

# Autumn 2020

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*Green-Rock Audubon Society*

**G-RAS**



*Protecting Wildlife for Tomorrow*

Serving Lafayette, Green,  
& Rock Counties

Photo by Joni Denker

***Black Eyed Susan at Spring Creek***

# THE NATURALIST

# G-RAS Lands Autumn 2020 Report

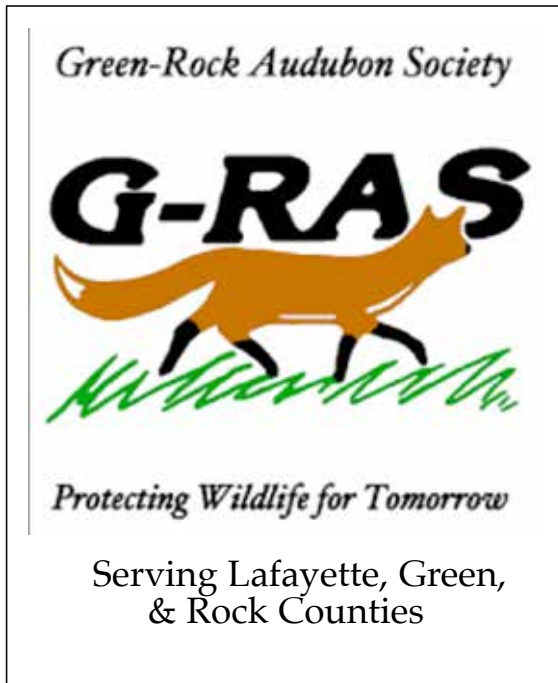
**Prepared by Victor Illichmann**  
*Land Manager*

**Androne Woods** The trails are mowed and in good shape. This is an excellent time to view summer flowers.

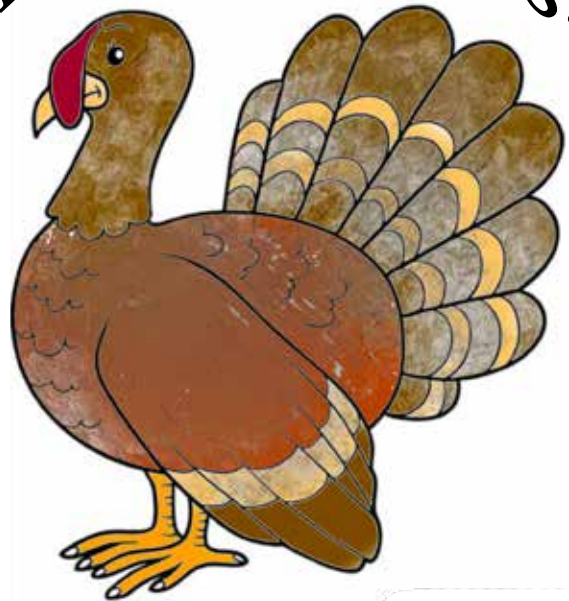
**Cleophas Reserve** The firebreaks are in good shape. We've sprayed it twice for canary grass. We have mowed the parsnip and weeds. We will soon be spot mowing weeds to get the regrowth. We need to spray the canary grass one more time. In spite of all our activity, we had some excellent patches of turk's cap lilies. We have swamp mallow along the drainage ditch to the west and along the creek. This fall, we will be planting 10 acres to prairie vegetation.

**Gabower-Reilly Reserve** The firebreaks are in good shape. We have mowed most of the brush, we rented a larger brush hog to do the work. Fred did wonders with the brush, We have been using fence posts from Gabower-Reilly East to lay more corduroy along the east boundary of G-Reilly. We have sprayed canary grass whenever the brush was mowed . Along the west side of the creek and about halfway back, about an eighth of a mile, there is an area with heavy growth of yellow coneflower and a half dozen or so compass plants. In Gabower-Reilly East, the shed is almost gone.

**Spring Creek Reserve** The firebreaks are in good shape. We have mowed almost all of the brush with a rental machine. Again, Fred did wonders. Wherever there is heavy growth of canary grass, it has been sprayed. The phragmites are almost gone. We may have made the brush mad, the way it is re-growing. We may mow a lot of it again late this fall. This may kill it. We also may get a wick herbicide applicator and go after the brush when it leafs out on the spring and before any prairie forbs and grass are growing,



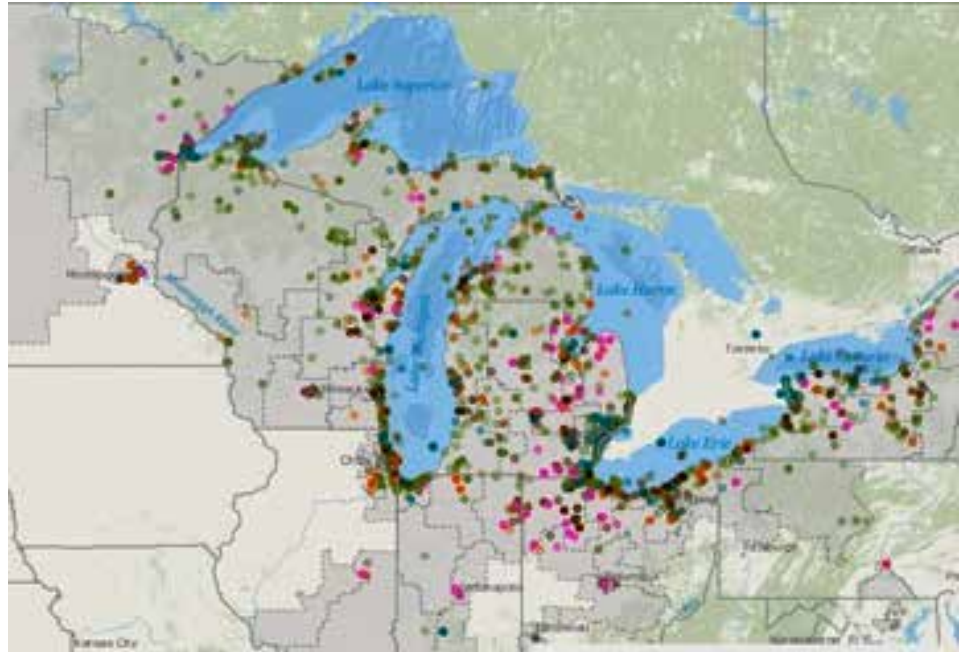
*Happy Thanksgiving!*



# The Audubon Great Lakes Region Report

**Susan Johnson**  
*Advocacy Chair*

The Audubon Great Lakes Region's annual program this year, (held virtually on June 27, 2020), ended with a discussion of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), currently in its Action Plan III. The GLRI was introduced in a previous Green-Rock Audubon newsletter, but let me refresh your memory. GLRI was first initiated in 2010. It is a federal program, focused on the protection and restoration of the five Great Lakes. Fifteen federal agencies work together under the guidance of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to focus on five major areas of concern in the Great Lakes: toxic substances, invasive species, non-point source pollution, habitats and species, and foundations for future restoration actions.



Great Lakes Restoration Initiative website

Map of projects throughout the region.

The funds are dispersed directly to the Great Lakes states, cities, and non-governmental organizations. Since 2010, Wisconsin has received more than \$447 million, which has allowed our state to engage in over 750 projects. The long-term goals of the GLRI include making water safe to drink and use for recreation, ensuring fish are safe to eat, protecting native habitats to restore populations of native bird and wildlife species, eliminating harmful algal blooms, and controlling current invasive species, while ensuring no new invasive species appear.

Erin Giese, Data Manager at UW-Green Bay's Biodiversity Center presented information about how closely GLRI funding is tied to policy-making in her work with restoring and protecting wetlands. In fact, half of her salary comes directly from the GLRI. It was only through a period of intense public input from the Audubon Great Lakes local chapters that the GLRI covers protection of wetland birds in the first place. Public action works!

Primarily, Giese works closely with the Great Lakes Coastal Wetland Monitoring program and the Nicolet National Forest Bird Survey. One of her main projects was working with Cat Island Restoration in the bay of Green Bay. Restoring the 272 acre Cat Island Chain in the Green Bay offers the benefit of not only restoring fish, bird, and wildlife habitat, but also reestablishing improved shipping for the Bay, boosting the local economy. Since the project began, the Cat Island chain now offers the highest diversity of shorebirds in Wisconsin.

Giese has done advocacy with student members of UW-GB's Audubon Society. Students participated in a fly-in to Washington D.C., so they might advocate for forage fish and sea birds with Wisconsin legislators. A foundation has been laid for continuing our work well into the future!

# Green-Rock Audubon Society Annual Meeting – Sunday, November 22 – via Zoom

Our annual meeting will be held virtually this year to protect everyone’s health. It will begin at 2 p.m. on Sunday, November 22, and is open to our members and the public. Our business will include the president’s report, a financial report, a land management report, election of officers, approval of proposed revisions to the G-RAS By-laws and Constitution, and any other business that is required. You will find the instructions for how to join the Zoom meeting on our Facebook page (Green-Rock Audubon Society) and our web page ([greenrockaudubon.org](http://greenrockaudubon.org)) the week before November 22.

*You may request a copy of the proposed changes to the By-laws by phoning (608-752-8342) or emailing Neil Deupree, [deupreen@charter.net](mailto:deupreen@charter.net). (They are nine pages long.) You may also request the financial report and the land management report from Neil Deupree (contact above).*

The program beginning at about 2:30 p.m. and the presenter are described below. We expect that there will be time for questions and answers after the thirty minute presentation. We are grateful for our partnership with Audubon Great Lakes for their expertise in bird conservation and appreciation, for their guidance and role in advocacy for birds, and for their support for local Audubon chapters like us.

## ***Title: A Rare Peek at Rails of the Midwest***

Bio: Stephanie Beilke is a Conservation Science Manager with Audubon Great Lakes, a regional office of the National Audubon Society, based in Chicago, IL. Her foray into the world of birds started at age 8 when watching birds in her backyard in Green Bay, WI. She then went on to obtain a Bachelor’s degree in Zoology and Psychology from the University of Wisconsin Madison and a Master’s degree in Environmental Science from the University of Wisconsin Green Bay. Stephanie now manages research projects that inform restoration through bird monitoring, with a focus on marsh birds in the Great Lakes region.



Description: Rails are a taxonomic family of birds with a tendency to be highly secretive, often dwelling in dense vegetation. We’ll take a closer look amid the reeds to uncover what there is to know about seven rail species that breed in and migrate through our region. Come learn about who would win the award for noisiest rail and the most secretive marsh bird of them all. In addition, we’ll explore what Audubon Great Lakes and partners have learned about how rails and other marsh birds respond to restoration happening across the Great Lakes.

**The photo above is a Sora, one of our local rails.**



*The Raccoon has lots of fun climbing trees. Have fun coloring these lovely furry friends. The colors of the Raccoon are gray-brown, black and white.*

# AGL Chapters Virtual Week of Seabird Action

**Susan Johnson**  
*Advocacy Chair*



Photo: Jillian Fritz / Audubon Photography Awards

**GLRI has helped to protect and restore habitat along the shores of the Great Lakes for species like Piping Plover, which is endangered.**

A recent initiative undertaken by Audubon Great Lakes Chapters was the Virtual Week of Seabird Action, July 16-24, 2020, organized by Marnie Urso, Policy Director of Audubon Great Lakes Chapters, Kristin Murphy, Governmental Affairs Association, Erin Rowan, Conservation Associate, along with Izabela Grobelna, our Great Lakes Network Associate. Basically, the week was made up of legislative lobby days, virtual fly-ins to meet and speak with your state's U.S. Senators about seabirds and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation

and Management Act, more commonly known as the Forage Fish Bill. Originally passed in 1976, this bill received bipartisan support when reauthorized in 1996 and 2006. It has been critical in managing our fish populations from over-fishing, so there are ample fish for seabirds relying on this food supply.

The Wisconsin fly-in was designed to reach out to Senator Ron Johnson regarding the Forage Fish Bill. The organizers provided a virtual briefing on July 16 for anyone wishing to participate in the fly-in. Yours truly attended both the briefing and the fly-in. During the briefing Kristin Murphy explained the role of an advocate at legislative lobby days. Professionalism is maintained at all times. We need to be sure to thank our Senator for attending the fly-in, and for supporting Audubon measures in the past. Then, speak from the heart with a personal story, explaining why this issue is so important to you. Erin Rowan gave us information as to the critical connection between Atlantic seabirds and birds of the Great Lakes, which was not intuitive to many participants, including me. She said that many Atlantic seabirds, like American white pelicans, common terns, and common loons, winter here in Wisconsin, right along our lake front. If there is not enough fish to catch in the Atlantic, and the birds don't live long enough to return here for winter, the health of Lake Michigan's environment suffers.

The fly-in occurred on Tuesday morning, July 21, 2020 via Zoom. Present during the meeting were Kristin Murphy, Erin Rowan, and Erin Giese of UW-GB, along with members of local chapters. Senator Johnson was not present, but one of his staff was there. The Audubon officers introduced the meeting and explained the importance of the Forage Fish Bill. They appreciated the Senator's support of Audubon initiatives in the past and spoke more specifically about what was needed in this reauthorization. Each local member gave their personal story.

This was what I said:

"Hello, My name is Susan Johnson and I live in Janesville, Wisconsin. I am a Janesville City Council member. I'm also a proud member of the Green-Rock Audubon Society. We're actively restoring prairie in southwestern and central Wisconsin to conserve our birds and wildlife, so future generations can enjoy this area of the state. I'm originally from Kenosha, WI, so Lake Michigan has a special meaning to me. I earned my Bachelor's Degree from Carthage College, which is literally on the lake front. I grew to love Lake Michigan, almost as a best friend! I care deeply about its health. There is nothing more important to Wisconsin than the environmental health of Lake Michigan! I came to speak with you today because populations of seabirds are declining rapidly due to a shortage of forage fish like krill, shrimp, and squid in the Atlantic Ocean. How does this issue relate to us? Lake Michigan and Wisconsin are closely connected to many Atlantic seabirds, like American White Pelicans, common terns, and common loons, because they winter here in Wisconsin, right along our lake front. If these birds don't live long enough to return here for winter, the health of Lake Michigan's environment suffers. We need to protect fish habitat in the Atlantic and also Lake Michigan, while minimizing by-catch. Thank you for listening and for being here."

Green-Rock Audubon Society



Protecting Wildlife for Tomorrow

# Join Green-Rock Audubon Society

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Your Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Your E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  
Would you prefer to receive the newsletter electronically? \_\_\_\_

## Two Ways to Join

\_\_\_ I wish to join Green-Rock Audubon Society, I understand that I will not receive the Audubon Magazine, but all dues will go to G-RAS. Dues: \$10 Senior or Student, \$15 Single Membership, \$20 Couple

• To pay by mail, make checks payable to G-RAS, and mail this form along with the check to this address:

Green-Rock Audubon  
Attn: Treasurer  
P.O. Box 1986  
Janesville, WI 53547-1986

• To pay online visit <https://www.greenrockaudubon.org/donate>

\_\_\_ I wish to join the National Audubon Society's normal membership of \$35 per year which includes the Audubon Magazine. (Please visit <http://audubon.org/> to complete this membership.)

## Volunteering Interests

I would like to volunteer for...

- \_\_\_ Whatever is Needed
- \_\_\_ Burning
- \_\_\_ Brushing
- \_\_\_ Spraying
- \_\_\_ Seed Collecting
- \_\_\_ Planting

## I can volunteer at:

- \_\_\_ Whenever is Needed
- \_\_\_ Androne Woods
- \_\_\_ Cleophas Reserve
- \_\_\_ Spring Creek Reserve
- \_\_\_ Gabower-Reilly Reserve
- \_\_\_ The Pond (Janesville)
- \_\_\_ Sunny Peace Prairie

## Times I can usually volunteer:

- \_\_\_ Monday
- \_\_\_ Tuesday
- \_\_\_ Wednesday
- \_\_\_ Thursday
- \_\_\_ Friday
- \_\_\_ Saturday
- \_\_\_ Sunday

## Donate Beyond Membership

I would like to donate to...

- \_\_\_ Whatever is Needed
- \_\_\_ Purchasing
- \_\_\_ Herbicides
- \_\_\_ Purchasing Spray Equipment

I want my donation to support G-RAS's efforts to manage or maintain...

- \_\_\_ Androne Woods
- \_\_\_ Cleophas Reserve
- \_\_\_ Spring Creek Reserve
- \_\_\_ Gabower-Reilly Reserve
- \_\_\_ Sunny Peace Prairie

## Volunteer Coordinator:

Victor Illichmann  
viccarol@sbcglobal.net  
608.752.8342

(Please mail checks according to the directions above or visit our website.)

# Membership Form Inside

Green-Rock Audubon Society (G-RAS) membership for one year with quarterly newsletter Green Rock Naturalist from Green Rock Audubon Society (all dues go to G-RAS).

- Senior or Student membership \$10
- Single person membership \$15
- Couples membership \$20



@GRAudubon, #GreenRockAudubon  
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[www.greenrockaudubon.org](http://www.greenrockaudubon.org)

## Board of Directors

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Advocacy Chair, Susan Johnson

## Your Articles are needed!

It will soon be time to assemble the winter issue of the Naturalist. As Editor, I would greatly appreciate your submissions.

Thank you very much.

Carol Herzig, Editor

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