Conservation Corner

*Conservation Corner is a weekly article produced by the Forest County Land &Water Conservation Department. For more information contact Steve Kircher, County Conservationist-Land Information/GIS Director at 715-478-1387 or by e-mail at* [*lcc@co.forest.wi.us*](mailto:lcc@co.forest.wi.us)*.*

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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | Lately, people have been asking, ‘Where are my Orioles or the Redwing Blackbirds? Did you know that even though it's summer, birds have already begun their fall migration? Fall migration starts as early as June and lasts until early January, with peak times running from August to mid-October.  Migratory birds are birds of both game and non-game species who regularly move between summer breeding grounds and non-breeding wintering areas.  There are five groups of migratory birds.  1. **Landbirds**- Forest and grassland songbirds and other perching birds such as: hummingbirds, kingfishers and woodpeckers.  2. **Raptors-** Eagles, hawks and falcons.  3. **Waterfowl**- Swans, geese and ducks.  4. **Waterbirds**- Traditional colonial nesting species such as gulls, terns, herons and egrets, loons, grebes, along with marsh birds like the rails and cranes.  5. **Shorebirds**- plovers, allies, stilts, and dowitchers.  During their migration, birds must stop to feed and rest at spots known as stopover sites. These stopover sites are critical to a bird’s survival during migration.  Stopover sites include:  •**Fire Escapes**- stopover sites in this category are areas such as city parks or forests that have been fragmented into smaller areas. These are areas of less use because they lack in resources. But, these are important stopping grounds to seek shelter from bad weather or predators.  •**Convenience Stores**- These sites have plenty of resources for birds and are much larger areas than Fire Escapes. This could be your woodland, prairie, or county park.  •**Full-Service Hotels**- These sites are not only rich in resources, but a bountiful habitat that can provide food, water and shelter to a large number of birds for a consistent period. These sites include National Parks, National Wildlife Refuge or State Wildlife Areas such as Horicon Marsh (Wisconsin has plenty of those!).  Now is a good time for landowners to keep plenty of water and food out for those birds starting to migrate south, they could be stopping by!  In Wisconsin, we have unique opportunities around the state to witness different fall bird migrations, you can read about them in Wisconsin's Birding by Season: Fall. Wisconsin is a major corridor for bird migration so your opportunities to see birds migrating are abundant.  If you feed hummingbirds, you know that they are drinking double the amount of nectar that they normally drink at your feeders at this time of year. Around the middle of September they will leave central Wisconsin for Mexico and Central America. In the middle of August (in the north) and late August (in the south), if you happen to be along the Highway 51 corridor at sunset, you will frequently see a "kettle" (or group) of Common Nighthawks migrating south. They are easily identifiable by their boomerang-shaped wings with a wide white bar on the wing. These are just a couple examples of our migratory birds. | | |