



**Lake County
Audubon Society**

Update for Bird Conservation Network



Birdscaping

- **2010–2020 – Early projects relied heavily on volunteers to perform site preparation, planting and maintenance. The program also required special fundraising efforts.**
- **LCAS board realized the program could not be sustained under the existing model of having volunteers install and maintain the gardens.**
- **2022 Program Revision – The initiative was reorganized as a grant program for the purchase of native plants, with customized Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) to provide direction for choice of plants and guidelines for long term maintenance.**
- **Funding Sources – Support now comes from general donations and one large gift made to LCAS.**
- **Grants Awarded – Nine individual grants have been provided so far, ranging from \$1,000 to \$3,000 each.**
- **Outreach & Engagement – LCAS continues to table at 4–8 community events each year, spreading awareness and interest in native landscaping.**

A photograph of several yellow Black-eyed Susan flowers with dark brown centers, growing on thin green stems. The background is a soft-focus field of green foliage and purple flowers.

Completed/Approved Projects

Mundelein Commons Butterfly Park

Univ of St Mary – Watershed stabilization

Libertyville High School - Shoreline

Fremont Township – Green Space

Lake Bluff Open Lands – Bird Habitat

Long Lake Park - Native Habitat

N. Chicago Math & Science – Native habitat

Deerfield Historical Society - Native Garden

Holy Cross Native Garden

PROGRAMS

- Balance of birding and nature topics
- In person and Zoom Hybrid meetings
- Meetings posted on YouTube
- Library support with room & equipment



PUBLIC OUTREACH





BIRD WALKS

- Regular bird walks at local forest preserves
- Some w/social gatherings – Bonfires, Birds & Breakfast, Coffee Shops, Beer garden.
- Partnership with groups including:
 - Brushwood & Brushwood Botanical Artists
 - Chicago Ornithological Society
 - Lake County Forest Preserves
 - Lake Forest Openlands
 - Lake Plain Members
 - Veterans Groups
 - Waukegan Schools
 - Wild Ones
- 40 – 50 walks per year
- Important source of new members
- *Support to new Audubon college chapter at Lake Forest College*

BIRD MONITORING

- Bluebird + *Fundraising Support*
- BCN Breeding Bird Survey
- Christmas Bird Counts
- Piping Plover and Migratory
- Secretive Marsh Birds
- Spring Bird Count



COMMUNICATIONS

Facebook:

1,950 followers

193,400 views as of 9/20/2025

Instagram:

835 followers

129,400 views as of 9/20/2025

Newsletter:

Over 1,600 subscribers

Website: lakecountyaudubon.org





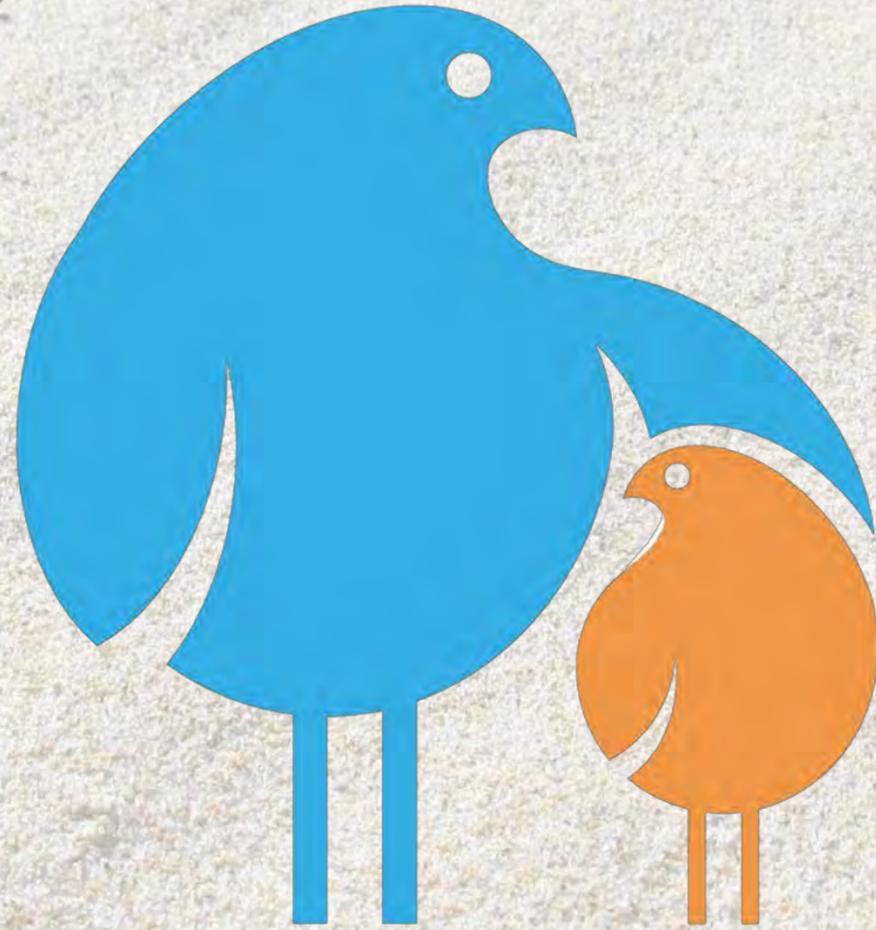
OVERVIEW

- Bird City Wisconsin, launched in 2009, was first program of its kind. It has now expanded to 13 states as well as Brazil, Mexico, Columbia
- Goal: Make communities healthier and more bird-friendly for both people and birds
- Criteria for recognition: Habitat creation, threat reduction, public education & community engagement
- Recognition: Official signage & Community certification
- Bird City Illinois began in 2022 with Waukegan as one of the first three cities recognized

Lake County Audubon ROLE

- Work with local leaders, including city planners, park districts, and sustainability staff, to help communities earn Bird City Illinois recognition.
- Provide guidance to help them identify qualifying projects and complete application materials.
- Encourage proclamations of support and promote World Migratory Bird Day each spring and fall.
- Promote community engagement through bird walks, educational outreach, and promoting native habitats.
- Through LCAS engagement, four Lake County municipalities are Bird City Illinois members:
 - Grayslake, July 2022
 - Lake Bluff, July 2024
 - Libertyville , April 2023
 - Waukegan, January 2022
- Currently working with North Chicago and Mundelein

Sharing Our Shore



Waukegan

Sharing Our Shore-Waukegan

- Program was created as a response to a pair of endangered piping plovers that attempted to nest in a gravel parking lot at the Waukegan Municipal Beach in 2018.
- Emma England & Diane Rosenberg led the effort to engage with the City of Waukegan.
- Modeled upon a National Audubon Society Share the Shore Initiative.
- In February 2019, Lake County Audubon formed a partnership with the City of Waukegan to launch the program which extends to hands-on community involvement.



Waukegan Piping Plovers



2018

In 2018, a pair of Piping Plovers attempted to nest in a gravel parking lot at Waukegan Beach. Their eggs were salvaged and taken to Michigan for captive-rearing.

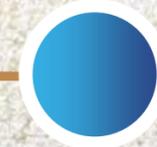
The following year, the adult plovers relocated to Montrose Beach in Chicago, where they became the famous pair known as “Monty & Rose.”



2023

Four captive-reared fledglings released in July on a restricted beach in Waukegan

Volunteers named them Blaze, Marram, Pepper and Sunny named for native plants found in the Lake Plain



2024

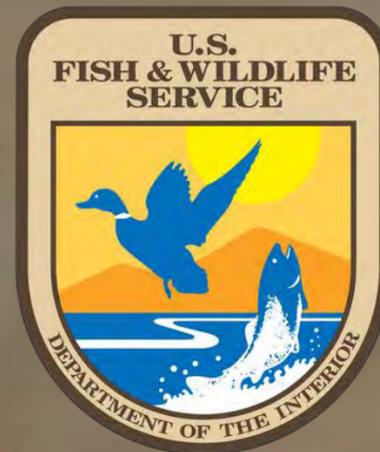
After wintering in North Carolina and Florida, Blaze and Pepper returned to Waukegan and successfully fledge three chicks: Juniper, Sage and Willow



2025

Blaze and Pepper return and successfully fledge one chick: Aster
Four captive-reared fledglings released on a beach in Waukegan. Two males and two females, from different nests have high odds of returning to Waukegan to nest. To honor Waukegan, the chicks named Benny, Dandelion, Genesee and Ray

Collaboration with Federal, State and Community Organizations



The Waukegan Dunes are federally designated as a critical habitat for the endangered Piping Plover.

Piping Plover Monitoring



Restricted Access Beach Location

- Safe space for nesting with limited public interaction
- Monitoring of other nesting and migratory birds using space
- Limited access for monitoring efforts

1,995 Volunteers Hours in 2025!



24 Volunteer Monitors including 5 interns from Carthage College and College of Lake County

Community Engagement in Waukegan



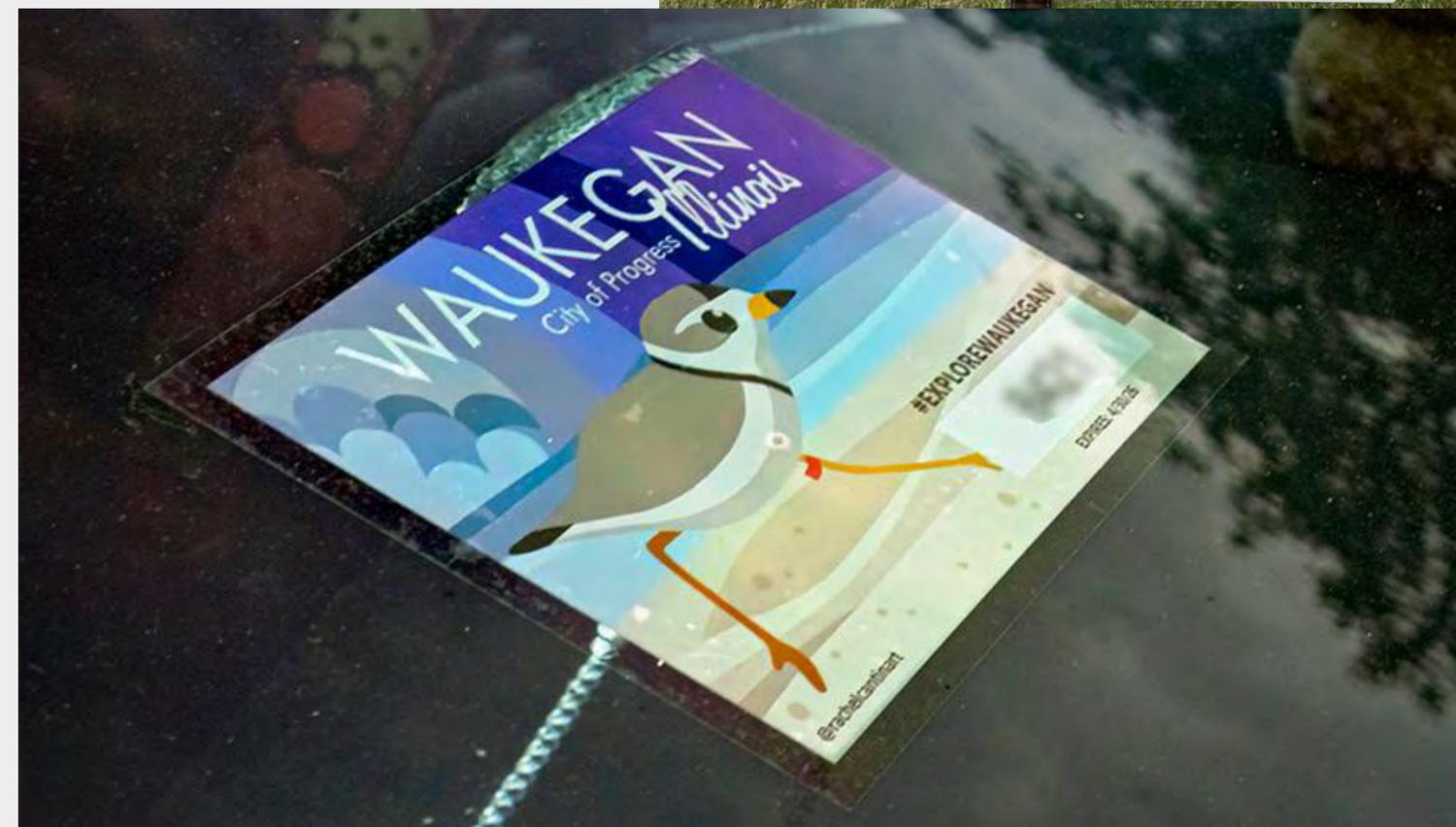
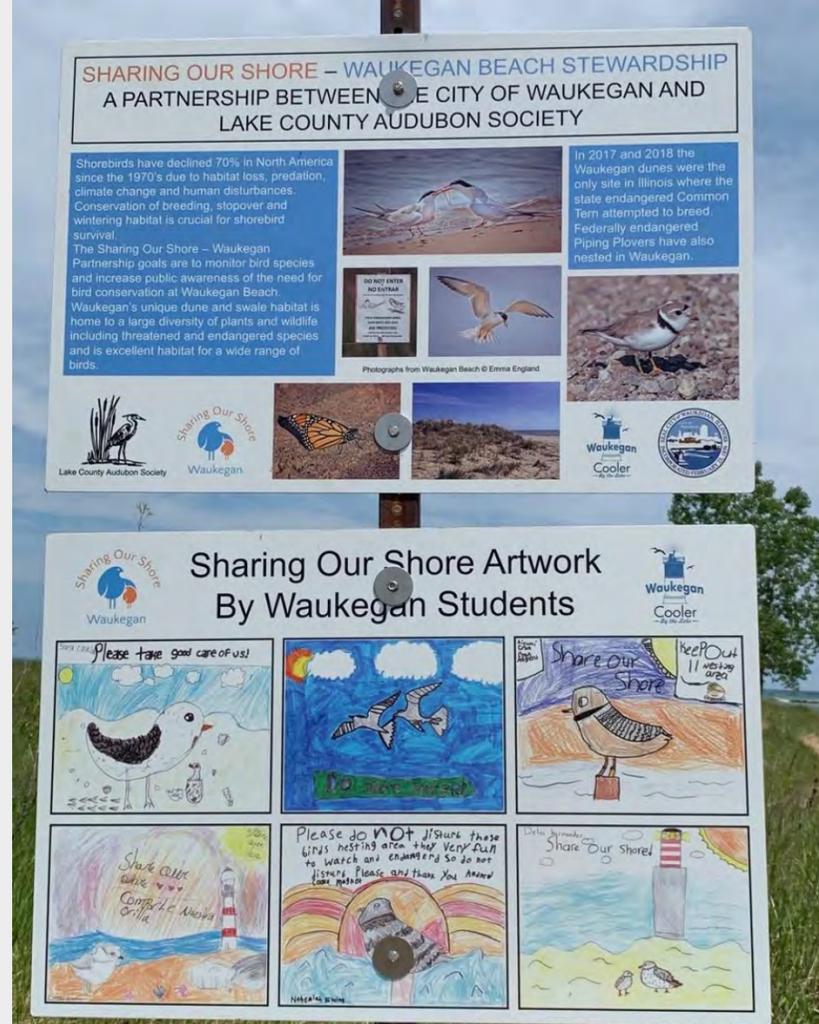
Sharing Our Shore - Waukegan

WAUKEGAN

City of Progress *Illinois*

City Government

- Celebrate World Migratory Bird Day
- Design and planning phase for Waukegan Dunes Observation Platform
- Mural featuring Piping Plovers
- Proclamations for Birds
 - 2018: First city in Illinois to declare 2018 the "Year of the Bird"
 - 2024: Piping Plover designated as the Official City Bird
 - 2025: May 29th recognized as Official Plover Day, celebrated annually
- Signage at lakefront
- Tabling at events and festivals throughout the year
- Train Beach Rangers



Police Department

- Plover Pal cookies created to raise awareness about beach protection
- Input in design of City Stickers
 - 2022 featured Piping Plover "Rose"
 - 2025 featured Piping Plover "Pepper"

Public Library

- Birding Backpacks
- Educational Programs
- Nature Displays in Lobby

Public Schools

- Guided and self-guided walks at the lakefront and local preserves
- Summer Camps hosted at the lakefront





Four LITTLE birds
one extraordinary
Journey

Waukegan Symphony - 2023

"Four Little Birds, One Extraordinary Journey", a nature/Piping Plover film, showcased during a live performance at the Young People's Concert



2024
Production –
Presentation –
for multiple
audiences

Watch it now on
the LCAS
Youtube
Channel!

a film by the LAKE COUNTY AUDUBON SOCIETY

Sharing Our Shore

and the Return of the Endangered Piping Plover to Waukegan Shores



2024 WAUKEGAN PIPING PLOVERS

FEMALE BLAZE MALE PEPPER CHICK JUNIPER CHICK SAGE CHICK WILLOW



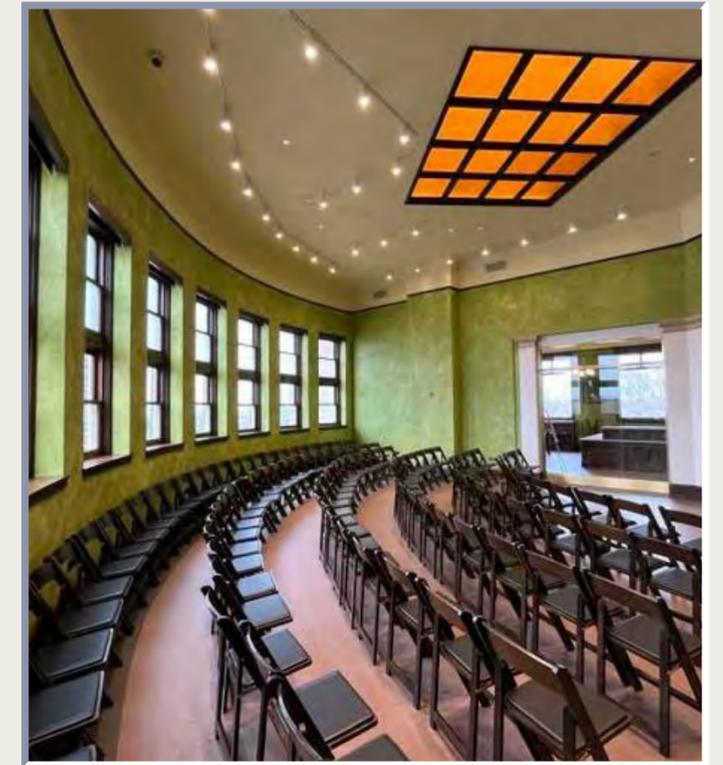
AGAINST ALL ODDS, THE ENDANGERED GREAT LAKES PIPING PLOVERS ARE ONCE AGAIN NESTING ON THE SHORES OF WAUKEGAN IN LAKE COUNTY, IL. FOLLOW THE STORY OF BLAZE AND PEPPER AS THEY TRIUMPHANTLY RETURN TO START A FAMILY IN THE FACE OF THREATS FROM PREDATORS AND STORMS. LEARN HOW LOCAL CONSERVATION VOLUNTEERS AND AGENCIES WORKED TOGETHER TO WELCOME THE PLOVERS BACK TO THEIR HISTORIC BREEDING GROUNDS.



PHOTO BY DAN KIRK

Waukegan Museum at the Carnegie

- ***LCAS / SOS-W and the Piping Plovers part of permanent exhibits***
- ***“Through the Eyes of the Piping Plovers: the Flora, Fauna and People of the Waukegan Shores” exhibit on display September 12 to October 31***
- ***“The Carnegie Classroom” with SOS-W instructor commences September 23, 2025. Every public and private 3rd grade student will tour the museum and engage in a one hour nature-based class with our team member with funding from a private family foundation and Audubon Great Lakes.***
- ***Dandelion Wine Festival tabling and educational outreach***
- ***History & Nature Walk held twice/yr before Waukegan Band performances***
- ***Educational, nature-based seminars presented to community in exhibit hall and classroom***





Sharing Our Shore - Waukegan

Presents a Special Art Exhibition

Through the Eyes of the Piping Plovers

**The Flora, Fauna & People
of the Waukegan Shores**

***September 12 through October 31
at the Waukegan History Museum at the Carnegie
1 N. Sheridan Rd, Downtown Waukegan***

*Featuring: Heeyoung Kim and Brushwood Botanical Artists
Interactive Exhibits, Programs & Lectures for All Ages
Photographs by National Audubon Photographer Steve Jessmore
and the Sharing Our Shore-Waukegan Monitoring Team*

Cutting-edge bird conservation technology



Windy City Bird Lab

Lake County will soon join Chicago with new Nocturnal Flight Call (NFC) technology with the installation of a Grosbeak Wildlife Monitoring Station (Nighthawk software) in Waukegan.

These recorders providing critical data to guide protections for species traveling through the Mississippi Flyway.

LCAS provided a 3 year sponsorship for this station and will be working with WCBL to create a network of stations in Lake County.

Learn more about the growing avian monitoring network at windycitybirdlab.org



Waukegan Dunes and North Beach ACCESS AND IMPROVEMENTS



Lake County Audubon partnered with Audubon Great Lakes and the Citizens Advisory Group on the Design and Planning of the Observation Platform