

Anderson Park

Irving & John Anderson County Park – 27201 Furman St NE, Stacy

Birds Counted at Anderson Park

July, 2009
Volume 2
Lori Angeli, Editor

On May 9th local Audubon member and long-time birder, Joe Sausen, guided a group of 10 Friends of Anderson Park members through the park. Over 35 different bird species were seen or heard that morning, including a golden-winged warbler, a rare species for the area.



Golden Winged Warbler

On June 2nd, Joe and 3 other local Audubon members completed the first breeding bird survey of Anderson Park. They had a great time and counted 46 species!

Here are some interesting bird facts from Joe:

How do you tell the difference between a crow and a raven? Crows have square tail feathers and ravens have round. An easy way to remember this is, "square crow"



and "round raven".



We also checked out the blue bird boxes that were installed on the last workday, which was only a week or so ago. All of the boxes were occupied, but only one by bluebirds. One bluebird already had laid eggs, but two of the nests were inhabited by tree swallows.



You can identify a tree swallow's nest because it will have a feather in it.

Chickadee nests are made with down, moss, and other soft plant fibers. Female chickadees may cover eggs with moss or fur when leaving the nests.

Did you know bluebirds can lay either blue or white eggs and if a nest has both blue and white eggs they were laid by different females?

For a complete list (with photos) of birds that have been observed at the park land over the years by Tom Anderson. Check out the park website (www.andersonparkfriends-isanti.org)

Better yet, visit the park soon and see what types of birds and other wildlife you can observe.

Eagle Update- two eaglets have been spotted in the neighboring eagles nest featured in the last newsletter.

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Blanding's Turtle Spotted at the Park



During the April park clean-up day, volunteer Steve Kingsbury spotted a Blanding's turtle on one of the trails. Isanti Country Parks Director Barry Wendorf quickly took a photo of it.

Unusual shell. According to the Wisconsin DNR's web-site, the Blanding's turtle is a medium-sized turtle and can be easily identified by the bright yellow underside of its neck. Its head, tail, and limbs are blue-black, while the underside of its shell is yellow, with brown or black splotches, and is hinged. Its upper shell is usually black speckled with yellow, or horn colored and mottled with brown.



The shells of the young are patterned differently from adults helping them blend in with their surroundings. Males are larger than females and have longer tails.

Blandings turtles have a unique ability to close the front half of the shell tightly, protecting the soft flesh of its head, neck and legs from predators. Due to this behavior, they are sometimes referred to as the "semi-box turtle."

Semi-aquatic creatures.

While Blanding's turtles live primarily in marshes and the shallow bays of lakes, they also can be found in shallow,

slow-moving rivers, streams, and bogs.

The Blanding's turtle is semi-aquatic. It prefers open, grassy marshes containing shallow water, but it will, on occasion, move to ground adjacent to water to forage or bask in the sun.

While in the water, Blanding's turtles feed on crustaceans, snails, insects, frogs, and fish. When on land, however, they consume earthworms, slugs, grasses, berries, and succulent vegetation.

The Blanding's turtle is unique because, unlike most turtles, it can swallow food both in and out of the water.

During the winter, it hibernates by burying itself in the silt on the bottom of the pond, bay, or river it inhabits. This reduces its chances of freezing.

Breeding. Blanding's turtles require 15 to 20 years to mature. Mating usually occurs in the water during early spring.

After fertilization, females will bask in the sun with their heads and legs fully extended. This warming behavior speeds the development of their eggs. This gives the eggs a better chance of hatching before the autumn frost allowing the hatchlings to grow before hibernating, giving the immature turtles a greater chance of surviving the winter.

About one-half of the female population breeds annually.

Like all turtles, Blanding's

must lay their eggs on land and prefer a patch of sandy ground for nesting. They will travel up to one and a half miles from water to nest, and they usually return to the same nesting site each year.

They typically lay their eggs during the late afternoon or after dusk. Once they deposit the eggs in the ground, the mothers return to the water, and the sun's warmth is used to incubate the nested eggs. The clutch may contain from 3 to 17 eggs and take between 65 and 90 days to hatch.

Predators. The nests are subject to predators such as birds like crows, and small mammals such as skunks and raccoons. Those that do hatch are in danger of additional predation and highway mortality as they travel to their aquatic habitat. Hatchlings are about one and a quarter inches long and range from dark gray to greenish in color.

Shy turtles! Even fully grown the Blanding's turtle is one of nature's most timid creatures. Due to their shyness, they must be approached very delicately if they are to be observed.

If disturbed on land, it will pull itself tightly into its shell. If it is basking in an aquatic environment, it may quickly dive and remain hidden in the water if it senses danger. It will remain at the bottom for 20 to 30 minutes at a stretch before again peeking carefully above water.

Though shy, the Blanding's turtle is also exceedingly gentle and will very rarely attempt to bite.

Many Thanks

A BIG THANKS to Oxford Township - At the annual township meeting the supervisors and chair agreed to donate \$5,000 toward the picnic shelter. Friends of Anderson park would like to give a special thanks to Sandy Hagen, Harlan Bellin, Mike Miller, Linnea Lentz and Peggy Nelson for the donation.

April clean-up- Thank you to the 33 volunteers who came out for the spring clean-up. The volunteers included three new members, some college students, and a few boy scouts and cub scouts. It's amazing how much we can accomplish when so many pitch in.

Rob Jutz deserves a special thank you for taking time out of his busy schedule to build the picnic table and two wood duck nesting boxes which were installed that day.

Another special thank you goes to Marlene Yenish, who is documenting all of the volunteer work at the park with her camera. Check out her photos on our website. (www.andersonparkfriends-isanti.org)

Finally, our appreciation to Barry Wendorf, Isanti County Parks Director, for his organization skills, ideas, support and enthusiasm. He is key to making our efforts successful.

Bird walk- Many thanks to Joe Sausen for an interesting morning of birding. Joe's love of birds and knowledge about bird-watching ensured that everyone on the walk learned new things about common and uncommon birds. It was exciting to be part of the rare sighting of a new species for the park—the golden-winged warbler.

Spring Wildflower Guided Hike

Garbed with lined windbreakers, gloves, sunglasses and flower guides a small gathering of nature lovers followed Marlene Yenish on an exhilarating hike through Anderson Park on May 16th AM. Anemone, Wild Geranium, Spring Beauty, and more peeked through the grasses, trees and brush. . Each area revealed different types of growth. A guide prepared by Marlene listed some possible wildflowers to be seen. We learned that many wildflowers are low to the ground, will bloom for a short period of time and then give way to other wildflowers. After our hike we understood that returning often to Anderson Park would yield varied displays of flowers. For further study we could also check out the online field guide "intended to serve hobbyists" in identifying flowers and grasses in the greater Metro area. The Minnesota Wildflower Website found at www.Minnesotawildflowers.info is a user friendly field guide to local wildflowers. Here flowers seen out in the field can be checked out by color and common name. "This site is modeled after a field guide in the hopes of helping you identify something you've found. Flowers are primarily categorized by color, but there is a custom [plant search](#) where you can key on other plant characteristics, or sort the plant lists differently." Thanks Marlene for the interesting Wildflower Walk through Anderson Park. Come and check out the late summer /fall wildflowers on your own!

North Branch Mid-Summer Days parade- Diana Horrigan, Steve and Lee Kingsbury, and Lydia, Grace and Anna Olund participated in this annual North Branch parade in June. Orv and Bev (Anderson) Otterness sponsored our parade entry and purchased a large banner that promoted Anderson Park. Despite the rain and the heat, it was great fun to hear the enthusiasm of the crowd. Thank you everyone!

Web site- Thanks to Don Yenish for creating and maintaining the Friends of Anderson Park web-site up; you've done an awesome job!

Next Volunteer Day-Mark your calendars! The next park clean up day will be October 24th. Activities will include Buckthorn removal, tree planting, installing split rail fencing at the park entrances and other fun filled opportunities to get some fresh air, improve the park and burn some calories- what could be more satisfying on a fall morning!

Memorial Benches

There are miles of trails planned for Anderson Park. We need benches along the trails for hikers to stop and rest and enjoy the sights and sounds of the prairie, lakeshore and bogs. We are inviting individuals or businesses to donate benches which will be located throughout the park. The benches are six feet long, made of recycled material and maintenance free. The Isanti County Parks Department will provide an engraved bronze-plated plaque for each bench that is donated.

If you are interested in donating a bench please contact Lee Kingsbury at 651-462-2015 or send a check for \$545 to Friends of Anderson Park treasurer Diana Horrigan. Checks should be made out to: The Parks and Trails Council of MN (write Anderson Park in the memo line). Send the check to Diana at 27440 Vassar St N.E, Stacy, MN 55079. Please include what you would like engraved on your plaque and a number where we can reach you if we have questions.

Remember, all donations to Anderson Park are tax deductible.



Irving & John Anderson
County Park

27201 Furman St NE, Stacy

E-mail: andersonparkfriends@
frontiernet.net



Our mission is to preserve the natural beauty and primitive nature of Anderson Park and to assist with the planning, development, and management of its facilities.

We're on the Web!

<http://andersonparkfriends-isanti.org>

Become a member of Friends of Anderson Park now!

All donations are tax deductible and 100% of the donations will go toward the development of Anderson Park

- Individual Friend - \$25 /year
- Family Friend - \$50/year
- Business Friend - \$50/year
- Add an additional \$10 and be a member of MN Parks & Trails

Make check payable to: Parks and Trails Council of MN (write "Anderson Park" in the memo line)

Mail to: Friends of Anderson Park

C/o Diana Horrigan

27440 Vassar St. NE

Stacy, MN 55079

The park is located in the southeast corner of Isanti County in Minnesota. It lies on both sides of County Road 18, a quarter mile north of County Road 9 and two miles south of County Road 5

We are here because

There are things that need our help.

Like the planet.

Like each other.

Like animals.

The world is like a garden,

and we are its protectors.

B.B. King
