

## April 2023 News Update

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### Upcoming Programs

#### Nest Box Trail Walk at Pope Farm Conservancy

**Saturday, May 13th, 2023 at 2PM**

Have you ever wondered.... Why is there a nest box trail at Pope Farm? How often are the boxes monitored? When and why are the boxes cleaned out? What species cause problems for the native cavity nesters? Join us on Saturday, May 13th at 2PM to find out the answers! Trail monitors Pat Ready and Curt Caslavka will be at Pope Farm Conservancy to lead us on a walk and share their knowledge about nest box trails placed around the conservancy. Learn first-hand what species use nest boxes and the type of habitat they need. Nest box type, poles, and predator guards will be explained, as well.



#### Event Details:

**Date/Time:** Saturday, May 13th, 2023, 2PM

**Location:** Pope Farm Conservancy, 7440 Old Sauk Rd, Verona, WI 53593 (lower parking lot)

**Hosted by:** Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy

**Presenters:** Pat Ready and Curt Caslavka

**Cost:** Free and open to the public. No registration needed.

**Event Website:** <https://www.popefarmconservancy.org/events/nest-box-trail-walk/>

## Spring Migration Birding Tour

**Saturday, June 3, 2023 (7:30AM)**



Join us for an exciting early morning avian adventure, as local birding expert Mike McDowell leads us on a birding tour at Pope Farm Conservancy. We typically see and hear dozens of different spring birds, including bluebirds, indigo buntings, eastern wood-pewees, wild turkeys, great crested flycatchers, and more. Mike will offer techniques to help you enjoy identifying and observing birds in their preferred habitats. This is a great way to start the day and meet other local birders. You might even see a few birds to add to your life list!

All ages are welcome. Wear good walking shoes and dress for the weather. Don't forget to bring your binoculars and camera, too.

### **Program Details:**

**Date/Time:** Saturday, June 3, 2023 (7:30AM)

**Location:** Pope Farm Conservancy, 7440 Old Sauk Rd, Verona, WI 53593 (lower parking lot)

**Speaker:** Mike McDowell

**Cost:** Free and open to the public. No registration required. All ages welcome.

**Event Website:** <https://www.popefarmconservancy.org/events/migratory-birding-tour/>

## **Recap of March Programs**

### **Raptor Talk with Madison Audubon - March 14th**

On Tuesday, March 14th, the Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy invited members of the Madison Audubon Society to present on the Audubon's involvement in raptor research and citizen science projects in Wisconsin. The presentation took place at Pope Farm Elementary School, and we had about 25 people attending in person and 55 people viewing the live stream online via Zoom. The presenters included Mark Martin, Drew Cashman, Graham Steinauer, Emma Raasch, and Pat Ready.

Diane Smidt from the FOPFC Programs Committee started the evening with a nice introduction highlighting Mark Martin and Sue Foote-Martin's involvement with conservation groups in Wisconsin and long-time careers with the Wisconsin DNR. Both Mark and Sue will be inducted into the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame in April 2023!

Mark Martin then gave a quick overview of Madison Audubon's raptor research and conservation efforts. He explained that the transmitters they use to track certain species of birds contain a solar panel, a battery, a GPS system, and a cell phone. Some transmitters can even take the bird's temperature and record elevation and flying speed!

Pictured right: A Rough-legged Hawk named Jeffrey with a Madison Audubon transmitter. Photo by Neil Paprocki.



The first presenter of the night was Drew Cashman who helped to grow a Bald Eagle Nest Watch Program in Wisconsin with Madison Audubon and several other organizations around the state. The program is now in its 6th season and has grown to monitor 170 nests with 456 volunteers in 36 counties of Wisconsin. The data collected by these volunteers is critical now that the DNR no longer has the resources to monitor these nests.

The next presenter was Graham Steinauer who introduced us to the Red-shouldered Hawk and the Northern Harrier. Graham talked about the birds' identification, habitat, diet, nesting and breeding, migration, and population status. He then explained how the red-shouldered hawks are banded (pictured right) and how the transmitters are attached to the adult birds.



Our third speaker, Emma Raasch, spoke about the Rough-legged Hawk Project in Wisconsin. Emma explained how these hawks are trapped using a Bal-Chatri trap, what data is collected about each bird, and how the transmitters they attach to these hawks capture important migration data. One hawk they named Dorothy logged a whopping 1,175 miles roundtrip from Goose Pond Sanctuary to her summer home in northern Quebec.

Our next speaker was Pat Ready who talked about monitoring American Kestrel boxes. Pat shared information about the kestrels' life cycle and biology and their ability to hover while hunting prey. It's unclear why the kestrel population has been declining in Wisconsin over the past 10 years but Pat says putting out nest boxes is one way to help the kestrel numbers. He then explained how he installs and monitors kestrel nest boxes across southern Wisconsin.

Pictured right: A kestrel incubating eggs inside a nest box. Photo by Pat Ready.



Our final speaker of the night was Mark Martin who talked about Project SNOWstorm and the tracking of snowy owls across Wisconsin. The transmitters attached to the owls track the birds' movement every hour and report data back three times a week. Finally, Mark talked about the Red-tailed Hawk Project, which is a long-term study about the 14

subspecies of red-tailed hawks. The goal is to learn about the genetics of these different subspecies and why some species migrate, and others don't.

If you missed this presentation, we highly recommend watching the recording. You can now view it on YouTube here: <https://youtu.be/9hYizSQL9FQ>

Feel free to share with others, as well!

Thanks again to all the presenters from Madison Audubon; to Diane from the FOPFC Programs Committee; to Janie Starzewski for tech support; and to all those who tuned in to watch this fascinating program.

## **News From the Friends**

### **Signage Replacement Begins**

The Friends are waiting for spring to arrive to begin our efforts to help the Town of Middleton replace most of the signage at the Conservancy. We managed to replace a few of the signs before the weather changed back to winter. All the equipment and signs are ready to go, and we just need spring weather to arrive.

We hope to see you out on the trails.

## **Upcoming FOPFC Meetings**

### **Education Team Meeting – VIRTUAL**

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday, April 25th, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

**Zoom Link:** Email Doug Piper (dlpiper0413@gmail.com) for the meeting link.

**Discussion topics:** We will finalize the new walking tour pamphlets with QR labels, and work on strategy for promoting our video series.

### **Programs Committee**

**Next Meeting:** Friday, April 14th, 2023, 1:00 p.m., 202 Saratoga Circle, Madison, WI 53705.

Our Programs Committee is finalizing our programs and events calendar for 2023. If interested in event planning or leading a program, please contact Diane Smidt (diane.smidt@gmail.com). All are welcome to join anytime!



## **Photo Contest 2023**

It may not feel quite like spring yet, but 2023 Nature Photography Contest is now officially open for entries! This year's themes are spring and summer:

- Landscape
- Prairie Plants

The contest is open to amateur photographers of all ages who are members of the Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy (FOPFC).

We are looking forward to seeing all the entries!

The deadline to submit photos is July 15, 2023.

Visit our website for more information:

<https://www.popefarmconservancy.org/events/nature-photography-contest/>



## **Reminders**

### **Renew Your Membership**

Just a reminder...you can now renew your membership online at

<https://www.popefarmconservancy.org/membership>, or you can renew by mail. Please send a check (Payable to FOPFC) to FOPFC, 10333 Blackhawk Road, Middleton, WI 53562.

If you have already renewed your membership, THANK YOU! We hope you enjoy being a part of our community. For questions regarding your membership, please send an email to [info@popefarmconservancy.org](mailto:info@popefarmconservancy.org).

## **Volunteer Opportunities**

- The **PR/Communications Team** needs help writing stories and short articles for our publications. We are also looking for photo submissions for the "Photo of the Month" feature. If interested, please email us at [info@popefarmconservancy.org](mailto:info@popefarmconservancy.org).
- The **Programs Committee** is currently planning events and educational talks for 2023. If you would like to get involved or share your ideas for programs offered at the conservancy, please contact Diane Smidt ([diane.smidt@gmail.com](mailto:diane.smidt@gmail.com)) or come to the Programs Committee meeting on April 14<sup>th</sup>.

If there's another activity you'd like to help with, please fill out the Volunteer Interests Form on our website: <https://www.popefarmconservancy.org/volunteer/>

## **Connect with FOPFC Online**

- Website: <https://www.popefarmconservancy.org>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfPopeFarmConservancy>
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/friendsofpopefarmconservancy>
- Flickr: <https://www.flickr.com/groups/fopfc-photos>

**Thank you for supporting the Friends of Pope Farm Conservancy!**  
**Our journey is ongoing, and YOU are part of it!**

