



JACK PINE WARBLER

Volume 84, Number 1

January/February 2007

Our Vanishing Grassland Birds



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OUR MISSION

Michigan Audubon Society advocates the awareness, enjoyment, and stewardship of the environment and natural resources through education, research, and conservation/preservation with an emphasis on birds and their habitats.

WELCOME NEW MICHIGAN AUDUBON MEMBERS.

We are happy to bring you news of Michigan's natural heritage.

Photographers and illustrators who wish to contribute their work for one-time use in JPW are encouraged to contact Jeff Colon (information at right). A description of the work including credit, copyright, and biographical data with contact information will be printed here.

About the cover: Bobolink, one of our vanishing grassland birds. Photo ©2006 iStockPhoto.com.

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MAS, Michigan's oldest conservation organization, was formed and incorporated in 1904. As a nonprofit entity, contributions to MAS are tax deductible (State of Michigan Charitable Trust License 1782). MAS supports and maintains bird surveys and research, provides educational opportunities, and preserves 4,700 acres of land within 19 sanctuaries and 3 affiliates. There are 42 local Audubon chapters in Michigan.

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Calendar

2007

January

20 **Michigan Audubon Board Meeting** Urban Options, East Lansing

February

TBA **Michigan Audubon Southeastern Regional Meeting**
16-19 **Great Backyard Bird Count**

March

2-3 **MAS Annual Conference** Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center, East Lansing

May

18-20 **Tawas Point Birding Festival**

12 **International Migratory Bird Day**

19 **Kirtland's Warbler Festival** Roscommon

25-28 **Memorial Weekend Nature Getaway** Loon Lake Lutheran Retreat, Hale

A Special Message from National Audubon

The implications of this past election go far beyond partisan score-keeping. It appears that voters rejected extremism in national policy and restored the balance that promises full and open debate on crucial issues, including environmental protections. That bodes well for the health of resources we all depend upon.

The challenge now is to rise above partisanship and enact policies that protect our natural resources while addressing critical energy problems. Voters want solutions and an end to a special interest-dominated energy policy that has consisted of little more than drilling, despoiling, and denial. Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle can meet voter expectations by blazing the trail to a clean energy future that protects human health, wildlife and treasured places.

We look to the new Congress and its leaders to offer constructive dialogue over dogma, and solid solutions over sound bites. Now is the time for real and lasting progress on energy and other priority conservation concerns:

- **Combating global warming** while preparing for its already-escalating consequences
- Safeguarding the **Arctic National Wildlife Refuge**
- Ensuring protection of our **endangered species**
- Adequately **funding enforcement** of federal environmental regulations and legislation, conservation programs, and **essential, overdue upkeep** of national parks and refuges
- **Protecting and restoring wetlands** vital to environmental and economic health.

Audubon is eager to work with the new Congress to bridge partisan divides and support the forward-looking policies needed to protect our natural heritage. Conservation is a cherished part of America's values—with the new balance in Congress, our lawmakers have a chance to show that they share those values with the voters they serve.

Let me add my personal thanks to our activists and chapter leaders for your dedicated efforts on behalf of birds, wildlife and their habitats. We need you now, more than ever, as we forge ahead on new initiatives to safeguard our environment.

*John Flicker, President
National Audubon*

President's Letter

Happy New Year, Auduboners!

Welcome to a new year of birding and a new *Jack Pine Warbler*. Our publications committee welcomes a new chair, Laura Julier, a professor in the Professional Writing program at Michigan State University. She and *JPW* editor Bob Guiliani, layout designer Jeff Colon, volunteer and regular contributor Bill Rapai, and staff members Jeanette Henderson and Caroline de Mauriac have collaborated to bring our members an exciting new format for Michigan Audubon's bi-monthly newsletter. The design is in a transitional phase and you may see some additional changes in issues to come.

The new format will continue to use eco-friendly paper and ink consistent with our conservation mission. The *JPW* will maintain its mix of event and trip announcements, chapter news, and bookstore specials. Additionally, *JPW* will include regular columns on birding and environmental issues that will be of interest to researchers, skilled amateurs, and backyard birders alike.

As the committee makes changes in the content and design, we encourage our readers and members to send queries, letters, articles, and artwork. Please note our new submission schedule for upcoming issues.

I extend a heartfelt thank you to those who have worked on creating *JPW's* new look. Please note our new submission schedule can be found on the inside of the front cover for upcoming issues.

*Jack Lapinski, President
Michigan Audubon*

Editor's Letter

Time: Do you have it?

by Bob Guiliani, JPW editor

Time. Webster defines time as "a nonspatial continuum in which events occur in apparently irreversible succession. Einstein developed mathematical theories on it." As youngsters we all thought time went so slow. Those long days in school dragged by when you just wanted to be outside or anywhere else but at that desk. Those years you couldn't wait to go by so you could get your driver's license, go to your first prom, graduate from high school, etc.

As we grow older, time seems to move faster. There doesn't seem to be enough time for all the projects we give ourselves. Time becomes the nemesis of all.

Throughout time, many memorable lines have been written regarding time. "All that time is lost which might be better employed" (Rousseau). "The inaudible and noiseless fort of time" (Shakespeare). "As every thread of gold is valuable, so is every minute of time" (Mason). "Ask me for anything but time" (Napoleon). "Dost thou love life? Then waste not time, for time is the stuff that life is made of" (Benjamin Franklin).

Then there are those everyday clichés and idioms: time flies, time is money, time waits for no one, make time, prison time, swing time, time

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Our Vanishing Grassland Birds

by William Rapai

On a downright cold and blustery October day, Dea Armstrong braces herself against a northwesterly wind and looks out from the cap of the Ann Arbor city landfill. A few miles to the north is Ann Arbor's skyline and just a few hundred yards to the west is the city's Materials Resource Facility, a fancy name for a building where garbage is compacted and loaded onto heavy trucks to be transferred to another location. Despite all the noise, activity, dust, and disgusting smells that come with a landfill, Armstrong, the Ann Arbor city ornithologist, protects this mound of clay and grass as if it were her own.

That's because something astonishing has been happening here over the past eight years: since being capped and seeded, this 100-acre section of the 400-acre facility has become a nesting site for several species of grassland birds, including Bobolink, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Sedge Wren.

As more and more land around Ann Arbor and across the Midwest is gobbled up by development, grassland birds are finding fewer areas every year where they can nest. Consequently, every grassland bird species in Michigan—including Grasshopper and Henslow's Sparrows, Western Meadowlark, Upland Sandpiper, Bobolink, Dickcissel and Short-eared Owl—is in decline.

But for several pairs of nesting birds, this area of non-native grasses near intense human activity and heavy equipment is good enough to call home—for the summer, at least. "I don't know why it's working," Armstrong says. "It's just working."

Armstrong's efforts to maintain this outdoor nursery—landfill though it may be—is a small but important part of a national effort to address the steep decline in the population of grassland birds. Studies show that since the start of the 18th century, more than 90 percent of North American grasslands have been replaced by development or agriculture. Unfortunately, that process continues today as fallow farmland is converted to subdivisions and retail centers.

Solid data on North American grassland bird populations exist only since 1966, according to Dave Sample, a grassland community ecologist with the Bureau of Science Services of the Wisconsin Division of Natural Resources. But anecdotal evidence suggests that grassland bird populations have been falling dramatically since the start of the 20th

Otis Sanctuary ©2006 Tom Funke



Dea Armstrong, Ann Arbor city ornithologist, surveys the grassland established atop a city landfill. Photo ©2006 William Rapai

century. Sample says that no other group of birds has seen a population decline as steep or widespread, and the population decline of some grassland species has begun to level off only because they're so low that they can't fall much further.

In response to this troubling news, Michigan Audubon and other conservation organizations are stepping up efforts to work with local, state, and federal governments and private property owners to better understand and address the needs of grassland birds and find innovative new ways to preserve their habitats.

There are a number of initiatives under way:

- Several Michigan Audubon sanctuaries are expanding the number of acres devoted to grasslands and are planting additional warm-weather native grasses and wildflowers.
- The Michigan Department of Natural Resources is working with private landowners and farmers to create more grasslands and better maintain existing ones.
- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Department of Agriculture are providing expertise and money to convert farmland into grasslands in Michigan and other states.

In some cases, like at the Ann Arbor landfill, conservationists, wildlife biologists, and birders are finding their efforts rewarded. In too many other places, however, they can only stand by and watch as grasslands are developed, neglected, or chopped into patches too small to support nesting.

Dr. Peter Vickery, president of the Center for Ecological Research in Richmond, Maine, says he has seen Ann Arbor's experience repeated at other landfills because they provide something that many grassland birds need—a completely open area of more than 100 acres.

Vickery researched grassland birds for more than 20 years with Massachusetts Audubon. During that time, he watched the populations of grassland birds decline in eastern Massachusetts, but he has also seen the population of at least one species—Grasshopper Sparrow—recover, in part because they like the kind of cover they can find in the grasses growing on landfills.

The job of finding areas large enough to support those birds—at least in southwestern Michigan—is up to Christopher Hoving, a wildlife biologist in the Michigan DNR's Plainwell office. Hoving focuses his efforts on areas of Michigan that historically had a higher percentage of grasslands and then prioritizes plots in those areas based on acreage. “If you have 15 acres or less, I won't even visit it because it won't support grassland birds,” Hoving says. “A 40-acre field is where you start seeing results.”

Hoving helps administer the Landowner Incentive Program, a federally-funded program that helps farmers and voluntary private property owners restore habitat for threatened and endangered species, including grassland birds. (In southern Michigan, the program targets the restoration of open wetlands, prairies, grasslands, oak barrens, and savannahs. In northern Michigan, the program targets pine barrens, which are native grassland openings found in jack pine habitats. In the Upper Peninsula, the program targets the



A controlled burn conducted at Baker Sanctuary. Photos © Mike Boyce.

If only it were that easy for every grassland species. Unfortunately, Vickery says, grassland birds are notoriously picky nesters and there's no one-size-fits-all solution. Some species prefer short, sparse vegetation, while others prefer taller, denser vegetation. And because shrubs and woody species are always ready to move in, grasslands require fairly intensive human management as a substitute for the occasional wildfire. The only thing that all grassland birds seem to like is lots of space.

Ron Hoffman, steward of Michigan Audubon's Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Audubon Sanctuary in Jackson County, has firsthand knowledge of what happens when grassland areas are neglected. Even though the Haehnle Sanctuary is dominated by wetlands that provide a congregating spot for Sandhill Cranes every fall, the Sanctuary has a large grassland area that had been neglected for some time. And when the trees and shrubs moved in, the grassland birds moved out.

So, for the past couple of years, Hoffman and sanctuary volunteers have worked to remove the unwanted growth and have planted more native grasses. The effort appears to have been worth it. Grassland birds are returning to Haehnle, and as a secondary benefit there are fewer white-tailed deer in the area.

“One of the issues that we have is that some of the species that are in the biggest decline are the ones that require large acreage—larger than we (at Haehnle) have devoted to grassland,” Hoffman says.

restoration of so-called mesic conifers—fir, hemlock, white pine, and spruce trees that grow in moist soils.)

Hoving says his job is actually easier than it may sound. Instead of going out and searching for grasslands, he's regularly called by landowners who are eager to preserve their land. “The fact of the matter is that we are really swamped by demand,” Hoving says. “On occasion, I will approach landowners—sort of like a cold call. Sometimes the people are afraid that the government is trying to interfere with their land. But much more often people come to me and I get the question, ‘Someone told me that I have this rare butterfly on my land. What do I do?’”

And although Dave Sample is impressed with the current efforts to preserve and expand grasslands, he thinks the future is grim for grassland birds unless we start thinking bigger—preserving grassland areas of 5,000 acres or larger. Coming up with that kind of space in already crowded states like Michigan and Wisconsin is going to be a real challenge, especially as more land is pressed into agriculture to grow corn for ethanol fuel.

“We have to start thinking bigger than we have in the past,” Sample says. “Society is going to have to make a choice as to whether they're going to want these critters around or not.” 🐾

William Rapai is president of the Grosse Pointe Audubon Society. He is a stay-at-home dad who formerly worked for the Detroit Free Press and the Boston Globe. He may be contacted at brapai@aol.com.

Creating Habitat for Bobolinks

by Kay Charter

About a century and a quarter ago, poet Emily Dickinson wrote often of Bobolinks near her home in Amherst, Massachusetts. “The Bobolink is gone – The Rowdy of the meadow...,” she wrote. “The hills untied their bonnets – the Bobolinks begun...” and, “The way to know the Bobolink – From every other bird – Precisely as the Joy of him...” And then there’s an excerpt from my very favorite:

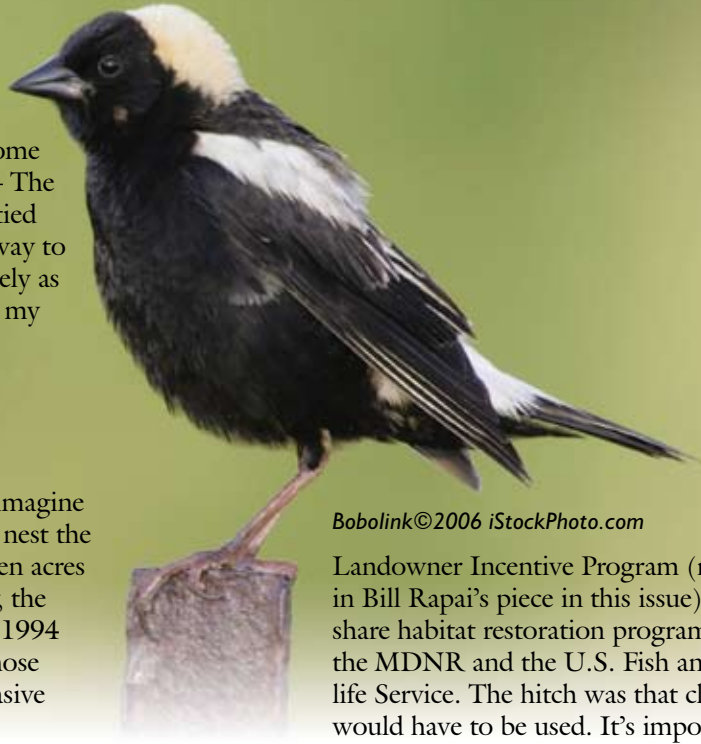
*Some keep the Sabbath going to church;
I keep it staying home,
With a Bobolink for a chorister,
And an orchard for a dome.*

I share Dickinson’s love for this bird, so you can imagine my own joy when a small flock of them appeared to nest the year after my husband and I purchased the forty-seven acres of land that would become our bird sanctuary. Sadly, the bird whose beautiful song has graced our field since 1994 has been steadily declining in number over half of those years. The main culprit is spotted knapweed, an invasive plant from Ukraine.

Like other grassland species, Bobolinks were originally confined to North American prairies in the west and midwest during the breeding season. But when Europeans opened eastern forests for agriculture, Bobolinks and other grassland birds moved eastward, ultimately becoming common in New England. Some, like the Bobolink, were abundant. In the first half of the nineteenth century, Audubon wrote of New York and Connecticut that it was “impossible to see a meadow or a field of corn which does not contain several pairs of them.”

Now, however, forests have reclaimed their place in that part of the country and Bobolinks have largely vanished. Forests would also reclaim the fields of Charter Sanctuary if we were to allow it to happen. There are some who have argued that my husband and I should not try to maintain habitat for grassland birds, since prairie was not endemic to northern Michigan. We take a different view. Bobolinks, along with other grassland species, are in serious trouble. They are losing nesting habitat to agricultural interests; rice farmers often kill them as pests during migration and on their wintering grounds. Offering a safe haven for the remarkable bird with the exquisite song is important to us. Doing so, however, has forced us to change the way we manage our land.

When we purchased this land, we vowed (or at least I did) never to use chemicals on it. Last summer, Vern Stephens of Designs by Nature came to present a program on prairies for Saving Birds Thru Habitat. After the program, when attendees were gone, he looked at our knapweed-covered meadow and said that if we didn’t do something about this noxious weed, we would lose our nesting birds entirely. He offered to help by connecting us with the



Bobolink©2006 iStockPhoto.com

Landowner Incentive Program (referred to in Bill Rapai’s piece in this issue), a cost-share habitat restoration program with the MDNR and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The hitch was that chemicals would have to be used. It’s impossible to eradicate knapweed without herbicides.

Reluctantly, I agreed—and came to think of it as chemotherapy for our upland habitat.

Last May, Roundup was applied twice and in early June little bluestem was drilled in. By the end of summer, the little blue was almost up to our knees. And it was blooming! In late April of this year, there will be additional herbicide applications, and in May other native grasses and several forbs will be added. Within a couple of years, we should have a spectacular native prairie in place of a meadow filled with non-native grasses and wildflowers. Once the prairie is in place, my beloved Bobolinks should return in higher numbers for nesting.

After they departed at the end of a summer, Emily Dickinson mourned their absence in one of her poems:

*The Bird of Birds is gone—
How nullified the Meadow—
Her Sorcerer withdrawn!*

Without the help of Vern Stephens, his wife Sue Tangora, and the LIP program, I would have been doomed to share her mourning forever. Thanks to Vern, Sue, and these programs, this wonderful bird of birds will continue to grace our fields with its exquisite song for years to come. 🐦

Concerned about the decline of their favorite bird species, Kay Charter and her husband Jim sold their lakefront home in Leelanau County in 1992 and used the proceeds to purchase 47 acres of mixed habitat away from the water. There they established Charter Sanctuary, which they have used since as an outdoor classroom where others can learn how to create habitat for our remarkable migrants. Kay is a founder and executive director of Saving Birds Thru Habitat (www.savingbirds.org).

Night Migrants Need “Safe Passage”



by Joe Bartell

Each year in North America, between one hundred million and one billion birds die during night-time migrations. Many people think that all birds migrate during the day. Not so. Many small birds such as warblers, wrens vireos, thrushes, and tanagers migrate at night on their way either to their summer breeding grounds or their wintering grounds. Migrants face many hazards in both directions, including towers and (especially during the day) structures that use glass. However, tall buildings lighted at night have been shown to be one of the greatest dangers.

It is thought that the lights on tall buildings confuse the navigation systems of birds unlucky to have such buildings in their flight path. They circle the buildings repeatedly and die either of exhaustion or by colliding directly with the illuminated building. According to scientists at the Field Museum in Chicago, this mortality could be reduced by 80% if those building lights were turned off.

The Detroit Audubon Society is requesting building organizations, government agencies, and property owners to reduce the carnage by turning off lights in tall buildings—on the 5 floor and above—from 11:00 p.m. to dawn, from the second weekend in March through May, and from the second weekend in August through October.

Governor Jennifer Granholm showed her support of this effort by issuing a proclamation naming “Safe Passage Great Lakes Days”: March 15 through May 31, and August 15 through October 31. Detroit Audubon has been gratified to receive support also from DTE Energy and Ford Motor Company.

Detroit Audubon’s annual meeting on March 31, 2007 will feature two nationally-recognized researchers who study the hazards that migrating birds face, one of whom is Daniel Klem, Ph.D.



Warblers and other night migrants are often confused by the nighttime skyline of cities like Detroit.
Photos © iStockPhoto.com

In spearheading “Project Safe Passage,” Detroit Audubon is following the lead of cities such as Chicago, New York, and Toronto, which have similar programs.

Toronto became the first North American city to dim tall building lights during spring and fall bird migrations. Chicago was the first United States city to follow suit. Michigan can become the first state to demonstrate its concern in a similar way.

However, it is not just a matter of saving the lives of avian migrants. Keeping those lights on means using a good deal of electricity, and that costs money. Further, the electricity used has an environmental cost: the generation of that electricity means that power plants are in operation, which contributes to air pollution.

So by turning out those lights, not only will birds be spared, but money and energy will also be saved, and pollution will be reduced. It can be a win-win-win situation, for the environment, for building owners and managers, and for the birds.

Detroit Audubon welcomes the support of Michigan Audubon in the effort to inform people throughout our state of the benefits of simply turning out lights during the bird migration season. Several of the bird species at risk from these nighttime lights are declining in population. We can help reduce that risk by removing one major hazard.

Spread the word.

Joe Bartell is a past president of the Detroit Audubon Society and has served on their conservation, membership, and finance committees over the years. He held a position on the Michigan Audubon board in the 1960s. He is a member of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, in addition to many other world conservation and birding organizations.

Birds of Isle Royale

by Vic Foerster

As an arborist, I'm in the habit of looking up at trees. With the sky as a backdrop, I often get to see birds of prey. Call it a job perk. It's amazing the number of hawks, owls, osprey, eagles, falcons, and their close cousins—gulls, ravens, and crows—that patrol the skies. As much as I enjoy the woods and even with all the birds I'm fortunate to notice overhead, my view is restricted when I stand under the trees. Breaking free from the forest allows me to see to a horizon that stretches to the lake's rim.

Isle Royale National Park is a freshwater archipelago located in the northwest corner of Lake Superior. But seeing Isle Royale from the water didn't occur to me until my second trip there. Ken, an old college friend, and I were hiking a lakeside trail. A couple canoed by us on the lake. They carried fishing poles. We slogged along a well-used footpath, hot, sweaty, with sixty-pound packs and sore feet. They waved at us as they glided by with a canoe full of gear and provisions we could never have carried in backpacks.

We had our next trip planned before we reached camp.

Canoeing Lake Superior opened up a whole new world, but it also gave us, by necessity, a very cautious attitude. We rarely venture far from shore. Since we tend to hug the land, we get to see a host of waterfowl, raptors, beavers, otters, muskrats, and songbirds of almost every kind. It's an environment consisting of miles and miles of shoreline. Wildlife is drawn to the water, and from our canoe, we have ringside seats.

Isle Royale National Park is one of the world's foremost outdoor laboratories. Because of its unique location and the absence of any motorized vehicles and industry for more than 80 years, in 1981 Isle Royale was designated an International Biosphere Reserve. The water and air has become the control portion for environmental quality experiments in North America.

For people who enjoy observing wildlife in an undisturbed wilderness environment, Isle Royale offers an unparalleled viewing experience. For twenty-five years, I've witnessed several wildlife incidents like the falcon and crow conflict described at right. The island's isolation amidst the largest fresh water lake on the planet makes the journey to get there difficult, but worth the effort. This is true regardless of whether one backpacks over its 165 miles of pathways or takes to the lake. 🦅

Vic Foerster works as a commercial arborist and is chair of the Michigan Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council. He has been exploring Isle Royale National Park for 25 years. This article is an excerpt from a forthcoming book, The Isle Royale Stories.

WHAACK! A stunned songbird fell from the sky. The falcon quickly circled around, snatched it off the water, and flew back into the trees.

We were fishing along the north side of Johnson Island, a long narrow spit of land within Robinson Bay. I was focused on my rod tip, waiting for a strike of my own. My pole was set in a rod holder mounted to the right side of the canoe. Out of the corner of my eye, I caught the flash of movement and had just enough time to turn and see the falcon streak by. The songbird had been trying to cross the bay. The collision was so close to me that I could hear the smack when the falcon struck the wren. The little bird was dead on impact. It spiraled softly down. When it landed on the lake, it was so light it made no ripple.

Countless small birds inhabit Isle Royale, and I have to believe a falcon rarely goes hungry for long. We'd seen this falcon earlier in the week sitting on a strategic branch further down inside Robinson Bay. They'll wait until some bird tries to take a shortcut over a cove or inland lake, exposing themselves outside the protection of the trees. The falcons are so fast the slower songbirds don't stand a chance.

Falcons are bold. When he struck, it was no more than twenty feet away from us. The same event occurred one other time. Ken saw the falcon crossing the bay and had just enough time to speak out from the back of the canoe. When I spun around, the falcon was less than ten feet from my face. Either my startled jump (not a wise move in a canoe), or Ken's shout saved that sparrow. The falcon pulled up short, and the sparrow escaped.

Falcons are the only birds of prey I've ever seen hunt crows. We were fishing out by Cork Island one day when several birds began to raise a loud protest over on the north side of Belle Isle Pointe. We were about a quarter of a mile from them. All we could see from that distance were black dots against the bright sky, swarming in erratic patterns, diving, circling, and changing altitudes sharply. Their outcry carried over the water and seemed loud in a place where such noise draws unwanted attention from predators and scavengers.

As we canoed closer, one dot swelled into a faster bird, the falcon. He was diving on at least twelve crows. The scene was like a World War I dogfight. Some of the crows were in flight and others were roosting in the trees. Picking out one, the falcon dove, but the crow flipped upside-down in the air to protect itself with its talons. It happened a few more times as we watched the falcon dart in after other birds. The strategy must work—we never saw any crows go down.

The falcon wheeled and swooped at will. A few crows tried to chase him, but it was a futile effort. None of them came close. He definitely had brass, because crows and ravens travel in groups, and if you take one on, you take them all on. I can't imagine the falcon, even if he had managed to kill one, being left in peace to feed.

Maybe they were just playing some aerial game of tag. I have never seen any other wildlife event like it. Normally, crows and ravens harass owls, hawks, or other birds of prey, not the other way around.

Michigan IBA Update

Regional meetings underway—First sites identified

by Caleb Putnam

On November 1, the Michigan Important Bird Areas (IBA) technical committee met for the first time to discuss our first round of IBA identifications. The committee discussed how to identify IBAs in the state, and reviewed fourteen sites which

may qualify as globally-significant or continentally-significant IBAs. Sites which met preliminary criteria include Kirtland's Warbler management units in both peninsulas, several Piping Plover breeding sites, Whitefish Point, Allegan State Game Area and the Kalamazoo River, Barry State Game Area and Yankee Springs Recreation Area, the lower Au Sable River, and Seney National Wildlife Refuge. In each case, the presence of a particular species of concern, or of a congregation of species, was what merited the IBA designation. The criteria are very specific, and require bird count data from any time during the past ten years.

For example, any species listed by the World Conservation Union (a.k.a. IUCN) as globally-threatened is given a threshold level for global IBA consideration. This number is different depending on the season (breeding, migration, or wintering). A complete list of Michigan's globally-significant species is given in Fig. 1. 15 pairs of nesting Cerulean Warblers, 60 migrating Henslow's Sparrows simultaneously, or 240 wintering Northern Bobwhites will qualify a site at the global level, but the threshold number must be met on a regular basis.

Continental criteria include thresholds for species on any of the continentally-driven priority lists (see Fig. 2), including the Partners in Flight Watch List and the American Bird Conservancy's Green List, among several others. Examples include 720 wintering Wilson's Phalaropes, 80 nesting pairs of Blue-winged Warblers, or 720 migrating Rusty Blackbirds present simultaneously. Numbers this high are going to be met at only a select few sites, and that is exactly the intent of this process. Only the state's very best sites will be recognized at this level. Many more sites will meet the state criteria, which will simply be stepped-down versions of the above.

Sites can also qualify by hosting a large percentage of any species' entire population either simultaneously or over a season. For example, a hawk watch site may support over 5% of the global population of Broad-winged Hawks each fall. A final global criterion recognizes any site which supports at least 20,000 waterbirds (including waterfowl, grebes, loons, pelicans, cormorants, rails, cranes, coots, herons, gulls, and terns) of any species simultaneously.

Regional meetings a great success

I have now given my IBA PowerPoint presentation at four regional chapter meetings, with great success. In the talk I described to chapter leaders how the IBA program works, and then how chapters or individuals can engage their membership in the program. The development of adoption groups will be a key element in the IBA program. These are nothing more than associations of key stakeholders who work to address the conservation needs of the IBA. After site identifications are finalized, the IBA program will focus on helping chapters achieve meaningful conservation. Adoption groups provide chapters the best medium for engaging in this process. Each group will assess the conservation needs of their local IBA, and then begin to plan for implementation of those needs.

Rather than reinvent the wheel completely, I encourage chapters to design adoption groups that fit with current strengths of the chapter. One group may choose to focus on education and outreach while another may work with a land conservancy to pursue protection of habitat. Another may try to influence public policy. Habitat restoration is another option, and chapters may choose to work with the Michigan DNR's Landowner Incentive

Figure 1

- Michigan's globally-threatened IBA species, as determined by the World Conservation Union
- Northern Bobwhite
- Buff-breasted Sandpiper
- Piping Plover
- Red-headed Woodpecker
- Henslow's Sparrow
- Olive-sided Flycatcher
- Golden-winged Warbler
- Kirtland's Warbler
- Cerulean Warbler

Figure 2

Michigan's continentally-threatened IBA species, as determined by conservation plans written under the North American Bird Conservation Initiative.

- Trumpeter Swan
- American Black Duck
- Bald Eagle
- Northern Harrier
- Peregrine Falcon
- Yellow Rail
- American Golden-Plover
- Solitary Sandpiper
- Upland Sandpiper
- Whimbrel
- Hudsonian Godwit
- Marbled Godwit
- Red Knot
- Purple Sandpiper
- Stilt Sandpiper
- Short-billed Dowitcher
- American Woodcock
- Wilson's Phalarope
- Common Tern
- Black-billed Cuckoo
- Short-eared Owl
- Whip-poor-will
- Loggerhead Shrike
- Sedge Wren
- Wood Thrush
- Blue-winged Warbler
- Prairie Warbler
- Bay-breasted Warbler
- Prothonotary Warbler
- Worm-eating Warbler
- Louisiana Waterthrush
- Canada Warbler
- Grasshopper Sparrow
- Le Conte's Sparrow
- Dickcissel
- Rusty Blackbird

Bird Facts

Question:

A member of MAS recently told me that he had trapped and killed scores of sparrows and starlings. Is this the policy of the Michigan Audubon? Is it the policy of the Audubon Society as a whole?

Response:

Thank you for contacting Michigan Audubon with your question about euthanizing sparrows and starlings. Michigan Audubon has no specific policy regarding this issue.

It might be useful, however, to know that invasive species such as the House Sparrow and European Starling are not native to northern Michigan nor to North America. They wreak havoc on struggling native bird species such as the Eastern Bluebird and the globally-threatened Kirtland's Warbler.

While alien species such as the Cowbird are protected by the state and federal governments, the non-native House Sparrow and European Starling are not protected under the law.

These non-native species encroach on the habitats of endangered birds. Euthanizing them does not compromise their populations, and may greatly improve the success rates of less adaptive native species. The continued degradation of habitat, introduction of non-native plant and animal species, and the introduction of toxic pollutants into our environment make it necessary sometimes to take management steps which at first blush may seem counter-intuitive and distasteful. These steps are not taken lightly by those who wish to protect and promote a healthy balance in local environments.

We hope we have provided some context for understanding this issue more fully. If you have any other questions, please contact us. Thank you for your interest and concern for the birds.

Caroline de Mauriac, staff member of Michigan Audubon, and Caleb Putnam, coordinator of Important Bird Areas Program, answer your bird and birding questions here every issue.

Send questions to:

Bird Facts, Michigan Audubon, 6011 W. St. Joseph Hwy., Ste. 403, Lansing, MI 48917

☎ 517-886-9144 • fax 517-886-9466

✉ MAS@MichiganAudubon.org

Photography Corner

Question:

Do I need to worry about using my camera outside in cold winter weather?

Response:

There are two concerns when using your camera (digital or film) in the cold weather. Batteries will lose their power very quickly in the cold. A second set of batteries carried inside a pocket to replace the cold set when they quit is an excellent solution. The cold set can then be warmed and exchanged if the second set quits. Some cameras can use lithium batteries, which have good performance in cold weather.

The other concern is bringing a cold camera inside. Those who wear glasses know what the problem is: condensation. Moisture from the warm air condenses onto the cold camera and lens and perhaps onto the electronics inside as well. One suggestion is to place the camera in a Ziploc bag before entering the warmth. Once the camera and air inside the bag has warmed, it can be removed. Or place it in a camera bag and zip it shut. Shut the camera off before going inside.

Although they're no guarantee, these techniques could save your camera for another adventure into the cold.

Bob Guilianni answers your photography questions here every issue.

Send Photography Corner questions to:

Photography Corner, Michigan Audubon, 6011 W. St. Joseph Hwy., Ste. 403, Lansing, MI 48917

☎ 517-886-9144 • fax 517-886-9466

✉ MAS@MichiganAudubon.org

IBA update

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Program (LIP), which pays for and carries out habitat restoration for threatened species on private lands. Lastly, adoption groups can and should take over monitoring species of concern at IBAs where it is needed. This is a perfect example of using one's birding skills for conservation. Any chapter or individual interested in starting an adoption group should contact me. 🐦

For more information

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The Bird We Love to Hate

Researching and understanding the Brown-headed Cowbird in Michigan

by Lauren A. Bailey

It has been called a pest, menace, and social outcast. People often roll their eyes or exhibit signs of disgust when its name is mentioned. It is quite possibly the most hated bird in the United States. Trap-and-removal programs have been implemented by wildlife management agencies for decades to control its population. Countless scientific studies have been conducted to determine its impact on songbird communities. The culprit is none other than the infamous Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*).

Often erroneously referred to as an invasive species, Cowbirds are native to North America—more specifically to the short-grass prairies of the Great Plains. Once known as “bison birds” because they followed migrating bison in search of insects and seeds kicked up during movement, cowbirds were a basic part of the grassland bird community. However, in the mid-1800s, settlers began to move from the eastern United States to the west, during the time period known as Westward Expansion. During this period, landscapes of extensive, untouched forest were quickly cleared and converted to agricultural and ranch lands and human developments. With bison herds exterminated from over-hunting, the resilient Cowbirds readily associated themselves with the livestock populations that existed on the newly agricultural landscape.

When Cowbirds began to expand their range into what were once virgin forests, the impact of their unique reproductive behavior on those birds was considerably different than it had been in the grassland bird community. Cowbirds are “generalist obligate brood parasites,” meaning they are unable to build a nest; therefore they must lay their eggs in the nests of many other bird species for these “host parents” to rear. While advantageous to the female Cowbird, which is now able to spend the breeding season laying 30 or more eggs in various host nests, the fates of host species are considerably less optimistic.

Several host species have evolved the ability to reject Cowbird eggs, but many more rear Cowbird chicks to the detriment of their own. In an area where Cowbird parasitism occurs, often the fertility rate (number of eggs hatched) and fledgling rate (number of young surviving to adulthood) are substantially lowered in host bird communities. When Cowbirds were confined to parasitizing grassland birds, a natural checks-and-balances scheme was in place, as many of these species had evolved defensive techniques against Cowbird parasitism. However, with an expanded range, Cowbirds began parasitizing bird species with which they had had no previous contact, and that had not developed defenses against them. In present-day United States, deforestation and forest fragmentation continue to occur, leaving forest birds exposed and vulnerable to contact with cowbird populations.

Despite its attractive coloration—males have black bodies and brown heads—and having one of the most complex vocalizations of any bird species, the Cowbird has been demonized in the scientific and popular literature, by birders and by the general public. Few people remember that it is human actions that have created a scenario where the Cowbird can expand its range so successfully. It is now found in Canada south to Mexico and it occurs throughout the entire continental United States.

In Michigan, Cowbirds are a major concern to managers and biologists. Not only are they highly abundant because of the vast agriculture available in the southern part of the state, but they also pose a threat to Michigan’s flagship bird species, the Kirtland’s Warbler (*Dendroica kirtlandii*). The Kirtland’s Warbler is the rarest warbler in the world, and its only breeding grounds are in young jack pine stands in northeastern Michigan. During the second half of the 20th century, Kirtland’s Warbler population rates started to decline dramatically, due primarily to extensive habitat loss, but exacerbated by intense Cowbird parasitism.

A combined effort by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (which listed the warbler as an Endangered Species in 1973), the U.S. Forest Service, and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources resulted in a recovery plan for the Kirtland’s Warbler in the early 1970s. The plan called for intense habitat restoration, which included planting and cutting jack pine stands on a 50-year rotation, and Cowbird control. Beginning in 1972, Cowbird traps were erected in a few counties in northeastern Michigan. Since then, the program has grown to include 12 counties, with traps having caught over 200,000 Cowbirds to date. Several other states, including Texas and California, have implemented Cowbird control programs, mainly to protect endangered bird species they commonly parasitize.

The Cowbird population, while spreading geographically, is actually experiencing a decline in numbers throughout the U.S., and particularly in Michigan. Wildlife managers report they are catching fewer Cowbirds in their traps every year, due to an increased number of escapees as well as to an overall smaller Cowbird population. Despite this, trapping in Kirtland’s Warbler habitat continues, since Cowbird populations can recover quickly in the absence of trapping.

After researching the history and current issues surrounding Cowbirds in 2002, I started a graduate research project to address some implications of this situation. For example, I wanted to know how the management of jack pine stands for Kirtland’s Warbler habitat impacted Brown-headed Cowbirds. If these forests were clear cut every 50 years, wouldn’t Cowbirds infiltrate these stands and parasitize the birds living there? I also wanted to know how the locations of Cowbird traps were impacted by the types of land that surrounded them. If traps were near agricultural fields, wouldn’t they catch more Cowbirds? In summer 2004,

field studies took place in the jack pine forests of Clear Lake State Wildlife area near Atlanta, MI. My field assistants and I recorded information on all the birds we saw or heard singing, and also took measurements on the vegetation they were living in. I also worked with scientists from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to obtain maps and records with information about the Cowbird trapping program from its beginnings in 1972 until the present.

After analyzing the various data over the last couple of years, I have started to see some interesting preliminary results. First, Cowbirds were not particularly abundant in any of the jack pine stands we sampled. This might be due to the fact that Cowbirds, while they use many different types of vegetation and land types to access the resources they need to survive, oftentimes avoid coniferous forests. My study seems to show that Cowbirds were more abundant in the large stands that are managed for Kirtland's Warblers than the small stands that are sometimes clear cut. However, Cowbirds did not seem to favor a particular stage of jack pine re-growth. They were as abundant in young stands as in middle-aged and old stands. The second part of this study examined whether surrounding land cover contributed to the number of Cowbirds caught in traps. Our results showed that trap captures were mostly associated with agriculture, urban areas, and deciduous forests. These findings are logical, since agriculture and urban areas contribute to Cowbird feeding behavior, and deciduous forests might supply ample host nests for Cowbirds to parasitize. Interestingly, trap captures were not related to coniferous forests, where the traps themselves are located. This might suggest that traps are more likely to capture Cowbirds outside Kirtland's Warbler habitat.

Cowbirds are a very complex species, and while this study has provided some interesting results, more research is necessary to support these findings. This is especially true considering that Cowbirds sometimes prefer different vegetation or behave differently in varying regions of the country. Further research would also contribute to the knowledge of managers implementing trapping programs throughout the United States. However, despite the impact of Cowbirds on the success of other bird species, it is important that we acknowledge our own responsibility in this story: had humans not caused wide-scale deforestation on the landscape, Cowbirds' natural parasitism strategy would not have posed such a threat to the bird community. While management of the species is now necessary to protect and maintain other bird populations, making the Cowbird the scapegoat for the actions of humans is scientifically and morally wrong. 🐦

Lauren Bailey is a graduate student in the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife at Michigan State University, and an adjunct instructor at Lansing Community College. She will have completed her Master's research on Brown-headed Cowbirds in December 2006, and hopes to pursue research in urban wildlife ecology in the near future. She can be contacted at bailey65@msu.edu.

Technology Corner

by Sarah Kozicki

People who describe themselves as birders range from the mildly interested to the clinically insane, but while all of them enjoy the pleasures of watching and identifying birds, only a few take it to the next level. That level is what BirdSource calls "birding with a purpose."

This winter, take your birding experience to new heights by getting involved in some exciting research projects. You can start by visiting **BirdSource** (🌐 www.birdsource.org) your online gateway to a number of projects, old and new, that get birders more connected to the science behind their favorite obsession. One of the newer projects, **Project FeederWatch**, promises to be fun and engaging for anyone interested in birds, regardless of their level of experience. The project runs from November through April, so it is still a great time to get on board. In addition, check out **The Great Backyard Bird Count**, which runs for four days in February.

Take birding with a purpose even farther by following the BirdSource link to **eBird**, or by visiting (🌐 www.ebird.org/content), "where your bird sightings make a difference!" Here is confirmation that your small contribution to science is important. Sign up with eBird and submit your observations, then make maps or graphs of the data you have collected. You can also look at data that have been compiled by observers from all over North America. Parents can get their kids involved by signing them up as **Bird Sleuths** at (🌐 www.ebird.org/birdsleuth). Like eBird, all the research projects to which you can find links on BirdSource are the joint undertaking of the **Cornell Lab of Ornithology** (🌐 www.birds.cornell.edu) and the **National Audubon Society** (🌐 www.audubon.org), the mamma and papa of everything birds.

Last on the list for this issue is a website for people who want to get active in bird conservation. **The American Bird Conservancy** (ABC) is a non-profit organization dedicated to conserving birds and their habitats. Check out the website at (🌐 www.abcbirds.org) to find out what the current issues are and how you can help. The website features campaigns and programs, news, and resources including a newsletter to keep you informed on issues about birds and their habitats. While you're there, check out how ABC is involved with **NABCI—the North American Bird Conservation Initiative**. Follow the link to the website or visit (🌐 www.nabci-us.org/main2.html) for more information. NABCI is a program that involves governmental agencies, private organizations, academic institutions, and industry working together on common goals in bird conservation throughout North America.

Sarah Kozicki, an environmental studies and applications major at Michigan State University, wrote about her experiences with the invasive garlic mustard in the May-June 2006 issue of JPW. She may be contacted at kozicki2@msu.edu.

Book Corner

Birds of Passage Island

by Loraine "Rainy" Campbell

Excerpt from Loraine Campbell's, *A Pocketful of Passage*, forthcoming in February 2007 from Wayne State University Press. Used with permission. For more information, please visit <http://wsupress.wayne.edu>.

I first learned of Passage Island when I co-lead Michigan Audubon Society tours to Isle Royale with Marti Schneiderman in the early 1990s. As a naturalist, I was enchanted by Isle Royale's beauty. As a historian, I was intrigued by stories of a little girl whose father had served as a lighthouse keeper on Passage Island from 1933-1942. So I found Annie Bowen Hoge. Sixty years has not diminished her enthusiastic love for Passage Island or her memories. They are the basis of *A Pocketful of Passage*, a chapter book for elementary-aged children and for anyone who shares an interest in lighthouses or the Isle Royale region. The following excerpt is Annie's memory of getting into serious trouble when she and some visiting boys attempted to retrieve a bird's nest from a cliff fifty feet above Lake Superior.

One morning Jo, the boys, and I slipped into the woods along the north side of the island. We followed the path beyond my favorite ledge to another spot where you could see straight down to the rocks and water far below. Larry had sharp eyes and noticed a bird's nest tucked into a notch in the rock, about ten feet below us. All the nestlings had fledged weeks before, but one unhatched egg remained in the nest.

"Wow, look at that!" Larry exclaimed. "There's still an egg in that nest. I wonder if we could get it. Maybe it would hatch!"

"I dunno," Pete said and wrinkled up his nose. "That egg's been sitting in the sun all summer. I bet it's really rotten inside. But," he added with a grin, "it would be neat to have the nest."

"Sure would," Larry agreed. "I think we could get it if we had some rope."

I knew where Daddy and Mr. Lane kept a rope in the fog signal building. The fog signal was off-limits for children, but the coiled rope hung on a hook just inside the door. I hesitated for only a second. "I know where there's a rope," I said proudly.

"Let's go!" said the boys.

We ran back to the lighthouse. There were no adults in the yard so I slipped into the fog signal building and grabbed the rope. "This will work great," said Larry. "It's

Cliff nests on Isle Royale

The 2000 Breeding Bird Survey on Isle Royale recorded 60 species, which is consistent with the average number of species previously documented. Only eight species were found on Passage Island during that survey. While Peregrine Falcons have nested on Isle Royale historically, they do not construct nests, but lay their eggs in a shallow scrape or on a bare ledge. However, Common Ravens do construct bulky stick nests on cliffs and sometimes locate them near the roosts of Peregrines. Smaller birds may construct nests in tangles on cliffs.



Illustration by Marie L. Campbell ©2006

strong and plenty long."

I don't remember how we decided that Larry would be the one lowered over the side of the cliff to get the nest. We tied the rope around his waist with a double knot. Then Jo, Peter, and I hung on to the rope as Larry climbed down over the edge. Peter stood closest to the cliff and braced his foot against a stone. I stood next in line and Jo stood behind me. We let the rope out hand over hand. Larry was heavier than I

had imagined. It took all our strength to keep the rope from slipping. Then Larry shouted, "OK, I got it! I got the nest! Pull me up!"

"All together," Peter commanded. "Pull!"

We yanked at the rope and pulled as hard as we could. The muscles in Peter's back, arms, and legs tensed and strained. The rope fibers dug into my hands. I tugged with Peter. Behind me, Jo huffed and puffed. But we were not strong enough to pull Larry back up. He dangled fifty feet above sharp rocks and pounding waves, gripping the rope with one hand and clutching the nest with the other.

"Hey, you guys!" he shouted, "Pull me up!"

"We're trying!" Pete hollered back. Beads of sweat formed on his forehead. "But you're awful heavy!"

I grunted as the rope dug into my hands. "I don't think we can pull him up!"

"What are we gonna do?" Jo started to panic and cry.

"Don't cry!" Pete demanded. "Don't be a sissy!"

"Well, we've got to do something!" I said. My hands burned and my arms hurt.

"I guess one of us has to go for help," Pete sounded scared too.

That's when I panicked. I thought of Mama and Daddy finding us in the woods, where we were not allowed to play, with a rope we had stolen, to get a bird's nest we were not allowed to have. Then fear grew into horror. What if Larry fell? What if the rope broke, or we let go and Mr. and Mrs. Lane's son fell to his death? Would our parents ever forgive us?

"I think you're right," I said. "I think you should go."

Birding the Gap

Mentoring the younger generation

by Peggy Ridgway

Even though my grandchildren live in the same town as I do, organized youth sports, after-school functions, weekend dance lessons, and family schedules leave little time for me to interact with them. However, there is an activity that one of my granddaughters and I share with a passion and always make time for...the Great Backyard Bird Count!

Eleven-year-old Allyson—or Ally, to me—has always enjoyed our joint venture out of doors to count every bird we see during this fabulous February event. Her first experience was at age eight. She was used to feeding and identifying many of the birds outside my kitchen window and thus knew several of the common winter species. Because these were viewed at close range and returned often for that choice morsel of food, counting and identifying was rather simple. She quickly learned not to count the same bird twice. If she saw five chickadees at once, that was her total. Both a star and date observed were jotted in her field guide beside the birds identified without my assistance. Her stars were numerous.

When she turned nine, I decided to take her out in the

Book Corner

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“OK, but you girls can’t drop him when I let go.”

“We won’t,” I said trying to sound tough. “Jo and I are strong.”

“I don’t know!” Jo cried.

“Yes, we are!” I shouted to Jo, but I was really trying to convince myself. “Hurry up, Pete! Run and get help.”

When Pete let go of the rope, it was all Jo and I could do to keep from sliding over the edge. My feet skidded on loose stones as I fought to brace myself as he had. I had never been so frightened. Each second seemed like an hour. Sweat trickled down my neck. A fly buzzed around my head. My shoulders, arms, and legs ached and my hands burned. There was a tight knot in my tummy and a worse feeling down below when I realized how much I needed to pee. But I concentrated, and I forced Jo to concentrate. “Hang on,” I shrieked to her. “Don’t let the rope slip! Don’t drop Larry!” 🐾

Rainy Campbell has worked as an interpretive naturalist, an educator, and an ecology researcher; she is currently Museum Manager of the Troy Museum & Historic Village. MAS members know her as a past president of Michigan Audubon (1991 -1993), and an active member of her local Macomb Audubon Society. She may be contacted at campbelm@ci.troy.mi.us.

field around her neighborhood to see what we would encounter on foot. We began by visiting neighbors’ feeders. Learning to locate and focus binoculars on the subject became easier and easier. At a distance, without the aid of optics, some feathered friends were easily identified by their color, size, or winter chatter.



However, one day as we strolled down the street, a black cloud of winged beauties whizzed overhead. “Gosh, Gramma, what were those?” she asked. “It appears to be about 25 European Starlings,” I responded. “How did you know how many when they are so far away? You didn’t even need your binoculars,” she replied. I realized that a teachable moment had presented itself, an opportunity to introduce her to estimation. “Well, I quickly counted off ten and then multiplied. The way they flew, or their flight pattern, told me they were starlings,” I answered. Thus began her journey in acquiring new, more advanced birding skills and techniques. Her young, alert eyes spotted additional flocks and she soon became quite proficient at totaling—or “guess-timating,” as we called it—large groups.

Her real test came, however, when I took her down to the mouth of the river towards sunset where a large flock of mallards gathered daily and feasted on corn left by a local enthusiast. As we stood on the bank, the sound emitted by hundreds of hungry ducks was almost deafening! “Gee, they must be hungry,” she shouted. As she stood there embracing the moment, I saw her glance over the huge gathering and then raise and move her hand as if sectioning off the air. “Wow, that’s a lot of birds. I would say there are about 300,” she uttered with confidence. I complimented her on her fine job of “guess-timating” such a large and boisterous clan.

At age 10 she decided that her little sister was not very serious about counting birds and wanted to go again with me by herself. Walking along the river in her neighborhood and traveling down the road by car, we covered twice as much territory as in the previous two years. Her eagle eyes spotted birds I missed. Periodically we would backtrack to double-check her observations and sure enough, she was right-on every time!

This year, as a fifth grader, she has decided to invite some of her friends to join us. Now she is able and ready to share her bird-watching enthusiasm and improved skills with them. Our passion has come full circle and there is no reason to doubt that her bird-watching will continue in the future. It looks like a new pair of binoculars needs to be purchased, along with a more advanced field guide. Birding the gap definitely has had its rewards and fond memories. I wouldn’t trade it for anything. Happy birding, Ally! 🐾

Peggy is a retired teacher from Oscoda Area Schools where she taught for 30 years. Since leaving the MAS presidency in April, she has continued to stay active in Audubon. She serves on the MAS Executive committee, is Northern Region Field Representative, a member of the IBA Management Committee, president of Iosco Audubon and compiler for their Christmas Bird Count, Audubon Ambassador for the Great Backyard Bird Count, co-chair for the Tawas Point Birding Festival, and she continues research on Trumpeter Swans along the AuSable River. When time permits, she also enjoys giving presentations on a variety of nature topics.

Affiliate and Chapter News

Michigan Audubon Chapter Mini-grant Program 2007-2008

Application Deadline: March 30, 2007

2007-2008 Theme: Connecting birds and people for the sustainability of Michigan's environment.

Purpose of the program

Michigan Audubon's mini-grant program was created to encourage and support our local chapters with environmental education projects. Since its inception five years ago, Michigan Audubon has granted over \$10,000 to 18 different participating chapters.

If you have applied before, you will notice a new application format, designed to assist you in developing a well thought-out project that is specific to the needs of your local community and addresses this year's theme.

Award information

Michigan Audubon will make \$4,000 available for the 2007-2008 funding cycle. Each local chapter may submit one proposal per funding cycle. Chapters can request up to \$1,000. Individuals, affiliates, and other entities are not eligible to receive these grants.

Eligible projects

All projects need to relate to this year's theme and to target one or more of the following groups of people:

- 1. The general public.** These projects educate the general public about bird-related issues in local communities. In general, these projects take the form of special program(s) and/or event(s) which are designed to both educate and encourage public participation in bird issues. These programs/events are separate from a club's monthly meetings.
- 2. Youth.** These projects focus on educating youth (pre-K through undergraduate) in a formal or non-formal setting about birds and bird habitats, to promote environmental awareness and careers in science.
- 3. Teachers & non-formal educators.** These projects educate teachers and non-formal educators (environmental educators, scout leaders, home school parents, etc.) about bird-related issues and teaching strategies to improve skills. These usually take the form of a workshop or class that provides hands-on problem solving and emphasizes the process as much as the content.
- 4. Under-served groups.** These projects introduce birding to an under-served group of individuals such as visually impaired individuals, hearing impaired individuals, nursing home residents and others.
- 5. Families.** These projects are designed to foster an environment which helps families to learn about birds and conservation issues together.

Additional guidelines

1. Chapter's members must be actively involved in the project and share their experiences, enthusiasm, and expertise with the

project participants.

2. All projects must consist of environmental education not just environmental information. Environmental education is defined as programs that increase knowledge and awareness of environmental issues, teach individuals how to think critically and make informed decisions, and challenge them to respond. It is based on scientifically sound information. Projects that only provide information will not be considered.
3. In order to be considered, all research and/or conservation projects must contain an educational component that connects bird research/conservation with people. An example of an acceptable bird research project includes teaching birders to accurately identify birds and to record data so that they can participate in a citizen science research project such as the Breeding Bird Atlas.
4. If requesting money for an ongoing project, you must demonstrate that there is a need for additional funding and identify what other sources for funding have been or will be secured.
5. Partnerships with other chapters, community organizations, businesses, etc. are encouraged.

Submission deadline and project period

Applications need to be received by March 30, 2007. The start date for projects is July 1, 2007. Budget periods are for one year.

Chapters are encouraged to submit a proposal synopsis to the MAS Program Coordinator prior to the deadline for help evaluating the merits of the project and to get ideas about how to strengthen the proposal to fit the grant criteria. Please submit the synopsis by February 1, 2007 to allow the Program Coordinator adequate time to review it and make comments.

Applicants will be contacted by late April 2007 notifying you whether your project has or has not been selected for funding and in what amount.

For more information

If you have questions about the program, please contact Jeanette Henderson, Program Coordinator

☎ 517-886-9144

✉ ProgramCoordinator@MichiganAudubon.org

Mini-grant Update

by Denny Brooks, Midland, MI



Our third year was another great year with our butterflies and dragonflies. I was able to do nine programs with a total of 224 people. The Monarch Butterfly influx this year gave me an entirely new direction for the program. I was able to integrate some of my Monarch research into the programs and enlighten both parents and children about the value of the citizen science projects. I'm already looking for-

ward to next year as a bigger and better year.

Midland Nature Club was awarded mini-grants in 2004 and 2005 to create and support programs to educate youth in their community about butterflies, dragonflies, and aquatic invertebrates.

Announcements

It's Time to Renew Your Support!

When you renew this year we'd like to ask you to—

Make a change by increasing your membership level by at least one tier or consider adding an additional donation to your membership renewal. Your current level is noted on your mailing label along with your expiration date.

Give a gift to a friend or family member. A gift during the holiday season—or for a birthday or other occasion—will help you share your passion for nature with others and encourage them to learn how they can do more to protect Michigan's wildlife and wild places.

Invite a friend or neighbor to join MAS and expand our ability to ensure a sustainable future for Michigan's wildlife and wild places. Share your issue of *Jack Pine Warbler* with folks to help them better understand how they can join you in supporting Michigan Audubon's mission.

Your current membership represents the importance of every individual contribution and membership in promoting environmental education, research, and conservation. Your continued support is needed and appreciated now more than ever. Members should check their *JPW* mailing label to determine their membership expiration date. Please help us grow: use the form at right to renew your membership, to give a gift membership, or to invite a friend to join Michigan Audubon.

Christensen Nature Center

Howard Christensen Nature Center will be accepting school groups beginning January 1, 2007.

For more information

If you would like more information or to schedule a trip, please contact the nature center at the new contact below:

Angela Mrozinski, Administrator
Howard Christensen Nature Center
P.O. Box 42, Kent City, MI 49330

☎ 616-675-3158 or 866-675-3158
✉ hcnc@kentconservation.org

Deadlines for *JPW*

The publications committee has put *JPW* on a schedule! Please note the following deadlines for items from writers and chapter presidents:

For Mar-Apr 2007 (Vol. 84 No. 2), material is due to the editor

continued on next page

YES! I WANT TO CONTINUE MY SUPPORT AND HELP MICHIGAN AUDUBON GROW

Please use this form to help Michigan Audubon ensure a sustainable future for Michigan's birds and critical habitats.

Make checks payable to: Michigan Audubon Society, 6011 W. St. Joseph Hwy, Ste. 403, Lansing, MI 48917

RENEW & MAKE A CHANGE

I would like to renew my membership support.

- BASIC \$25
- DONOR..... \$50
- SUPPORTING..... \$100
- SUSTAINING \$500
- BENEFACTOR \$1000
- DONATION \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State/ZIP _____

Phone _____

e-mail _____

GIVE A GIFT

I would like to give a gift membership (\$25) to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State/ZIP _____

Please let the recipient know the gift is from:

Name _____

- I have enclosed a check
- Please charge my renewal to my
 - MasterCard Visa

Expiration date _____

(Bob Guiliani bgui@voyager.net) by January 15. The issue goes to final layout and proofing on February 1. This will allow us to get it into members' mailboxes by the first of March.

For May-June 2007 (Vol. 84 No. 3), material is due to the editor by March 15. The issue goes to final layout and proofing on April 1. This means the issue will be able to arrive in members' mailboxes by the first of May.

Michigan Audubon's Annual Conference 2007

March 2 & 3, 2007

Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center, East Lansing

The theme of this year's annual conference is connecting birds and people for the benefit of both, and will focus on ways you can get more involved in bird conservation in the state through education, research, and conservation projects. Please plan to join us for a weekend of learning, sharing, and fellowship. Highlights of the conference include:

Keynote address

This year's keynote address will be presented by Dr. Bill Bowerman. Bill will share with us the status of the world's Sea Eagles. Currently a professor at Clemson University, Bill is a nationally-recognized Bald Eagle researcher. Eagles of the genus *Haliaeetus* (Sea Eagles), occur on every continent except South America and Antarctica. Their associations with aquatic systems make them vulnerable to many environmental and human-caused stresses. You will learn about their ecology, the current status of each of the eight species, and their use in assessing the health of the planet from the eyes of a researcher who has studied four of these species over the past twenty years.

Concurrent sessions and regional chapter meetings

This year's concurrent sessions will be presented by some of the state's leading researchers and birding experts and will feature various topics of interest to both beginning and expert birders. Topics include avian flu and other bird diseases, Important Bird Areas in Michigan, bird banding and its importance, and an introduction to birding optics, to name just a few. Chapter leaders and members are also invited to attend regional chapter meetings to learn about and discuss chapter issues.

In addition to many great educational sessions, vendors such as the Michigan Audubon Bookstore and the Michigan Loon Preservation Association will be selling nature books, gifts items, and optics throughout the conference.

Annual meeting

All members of Michigan Audubon are invited and encouraged to attend the annual meeting to learn about the past year's accomplishments and future endeavors.

Annual luncheon and auction

Both of these are designed to encourage fellowship among our members. The annual luncheon honors individuals and organiza-

tion which have made significant contribution to Michigan Audubon. The auction is a time to relax and socialize with other members while raising money for the organizations.

Flagstar Bank and other sponsors

This year's conference is generously sponsored by Flagstar Bank. To learn more about Flagstar Bank and its services, please visit www.flagstar.com. Additional sponsorship is provided by Michigan State's Agriculture and Natural Resources Week (ANR Week) and the Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center. To find more information about ANR week and to view a list of the other activities taking place, please visit www.canr.msu.edu/anrweek/.

Registration

Registration includes all activities except the annual luncheon.

Regular registration is \$35; the deadline is February 23, 2007.

Annual luncheon fee is \$20; the deadline is February 23, 2007.

Late and on-site registration is \$45.

For more information

Contact Jeanette Henderson, MAS Program Coordinator

☎ 517-886-9144

✉ programcoordinator@michiganaudubon.org

For schedule and registration forms

🌐 www.michiganaudubon.org

2007 Tawas Point Birding Festival Speakers Announced

Bill and Elsa Thompson, founding publishers of *Bird Watcher's Digest*, will be the Friday night banquet keynote speakers during Tawas Point Birding Festival, May 18-20, 2007. They will delight the audience with music and tales of birding magic.

From Friday through Sunday, festival participants will have the opportunity to attend numerous seminars and field trips. A new website is under construction; links to the Festival will be available by January 2007. The site will include details on seminars, field trips, lodging, and online registration.

Because of its migratory significance, Tawas Point will be officially recognized as an IBA. A special dedication ceremony will take place on Saturday, May 19.

For more information

Tawas Chamber of Commerce

☎ 1-800-55-Tawas or 989-362-8643

Fieldtrips

Birding Hot Spots at the Soo

Two field trips being offered in 2007:

January 13 & 14; February 10 & 11

Leaders: Chuck & Colleen McDonald

Limit: 20

MAS member cost: \$55

Non-member cost: \$80 (includes cost of MAS membership)

Do you salivate at the thought of adding a Snowy Owl, Great Gray Owl, Northern Hawk Owl, Gyrfalcon, Northern Shrike, Gray Jay, Sharp-tailed Grouse, and Harlequin Duck to your life list? If so, then join Chuck & Colleen MacDonald's field trip to Sault Ste. Marie for winter birding at its best. Get your annual birding off to a great start with some of these northern specialties, and more. The MacDonalds make their home in the Soo region and know where to find the birds.

This trip fills up fast, so register today!

For more information and registration

Contact Jeanette Henderson, MAS Program Coordinator

☎ 517-886-9144;

✉ programcoordinator@michiganaudubon.org

Eco-Tour

MAS eco-tours are planned for enjoyment and education to meet the needs, abilities, and interests of our members.

Brazil's Atlantic Rainforest, Pantanal, and Iguazu Falls

Realm of the Jaguar, Hyacinth Macaw and Golden Lion Tamarin

14-DAY BRAZIL WILDLIFE EXPEDITION

March 3-15, 2007—NEW DATES!

Leader: Chris Van Lonkhuyzen; ✉ cvanlonkh@gmail.com

Cost: \$3,750
plus airfare

Deposit: \$1,000

Cost based on double occupancy.

This trip will consist of visits to the Pantanal, Iguazu Falls, and the rare eastern coastal rainforests of Brazil. The Pantanal is woodlands and immense expanses of marshes, swamps, and recognized as one of the most important wetland areas in the neotropics. The relative lack of human disturbance and open habitat means that there is more wildlife to observe than elsewhere in South America. Jaguar, Hyacinth Macaws, parrots, and exotic hummingbirds are some of the many wildlife opportunities in the Pantanal. The highly threatened eastern coastal rainforest contains many rare and spectacular animals such as the golden lion tamarin, one of the most beautiful primates on earth. The mighty Iguazu Falls is surrounded by wonderful habitats for wildlife such as colorful tanagers, toucans, tropical butterflies, and capuchin monkeys.

For more information and registration

Contact Jeanette Henderson, MAS Program Coordinator

☎ 517-886-9144

✉ programcoordinator@michiganaudubon.org

🌐 www.MichiganAudubon.org

Campout

Memorial Weekend Nature Getaway

Friday, May 25–Monday, May 28, 2007

Loon Lake Lutheran Retreat Center, Hale, Michigan

Leaders: Jeanette Henderson, Jim Bull, and Rosemarie Attilio

Once again Michigan Audubon and Detroit Audubon Society are joining forces to sponsor a weekend of birds, learning, and lots of fun at beautiful Loon Lake Lutheran Retreat Center near Hale, Michigan. Located in Iosco County, Loon Lake (formerly known as Camp Mahn-Go-Tah-See) offers a prime spot to enjoy northern Michigan's birds and scenic wonders. In the past, birders have been thrilled with sightings of Piping Plover, Whimbrels, Western Meadowlarks, nesting Merlins, Pileated Woodpeckers, Black-throated Blue Warblers, and more. Fieldtrips will include trips to the scenic Rifle River Recreation Area, Tawas Point State Park, Tuttle Marsh, Kirtland's Warbler viewing area, and maybe even a canoe trip to get an up-close view of the local Loons. Expect the weekend to be filled with great food, educational programs, and new friends as both Michigan and Detroit Audubon Society members join together to enjoy Michigan's natural heritage. This weekend is perfect for the whole family. Weekend package includes eight meals (Saturday through Monday), snacks, field trips, evening programs, and accommodations for three nights.

For more information

Contact Jeanette Henderson, MAS Program Coordinator

☎ 517-886-9144

✉ programcoordinator@michiganaudubon.org

🌐 www.MichiganAudubon.org 🌐 www.loonlakeretreat.org



Mark your calendars now to attend the Labor Day Campout at Cedar Campus in Cedarville, Mich., August 31 to September 3, 2007.

Editor's Message

continued from page 2

heals all, good times, time marches on, day time, central time. The list is endless. We cannot make time; all we can do is schedule our time. Time spent planning your future is time well spent.

Your MAS board of directors have given much of their time. There was much time given by many on the dove hunting issue; the office staff struggles with getting everything done on time; the publications staff strives to get the *JPW* out on time and to receive articles in a timely manner. MAS committee members give much of their time. The industrial revolution was to give us more time, but today finds all of us wishing for even more time. I hear it all the time: "I need a little more time, I wish I had more time."

I hope you take time to make it to the annual conference in March and to give some of your time volunteering to further the cause of MAS. And be sure to take time for family and friends.

Time passes...memories don't!

Michigan Audubon Bookstore

Michigan Audubon members receive a 10% discount on their purchases.

Recently published!



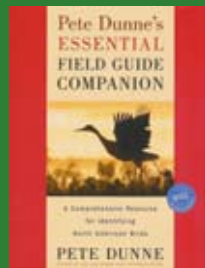
The Birdwatcher's Companion to North American Birdlife,
by Christopher W. Leahy

This book is the A-Z guide for anyone interested in birds. Newly revised and updated from its first edition twenty years ago, it provides information not just on individual species but also a variety of subjects such as bird physiology and anatomy, etymology, and ornithological groupings.

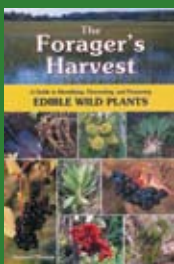
ISBN 0-691-11388-2 **\$19.95**

Pete Dunne's Essential Field Guide Companion,
by Pete Dunne

Bursting with more information than any field guide could hold, the well-known author and birder Pete Dunne introduces readers to the "Cape May School," or GISS (General Impression of Size and Shape) method of identification. This supplement to field guides shares the knowledge and skills that expert birders bring to identification challenges.



ISBN 0-618-23648-1 **\$29.95**

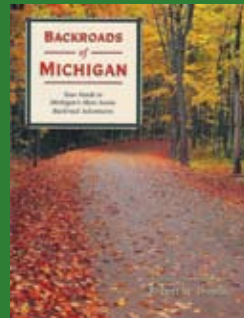


The Forager's Harvest,
by Samuel Thayer

Covering plants mostly of the northeastern states, Thayer provides great detail on a number of plants, with crystal-clear photography for identification, plus additional photos showing the edible parts and the processing

of them. He writes from personal experience, giving useful tips on how to efficiently harvest, process, and prepare wild plants for the dinner table.

ISBN 0-9766266-0-8 **\$22.95**



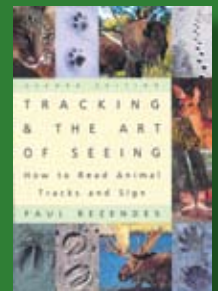
Backroads of Michigan,
by Robert W. Domm

This book guides the reader on scenic drives and adventures throughout the Great Lakes state to see both natural and historical areas. The book is filled with wonderful photography that showcases Michigan's natural wonders.

ISBN 0-7603-2574-X **\$19.95**

Tracking and the Art of Seeing,
by Paul Rezendes

The perfect book for identifying those animal tracks in the snow. It will enable you to identify their "sign"—droppings, browsing marks, claw marks, trails, and digs or dens—and distinguish between animals whose marks are similar. The book contains more than 200 color and 100 b&w photographs and drawings.



ISBN 0-06-273524-1 **\$25.00**

Order by phone, mail, or online

By phone. Visa or MasterCard ☎ 517-886-9144

By mail. Send name, address, phone number, and payment to MAS Bookstore, 6011 W. St. Joseph Hwy., Ste. 403, Lansing, MI 48917

Prepayment includes item cost + 6% sales tax + \$2.50 postage and handling for the first item + \$0.75 for each additional item.

Online. 🌐 www.MichiganAudubon.org

Not all items are available online.

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