

Dear friend,

I am especially grateful donors like you to my "Big Day" birding adventures for conservation. Your contribution last year to Cutright's Old Coots helped us top our goal in this special effort to ensure that future generations can enjoy the birds that mean so much to us today. I would be most grateful if you could do as much or more on the birds' behalf this spring. We have set a goal that challenges us **and** our supporters, but the conservation challenges have never been greater. All the best,

Carl and the gang...



Support bird conservation through the **GREAT WISCONSIN BIRDATHON!**
and **Cutright's Old Coots**

(Carl Schwartz, Tom Uttech, Marilyn Bontly, Joan Sommer and Mike Wanger)

I was so astounded last spring when *Cutright's Old Coots* raised just short of \$9,000 with its Big Day fundraising birdathon on behalf of the **Great Wisconsin Birdathon** and the **Bird Protection Fund**. Thanks to your generosity, we led all teams last year and felt that it was a fitting way to honor the induction of our namesake, the late ornithologist and conservationist Noel Cutright, into the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame. Not only that, the GWB topped its overall goal of \$75,000 for the year. The birdathon's home page <http://wibirdathon.org/default.asp> says it all:

We believe that birds are valuable and need our help.

With your help we've raised more than \$200,000 for bird protection in Wisconsin since 2012!

With all this in mind, my team has climbed out on a limb and pledged to redouble our efforts and raise **at least \$10,000** toward the GWB's overall 2017 goal of \$77,000. So on May 11, Joan Sommer, Marilyn Bontly, Tom Uttech, Mike Wanger and I will get up during the middle of the night and spend the next 19 hours scouring Ozaukee, Sheboygan, Fond du Lac and Dodge Counties for as many bird species as we can find (hopefully at least 155) in order to earn your financial support for the vital bird conservation projects supported by the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin through its Bird Protection Fund (see the attached update on those projects.) And we intend to have fun in the bargain!

But what will make our day a real success is your donation today. Remember, IT'S FOR THE BIRDS! You can go to <http://wibirdathon.org/teampage.asp?fundid=1866> to make a per-species pledge or donate a flat amount by credit card. This secure site takes care of the rest, including handling the pledges and notifying our team of donations. (And if you want to write a check or make a pledge by mail, I've attached a pledge/donation form to use in doing just that.)

And here is what your donation will do on the ground:

- Help collect vast amounts of information on breeding birds in Wisconsin through the largest citizen science program in the state—the [Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas](#);
- Survey shorebirds, owls, nightjars, marsh birds, and other groups of birds that scientists need more information about through the [Wisconsin Bird Monitoring Program](#);
- Make communities healthier for birds and for people through [Bird City Wisconsin](#);
- Identify, safeguard, and enhance resting and refueling sites for migratory birds through the [Wisconsin Stopover Initiative](#);
- Grow Wisconsin's populations of federally endangered [Kirtland's Warblers](#) and [Whooping Cranes](#);
- Develop regional bird conservation strategies through the [Important Bird Area Program's](#) Southern Forests Initiative;
- Enhance [wintering bird habitat in Costa Rica's Osa Peninsula](#).

As an avid birdwatcher now in my third decade of getting up early in May to find, identify and count lots of those birds, it's always been about raising vital conservation funding so that my sons Eric and Chris can still find those same species when they are my age. But as the grandfather of 27-month-old Maggie Joy, I have to work even harder to make sure that the birds of spring are able to return to Wisconsin and elsewhere for an additional generation – and longer.

So that's why I am asking you to underwrite this marathon day of birding that will begin with listening for owls and nighthawks, progress to woodcock, snipe, followed by tramping through Wisconsin prairies, woodlands and marshes to enjoy and tally as many species as possible in a day.

Birds do so much to improve our lives; this is one important way we can give back to them. And you can do it all online and still get my detailed account of Big Day non-stop birding.

Go to <http://wibirdathon.org/teampage.asp?fundid=1866>

**to support Cutright's Old Coots
or mail a check payable to Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin,
P.O. Box 2317, Madison, WI 53701-2317 and mention the Coots**

Here are the other members of my team (left to right in top photo) who make this Big Day possible:

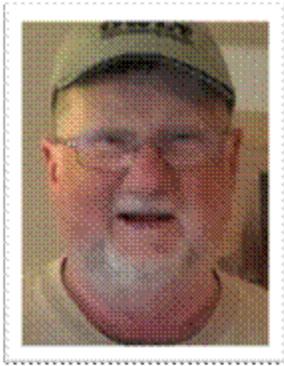
Mike Wanger -- Milwaukee County coordinator for Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II

Marilyn Bontly -- Schlitz Audubon, WSO and Cutright Bird Club

Joan Sommer -- Former WSO bookstore manager and Cutright Bird Club

Tom Uttech – Noted landscape artist, Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, Cutright Bird Club

Thank you in advance for your support!



Carl

Carl Schwartz

Steering Committee Chair, Bird City Wisconsin

Board Chair, Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory

Steering Committee member, Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas II

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