securing the regular support of its friends, but also in cultivating larger donors and securing grant support from private foundations as well as state and federal agencies.

## Species Added to the Forest Beach Migratory Preserve's Checklist in 2016:

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, September 10**

**Eurasian Collared-Dove, September 27**

**Ross's Goose, October 8**



Scissor-tailed Flycatcher by Brian L. Sullivan.

**WE THANK THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS, WHO DONATED TO THE OBSERVATORY BETWEEN JANUARY 1, 2016, AND MARCH 1, 2017:**

Richard and Joan Abdoo	James and Virginia Helland	Kate Redmond
Elizabeth Abert	R. Tod Highsmith and Joan Braune	Robert Retko and Kay Wienke
Richard Albert	Sue Holcomb	Julia Robson
Margaret and Mark Amato	Robert Holzrichter	Joan Rosenberger
Leakhena Au	Eric Howe and Kristin Wegner	George and Dorothy Roth
Marilyn Bontly	Judith Huf	John and Jennifer Rothstein
Jacquie and Jim Branchford	Nikki Janisin	Daniel Scheiman
Mike Brandel	James Johnson	Larry and Marilyn Schlotfeldt
Cheryl and Mark Brickman	John and Laurie Johnson	Glenn and Margy Schrubbe
Dennis and Jean Casper	Russell Johnson	Carl and Barbara Schwartz
Gary Casper and Kim Koziol	Ellen Kellen	William Seybold
Robert Demge	Judith Kesser	Holger and Deanna Sommerfeld
Ann Demorest	Marjorie Kieckhefer	Mark Sorensen
Jane Dennis	Elynor Kimmel	Susan Sprinkmann
Jim Ditter	Shirley Klapperich	Robin Squier
Dennis and Susan Duffy	Joanne and Dan Kline	Wendy Stein
James and Karen Etter Hale	Terry and Carole Knudsen	David and Sarah Stokes
Millicent Ficken	Katherine Koch	Jean and Stanley Strelka
Zoe Finney	Kim Kreitinger and Eric Preston	Roger and Karen Sundell
Chris and Jude Ford	Jill Kunsmann	Alice Thompson
Glen Fredlund	Victor Larson	Darwin Tiede
Kathleen Gallick	Robert Litzau and Annie Salmona	Marjie Tomter
Tim Garvey	Stuart Malcolm	Joel and Patricia Trick
Michael and Sara K. Gilman	Joshua Martinez	Tom and Mary Uttech
Christopher and Nancy Gloe	Cory Masiak	Barb Wehrle
Shawn Graff and Cheryl White	Kris and Karen McKinney	Kay Wienke
Larry Graham	William Mueller and Leah Klapperich	Levi Wood
Joan Grant	John Munson	Thomas Wood
Davor Grgic	Dori Naef	Barbara and Marvin Wooten
Charles Hagner and Julie Landes	Marlene Nelson	Allen Young
Kent and Sue Hall	John and Nancy O'Donnell	Caryl Zaar
Nancy Hansen-Bennett	John Patterson	Ric Zarwell
Bettie Harriman		Norma Zehner

# Balance Sheet

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## ANNUAL REVENUE

Government grants	\$51,272
Foundations/organizations	\$16,464
Individuals and other funding sources	\$47,701

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TOTAL REVENUE	\$115,437
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## ANNUAL EXPENSES

Wages, contractors, and expenses	\$84,779
Utilities and internet	\$5,463
Grant administration	\$11,510
Other	\$10,177

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TOTAL EXPENSES	\$111,929
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TOTAL WORKING CAPITAL AVAILABLE END OF PERIOD	\$65,098
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# Endowment Fund

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## ANNUAL REVENUE

Revenue accounts contributions	\$15,000.00
Investment earnings	\$352.70

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TOTAL REVENUE ACCOUNTS	\$15,352.70
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Expense accounts fund administrative fee	(\$77.03)
Market adjustments gains on investments	\$566.64

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ENDING BALANCE AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2016	\$15,842.31
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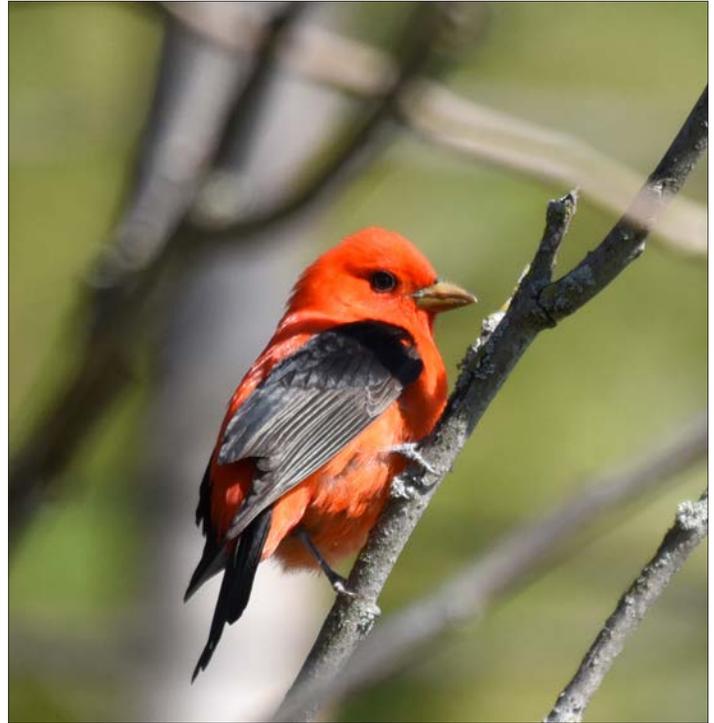
# How to Donate

The Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory is soliciting partners, sponsors, and donors for several major coordinated research, monitoring, and education projects, including the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II, the Midwest Migration Network, the American Kestrel Partnership, the Waterbird Watch, bat monitoring, the banding station, and others. By donating, you show support for the Observatory's goal of advancing the conservation of birds and bats in Wisconsin and throughout the Western Great Lakes Region. Please also consider a donation to fund the Observatory's extensive outreach efforts.

The Observatory is in the process of incorporating as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with a board of directors and scientific advisory committee.

In April 2016, the Observatory finalized an agreement with the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin to establish the WGLBBO Fund, a permanent endowment fund supporting the mission of advancing the conservation of birds and bats in Wisconsin and throughout the Western Great Lakes Region through coordinated research, monitoring, and education. The WGLBBO Fund is managed by the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin. Contributions are tax-deductible and can be made to the Observatory or by sending a check directly to the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, Attn: WGLBBO Fund, P.O. Box 2317, Madison, WI 53701 or by donating online at [www.wisconsinconservation.org](http://www.wisconsinconservation.org).

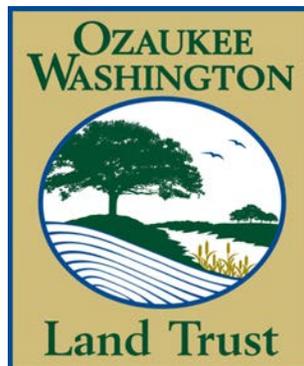
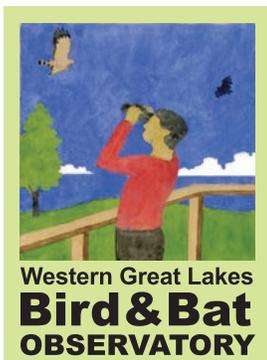
You can also help ensure the Observatory's future work by including it in your estate plans. Bequests of any size are gratefully accepted. To leave a bequest to the WGLBBO Fund, simply incorporate the following language in your estate plans: "I give [describe the gift] to the Natural



Scarlet Tanager by Zoe Finney.

Resources Foundation of Wisconsin [federal tax ID 39-1572034], a nonprofit corporation organized and existing under the laws of Wisconsin and with a principal mailing address of P.O. Box 2317, Madison, WI 53701. This gift shall be designated to the WGLBBO Fund."

**Donations to the Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory are tax-deductible through our fiscal agent and partnering organization, the Ozaukee Washington Land Trust, Inc. For more information on how to make a gift or a bequest, contact the Land Trust at [mschlotfeldt@owlt.org](mailto:mschlotfeldt@owlt.org) or (262) 338-1794.**



# Contact Us

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Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory

Forest Beach Migratory Preserve  
4970 Country Club Road  
Port Washington, Wisconsin 53074

(262) 285-3374  
(414) 698-9108

wpmueller1947@gmail.com



To learn more about the Observatory, its research projects, and volunteer opportunities, and to get driving directions to the Forest Beach Migratory Preserve, visit our website.

To sign up for the Observatory's free bimonthly e-newsletter, visit our website or send your email address to [friends@wglbbo.org](mailto:friends@wglbbo.org).

We intended this report to be distributed electronically.  
Please consider the environment before printing it.

[www.wglbbo.org](http://www.wglbbo.org)

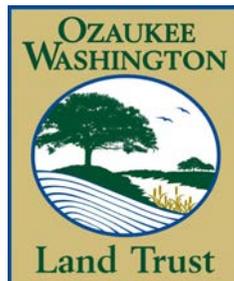
 Like us on Facebook: [facebook.com/wglbbo](https://facebook.com/wglbbo)

 Follow us on Twitter: [@WGLBBO](https://twitter.com/WGLBBO)

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Website: [owlt.org](http://owlt.org)



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