

Adam Birding Conservancy

A Prairie & Wetlands Reserve in Cold Spring, WI

2024 Mid-Year Update

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Two more new sighted species in February and seven swan cygnets a swimming in June.

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Exploring white water crowfoot (the stuff that bloomed in the east ponds in May)

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The State of Wisconsin just designated two sites on the ABC as having Native/Indigenous Peoples activity.

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Learn about educational outreach, a ROUS and catch a sneak peek on upcoming research.



Welcome to the New Newsletter Format

After two years of less rain than normal, 2024 has been a wet one with water levels high in the ponds and on the Bark River. Rich and Donnie have not been able to mow some of the spur trails off the Inner Peace loop and the bushwacked path along the Bark berm. It also meant less waterfowl activity in our ponds given so many other wet spots in the vicinity.

ABC highlights in the first half of 2024 include welcoming our largest trumpeter swan family ever, state designation of the ABC as a site of Native American importance, the discovery of an unusual rock and our first expo educational outreach effort.

New Newsletter Format

This issue marks the first attempt at a semi-annual update in addition to occasional website and Facebook/Instagram posts. Suggestions are encouraged. Also let me know if you'd like to be dropped from the list or wish to have others added.



Feedback: adambirdingconservancy@gmail.com



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Birding Update

Thanks to all the ABC visitors who log their findings and share pictures, audio and add comments on eBird! It truly helps us in understanding what is passing through and how habitat changes are impacting birding communities.



⇒ The Trumpeter Swan couple had seven cygnets this spring, making their nest in the middle of the Blackbird Blind pond. It was awesome watching the little ones take their first 'plop' from the nest into the water. If all goes well, they should be on this pond until fall.

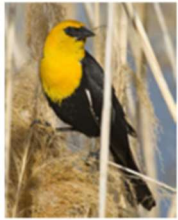


⇒ Two new bird species were sighted in February – a Ross's Goose and a Northern Saw-whet Owl, pushed the ABC total up to 215 different species.



⇒ Hint: After gorging on Brenda's feeders in early April, the Yellow-Headed Blackbirds increasingly spend their spring in the cattails closer to the Bark River than by the Blackbird blind pond that has been commandeered by the Trumpeters.





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Perspectives on Plants

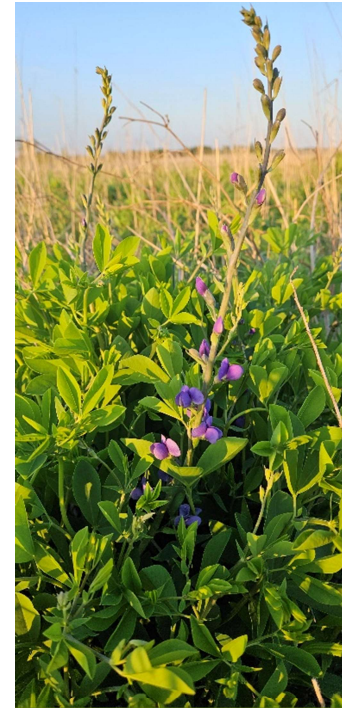
It looks like the pesky sweet clover is more subdued this year than last. It is a biannual plant that takes two years to reach maturation and is stimulated by a burn. As our last prescribed burn was in 2022 with no burns likely until 2026 at the earliest, this year seems to be an 'off' year.



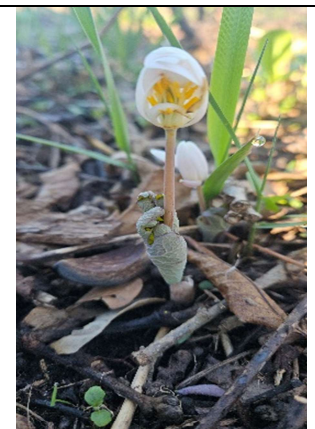
White water crowfoot is a beneficial native aquatic plant in the buttercup family that bloomed profusely in the Trumpeter Blind pond this spring.

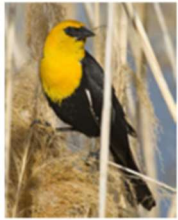


Crowfoot grows in mats on the surface of shallow water. See the pond pics taken from the Trumpeter Blind of the ruddy duck at left and blue-winged teal at right. It contains a toxic compound called protoanemonin that is released when the plant is wounded (say when it is eaten or picked). It can cause skin irritation and blistering. If swallowed, crowfoot can cause burning of the mouth and digestive tract, as well as nausea, vomiting and convulsions.



The plant is most poisonous when it is flowering or experiencing vigorous growth. Luckily, due to its nasty nature and acrid taste, animals stop eating it and usually don't ingest enough to cause significant internal damage or death.





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Archaeology Activity

My first degree was in accounting and one of my master's degrees was in archaeology...so if you see me and I'm looking down at my shoes, it's because I'm an introvert who dig rocks.

The ABC hosted the Wisconsin Archaeological Field School on a day in May with over 20 students and staff of the State spending the morning shovel testing at the conservancy. Ten objects were found, primarily flakes with a broken knife, most of which is made from Prairie du Chen chert.

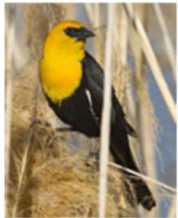
In addition to another thirtyish objects I've found since 2022, enough Native American material has been collected for the state or record a Native American presence on two sites at the ABC and one on an adjacent property. River access coupled with freshwater springs that don't freeze in the winter probably aided in the suitability of the area for Indigenous Peoples.

In addition, and to be covered in a later newsletter, Abe Lincoln was known to be in the area around Burnt Village two miles to the west of the ABC in July of 1832 during the sad time known as the Black Hawk War.

Pics on this page described clockwise from the upper right:

- ⇒ Field School meets in parking lot to learn of various types of artifacts
- ⇒ Field School shovel testing
- ⇒ My two 2022 finds that piqued my curiosity...a Waubesa Contracting Stem Point ~ 500BCE and a St Charles hafted scraper ~ 6,000BCE (D Adam 2022)
- ⇒ Broken knife (Field School 2024)
- ⇒ Fire-cracked rock used to warm up soups in deer hide bags (D Adam 2024)
- ⇒ Archaeology Field School findings from the shovel testing this May
- ⇒ Scraper (D Adam 2024)





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Miscellaneous Stuff

Meet an Ancient ROUS



The bottom rock in this cairn is a Rock of Unusual Structure that was recovered this spring.

Called a Xenolith, it has a migratory story as interesting as most birds at the conservancy. The small black rock (termed a Batholith) is cooled volcanic lava magma from the earth's crust that wrapped around basalt, siltstone or shale bits as it bursts to the surface before landing on a larger igneous rock. Most batholiths burn into the rock and then burn up or crumble as they cool.

This one stuck. It's likely this mass came from granite outcrops in the Lake Superior area and was 'transported' south with the Wisconsin Glacial Episode over 10,000 years ago.

Successful 6th Annual NRF Bird Trip



Thanks to Aaron Stutz and Mike Adam for guiding our annual Natural Resources Foundation (NRF) birding trip in May. We've successfully seen more than fifty species a year thanks to the eyes and ears of Aaron and Mike.

ABC Badgers



There are about twenty holes on Camp Randall, the hill behind (to the south of) the ABC parking lot where the badgers play. In geological terms, this is a drumlin, created by the Wisconsin glaciation period during the end of the Ice Age. It contains sandy and easy to burrow soil that is ideal badger habitat. Our Facebook poll on the pic above concluded the badger has a ground squirrel in its mouth.

Whitewater STEM Expo



My better half helped out at the first Whitewater STEM Expo the same day as our NRF birding hike. Our educational game was matching bird nests (plastic pots) with their preferred habitat with the bonus round attempting to match the bird's eggs in the proper nest. Very impressed with the interest in the game and the property and the excitement level of the youth!

Coming Attractions....

We've just added a new walking path through the woods that goes past some of our larger trees and highlights the wooded wildflowers. Several surveys are in the works or in the planning stage – the DNR is conducting a bat survey in July, the next few months UW-Madison will be on-site every few weeks studying bees and we might get a herp study from a team from Illinois. More to come in the winter newsletter.

ABC YouTube Videos



Our YouTube channel shows a rabbit entering unwillingly into one of these holes this April. On the same video, one can see footage of river otters mating. With the Olympics upon us, seek out my favorite video of one of our badgers doing a 360 twist and flip.

Summer Creatures at the ABC

Just because birding activity is subdued in the summer doesn't mean there aren't creatures to observe at the ABC. The family of painted turtles (left) and a black swallowtail (right) are examples. Plus, the trumpeter family might be out for a swim when you stop by...

