

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Bird Protection Fund passes the \$1 million mark for Wisconsin bird conservation**

The Bird Protection Fund—a collaboration of the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative, and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources—has raised and distributed \$1,014,566 for bird conservation since it was created in 2009.

[Madison, WI — Sept. 6, 2018] — The Bird Protection Fund supports Wisconsin’s birds throughout their lifecycle—from their breeding grounds in Wisconsin to their migratory habitat in Central and South America. Each year the Bird Protection Fund partner organizations get together to review bird conservation priorities in Wisconsin, identify some areas of greatest need, and allocate funding to projects that address those needs.

“Given the increasing demand for bird conservation funds for a growing number of projects, NRF’s Bird Protection Fund plays a special and novel role to address a rich variety of bird conservation needs,” said Sumner Matteson, a conservation biologist with WDNR. By bringing together public and private entities to coordinate and work together toward a common goal, Matteson sees the Bird Protection Fund as “uniquely positioned to help maintain Wisconsin’s storied bird conservation legacy.”



Common Tern. Endangered in Wisconsin. Photo by Carol Henderson.

This million-dollar mark was made possible thanks to a truly Wisconsin-wide effort. The primary source of donations for the Bird Protection Fund comes from the annual Great Wisconsin Birdathon—a walk-a-thon style fundraiser in which participants raise money and venture out to log as many birds as they can see in one day.

“Wisconsin people care about birds,” said Karen Etter Hale, chair of the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative and director of community relations for the Wisconsin Audubon Council. “We really appreciate every donor and Birdathon participant who has made this million dollars possible.”

In 2018, Birdathon teams ranged throughout the state from a kindergarten class in Sussex to millennials in Madison and professional birders in Lake Superior. Teams birded by kayak, bike, and by foot; from front porches, out windows, and at ice cream shops. (See the [2018 Great Wisconsin Birdathon report](#) for more information.)

The common thread running through every team whether they were out for 16 hours or just one, has been the excitement and wonder that come from devoting one’s attention to nature—watching closely and uncovering glimpses of a world we too often take for granted. This reprieve into nature can feel like a break from “real life”. “I’ve been looking forward to next year’s Birdathon for three months already,” commented Tom Pearce of the Millennial Falcons in Madison. “It’s my favorite holiday.”

In 2018 the Bird Protection Fund is granting a total of \$62,000 to the following:

- Bird City Wisconsin
- Cornell Lab of Ornithology for the Neotropical Flyways Project



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- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Natural Heritage Conservation Program for endangered tern conservation, Kirtland's warbler recovery efforts, and piping plover conservation
- Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory for Lake Michigan waterbird monitoring
- International Crane Foundation for whooping crane recovery
- Wisconsin Society for Ornithology for Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II

**Background:** The Great Wisconsin Birdathon began in 2012 and since then has raised more than \$400,000 for bird protection in Wisconsin. The funds are collected and managed by the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin through the Bird Protection Fund. Learn more at [www.WisConservation.org/grants/bird-protection-fund/](http://www.WisConservation.org/grants/bird-protection-fund/)

**The Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin** is an independent, nonprofit 501(c)3 created in 1986. In the years since, the Foundation has contributed nearly \$7 million to public and private conservation efforts to protect the lands, waters, and wildlife of Wisconsin and to support environmental education in our state. Learn more at [www.WisConservation.org](http://www.WisConservation.org).

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