

Birds of the Campus Natural Areas by Season *(continued from page 3)*

Summer

The CNA supports a diverse set of summer birds. The Breeding Bird Study (2000-2002) confirmed 69 species and another 12 probably bred (Lenehan, *Habitat and Abundance of CNA Breeding Birds*, 2003).

- Green Heron – The Green Heron is regularly seen quietly feeding around University Bay and the Class of 1918 Marsh. At least one pair nests annually.
- Great Blue Heron – Great Blue Herons visit University Bay to feed, but do not nest in the area.
- Canada Goose – Canada Geese were reintroduced and now spend most of the year and nest in the area.
- Wood Duck – The spectacular Wood Duck nests throughout the CNA, wherever there are mature trees with large holes. In April these ducks scout the woods. While the females incubate eggs, the males rest at the Class of 1918 and Picnic Point Marshes. Wood Ducks disappeared and were reintroduced by Robert McCabe into the Arboretum in the 1940s.
- Red-tailed Hawk – The Red-tailed Hawk spends most of the year in the CNA, but is most obvious when the pair's large begging young occupy the old field edge.
- Cooper's Hawk – The usually secretive Cooper's Hawk can often be seen hunting for birds along the edge of the Biocore Prairie or the Class of 1918 Marsh. Several pairs of Cooper's Hawks nest in the CNA. This species almost disappeared from southern Wisconsin by the 1970s, but after DDT was banned it recovered and colonized many urban areas.
- Rails – Virginia and Sora Rails nest in the Class of 1918 Marsh. These rails are most active in early morning and late evening. They can be most easily seen during high water when they are forced to cattails edges close to the land or during very low water when they have to feed at the interior edge of the cattails. More frequently their descending whenny (Sora) or deep grunts (Virginia Rail) are heard.
- Killdeer – In late May the Killdeer can be observed behind the Class of 1918 Marsh or in the Eagle Heights Gardens giving its broken wing act to lead predators (people) away from its nest.
- Terns – Although no terns breed in the CNA now, Black Terns bred in the past at the Class of 1918 Marsh. Caspian Terns, with their large red beaks, periodically appear on the sandbar in University Bay.
- Belted Kingfisher – At least two Kingfisher pairs nest in the CNA in holes in earthen banks. They can be observed sitting on a snag waiting or diving for fish. Their loud rattling call helps locate them.
- Neotropical Migrants – Comprising 40 % of CNA breeding birds, these species include flycatchers (5 species), swallows (5), vireos (3), and warblers (6).

Fall

Many CNA bird species can be found during a longer period in the fall than during the spring. Fall waterfowl numbers are also larger and more predictable.

- Great Egret – Great Egrets visit the Class of 1918 Marsh and University Bay most years in late summer. Occasionally, when food is favorable (like during the flood of 2000) more Egrets come or they stay for longer periods. This species almost disappeared from southern Wisconsin, but has increased recently.
- Black-crowned Night-heron – Like Great Egrets, Night-herons visit the CNA annually, usually in the late summer. They are usually observed feeding near Willow Creek or at the Class of 1918 Marsh.
- Dabbling Ducks – Most years, when the Class of 1918 Marsh has enough water, many dabbling ducks occupy the Marsh. Beginning in late summer, other ducks join the resident Mallards and Wood Ducks: first Blue-winged Teal, then Shoveler (also common in spring), Gadwall, and American Wigeon. Pintail and Green-winged Teal also visit the Marsh.
- Diving Ducks – Once University Bay was famous for its diving ducks, but today they appear in numbers only late in the fall after most boats leave the lake. From 1946 to 1980 fall ducks were counted several times weekly by 54 Wildlife Management Techniques class students. University Bay was known for its periodic large number of Canvasbacks (2000 in 1914 and 1634 in 1954). Bufflehead (throughout spring and fall), Goldeneye, and Common Merganser still occur in relatively high numbers in the Bay.
- Turkey – Turkeys completely disappeared from Wisconsin. Reintroduction has been so successful that Turkeys have recently colonized the Madison area. They appear occasionally in the CNA, although they have not been found nesting there yet. Most CNA observations are from fall and winter.
- Shorebirds – Shorebirds occur in the CNA when there is appropriate habitat. In spring they often feed in the puddles behind the Class of 1918 Marsh and rest on the University Bay sandbar. They feed in the 1918 Marsh when it is low in the late summer and fall. Repeated visitors include Spotted Sandpiper (breeds), Snipe (annually), Solitary Sandpiper (regular spring and fall), both Yellowlegs, and Least and Semipalmated Sandpipers.
- Sparrows – The Eagle Heights Gardens and the Biocore Prairie host a wide variety of sparrows in September and October. Their diversity (12 species can often be found during the fall) and their visibility makes this one of the best places in Madison to practice the art of fall sparrow identification.