

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.
257 Cove Road
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!

Barbara Francis • Kent and Jan Johnson
Sally Leider • Deb Sussex • Fred Treiber



Tropical Wings *Newsletter*

Spring 2018 • Volume 2 • Issue 1

Celebrating the
YEAR OF THE BIRD
and the
50th Anniversary
of the
**WILD AND SCENIC
RIVERS ACT**



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: _____

COMPLETED MEMBERSHIP FORMS SHOULD BE MAILED WITH PAYMENT TO:
Tropical Wings, Inc., 257 Cove Road, Hudson, WI 54016

Tropical Wings

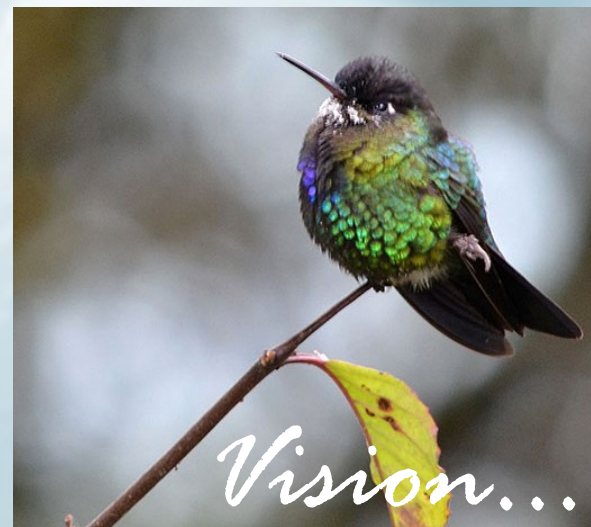


The mission of Tropical Wings is to support the Sister Parks Agreement between the National Park Service in the Upper Midwest and national parks on the Osa Peninsula of Costa Rica (SINAC/ACOSA) by promoting an awareness of Neotropical migratory birds and supporting habitat conservation through building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

Year of the Bird Youth Art Exhibition

By TW Secretary, Nina Koch

In honor of the 100th anniversary of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), National Geographic, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and the National Audubon Society have joined forces to make 2018 the Year of the Bird. The MBTA was passed in 1918 in response to the extinction and endangerment of many species of birds due to commercial trade in birds and feathers. The legislation "makes it illegal for anyone to take, possess, import, export, transport, sell, purchase, barter, or offer for sale, purchase, or barter, any migratory bird, or the parts, nests, or eggs of such a bird..." In order to protect birds that migrate across international borders, the MBTA implements Conventions (legislation) between the United States and four countries; Canada, Mexico, Japan, and Russia.

In the spirit of celebrating this monumental, international achievement, Tropical Wings is joining the Year of the Bird centennial by hosting a Year of the Bird Youth Art Exhibit during our annual Migratory Bird Celebration, which takes place May 11th and 12th. Preparation for the exhibition is well underway. This winter, Nanci Olesen, a Tropical Wings volunteer, worked with students from Lake Country Montessori School in Minneapolis to create artwork that was displayed at the 5th Annual Bird Festival in Puerto Jimenez, Costa Rica. Karen Leavelle and Pilar Bernal of Osa Birds also shared artwork from Costa Rican students at the festival.

In addition to being the centennial of the MBTA, this year also marks the 50th anniversary of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. To combine these celebrations as part of our Youth Art Exhibition, we are inviting students from the St. Croix River Valley to contribute art as well. The opening night of the 2018 Year of the Bird Youth Art Exhibit is on May 11th in conjunction with the Tropical Wings' Migratory Bird Celebration at the Phipps Center for the Arts. The event is free and open to the public, and all student artwork will be on display from May 11th through June 11th. For more information, please visit our website www.tropicalwings.org.



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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.

The organization featured in this issue’s Partner Profile was a recipient of the 2018 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.

River Crest Elementary School By TW Member, Jessie Eckroad

Established in 2008, River Crest is an environmental elementary school which serves the community of Hudson, Wisconsin. When the school was built, River Crest was one of only two Gold-rated Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) schools in the state. Today, the school offers a wide variety of nature-based educational programs for its over 500 students, including opportunities to learn outdoors in the school garden or on the school’s established prairie.

River Crest sought grant funding from Tropical Wings to help maintain and improve their prairie, which is managed in partnership between students and staff, the Prairie Enthusiasts, Hudson Fire Department, River Crest Parents Association, and the Agricultural Services & Educational Center of Wisconsin. By improving their prairie, River Crest hopes to create habitat for migratory birds and an opportunity for their students to observe and interact with the prairie ecosystem. They are excited by the prospect of engaging their Environmental Kids’ Club (grades 3-5) in migratory bird research and other citizen-science projects in the future.

In addition to partnering with Tropical Wings in habitat conservation efforts, River Crest will also be participating in the **2018 Year of the Bird Youth Art Exhibit** (see page 6).



Not only did the design and construction team for River Crest create a beautiful, environmentally friendly structure, they managed to complete the build at a cost that was 29% below the average cost for elementary schools built in the Midwest.



River Crest students take part in a wide range of environmentally-based activities, including participating in and learning about the importance of prairie burns (left), observing astronomical phenomena like the August 2017 solar eclipse (middle), and planting trees to create habitat for birds and other animals in their school yard (right).

Tropical Wings

Birding Journal By Tropical Wings President, Patty Mueller

Every spring we witness an amazing natural wonder, as birds that have been absent all winter, return to their breeding grounds. The early morning songs of our resident chickadees and cardinals are joined by our returning migrants, including the yellow warblers and baltimore orioles. Some of the migrants returning to the St. Croix River Watershed this spring spent the winter in the country of Costa Rica. Their wings carry them an astonishing 2500 miles on their journey to return to our backyards.

As humans are not equipped with wings, in order to make a similar journey, we must board an airplane. Ten members of Tropical Wings did just that when they traveled to Costa Rica this winter in order to participate in Tropical Wing’s second annual Birdathon. In addition to being an incredible travel opportunity, the Birdathon is also a fundraiser for conservation efforts. Each participant raised a minimum of \$500 to support conservation projects in the St. Croix Watershed and in Costa Rica.

Birdathon travelers experienced the many ecosystems found in this small country, and spotted 299 of Costa Rica’s 921 bird species, including 19 of the migratory birds that spend their summers “up north”, building their nests and raising their young in Minnesota and Wisconsin. As 2018 has been declared the **Year of the Bird** (see insert below), celebrating migratory species in Costa Rica was particularly pertinent. There is additional cause for celebration this year, as it is also the 50th Anniversary of the **Wild and Scenic Rivers Act** (see page 4), which has protected the St. Croix River and surrounding habitat as a haven for migratory birds.

The two week Birdathon included visiting three of our seven “Sister Parks” - the Golfo Dulce Forest Reserve, Terraba Sierpe National Wetlands and Corcovado National Park. We spent two nights in Corcovado National Park, considered the crown jewel of Costa Rica's national parks system. Corcovado was designated a protected area in 1975 and covers 103,290 acres with 13 major ecosystems including the largest intact lowland rainforest in Central America. In addition to the incredible diversity of birdlife, we also saw several of the 140 mammal species, including spider, howler, white-faced and squirrel monkeys, Baird’s Tapirs, and Collared Peccaries. Travelers came away with an increased awareness of the importance of healthy ecosystems, and a desire to promote conservation in the St. Croix River Watershed and in our Sister Parks on the Osa Peninsula of Costa Rica.



Patty Mueller



Matt Trevillion

Corcovado National Park (top) is a lush convergence of land, sea, and sky. It is teeming with plants and wildlife of all kinds, including migratory species that spend time in St. Croix River Watershed, such as Spotted Sandpiper (bottom).

2018

YEAR OF THE BIRD

To commemorate the centennial of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, 2018 has been declared the Year of the Bird. This year-long celebration began as a partnership between National Geographic Society, the National Audubon Society, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and BirdLife International, but now includes hundreds of organizations across the globe that are participating in raising awareness about migratory birds and engaging in migratory bird conservation efforts. Join us in celebrating the Year of the Bird by becoming a **Tropical Wings Member**, participating in our **Migratory Bird Celebration** from May 11th—13th, and attending our **Annual Meeting** on September 15th. For more information, please visit our website at www.tropicalwings.org.

Bird Biographies

American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*)

By TW Board Member, Lynette Anderson

"In order to see birds it is necessary to become part of the silence." - Robert Lynd

A light step, an alert awareness, an eager anticipation, these are some of the necessary ingredients for spring birding. This is the time of year when our hearts are full of excitement for longer days, warmer temperatures and the delightful chorus of returning birds!

One such bird is the American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*), which is a member of the Warbler family. This bird is referred to as “the butterfly of the bird world” because of its quick fluttering motions and bright orange color on the wings and tail. In Latin America they are called “Candalitas” or little torch.

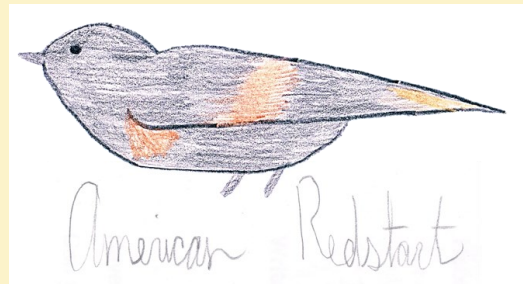
As an insect eater, it loves to hang out in the canopy gleaning food from leaves and twigs. Some of its preferred tasty tidbits are leafhoppers, planthoppers, flies, moths and their larvae, wasps and beetles. Similar to Flycatchers, they also “hawk” insects by flying out to catch the prey on the wing. Another hunting technique is to fan their tails and droop their wings, showcasing the bright orange and black or yellow and gray “flash patterns” of their plumage. This presumably startles the insect, causing it to flush from the vegetation. If successful, the Redstart gets a tasty treat! They will also eat small berries such as Serviceberry or Magnolia.

Redstarts are one of our more common warblers. They are summer residents of second-growth forests that have an abundant shrub component with close proximity to water. Their breeding range extends from the southeastern U.S to far northern Canada and Alaska. Winter habitat for a Redstart is typically tropical, including the Osa Peninsula, where they live in mangroves, shade-grown coffee and citrus plantations.

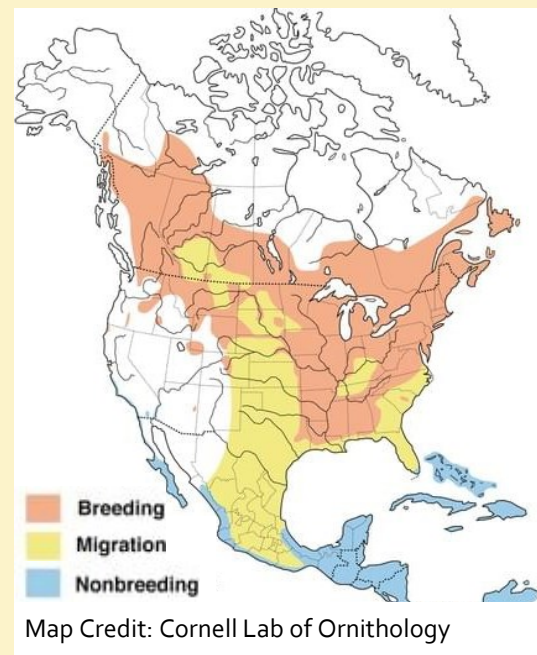
Here are 4 things to look for to help you identify the American Redstart:

- Size and shape – look for a medium sized warbler with a relatively wide, flat bill and fairly long expressive tail. Length 4-5 inches
- Color pattern – males are mostly black with bright orange patches on the sides, wings and tail. Belly is white. Females and immature males replace the orange with yellow or yellow-orange.
- Behavior – incredibly active insectivores that never seem to stand still. Rapidly spread their cocked tails exposing the orange or yellow in a quick flash which often startles insect prey in to flushing. Flit from branch to branch.
- Habitat – open, deciduous wooded areas in both winter and summer habitats.

These sweet singing birds are a treat to watch and a joy to listen to. Give yourself the gift of a spring walk and become part of the silence that allows us to enter the magic of the natural world.



The top illustration of a nesting Redstart pair was published in 1882 as part of *Nests and Eggs of Birds of The United States*, by Thomas Gentry. Over 130 years later, these colorful, flamboyant birds still capture the hearts of birders, including young people like Frankie, the creator of the bottom Redstart drawing. See page 6 for more info about the **2018 Year of the Bird Youth Art Exhibit** in which Frankie is participating.



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.

Walter Mondale and Gaylord Nelson

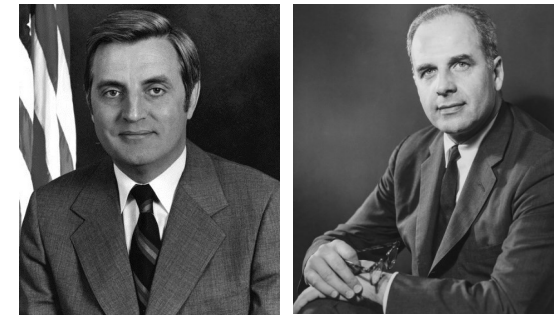
By TW Treasurer, Judith Freund

In 2018 the St. Croix River celebrates 50 years of protection under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. As the second half of the 20th century saw an increase in polluted rivers, the idea to create clean water began to become apparent. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act was the culmination of two local environmental giants – Walter Mondale and Gaylord Nelson.

Nelson entered the US Senate in 1963 and Mondale a year later. There had been a number of stresses on the St. Croix at that point, including development, looming power plants and dams that were proposed by the Army Corps of Engineers. In 1965 Nelson introduced the first piece of legislation to protect scenic rivers into the US Congress. In that year, LBJ expressed interest in the need to build a system of protection for the Nation's Rivers. There was not much Congressional support for the legislation at that time.

A few years later, in 1967, Nelson, along with Walter Mondale, again introduced legislation to protect the Nation's rivers - and this time the effort attracted interest. The cost of acquiring easements along the St. Croix and Namekagon loomed a deal breaker until NSP (now Excel Energy), which had acquire property along the St. Croix and Namekagon following the logging in the early 1890's, offered easements at no cost. They wanted the rivers to be “the peoples’ rivers.” There were ultimately many key players and events that lead to the signing in 1968 of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. But it is safe to say that Walter Mondale and Gaylord Nelson are two of the river's environmental super-heroes!

Walter Mondale (top left). Gaylord Nelson (top right). President Lyndon B. Johnson shakes hands with Senator Mondale at the pen presentation following the 1968 signing of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (middle). Gaylord Nelson, Wisconsin Governor Patrick Lucey, and Walter Mondale look out over the construction of the eastbound I-94 bridge near Hudson in 1972 (bottom).



Wild and Scenic Rivers Act

Passed in 1968, The National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act declared that “*certain selected rivers of the Nation which, with their immediate environments, possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural or other similar values, shall be preserved in free-flowing condition, and that they and their immediate environments shall be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.*”

The original Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSR) designated were 1) Clearwater, Idaho 2) Eleven Point, Missouri 3) Feather, California 4) Rio Grande, New Mexico 5) Rogue, Oregon 6) Salmon, Idaho 7) Wolf, Wisconsin and 8) St. Croix, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Today, the WSR system protects 12,734 miles of 208 rivers in 40 states and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.