

# The Cherokee Marsh News

The newsletter of the Friends of Cherokee Marsh

## New bird checklist available for Cherokee Marsh

Timothy Baker

Birds might be the most popular group of animals at just about any natural area, and Cherokee Marsh is no exception! The variety of sounds, colors, and behaviors of our local and migrant birds is seemingly endless, and birding is among the most popular activities at Cherokee Marsh.

In fact, Cherokee Marsh is a hotspot well known to many bird enthusiasts, and at different times of the year several rare or unusual species can be found there. Until now, though, there has been no organized bird species checklist.

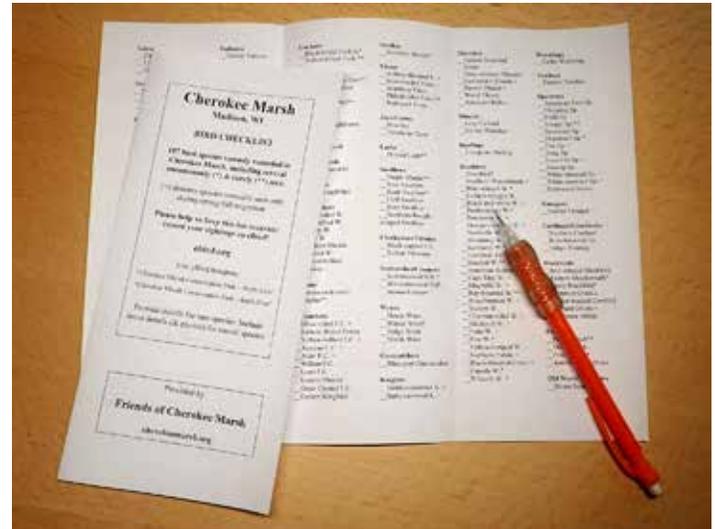
Many parks and conservation areas maintain a checklist of bird species and the idea of a checklist for Cherokee Marsh often comes up at our meetings and events. This winter, using data from eBird.org and local birders familiar with Cherokee Marsh, we created a checklist of 187 bird species confirmed to have been seen there in the last five years.

Determining which species to include was a lengthy process, beginning with compiling every report we could find into a single list, then winnowing out those species we considered outliers (only one report, never seen before or since) or no longer present (not seen for more than five years).

For example, several species of shorebirds were seen on exposed mud flats during the drought of 2012, but did not make the list because the habitat they require does not exist there most years and those species were never observed before or since. On the other hand, American Black Duck has been recorded only once, but it was very recent (December 2014) and seen by several people, so it appears on the checklist.

The completed checklist is at [cherokeemarsh.org/visit](http://cherokeemarsh.org/visit) and is free for anyone to print or save to a computer, phone, or tablet. When printed double-sided, it can be tri-folded like a typical brochure; the entire checklist appears on one side of the sheet and a legend with additional information appears on the reverse side.

Many species are identified as uncommonly seen (\*), rarely seen (\*\*), or seen only during spring/fall migrations (+); these determinations are based solely on how often they are found at Cherokee Marsh.



Timothy and Elizabeth Baker created this checklist for recording bird sightings in Cherokee Marsh.

This checklist will continue to be updated as the data changes, and you can help by reporting the birds you see! Logging your bird sightings on [eBird.org](http://eBird.org) is free, easy, and fun; you can use it to track your own sightings (anonymously if you prefer) and to find out what birds other people have been seeing.

To ensure that your entries are helping us maintain an accurate checklist for Cherokee Marsh, be sure to use the

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## Checklist *(continued from page 1)*

appropriate “Hotspot” within eBird; for example, if you are in the North Unit (at the end of N. Sherman Ave), you should use eBird Hotspot *Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park - North Unit*.

## Rezoning requested for parcel adjacent to conservation park

The Cherokee Park Neighborhood Association (CPNA) recently received notice that developer Cherokee Park, Inc. (CPI) has applied for a zoning change for two acres adjacent to Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park. The parcel, at 1507 Burning Wood Way in the Cherokee Park neighborhood, is just north of the end of Burning Wood Way where it meets Comanche Way.

The parcel borders a strip of public shoreline along the Yahara River to the west, conservation park land to the north, and the Cherokee Golf Course to the east.

In 2007, the site was approved for three duplex homes, and in 2008, the approval was changed to allow three single-family houses. No development occurred, and the approvals have expired.

CPI is now requesting rezoning to allow either three duplex homes or three single-family houses. If approved, the developer intends to install public utilities, street, and sidewalks this summer with sales and construction to follow immediately.

As we reported in our Feb/Mar 2015 newsletter, Madison Parks plans to add a public trail that will connect the parcel and the Cherokee Park neighborhood to the trail system in the conservation park.

CPNA is requesting a meeting with the developer to obtain more information. When available, we will post details at [Cherokeemarsh.org](http://Cherokeemarsh.org) and on our Facebook page.

## Celebrate Bird City Day

Sunday, April 19, 12 noon – 4 pm

Warner Park “Rainbow” Shelter, 1625 Northport Dr

Celebrate Bird City Day, birds, and nature with an afternoon of fun events, games and activities. Stop by and see us at our table. Discover the new Northside Nature Center inside the Warner Park Community and Recreation Center. Help plant a tree. Take a Bird and Nature Walk. Play Bird Bingo. Sing and dance with the Wingin’ It Bird Band. Do a Big Sit on Bird Island for the Great Wisconsin Birdathon. For times and details, call 608-698-0104 or visit [cityofmadison.com/parks](http://cityofmadison.com/parks).

Whether you are a serious birder or just curious about what to expect in the marsh, we hope you will find this new checklist useful. Spring migration is just getting started, so get outside and see what you can see!

## Peatmarsh Paddlers fundraiser tour announced

In February, we announced two special tours to benefit the Cherokee Marsh Conservation Fund. Those tours filled within hours, but we are happy to announce a new event: a Cherokee Marsh Birdathon paddle tour to benefit the Bird Conservation Fund.

**Marshbirds of Cherokee Marsh fundraiser paddle tour with the Peatmarsh Paddlers**

**Saturday, May 9, 5:00 pm – 8:00 pm**

Paddle the upper Yahara River at Cherokee Marsh in search of marshbirds such as green heron, great blue heron, northern harrier, sora, Virginia rail, sedge wren, and sandhill crane. We’ll also have a chance of spotting bald eagle, wood ducks and other waterfowl, and other marsh critters. You must bring your own canoe, kayak, or stand-up paddleboard (SUP). Launch location and other details will be provided on registering.

Leaders: Timothy Baker and Jan Axelson.

This tour is a fundraiser to benefit the Bird Protection Fund. Managed by the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, the fund supports bird conservation projects and programs identified as priorities by authorities such as the Wisconsin Wildlife Action Plan, the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Minimum donation is \$25/person. Get more information or join the team at [wibirdathon.org](http://wibirdathon.org).

## Friends help fund field studies for students

We’ve donated \$1125 this year to help pay for transportation for naturalist-led field studies in Cherokee Marsh for local schoolchildren. The amount includes \$625 in dedicated funds from our members plus \$500 from the Friends’ general fund. A big thanks to all who contributed!

If you would like to contribute, see the form on the last page of this newsletter or visit [Cherokeemarsh.org](http://Cherokeemarsh.org).

# Friends sponsor species for Breeding Bird Atlas II

This year marks the beginning of the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II, a 5-year project to document the distribution and abundance of birds that breed in Wisconsin. A major purpose of the atlas is to provide data to help identify the conservation needs of breeding birds.

As the name suggests, the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II is an update to the first Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas. Published in 2000, the first atlas documented 235 bird species that were probable or confirmed breeders in Wisconsin.

The atlas is a project of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, and other conservation groups.

The majority of contributors to the atlas will be volunteers, but the project has expenses, and one way to help is to sponsor a species. A donor who sponsors a species for each of the project's five years will be credited on the species' page in the atlas. The cost per year ranges from \$100 (for most species) up to \$2000/year.

In support of the project, the Friends of Cherokee Marsh have contributed \$500 to sponsor the common yellowthroat for five years. We chose the yellowthroat because it's a wetland bird that nests in Cherokee Marsh and because it's a colorful bird that you're likely to hear and see on any spring or summer visit to the marsh. Look for common yellowthroats in shrubby vegetation and listen for their distinctive wichey-wichey-wichey call.

The atlas depends on volunteers for field observations. If you observe breeding behavior in Cherokee Marsh (or anywhere in the state), you can contribute your data by



*To identify the male common yellowthroat, look for its bright yellow breast and black mask.* Photo by Arlene Koziol.

using the special online eBird Atlas portal. Examples of breeding behavior are a bird seen in suitable habitat, building a nest, or on nest.

For more information about Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II, see:

[wsobirds.org/about-the-atlas](http://wsobirds.org/about-the-atlas)

The eBird portal for Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II is at:

[ebird.org/content/atlaswi](http://ebird.org/content/atlaswi)

## Memorial donation

Our thanks to member Margaret Jensen for her memorial donation of \$15 in memory of Tony Farina.



*On March 19, a crew from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources performed a successful prescribed burn in the Cherokee Marsh State Natural Area. The area was last burned in November, 2011.* Photo by Jim Hughes. See more photos at [flickr.com/photos/widnr](http://flickr.com/photos/widnr).

# Events calendar

Don't miss out on last-minute events that don't make it into this calendar. For the latest event information, *Like* us on Facebook, join our email group, or visit [CherokeeMarsh.org](http://CherokeeMarsh.org).

If you want to be added to our email notification list for volunteer events, email [info@cherokeemarsh.org](mailto:info@cherokeemarsh.org).

## Monthly bird and nature walks

**Sunday, April 5 AND**

**Sunday, May 3, AND**

**First Sunday of EVERY month**

**ALWAYS 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm**

**Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park, North Unit**

Free, monthly, family-friendly bird and nature walks.

Sponsored by the Friends of Cherokee Marsh, Madison Parks, and Madison Audubon Society. Contact Paul Noeldner at [paul\\_noeldner@hotmail.com](mailto:paul_noeldner@hotmail.com) or 608-698-0104.

## Help with a prescribed burn

**Tuesday, April 7, 10 am, may work through lunch**

**Yahara Heights County Park, Caton Ln entrance.** Bring drinking water & wear "fire safe" clothing (no nylon) and a hat. Sponsored by Dane County Parks. To sign up, call Rhea at (608) 224-3601.

## Garlic mustard pull

**Saturday, April 11, 12 noon – 3 pm**

**Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park, North Unit**

Make room for native wildflowers by helping to pull garlic mustard on the hill. No experience needed. Sponsored by the Madison Area Weed Warriors.

## Tour the South Cherokee restoration

**Wednesday, April 15, 6:30 – 8:00 pm**

**Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park, South Unit.** Meet at 1000 Wheeler Rd (corner of Wheeler Rd and Ilene Ln)

Witness the rebirth of oak savanna habitat along the shores of glacial Lake Mendota. Ponds constructed nearby in 2012 treat urban storm water while providing wildlife habitat. We'll look for early migrating birds in and around the ponds. Sponsored by Madison Parks.

## Evening at Cherokee Marsh

**Friday, April 17, 6:30 – 8:30 pm**

**Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park, North Unit**

We are likely to see cranes, observe the courtship flight of woodcock and snipe, and see several spring migrants. Binoculars recommended. Sponsored by the Friends of Cherokee Marsh and Madison Audubon Society. More information.

## Warbler walk

**Wednesday, May 6, 6:00 am – 8:00 am**

**Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park, North Unit**

Join us for an early morning walk to look for colorful warblers and other spring migrants. Binoculars recommended. Sponsored by the Friends of Cherokee Marsh and Madison Audubon Society.

## Locations

**Cherokee Marsh Conservation Park, North Unit.** Travel north on N. Sherman Ave to the main parking lot at the end of the gravel road.

**Yahara Heights County Park, Caton Ln entrance.** From central Madison, heading north on HWY 113/Northport Dr., just past HWY M, turn right on River Rd., then right on Riverview Dr., and right on Caton Ln. For volunteer events only, drive into the park from the end of Caton Ln.

Plan ahead! Find summer and fall event listings at [Cherokeemarsh.org](http://Cherokeemarsh.org)

## Friends of Cherokee Marsh

PO Box 3390

Madison WI 53704

[info@CherokeeMarsh.org](mailto:info@CherokeeMarsh.org)

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

*To protect, preserve, and restore the beauty, value, and health of the Cherokee Marsh and upper Yahara River watershed.*

### Directors

Jan Axelson (President)

Timothy Baker

Janet Battista (Vice President)

Dana Erlandsen

Jim Krause

Lesleigh Luttrell (Treasurer)

Paul Noeldner

Justin Sargent

Muriel Simms

Dick Walker

Dorothy Wheeler (Secretary)

### Advisor

Don Hammes

# Membership and contribution form

## YES! I want to be a Friend of Cherokee Marsh.

The Friends of Cherokee Marsh are dedicated to protecting, preserving, and restoring the beauty, value, and health of Cherokee Marsh and the upper Yahara River watershed. Your contribution of time, talent, or funds will help preserve and restore the crucial wetland ecosystem of Cherokee Marsh.

Memberships are per calendar year. New memberships paid after June 30 are valid through the current and following year.

- Individual \$15
- Family \$25
- Mallard \$50
- Additional donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Additional donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_ in honor of \_\_\_\_\_
- Osprey \$100
- Sandhill Crane \$250
- Great Blue Heron \$500
- Additional donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_ in memory of \_\_\_\_\_

### Additional donation to the Cherokee Marsh Conservation Fund:

- \$25
- \$50
- \$100
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Find out more about the Cherokee Marsh Conservation Fund at [CherokeeMarsh.org/conserve](http://CherokeeMarsh.org/conserve)

### Additional donation to fund transportation to bring schoolchildren to the marsh for field studies:

- \$25
- \$50
- \$100
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Family member(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Second (family member) Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_  Don't publicize my financial support.

I'm interested in helping with:  Field work  Publicity  Tours  Education  Board/Committees

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail this form and payment to:

**Friends of Cherokee Marsh, PO Box 3390, Madison WI 53704**

Thank you for joining us in our effort to protect this valuable resource!

The Friends of Cherokee Marsh is a Federal tax-exempt charitable organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.