



# the Sand Bluff Birder

the official newsletter of the Sand Bluff Bird Observatory—online edition

December 2023

## President's Message

The winter season is fast approaching. Outside it's getting noticeably colder and quieter in the woods. Winter is a time when I slow down, read, draw and enjoy the company of birds visiting my feeders. Downy Woodpeckers, Blue Jays, White-breasted Nuthatches, Chickadees, Juncos, Goldfinches and Cardinals are all welcome regulars. And every winter, there is the excited anticipation of the possibility of Pine Siskins and Redpolls making an appearance. Who knows, maybe this year, I will be blessed with a visit from Crossbills!

Best to you all,  
——Ivy Otto  
President, SBBO

## Owl Night

\_\_\_\_\_ John Longhenry

Owl Night 2023 saw a full house with visitors and volunteers numbering 30 people in attendance. We were not sure how the night might work out, but the night was perfect with falling temperatures, little to no wind, and a clear sky. So after our owl introductory presentation, everyone grabbed their flashlights and off we went to check on the nets in



hopes of finding an owl or two. Unfortunately, we returned sans owls the first net run so people grabbed some snacks and sat down to wait for net run #2 about 45 minutes later. The second net run turned out to be the magic run of the night as visitors were able to watch 4 Northern Saw-whet Owls being removed from the nets. Back to the station where the birds were processed and photographed before each was released. The last net run, #3 for the night, was also productive as we ended up with another 2 owls. So overall we ended up with 4 new owls and 2 recaptures; one of the recaptures was originally trapped and banded at another station (we still have yet to verify the station).

Owl Night 2023 was a complete success with guests and volunteers all going home having seen up close the beautiful little Northern Saw-whet Owls that we hoped to see. The season for 2023 netted a total of 39 new Northern Saw-whet Owls and 5 foreign recaptures. Thanks to everyone who helped with the owls again this year and a big thank you to all of this year's visitors at Owl Night who came out and contributed to our success.



Mike Eickman and Northern Saw-Whet Owl

(Photos by John Longhenry)



The breakfast buffet was provided by SBBO volunteers.



Mike Eickman was the bander while Lee Johnson provided commentary to the visitors.

## Donor Breakfast

SBBO once again invited our generous supporters to "Breakfast with the Birds" to enjoy delicious food and the banding process on October 7 from 7:30-11:00 am. The building was bursting with guests and birds—just the way we like it!

(Photos provided by Sarah Aavang)



Volunteer Reita Baird (blue jacket) escorted attendees to the visitor net run to check for birds.



Just a few of the many attendees!



## Fall 2023 Banding Report

Sand Bluff's fall migration season has come to an end. This year has been exceptional for both spring and fall. Spring numbers of 1,860 new birds and Fall's 3,087 gave us a total of 4,947 new birds for the year and add in 1,469 retraps gave us a grand total of 6,416 birds handled for the year.

During the spring, the usual Gray Catbirds and Field Sparrows were recaptured, totally expected. Totally unexpected, this fall we had one Hermit Thrush return migrating south that was originally captured in November of 2022 as a hatch-year bird, as Lee Johnson said, "a true migrant." Other retraps were several Slate-Colored Juncos from 2021 and 2022, a Field Sparrow from 2016, and a Great-crested Flycatcher from 2016. An unusual bird from 2016 was a Hairy Woodpecker that had a very pale gray upper mandible which is normally darker gray.

For encounters, the foreign retrapped Northern Saw-Whet Owls totaled 5. On October 20<sup>th</sup> we caught an owl from Hawk Ridge, Duluth, Minnesota. November 4<sup>th</sup> the nets were graced with 3 foreign captures, one was at least 2 years old from Waupaca, Wisconsin, another from Hudson, Wisconsin, near Marine on the St. Croix River, and the third has

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### Fall 2023 Bird Count

SPECIES	COUNT	SPECIES	COUNT	SPECIES	COUNT
BLACKBIRD, RED-WINGED	0	OWL, NORTHERN SAW-WHET	39	VIREO, WARBLING	4
BLACKBIRD, RUSTY	0	PARULA, NORTHERN	0	VIREO, YELLOW-THROATED	3
BLUEBIRD, EASTERN	17	PEEWEE, EASTERN WOOD	27	WARBLER, BAY-BREASTED	3
BUNTING, INDIGO	8	PHOEBE, EASTERN	8	WARBLER, BLACK AND WHITE	22
CARDINAL, NORTHERN	50	REDSTART, AMERICAN	103	WARBLER, BLACKBURNIAN	0
CATBIRD, GRAY	359	ROBIN, AMERICAN	85	WARBLER, BLACKPOLL	7
CHAT, YELLOW-BREASTED	0	SANDPIPER, SOLITARY	0	WARBLER, BLACK-THROATED BLUE	5
CHICKADEE, BLACK-CAPPED	38	SAPSUCKER, YELLOW-BELLIED	0	WARBLER, BLACK-THROATED GREEN	5
COWBIRD, BROWN-HEADED	0	SHRIKE, NORTHERN	1	WARBLER, BLUE-WINGED	0
CREEPER, BROWN	24	SPARROW, AMERICAN TREE	46	WARBLER, CANADA	3
CUCKOO, BLACK-BILLED	0	SPARROW, CHIPPING	12	WARBLER, CAPE MAY	5
CUCKOO, YELLOW-BILLED	1	SPARROW, CLAY-COLORED	0	WARBLER, CHESTNUT-SIDED	13
DOVE, MOURNING	5	SPARROW, FIELD	25	WARBLER, CONNECTICUT	1
FINCH, HOUSE	2	SPARROW, FOX	67	WARBLER, GOLDEN-WINGED	4
FINCH, PURPLE	19	SPARROW, GRASSHOPPER	0	WARBLER, HOODED	0
FLICKER, YELLOW-SHAFTED	17	SPARROW, HENSLOW'S	0	WARBLER, KENTUCKY	0
FLYCATCHER, ACADIAN	0	SPARROW, LARK	0	WARBLER, MAGNOLIA	114
FLYCATCHER, GREAT-CRESTED	3	SPARROW, LINCOLN'S	11	WARBLER, MOURNING	3
FLYCATCHER, LEAST	15	SPARROW, SAVANNAH	0	WARBLER, MYRTLE	14
FLYCATCHER, OLIVE-SIDED	0	SPARROW, SONG	45	WARBLER, NASHVILLE	41
FLYCATCHER, TRAILL'S	13	SPARROW, SWAMP	35	WARBLER, ORANGE-CROWNED	15
FLYCATCHER, YELLOW-BELLIED	14	SPARROW, VESPER	0	WARBLER, PINE	0
GNATCATCHER, BLUE-GRAY	0	SPARROW, WHITE-CROWNED	7	WARBLER, PROTHONOTARY	2
GOLDFINCH, AMERICAN	51	SPARROW, WHITE-THROATED	273	WARBLER, TENNESSEE	93
GRACKLE, COMMON	0	SWALLOW, NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED	0	WARBLER, WESTERN PALM	20
GROSBEAK, BLUE	0	SWALLOW, TREE	0	WARBLER, WILSON'S	2
GROSBEAK, ROSE-BREASTED	53	TANAGER, SCARLET	4	WARBLER, YELLOW	1
HAWK, COOPER'S	1	TANAGER, SUMMER	0	WATERTHRUSH, NORTHERN	6
HAWK, RED-TAILED	1	THRASHER, BROWN	8	WAXWING, CEDAR	41
HAWK, SHARP-SHINNED	8	THRUSH, GRAY-CHEEKED	30	WHIP-POOR-WILL, EASTERN	1
JAY, BLUE	46	THRUSH, HERMIT	110	WOODCOCK, AMERICAN	1
JUNCO, SLATE-COLORED	277	THRUSH, SWAINSON'S	199	WOODPECKER, DOWNY	25
KINGBIRD, EASTERN	0	THRUSH, WOOD	41	WOODPECKER, HAIRY	5
KINGLET, GOLDEN-CROWNED	50	TITMOUSE, TUFTED	26	WOODPECKER, RED-BELLIED	10
KINGLET, RUBY-CROWNED	76	TOWHEE, EASTERN	15	WREN, CAROLINA	0
MEADOWLARK, EASTERN	0	VEERY	7	WREN, HOUSE	69
NUTHATCH, RED-BREASTED	0	VIREO, BELL'S	0	WREN, WINTER	11
NUTHATCH, WHITE-BREASTED	10	VIREO, BLUE-HEADED	0	YELLOWTHROAT, COMMON	25
ORIOLE, BALTIMORE	19	VIREO, PHILADELPHIA	8		
ORIOLE, ORCHARD	1	VIREO, RED-EYED	18		
OVENBIRD	85	VIREO, WHITE-EYED	0	FALL TOTAL NEW BIRDS	3087
				2023 TOTAL NEW BIRDS	4947

## PLEASE HELP US ... in any way you can

Our non-profit organization survives because of private contributions of time and money from friends just like you. Please examine the list below and help us continue our important banding program by making your contribution!

Please return this form to: Sand Bluff Bird Observatory, P. O. Box 2, Seward, IL 61077 or donate through PayPal on our website: sandbluff.org

- |  |    |   |    |
|--|----|---|----|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Enclosed is a (tax-deductible) contribution of<br><input type="checkbox"/> \$10.00 (Subscriber)<br><input type="checkbox"/> \$25.00 (Donor)<br><input type="checkbox"/> \$50.00 (Supporting Member)<br><input type="checkbox"/> \$100.00 (Net Sponsor)<br><input type="checkbox"/> \$250.00 (Sustaining Member)<br><input type="checkbox"/> Please do not share /publish my contact information | \$ | <input type="checkbox"/> Enclosed is a (tax-deductible) donation of _____<br><input type="checkbox"/> in memory /honor of _____<br><input type="checkbox"/> for the Sand Bluff Bird Observatory Endowment Fund<br><input type="checkbox"/> for the Sand Bluff Bird Observatory Scholarship Fund<br><input type="checkbox"/> I'd like to learn more about volunteering, please call me!<br><input type="checkbox"/> Please contact me to schedule a program/tour for my group! | \$ |
|--|----|---|----|

Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip + 4 \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (days) \_\_\_\_\_ (evenings) \_\_\_\_\_ (email) \_\_\_\_\_

The SBBO website “www.sandbluff.org” has been updated with more options. You can now make a secure online donation through PayPal by selecting the “Support Us” page when you click on the “list” icon in the upper right corner of the website’s homepage. There is also a SBBO t-shirt in multiple colors and sizes available to order online through PayPal on the “Merchandise” page.

### Fall Banding Report, Continued

not been submitted to the Banding Lab yet. The last Saw-Whet was captured on November 15<sup>th</sup> and that one was from Linwood Springs Banding Station, Stevens Point, Wisconsin.

Now that the banding season is over its time to sit back relax a little and plan for next season. I hope everyone has a good holiday season and stays healthy and we will see you in the spring.

\_\_\_\_\_ Mike Eickman, Station Master

Data has been collected from the Motus station, but SBBO has not received a report at this time. The array of Motus stations is growing and expanding westward creating a larger grid to better track birds wearing tracking devices.



Mike Eickman and John Longhenry work together to roll the nets around the poles as they are taken down until spring migration. (Photo by Sarah Aavang)

### Sand Bluff Bird Observatory Scholarships

Sand Bluff Bird Observatory will be offering two scholarships to graduating seniors and current college students beginning with the 2023-2024 school year. The scholarships will be offered through a partnership with the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois (CFNIL). Application for the \$500 scholarships will be available on the CFNIL website from December 1, 2023 to February 1, 2024. Students who are furthering their education in an environmental or conservation related field are welcome to apply.

One scholarship is named in honor of the founders of the Sand Bluff Bird Observatory, Lee and Lynda Johnson. A second scholarship is named in honor of one of our long-time and current volunteers Dave Seal. Contributions to the SBBO scholarship fund can be made through our website, by mail to SBBO with a check or directly through the CFNIL website.



Rare fall bird was a Northern Shrike on 11-5-2023. (Photo by John Longhenry)

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P. O. Box 2  
Seward, IL 61077



The SBBO annual meeting will be held January 13, 2024 at 10:00 am, Rockton Township Center, 302 W Main St., Rockton, IL Open to the public.

## EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR CLASSES AND GROUPS

Keeping in mind that Covid-19 variants are still active threats to our health, SBBO has welcomed many weekend visitors this fall.

Thursday or weekend mornings, a group of 10 –15 can schedule a “group presentation” with a suggested donation of \$5 per person. Smaller groups may join the general visitors.



Photo by Thelma Bottum

Call Kathy Hoel (pictured), 815-877-2938 or e-mail [kathyhoel6@gmail.com](mailto:kathyhoel6@gmail.com)/subject: SBBO group visit, for details and to reserve your spot. Allow 1½ hours to watch the banding process and visit the nets.

### Here's How To Reach Us!

During Operating Hours: 815-629-2671

Mailing Address: Sand Bluff Bird Observatory  
P. O. Box 2  
Seward, IL 61077

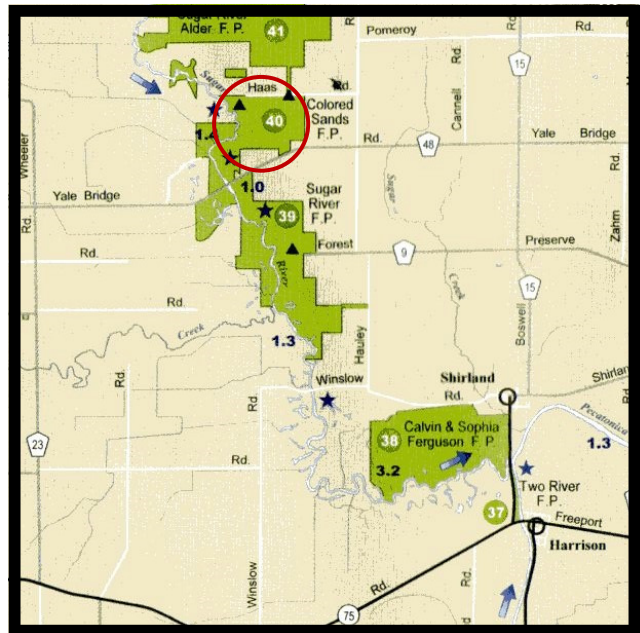
GPS Address: 10602 Haas Rd, Rockton, IL

Be sure to visit our website at: [www.sandbluff.org](http://www.sandbluff.org)



## ADDRESS CORRECTIONS

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