

Membership

Tropical Wings is a non-profit 501c3 organization composed of volunteers supporting education and conservation for Neotropical Migratory birds through the Sister Parks Agreement between National Parks in the Upper Midwest and Costa Rica's Osa Peninsula.

Join our efforts today by making a contribution and becoming a Tropical Wings Member!

Contribution Levels

Hummingbird

\$15 (Students & Seniors)



Warbler

\$35 (Individuals)

Osprey

\$50 (Households)



Falcon

Donations > \$50

Membership Benefits

- ✧ Subscription to the bi-annual Tropical Wings Newsletter ✧
- ✧ Advanced notice of birding and conservation events ✧
- ✧ Priority registration for the Costa Rica Bird-a-thon Trip ✧

To become a member, please complete the membership form and mail with payment to:

Tropical Wings, Inc.
2107 Chestnut Dr.
Hudson, Wisconsin, 54016

Thank You to our Members

The following people have become new members to the Tropical Wings community. Your contributions help us achieve our mission. Thank you!

Tom Clark • Jim Freund • Kelsey Hans
Craig Leiser • Tracy Maki • Mark Martell



Tropical Wings

Newsletter

Fall 2017 • Volume 1 • Issue 2

Birding Journal

A Message from the
President of Tropical Wings
Page 2

NORTHERN HARRIER

Page 3

Habitat Hero

"Scrappy" the Splashing Bass
Page 4

Community Partners

The Prairie Enthusiasts
and
Friends of Crex Meadows
Page 5

Osa Birds

Page 6

Help Protect Migratory Birds

Become a Member

Page 7



CONTRIBUTION LEVEL:

- ☐ Hummingbird—\$15
(Students & Seniors)
- ☐ Warbler—\$35
(Individuals)
- ☐ Osprey—\$50
(Households)
- ☐ Falcon—Contributions > \$50
Amount: \$ _____

MEMBER INFORMATION:

Name: _____ Phone: _____
Street Address: _____ Email: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zipcode: _____

PAYMENT OPTIONS:

- ☐ I would like to pay by check made payable to Tropical Wings, Inc.
- ☐ I would like to pay by credit card Card Type: _____
Card #: _____ CSC #: _____ Exp. Date: _____
Billing Address (if different from above): _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zipcode: _____

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- ☐ I would like to make this gift in honor of: _____
- ☐ Please keep my name anonymous

Tropical Wings

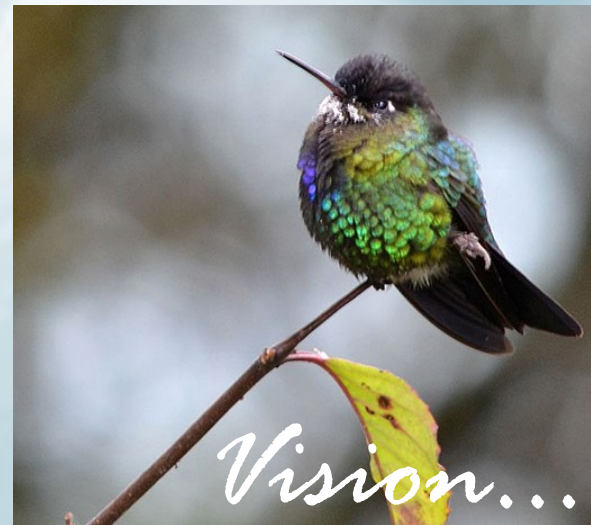


The mission of Tropical Wings is to support the Sister Parks Agreement between the National Park Service in the Upper Midwest and national parks on the Osa Peninsula of Costa Rica (SINAC/ACOSA) by promoting an awareness of Neotropical migratory birds and supporting habitat conservation through building relationships within and between communities at both ends of the migration.

Tropical Wings is a gathering of concerned citizens in the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway communities in Minnesota and Wisconsin. The focus of Tropical Wings is the welfare of migratory birds shared between the Upper Midwest and Costa Rica's Osa Peninsula.

As a shared resource these birds play a vital role in the web of life and depend on quality habitat along and at both ends of their migration to thrive.

Tropical Wings is committed to engaging citizens in celebrating and sustaining this natural phenomenon through education and habitat preservation both in Costa Rica and the Upper Midwest.



Tropical Wings facilitates many activities as part of our mission including:

- *Engaging in habitat restoration*
- *Organizing an annual Bird Celebration in collaboration with local community groups*
- *Promoting the Sister Parks relationship and instilling an appreciation for the natural history and value of migratory birds by participating in existing community events throughout the St. Croix Watershed.*
- *Encouraging and organizing adult and student exchanges between the Upper Midwest and Costa Rica's Osa Peninsula for the purpose of education and service efforts.*



Sister Parks Updates

Osa Birds Research and Conservation By TW Secretary, Nina Koch
With contributions from Karen Leavelle—Osa Birds Research and Conservation Director



Tropical Wings offers an exciting trip to Costa Rica each February/March. Participants engage in a 12 day Bird-a-thon to collect pledges corresponding to the number of birds that are seen during their visit to Costa Rica. While Tropical Wings keeps half of the proceeds that are collected in order to support the annual Habitat Conservation Grants, the other half goes to OSA Birds, Research and Conservation in Costa Rica, which uses the money in much the same way on the Osa Peninsula.

There are many reasons Tropical Wings is proud to partner with Osa Birds. Like Tropical Wings, OSA Birds is a non-profit organization dedicated to conserving bird habitat for both resident and overwintering migratory birds. While Tropical Wings centers on the habitats in the St. Croix Valley region of Minnesota and Wisconsin, OSA Birds focuses on conservation on the Osa Peninsula of Costa Rica. Osa Birds most recently partnered with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service Central America "Wildlife Without Borders" program. This program seeks to create healthy habitats and sustainable livelihoods along the Caminos de Osa "pathways" trails on the Osa Peninsula through biological monitoring, a return to native landscapes, and the creation of "green" jobs. In response to Hurricane Otto in November 2016, which caused major flooding and landslides on the Osa Peninsula, Osa Birds is helping fund and reestablish Dos Brazos Native Plant Nursery which grows plants for reforestation. Osa Birds is also currently supporting other local nursery businesses, and the reforestation of degraded lands along key riparian zones to be held in conservation in perpetuity.



Proudly, Tropical Wings supports the annual International Migratory Bird Day Festival that is held in Puerto Jimenez, Costa Rica on the first Saturday of March. It is organized by Osa Birds and their Costa Rican partners. While this celebration says "adios" to the birds as they make their way north, Tropical Wings holds a similar Migration Celebration along the St. Croix Waterway in May (second weekend) to welcome the migrating birds to their summer breeding ground. Both organizations and the festival's focus their efforts on bringing an awareness to the neotropical migratory birds and the need for conservation.

Tropical Wings will be working closely with Osa Birds in future reforestation efforts in the fragmented parts of the Osa Peninsula to strengthen Osa's Biological Corridor, and to create habitat for our shared neotropical migratory birds to provide resources and refuge in their critical and sensitive wintering grounds.

Acknowledgements

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Partner Profiles

It takes cooperation of many organizations to protect migratory birds and conserve the ecosystems on which they rely. Tropical Wings partners with many entities throughout the St. Croix Watershed that perform vital conservation and education services for the animals and people of our community.

Both of the organizations featured in this issue's Partner Profile were recipients of the 2017 Tropical Wings Habitat Restoration Grant. Each year, Tropical Wings awards grants of up to \$1000 to individuals, businesses and organizations in the St. Croix River Watershed to preserve and restore bird habitat.

The Prairie Enthusiasts



Wide open prairies and oak savannas once covered the landscape of the Upper Midwest. Today only a tiny fraction of these fire-dependent ecosystems remain, harboring many specialized and endangered plants and animals in some of the rarest habitats on Earth. The community of Prairie Enthusiasts (TPE) strives to protect and manage these complex, beautiful natural areas and help others learn about their importance.

The Prairie Enthusiasts work with landowners, farmers, and other organizations to save these prairie and oak savanna remnants which have persisted on the land since before European settlement. TPE focuses on remnants because they harbor nearly all of the components (including life-forms such as microbes and insects) that make up a prairie community. TPE grassroots volunteers also plant and maintain native plantings. They share their knowledge, labor, and love of the land.

Organization description provided by <http://www.theprairieenthusiasts.org/whatwedo>.

Friends of Crex Meadows

The Friends of Crex (FOC) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization established in 1984 for the purpose of assisting with and supporting wildlife education and wildlife management activities at Crex Meadows and the other Glacial Lake Grantsburg properties. FOC provides volunteer and financial assistance needed to expand the wildlife education program and assist with wildlife management activities at Crex. FOC is composed of individuals from many different backgrounds interested in increasing public understanding, appreciation, support, and enjoyment of wildlife. With more than a thousand active members, the Friends of Crex is one of the largest friends groups associated with the Wisconsin DNR.

Each year, Friends of Crex members provide hundreds of hours of volunteer assistance and thousands of dollars of financial support. Their financial support has allowed the Crex staff to purchase equipment, supplies, and displays, and fund a Program Assistant/Naturalist position at the Visitor Center.

Organization description provided by <https://www.crexmeadows.org/friends-of-crex>.



Tropical Wings

Birding Journal By Tropical Wings President, Patty Mueller



Tropical Wings celebrates International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) each spring on the second weekend of May. This past May we held our Fourth Annual IMBD Celebration with activities from St. Croix Falls to Prescott in Wisconsin and Marine on St. Croix to Afton in Minnesota. IMBD is an especially significant celebration for Tropical Wings, as our focus is on Neotropical Migratory Birds, especially those birds shared by our "Sister Parks" in Costa Rica. Our Bird Celebration welcomes the birds "home" after their journey from Central and South America, Mexico and the Caribbean. They spend the few short summer months here, raising their young, before making the journey back to their winter homes during fall migration which peaks from August through October.

Through our Bird Celebration, we seek to raise awareness about the birds, their needs and how each person can take action to help the birds. Joining us as our Friday night Keynote Speaker this year was Tom Will, Migratory Bird Biologist Coordinator with the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Through an engaging and informative presentation, he taught us how an action as simple as planting trees

native to our region can have a tremendous impact on supporting our birds during the nesting season, when they have to find large quantities of caterpillars to feed their young. Research shows the native trees, such as Oaks, can support over 500 species of caterpillars, while non-native trees, like Ginkgo, support five. This is hugely important when you consider that it takes 6000 caterpillars to raise one brood (family) of chickadees!

We invite you to join us for our Fifth Annual Bird Migration Celebration May 11-13, 2018.

Watch for our Poetry Contest, open to all aspiring poets, with prizes going to winners in each age category.

One of last year's adult winner, John Mueller's poem is shared here:

"As quick as it had vanished
the hum returns
This time my eyes connect
to the bird floating still
with blurred wings
then quickly spinning and twirling
beak to flower, beak to flower,
beak to flower...

Here for just a moment in time
after a long perilous
seemingly impossible flight
from the rich humidity of rainforest
over oceans
guided by by stars
and ribbons of water
new spring blooms
laying trails of nourishing nectar
a fragile winged merchant
sometimes fighting
sometimes lifted by
the winds pulling him north..."



Bird Biographies

Northern Harrier (Circus cyaneus) By TW Board Member, Lynette Anderson

A slender, elegant bird, long of wing, glides magically across wetlands, prairies and meadows. It flies with a light and airy grace, moving low over the vegetation as it hunts its prey. The Northern Harrier is poetry in motion.

The Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) has the hooked beak and long talons typical of members of the raptor family. What helps to identify this bird are its long wings and tail and a distinctive white rump patch, which occurs on both male and female.

Harriers, like Turkey Vultures, hold their wings in a dihedral or V shape when flying. Their flight pattern when hunting is a floating dip and rise, side to side that is mesmerizing to watch.

The food of the Northern Harrier during mating and nesting season consists of insects, small rodents, small reptiles and smaller birds. In the winter they feed almost exclusively on meadow voles. Its owl like face and large ears help it to hear prey moving on the ground. When it finds a tasty treat, it will drop from the sky and pounce on the unsuspecting victim. They eat right where they are and when completely satiated will fly to a nearby post or perch where they sit until digestion is complete.

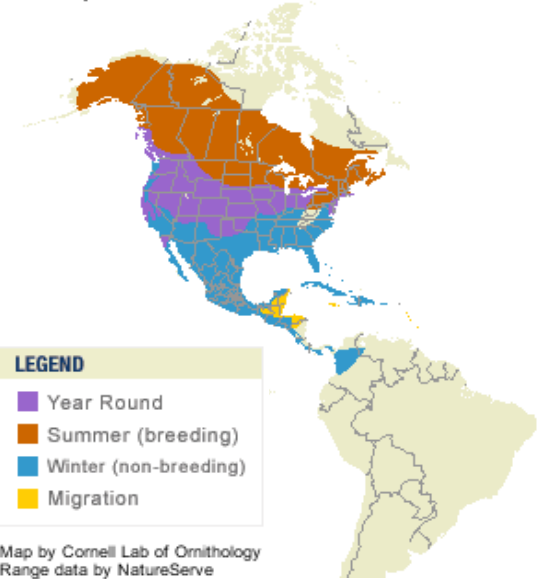


Mick Thompson



Tyler Ingram

Northern Harrier
Circus cyaneus



Map by Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Range data by NatureServe

These birds are ground nesters. Typically found in a dense clump of vegetation, the nest platform is made from cattail, alder and willow. The inside of the nest is lined with rushes, grasses and sedges. It takes roughly 1-2 weeks to complete. The male and female both help to bring in materials, however the female arranges everything to form the nest. The 4 or 5 eggs are incubated for about a month, and after hatching, the nestlings remain in the nest for only two weeks. For all birds, the nest is a dangerous place to be so the sooner they are out, the better!

Northern Harriers can be found throughout North America. As a long-distance migrant they usually travel alone, in the daytime, hunting as they go. These birds are also referred to as "leapfrog migrants" because individuals from the northern breeding populations winter farther south than individuals from southern breeding populations. They winter throughout Mexico and Central America, including the Osa Peninsula in Costa Rica.

On your next hike in a field, prairie or wetland be on the lookout for this cruising, graceful bird. Allow your self to just stop and watch. Be amazed by their fluid flight!

Taking the time to look and listen can bring us the peace, grace and beauty that the natural world offers. Happy hiking!

Fun Fact: Juvenile males have pale greenish-yellow eyes, while juvenile females have dark chocolate brown eyes. The eye color of both sexes changes gradually to lemon yellow by the time they reach adulthood.

Habitat Heroes

A Habitat Hero is a person or organization that has an extraordinary understanding of the importance of habitat protection, and a vision for implementing activities to raise awareness and build knowledge about conservation efforts.

Scrappy the Splashing Bass By TW Treasurer, Judith Freund



Scrappy the Splashing Bass was "born" in 2013. He was created for Hudson Riverfest to help raise awareness of the fragile nature of rivers, and our need to think twice about what we might casually throw into the river.

Scrappy was created by artist Mary Johnson, and is referred to as an "armature" that is able to hold trash. Each May he visits River Falls, specifically the Kinnikinnic Land Trust. The trash collected from the Kinni is affixed to Scrappy and he makes his appearance about town as a reminder of what finds its way into the river, and as a reminder of how these materials – from plastic can holders to metal object – even a wedding dress – might harm critters that inhabit the river. He appears in the Hudson Booster Days parade and the River Falls Days parade – typically coming last, and with a team of volunteers who hand out – you guessed it – trash bags to parade goers to deposit debris.

Scrappy is shamelessly "undressed", and awaits a new "skin" of trash that is collected during the St. Croix Cleanup during River Fest in Hudson. Appropriately "suited up" he is ready for the next round of appearances that include all the events of River Fest, Pepper Fest in North Hudson, Spirit on the St. Croix and even the Hot Air Affair in February. By now, he deserves a rest! Waiting for the next round of activities that begins each year, appropriately, on Earth Day, when he is undressed.

Many thanks go to Mary Johnson for the inspiration behind Scrappy. And to Liz Malanaphy who is in charge of Scrappy's wardrobe – both undressing and dressing. And lastly to the official "driver" who escorts Scrappy to all the events, Buck Malick.



Left: Artist Mary Johnson searches a local junkyard for materials to create Scrappy. **Middle left:** Scrappy's bare frame is mounted to a trailer so he can be easily transported across the St. Croix Watershed for environmental events. **Middle right:** Families help to "dress" Scrappy with trash collected from nearby waterways. **Right:** With his trash skin complete, Scrappy is displayed in Hudson Lakefront during Riverfest Week. Images from www.stcroixriverfest.org/scrappy/.