

# LAKE WAUSAU ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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## Domitar Dam Drawdown Done!



The three stages of repair of the concrete piers.

Refill of Lake Wausau will begin tomorrow, November 15th. Domitar will be refilling the lake at a rate of 2 inches per day until this Friday, when they will bring the level up 6 inches per day until it is completely full (by November 28th.)

*“Central Wisconsin has been blessed with an amazing summer and fall that has worked out very well for the repair project on the dam. The work started a week late but with the good weather we have been able to make up the lost time and complete all of the repairs to the concrete section of the dam. The repairs to the concrete section of the dam consisted of 14 separate concrete pours that added up to about 50 yards of concrete and we installed over 850 feet of rebar. What does 50 yards of concrete look like, it would be the equivalent to a concrete driveway 400 feet long and 8 foot wide. So by taking the time to lower the lake and completing the repairs in the dry we should have a good solid repair for years to come.”*

Warren Netzow, Project Engineer, Domitar.



**Contact Us! We'd love to connect!**

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## Lake Wausau Clean Up Yields Results

The Wisconsin Waterfowl Association (Wausau-Chapter) organized a lake bed clean on October 29th. Many thanks to all who participated! The majority of the trash removed from the lake bed was vehicle tires, bottles and cans. When summer arrives enjoy the cleaner environment! Lets all do our part by maintaining a trash free Lake Wausau.

## Lake Wausau Birding Highlights in 2016 by Dan Belter, Wausau Bird Club

2016 has been another great year for birding on Lake Wausau. Both spring and fall migrations were filled with great bird sightings, and several new species were added to the list of birds that have been recorded for Lake Wausau. But 2016 is not over with just yet, and when the lake is refilled from the drawdown, we may yet be adding a few more unusual bird sightings before the lake freezes up again.

As soon as the lake started thawing out in the spring the migrants started coming in, mostly with waterfowl. Every year when the lake first starts to open up, D.C. Everest County Park can be a great place to be at dusk to watch the hundreds, or sometimes thousands, of ducks flying in to spend the night on the open water. Most of these ducks will be Common Goldeneyes and both Hooded and Common Mergansers, but lesser numbers of other species will be mixed in. Starting around middle of March, Tundra Swans should be watched for, and this year March 20th was the day that the first sighting occurred. Several sighting of Trumpeter Swans also occurred this spring as well. There were two good sightings of waterfowl in the spring of 2016. The first was of a White-winged Scoter found on March 17th and last sighted on the 27th, and the second was of a Long-tailed Duck first sighted on March 25th and stayed until the 28th. Both of these ducks were females, and are rather uncommon for Lake Wausau. Most sightings are during fall migration, so a spring sighting is even more uncommon.

April 8th saw the first Red-necked Grebe sighted on the lake. At least 8 birds were present, mostly on the north end of the lake. Both Horned and Pied-billed Grebes were also present throughout the month of April in great numbers.

A nice variety of Herons also occurred on the lake in 2016. The first Great Blue Herons returned to the rookery on March 8th, and by the end of the month the rookery was full of them. On the evening of August 27th, a juvenile Black-crowned Night-Heron was seen flying past Rookery View Park and headed towards the heron rookery.

(cont. from page 3, by Dan Belter)

During September there was at least one Great Egret (maybe two were present?) hanging around the Wausau area, and it was seen several times flying over the lake, and once in the marshes on the north end of the lake. A migrant Cattle Egret was sighted during the afternoon of October 7th during the draw-down period at D.C. Everest County Park. As far as we know, this is a first sighting ever for Lake Wausau of this species.

Shorebirds put in another good showing again this spring, both on and around the small sandbar near the old Osprey nesting platform. On May 27th, 2 Black-necked Stilts were seen on the sandbar, which is the first ever recording of this species on Lake Wausau, and the second Marathon County record overall. Non-breeding plumaged Black-bellied Plovers and American Golden-Plovers were seen during the first few weeks of the draw-down period, as well as other more common shorebirds. Willets were present again in 2016. Sightings were made on May 3rd with 2 birds, and May 12th with 3 birds. Marbled Godwit sightings also took place on May 17th and May 19th, with only a single bird present on each date.

It was a good year for gulls too. Usually only three species of gulls can be expected for Lake Wausau, but this year we had five species. The most commonly seen gull on Lake Wausau is the Ring-billed Gull, followed by lesser numbers of Herring Gull and Bonaparte's Gull (but these two gulls can be common at certain times while in migration.)



Sabine's Gull

On April 17th, an adult Lesser Black backed Gull was present on the sandbar for the day. This was also a new species to be recorded for Lake Wausau. Then on September 7th, Lake Wausau's second record of a Sabine's Gull was discovered across from D.C. Everest County Park near the south end of Memorial Park. This is a rare gull to be seen anywhere in Wisconsin. It is more at home on the Atlantic or Pacific Oceans.

## Save the Dates!

Lake Wausau Association  
Social 2/8/17

Lake Wausau Association Fund  
Raiser 4/21/17

Places and times  
to be announced!

Watch for membership  
renewal reminders for 2017 or  
go to our website at  
[www.lakewausau.com](http://www.lakewausau.com)

Tern sightings were reported as normal. Black Terns were sighted on May 27th on the sandbar, and again on Sept. 8th off of Radtke Park. On Sept. 30th, up to 10 Common Terns were seen on the south end of the lake off of Country Club Road.

Sightings of American White Pelicans occurred in the middle of April. This large white bird is becoming a more common site on Lake Wausau as the species expands their range into Wisconsin. Last, but not least, the Lake Wausau draw down also attracted American Pipits, Lapland Longspur and Horned Larkes throughout September and October.

Check out footage of many of these birds sightings on Dan Belter's Youtube Channel. After all if we don't keep a close eye on what's present, we will miss all the interesting birds far from their normal ranges, attracted to Lake Wausau.



Do you know what happens to these Lake Wausau herptiles in the winter ?

A. Northern Crawfish



B. Snapping Turtle



C. Garter Snake



D. American Toad



Which statement best describes this herptile's winter habits?

1. They don't hibernate in the winter. Their bodies slow way down but they remain alert to changes in light and temperatures that signal a winter thaw or the coming of spring.
2. They hibernate communally, hundreds spending the winter in the same burrow. They use scent trails to find their way back to the same hibernation site each year.
3. They do not go dormant or hibernate, but move to deeper water for the winter.
4. They burrow into the ground deep enough to stay below the frost line.

D. 4

C. 2

B. 1

A. 3

Creatures of Lake Wausau wintering habits - how many did you get right?