

Hawk Weekend Festival 2024

Detailed Event Information

Must pre-register online for all field trips/workshops/evening events

Festival wristband required for all field trips/workshops and daily programs at Hawk Ridge

Registration – will close on Sunday 9/15

A la carte Registration – register for individual event selections. Early Bird Discount available through Tuesday, August 15th (\$5 off each a la carte field trip/workshop/program). Please send an email to jlong@hawkridge.org with questions or to see if there's waiting list availability for any full/closed events.

COST: varies by event (members/students receive discounted prices on all events).

Offered Fri. 9/20 ONLY!

Sax-Zim Bog Birding and Natural History Tour

Friday, September 20, 2024 (LIMIT 20, min. 10)

Cost: \$50 members/students, \$60 non-members

Meeting Location: meeting at Menards Parking Lot, 4809 Miller Trunk Hwy, Hermantown, MN (near Kwik Trip off of Hwy 53 and Arrowhead Road). **Transportation:** Carpooling as comfortable/possible

Meeting Time: 7:30 am; return 3-3:30pm **Duration:** 5-6 hour tour (not including travel time)

Description: The Sax-Zim Bog is a well-known bird watching location during the winter months. Visitors come from far and wide to experience winter birds like Pine Grosbeak, Common Redpoll, Northern Shrike, and Northern Hawk Owl, as well as resident species like Great Gray Owl, Boreal Chickadee, Canada Jay, and Black-backed Woodpecker. Many of the species that call the Bog home year-round specialize using bog habitats. This field trip will have a focus on birds, but will also consider the bogs in the landscape and the Friends of Sax-Zim Bog's work to help preserve the amazing ecosystems in the Sax-Zim Bog!

Field Trip Expectations/Preparation/Notes: Be prepared for birding from gravel roadways or boardwalks. Any hiking done will be short in duration and distance on fairly level surfaces. Bugs will not likely be too bad at this time of year, but do bring bug spray if desired. Plan on bringing a lunch/snacks along on the trip so we can maximize our time exploring the region. There isn't a need for mud boots etc for this field trip.

Leader: Clinton Dexter-Nienhaus, Head Naturalist, Friends of Sax-Zim Bog

University of MN Duluth Biology Seminar

Friday, September 20, 2024

Cost: FREE (no registration required)

Location: University of MN Duluth, Life Science Building Room 185 (LSci 185) (Click [HERE](#) for parking map)

Time: 3:00pm

Description: **Mercy Melo, from the Pennsylvania Game Commission, will present “Investigations into potential drivers of the American kestrel's continental population decline”.** What could cause populations to dwindle in a highly-adaptable and geographically widespread species? Mercy will discuss her research on the American Kestrel and the different drivers that may be influencing their continental population decline. Learn how urbanization, decreased prey abundance, competition with Cooper's Hawks, environmental contaminants, and seasonal challenges may be impacting this vibrant falcon species across North America.

Festival Kick-off Event (Social, Annual Meeting, Keynote Speaker) at Great Lakes Aquarium

Friday, September 20, 2024

Cost: Members (FREE); Students (\$10), Non-members (\$25)

Meeting Location: Great Lakes Aquarium, 353 Harbor Dr, Duluth, MN (www.glaquarium.org)

From I-35 S (from Duluth/North Shore) - Exit 256B - Follow signs for 5th Ave W veering to the right. Take a left onto 5th Ave W. The aquarium parking lot will be on your right.

From I-35 N (from Twin Cities) – Exit 256B (5th Ave West). At the lights, turn right on Harbor Drive. The aquarium parking lot will be on your right.

Time: 6-9pm (6pm doors open/registration, 6:30 social hour, 7:30 annual meeting/awards, 7:45 speaker)

Description: Join us for the return of this popular evening event at the beautiful Great Lakes Aquarium.

Starting at 6:30pm, the social hour will include a cash bar and light refreshments and the full aquarium will be open to tour, including the Raptor Ridge Exhibit. The Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory Annual Meeting will begin at 7:30pm (approx. 15 minutes) followed by our keynote speaker, **Mercy Melo from the Pennsylvania Game Commission, presenting “Collaborations in Conservation”** Migratory raptors don't obey state and international borders, and neither should our studies of them! Research projects that span large geographic areas are key to truly understanding raptor populations and how we can protect them best. In this talk, Mercy will discuss how teamwork makes the dream work in conservation studies using examples from her research on American Kestrels investigating continental population decline.

Offered Sat. 9/21 ONLY!

Birding at Wisconsin Point

Saturday, September 21, 2024 (LIMIT 15)

Cost: \$25 members/students, \$35 non-members

Meeting Location: Perkins Restaurant, 103 E 2nd St, Superior, WI 54880 (US 53 South); **Please note:** construction on I35 may require an alternate route and additional travel time to get to your location.

Meeting Time: 7:00 am (arrive 10-15 min prior) **Duration:** 2-3 hours (easy-moderate walking/observing)

Description: Visit one of Wisconsin's beloved birding hotspots and known for great viewing of jaegers! We will search the lakeside for shorebirds, terns, gulls, and jaegers; and check the wooded areas along the dunes for warblers and other passerines.

What to Bring: Binoculars and dress in layers. Spotting scopes will be useful for this trip.

Leader: Erik Bruhnke

St. Louis River Estuary Field Trip

Saturday, September 21, 2024 (LIMIT 15)

Cost: \$25 members/students, \$35 non-members

Meeting Location: Waabizheshikana “The Marten Trail” (fka Western Waterfront Trailhead) parking lot located behind the Willard Munger Inn (7408 Grand Ave, Duluth); turn east on Pulaski St/75th Ave W, cross the railroad tracks, then trailhead parking lot will be on your left. **Please note:** construction on I35 may require an alternate route and additional travel time to get to your location.

Meeting Time: 7:00 am (arrive 10-15 min prior) **Duration:** 2-3 hours (easy-moderate walking)

Description: Spend a relaxing morning visiting a birding hotspot in Duluth. The morning along the St. Louis River Estuary (Audubon Important Bird Area) will take you birding along the riverfront searching for migratory waterfowl, shorebirds, warblers and other passerines.

Leader: Laura Erickson

Live Raptors Program

Saturday, September 21, 2024 (LIMIT 40/program); Cost: \$10 members/students, \$20 non-members

Meeting Location: Education Program Area at Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve, approximate address 3980 E Skyline Pkwy, Duluth (if inclement weather, program will be moved indoors to the UMD Limnology Building at 6008 London Rd, Duluth, MN); **Meeting Time:** 11:00 am **Duration:** 45 minutes – 1 hour (seated program)

Description: Meet a live raptor(s) and learn about their natural history, unique adaptations, and the importance of raptors to ecological diversity. **What to Bring (optional):** camera, binoculars

Leader: Wolf Ridge ELC

Offered Sun. 9/22 ONLY!

Park Point Birding Field Trip

Sunday, September 22, 2024 (LIMIT 15/trip)

Cost: \$25 members/students, \$35 non-members

Meeting Location: Main parking lot at the Park Point Recreation Area. From Canal Park, travel across the lift bridge and continue on Lake Avenue / Minnesota Avenue approximately 3.75 miles to the Park Point Recreation Area.

Meeting Time: 7:00 am (arrive 10-15 min prior)

Duration: 2-3 hours (walking, easy-moderate)

Description: Visit one of Minnesota's beloved birding hotspots with one of Minnesota's beloved birders – Laura Erickson! We will search the lakeside for shorebirds, terns, gulls, and possible jaegers (spotting scopes useful); and check the wooded areas along the dunes for warblers and other passerines.

What to Bring: Binoculars and dress in layers

Leader: Laura Erickson

Lester River & North Shore Birding Field Trip

Sunday, September 22, 2024 (LIMIT 15)

Cost: \$25 members/students, \$35 non-members

Meeting Location: Meet at the Lester Park parking lot, one block north of Superior St. To get there, travel east on Superior Street and turn left on the Lester River Road, located 2 blocks past 60th Ave East.

Meeting Time: 7:00 am (arrive 10-15 min prior)

Duration: 3.5-4 hours (easy-moderate walking & driving for N. Shore portion)

Description: This is an exciting field trip along the Lester River and North Shore. We will bird around the southern portion of Lester Park, the grounds of the EPA lab, and the Lester River. Depending on migration conditions, we will then caravan up the North Shore of Lake Superior with potential stops at Brighton Beach/Kitchi Gammi Park and the McQuade Road Public Access. **Please note, this trip may not be back in time for the 11am Advanced Hawkwatching workshop, so we suggest registering for the Saturday 1pm slot.*

What to Bring: Binoculars and dress in layers

Leader(s): Bill Tefft

Geology & Birding along Duluth's Shoreline Field Trip – "Birds ROCK!"

Sunday September 22, 2024 (LIMIT 15)

Cost: \$25 members/students, \$35 non-members

Meeting Location: Lester River Tourism Information Center. Directions: travel east on London Road and just after crossing the Lester River, park in the parking lot for the little blue building—tourism information center.

Meeting Time: 1:00 pm (arrive 10-15 min prior)

Duration: 2-3 hours (moderate walking on/around rocky areas and driving)

What to Bring: Dress in layers (possibly raingear)

Description: Join Hawk Ridge Education Director, Margie Menzies, all-around naturalist and passionate about both birds and geology on a journey along Duluth's shoreline. We will visit several interesting outcrops to reveal the story of ancient volcanic geology in the area, as well as birding along the way.

Leader(s): Margie Menzies

Offered Multiple Dates

Evening Owl Programs

Friday, September 20 – Monday, September 23, 2024 (LIMIT 10/program, min. 4)

Cost: \$40 members/students, \$50 non-members

Meeting Location: Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve, but before the main overlook (from Glenwood St turn to enter Hawk Ridge on East Skyline Pkwy, once gravel road starts - drive approx. 0.2 miles, park on the same side of road as the porta-potty/wood chip pile & meet Margie on roadside)

Meeting Time: 6 programs offered: Fri. 9/20 9:30pm, Sat. 9/21 & Sun. 9/22 7:30 or 9pm; Mon. 9/23 7:30pm

Duration: 1-1.5 hours (short walk, observing)

Description: The Evening Owl Program will shine a light onto the mysterious nature of the nocturnal migrants flying over Hawk Ridge. Participants will learn about the research methods being used to study owl activity at Hawk Ridge, as well as how to identify many of the species that can be observed in Northern Minnesota by sight and sound. Depending on the night and weather pending, the program will last roughly 1.5 hours and could involve watching the banding of live owls, their release back to the wild, and certainly the opportunity to learn much more about the owls found in our area, as well as those migrating through.

What to Bring: Dress in layers, as it could be cool evening.

Leader(s): Hawk Ridge Staff

Songbird Banding Workshop

Saturday, September 21 & Sunday, September 22, 2024 (LIMIT 15/program)

Cost: \$25 members/students, \$35 non-members

Meeting Location: Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve, but before the main overlook (from Glenwood St turn to enter Hawk Ridge on East Skyline Pkwy, once gravel road starts - drive approx. 0.2 miles, park on the same side of road as the porta-potty/wood chip pile & meet Margie on roadside)

Meeting Time: 7:00 am **Duration:** 1-2 hours (short walk, observing)

Description: Songbird migration is a fascinating sequence of birds moving through in the fall. Participants will have an exciting opportunity to see all aspects of the songbird banding process in action, what colorful birds are moving through, as well as how banding provides valuable research tools for bird conservation.

Leader: Margie Menzies

Advanced Hawk Watching Workshop

Saturday, September 21 & Sunday, September 22, 2024 (LIMIT 35/workshop)

Cost: \$25 members/students, \$35 non-members

Meeting Location: Hawk Ridge Education Program Area at Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve, approximate address 3980 E Skyline Pkwy, Duluth (*if inclement weather, program will be moved indoors down the road to Lester-Amity Chalet, 2940 Seven Bridges Rd*)

Meeting Time: Sat. 9/16 @ 1pm – OR - Sun. 9/17 @ 11am) **Duration:** 45-60 min (seated program)

Description: The Advanced Hawk Watching Workshop will cover the many raptor identification techniques such as using shapes, wing and tail length and shapes, flight behavior, size and plumage details and other tricks of the trade that professional hawk counters use to make quick, real time, and correct identifications of what's flying regardless of distance and altitude.

What to Bring: Bring binoculars and reference books (if you'd like)

Leader: Dave Carman

SPEAKER/FIELD TRIP/LEADER BIOS

Erik Bruhnke has loved birds since he was a child looking at chickadees. He graduated from Northland College in Wisconsin with a Natural Resources degree in 2008 and taught field ornithology at Northland College for three semesters. Throughout college and shortly after, he spent his summers conducting field research focused on breeding bird transects in Upper Michigan, point counts for a breeding bird atlas in Minnesota and Wisconsin's Northwoods, vegetation and breeding bird surveys throughout wind farms in North Dakota's prairie potholes, and cavity-nesting surveys in the Cascade Mountains of Oregon. He educated visitors about raptor identification throughout six fall seasons at Hawk Ridge, where he caught the lifelong hawkwatching bug. Following Hawk Ridge, he counted migrating raptors at the Corpus Christi HawkWatch in Texas in 2015; and was the 2016, 2017, and 2018 hawk counter at the Cape May Hawkwatch in New Jersey. Erik's wildlife photography has won national awards, and he's written for the American Birding Association's Birder's Guide, BirdWatching magazine, and Bird Watcher's Digest. Erik is a birding tour guide for Victor Emanuel Nature Tours as well as his own business, Naturally Avian. He enjoys hiking, kayaking, ice skating, and being out in the snow. In his free time he loves to cook and bake, often following the recipes of his Omas and Opas. Erik is looking forward to helping people connect to the magic of migration at Hawk Ridge this fall!

David Carman is a lifelong birder and hawkwatcher, who has assisted with the fall counts at Hawk Ridge Nature Reserve for over 30 years, as well as the West Skyline Spring Count. He has served as a board member, treasurer, and chairperson of the Hawk Ridge Management Committee and was a founder and the first executive director of its successor, the Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory. After a long corporate career in sales and marketing management, he became a special education teacher. Dave continues to enjoy sharing his love of hawkwatching with others.

Clinton Dexter-Nienhaus is the Head Naturalist with the Friends of Sax-Zim Bog, serves as a board member of the Duluth Audubon Society, teaches courses for MN Master Naturalist, and has led education programs at Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory in a variety of roles from 2014-18. He has a degree in Environmental Biology from St. Mary's University of Minnesota in Winona and a Master's Degree in Environmental Education from the University of Minnesota-Duluth. Clinton has an affinity for every and all species in the region!

Laura Erickson has been sharing her love of birds for decades, as an author, trip leader, public speaker, and as the creator and producer of the long-running radio show "For the Birds". Laura started her career as a school teacher and has been teaching about birds ever since in an amazing variety of venues and media. Some examples include several books over the years, including "Twelve Owls" and "Hawk Ridge: Minnesota's Birds of Prey", both by the University of Minnesota Press, magazine articles in "BirdWatching" and an editor for several years for "Bird Scope" for the Cornell Lab for Ornithology. She completed her own "Big Year" of birding in 2013 identifying 604 species! In 2014, Laura was awarded the prestigious American Birding Association – Roger Tory Peterson award for "a lifetime of achievements in promoting the cause of birding".

Mercy Melo is a Wildlife Management Supervisor with the Pennsylvania Game Commission with a background in raptor biology and ecology. She got her start in raptor research through her undergraduate work with American Kestrels at Cedar Crest College and continued following this passion throughout her graduate career. She just completed her PhD at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst where she was able to research potential causes of the population decline in American Kestrels, ultimately resulting in management strategies to help reverse the effects of this decline. Although she loves American Kestrels, Mercy is excited for any wildlife encounter and has had the opportunity to work with Peregrine Falcons, Merlins, Red-tailed Hawks, Sharp-shinned Hawks, Cooper's Hawks, and American Goshawks throughout her career thus far. Mercy was one of the lead authors in a recently published research article in the Journal of Avian Biology titled, "*Disentangling relationships between physiology, morphology, diet, and gut microbial diversity in American kestrel nestlings*" by Jennifer Houtz, Mercy Melo, Jean-Francois Therrien, & Allison Cornell.

Margie Menzies is a lifelong naturalist, educator, and lover of birds, rocks and all things of the natural world. She spent years in the formal classroom as a science teacher but has abandoned the indoors for the great outdoor classroom. Margie Menzies joined Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory in 2011 as a fall naturalist and is currently the Education Director at Hawk Ridge. She has a passion for birds and has been involved in songbird banding for more than 25 years. She has served as the naturalist at Sugarloaf Cove Nature Center up the North Shore in Schroeder, MN and adjunct member of the University of Minnesota Duluth, Education Department. She has a BA from Bethel University and a MA from University of St. Thomas. She loves birds, loves learning, and loves sharing the natural world with people of all ages.

Bill Tefft is naturalist and a retired community college instructor that grew up in southern Michigan, but has been living in Ely, MN for over 40 years. Bill has taught raptor ecology at Hawk Ridge for many years in addition to bringing college students and community members for fall hawk and owl migration visits. Bill has led groups to local, national and international destinations, writes a local weekly nature column, and works to connect all ages to nature.