

1000 Islands Environmental Center

January 2026 Naturalist Report

Brad Garrity – Naturalist, 1000 Islands

Terri Vosters – Director, Community Enrichment

Admin/Finance

- The Nature Center was closed on January 23rd and 24th due to the extreme cold temperatures with windchills of –40F.
- Finance Director Will Rossum has resigned from the City and will depart in early February. Ashley Roehl will fill the role as the interim until Will's replacement is hired.
- Our Jabber memorial fundraiser brought in \$400 which was split between J&R Aquatics and Wildlife of Wisconsin in recognition for their work with exotic and native animals in need, as well as their ongoing support of 1000 Islands.
- Friends of 1000 Islands held their Annual Meeting on January 11. Carol VanBoxtel presented about developing and writing her new children's book about the history and landmarks of Kaukauna, which Cassie and Brad were involved in helping edit and provide feedback.
- City of Kaukauna is advertising in the Travel Wisconsin magazine and social media for the first time, and 1000 Islands will be a part of the feature. Brad, Kat, and Eric were part of a photo shoot for some of the visual content.
- Our US Fish and Wildlife Service migratory bird permit reports for 2025 were submitted. We were informed that due to regulatory changes, the permits will not be needed in the future for the purposes of having our collection of taxidermy and specimens for educational and scientific purposes. We will continue to hold an annual Scientific Collectors permit issued by Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Education / Programming

- Our Winter Birdfeeder clinic was held on Jan 10 and approximately 25 people attended. Birdfeeders were made by upcycling old coffee cups, teacups, punch glasses and other glassware into birdfeeders filled with a suet made from Crisco/lard, birdseed, nuts and dried fruits.
- Also on Jan 10 was our kickoff for the Great Backyard Bird Count which is happening in mid-February. Kat provided a great selection of materials related to identification, counting and documentation of bird species, as well as information on how to access the e-bird app and more resources from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.
- The Bale Eagle nest cam planning group met to discuss our progress. A forester from City of Green Bay recently came to assess the health of the nest tree and adjacent trees, concluding that a camera could potentially be placed in the same nest as the tree. Eric G

continues to get some information on the technology, costs and work behind the nest cams from other locations in the Upper Midwest as well as the Raptor Resource Group. He also met with Wire Tech of Kaukauna to get quotes and ideas for the set up. Brad is working with KU on placement of equipment and securing permissions from the utility commission. The group volunteers will look at different websites and get ideas for the future website and user experience. We will meet again in February to discuss next steps.

- Brad was interviewed on Local 5 Live for two live spots about Eagle Days with Jordan Lamers, braving the below zero temperatures for live shots at the eagle nest site. Eric found his second calling as a mascot by donning the Eddie the Eagle costume in the background of our spot by the indoor eagle nest replica.
- Brad and Kat were featured as part of WLUK Fox 11's "Amazing America" story on Bald Eagles. Eric Peterson interviewed us about Eagle Days, facts about Eagles, and the connection of the eagle to the United States and the 250th anniversary of the founding of the nation.
- Brad was also interviewed for a spot that aired on NBC 26 about eagle days and our role as the Fox Valley Coordinator for Bald Eagle Nest Watch.
- The 14th annual Eagle Days event was a roaring success. Held on January 31st the event featured guided eagle viewing stations, kids crafts and coloring contest, a door prize raffle, food provided by Friends of 1000 Islands, and presentations by the National Eagle Center of Waubesa, MN and Kim Cackowski of the Kaukauna Public Library. Special thanks to KHS Key Club volunteers for their work, Friends of 1000 Islands for the food stand and sponsoring the appearance by NEC, the volunteers at the viewing stations, and staff for their hard work! Over 700 people attended the presentations alone, and we had people from all over the state in attendance, and even one visitor from Singapore!
- We had a handful of Homeschool group field trips as well as a visit from a group of high schoolers with special needs from Fundamentals. The adaptability and willingness of Kat and Brad to lean into these areas has opened up 1000 Islands and our mission to serve more groups outside of the traditional field trip groups.
- Brad has been very busy coordinating Bald Eagle Nest Watch, scouting the nest sites in the area and assigning volunteer watchers to the nests in anticipation of nesting season which begins in our area of the state between Valentine's Day and St Patrick's Day.

Building and Grounds

- Not too much to report as outdoor work has been hindered by the extreme cold weather which has gripped the area for most of the month. Eric and staff have been busy with snow removal as the result of multiple small snow and ice events. We have done our best to keep the boardwalk at least partially clear of snow and ice to maintain accessibility and put our regular trail condition reports via social media.
- We removed the old AR sand table equipment and patched and painted the wall in that area. Plans are in progress to potentially use of the space as a small reading and video nook.

- We have had a lot of eagle activity in the area and also the arrival of different duck species such as Goldeneye and Mergansers. There has been nest building activity at our bald eagle nest site.