

Jack Pine *Warbler*

THE UPPER PENINSULA ISSUE: Birders Flock to Tawas Point ■ Birding in the U.P. ■
Michigan Audubon Sanctuaries Summit ■ Photo Equipment for Rugged Birding



Jack Pine Warbler

CONTACT US

Michigan Audubon

6011 W. St. Joseph Hwy.
Suite 403
Lansing, MI 48917
Phone 517-886-9144
Fax 517-886-9466
M–F, 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jonathan E. Lutz

JLutz@MichiganAudubon.org

STAFF

Tom Funke

conservation director
TFunke@MichiganAudubon.org

Wendy Tatar

program coordinator
Wendy@MichiganAudubon.org

INTERNS

Brittany Baker

Ashley Bigham

Bethany Tomaszewski

EDITOR

Laura Julier

Julier@MSU.edu

GRAPHIC DESIGN & PRODUCTION

Redhead Design Studio

408 East Grand River
Lansing, MI 48906
www.VirtualRedhead.com
Info@VirtualRedhead.com

ADVERTISING

Guidelines available on request.

PRINTING

Jack Pine Warbler (ISSN 0021-3845) is published six times per year and is received by all Michigan Audubon members. It is printed by Millbrook Printing Co., 3540 West Jefferson, Grand Ledge, MI 48837. Contact Millbrook at 517-627-4078 or www.MillbrookPrinting.com.



Printed on recycled
paper made from 100%
post-consumer waste.



Cover Photo ■ Gray Jay

Photographer: Skye Christopher G. Haas

Gray Jays are a most curious and engaging bird. Found in remote northern conifer forests, they will often silently glide in for a closer look at any human visitor to “their” woods. Their ability to survive the harsh winter climate is due in part to their habit of caching food to trees with a sticky saliva. However, a recent conservation concern studied in nearby Ontario has shown that mild winters and unseasonable thaws cause these food caches to rot and become unusable. Between this and habitat destruction—in the form of industrial-scale logging operations—Gray Jays may be threatened with range contraction.

Still, any encounter with one is always an enjoyable experience. This particular bird was photographed along the Peshekee River in northern Marquette County by Skye Haas on February 14, 2009, using a Nikon D80 with a Nikon 300mm at f/8, 1/640s, ISO 400.

Contents

Features

2
Birders Flock to Tawas
Point, Michigan

4
Superiorland: Birding in
the Upper Peninsula

8
Michigan Audubon
Bird Sanctuaries: 2010
Resident Managers’
Summit

Columns

6
Websitings
Birds and Brews from
Keweenaw to the Sault

7
Book Corner
Wild About Michigan Birds:
A Youth’s Guide to the Birds
of Michigan

9
Feathered Lens
Photo Equipment for
Rugged Birding in Michigan’s
Upper Peninsula

Departments

1
Executive Director’s Letter

5
Inquiring Birders

11
Kids’ Corner

12
Announcements



MICHIGAN AUDUBON CONNECTS BIRDS AND PEOPLE FOR THE BENEFIT OF BOTH ...

... through conservation, education, and research efforts in the state of Michigan. Formed and incorporated in 1904, it is Michigan’s oldest conservation organization. Michigan Audubon supports bird surveys throughout the state, publishes survey data, provides educational opportunities, and preserves nearly 5,000 acres of land within 19 sanctuaries as habitat for birds and other wildlife. The 41 chapters of Michigan Audubon focus on local conservation issues and provide educational programs within their communities. Contributions to Michigan Audubon are tax-deductible.

Executive Director's Letter

ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY SPECIES IN A SINGLE WEEKEND



TOP: The Black-throated Green Warbler is a regular visitor to the Upper Peninsula. Migrating warblers, including this species, are also seen in great numbers during the annual Tawas Point Birding Festival, May 13–16. © 2009 Skye Haas.

BOTTOM: Jonathan Lutz talks to Michigan Audubon's sanctuary staff about plans for the coming year. © 2010 Mike Boyce.

Spring Fling 2010

April 23–25

Visit wpbo.org/springfling for details.

The Tawas Point Birding Festival and Michigan Audubon Annual Conference

May 13–16

Visit tawasbirdfest.com for details.

THANKS TO THE unique shoreline features that occur in Michigan, the goal of logging 160 (or more) bird sightings over the span of a weekend is possible. Successfully logging huge numbers of species depends upon the season, and most birders would agree that the months of April and May are ideal for seeing migratory birds at hot spots throughout the state.

When I visited Whitefish Point in late April 2009, I was amazed to see a dozen Sharp-shinned Hawks, a Short-eared Owl, and a Golden Eagle within minutes of pulling into the parking lot. If you haven't experienced spring migration at Whitefish Point, I strongly encourage you to attend Spring Fling 2010, the annual event of the Whitefish Point Bird Observatory, a Michigan Audubon affiliate.

Don't let your Upper Peninsula birding adventures end at Whitefish Point. In this issue, Northern Michigan University student and "bird bum extraordinaire" Skye Haas will share his thoughts about chasing birds in the Upper Peninsula. Throughout the year, Michigan's U.P. can yield species such as the Great Gray Owl, Northern Hawk Owl, Black-backed and Three-toed Woodpeckers, Great Lakes Piping Plovers, grouse species, and more. Seasonal migrations in the spring and fall in places like the Keweenaw Peninsula will astonish even the most seasoned birders.

I want to remind birders to flock to Tawas for the 2010 Tawas Point Birding Festival. As I noted in the previous issue, the Michigan Audubon Annual Conference will take place concurrently with the festival. Attendees can learn about the conservation efforts in Michigan that are affecting birds and their habitat, and then venture into the field to see the plethora of spring migrants taking time to rest and feed at Tawas Point, Tuttle Marsh, and bird habitats throughout Iosco County. Registration can be completed online via the festival website.

We're in full swing here in Lansing. Our program schedule for 2010 is well underway; we've already held eight programs, including two birding excursions in the Sault Ste. Marie area and a handful of activities at bird sanctuaries in the lower peninsula. In January, our squad of resident sanctuary managers met to discuss even more programming ideas for the future. Tom Funke, conservation director and resident manager of the Otis Sanctuary, provides a full report of this first-ever resident managers' summit on page 8.

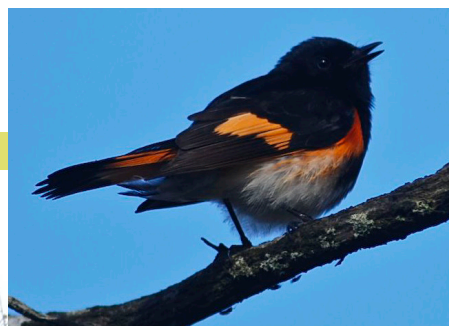
The 2010 birding season is yet another great opportunity to explore new territory and introduce young people to recreational bird watching. Please refer to our calendar and announcements pages to learn more about birding opportunities in Michigan. We hope to see you at an upcoming program or event, hopefully with a young birder under your wing.

Best regards,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, likely belonging to Jonathan E. Lutz.

Jonathan E. Lutz, executive director

American Redstart was among the nearly 170 species of birds that were recorded during the 2009 Tawas Point Birding Festival. © 2009 Skye Haas.



Birders Flock to Tawas Point, Michigan

BY WENDY TATAR

In 2005, former Michigan Audubon president Peggy Ridgway championed the inaugural Tawas Point Birding Festival. Now five years later, the event has grown to include the annual conference of Michigan Audubon. From May 13 to May 16, birders and conservationists will choose from an abundance of field trips, seminars, and presentations occurring at the height of spring bird migration at Tawas Point. The event is an ideal opportunity to experience some of the best bird watching Michigan has to offer.

Tawas Point was a beacon for migrating birds long before lake-going navigators used the lighthouse to negotiate the waters of Lake Huron. Today, birders from around the country and the world have made the Tawas Point Birding Festival an annual destination for spring birding. © 2008 Wendy Tatar.

Tawas Point was a beacon for migrating birds long before lake-going navigators used the shoreline to negotiate the waters of Lake Huron. Today, birders from around the country and the world have made the Tawas Point Birding Festival an annual destination for spring birding. The Point is well known for high concentrations of migrating warblers, especially during the month of May. It's also home to a wide variety of shorebirds and gulls, and the nearby wetland areas attract marsh birds galore.

Each year, Iosco County residents and businesses provide a warm welcome for birders. The highway following the Lake Huron shoreline, M-23, is decorated with "welcome birders" signs as one nears East Tawas and Oscoda. These Michiganians get it: birders bring business to their communities at an otherwise dormant time of year. The locals show their appreciation by welcoming birders with open arms and helping Michigan Audubon sponsor the annual festival. The Oscoda and Tawas Chambers of Commerce and the Visitors and Convention Bureaus have revised their promotional materials to include birding as one of the main recreational activities in the area. Their websites provide links to the website of Michigan Audubon's local chapter, the AuSable Valley Audubon (AVA), enabling visitors to download maps and directions to great local birding sites.

The East Tawas and Oscoda communities are creating new opportunities for birders. The AuSable Township park planners sought advice from local chapter members when designing bird observation platforms for Shoreline Park in Oscoda. Gary Oil now supplies all the seed for the feeding stations near one of those platforms. Tawas Point State Park and the Huron-Manistee National Forest also work closely with Michigan Audubon and AVA to provide festival attendees with access and equipment at festival time.



Participants pose for the camera following a photography workshop at the 2009 Tawas Point Birding Festival. The bird-watching blind, located at Shoreline Park in Oscoda, is evidence of how dedicated the communities in Iosco County are to creating opportunities for birders. © 2009 Denise Willis.

The 2010 festival and conference schedule includes four days of field trips and seminars to give attendees a glimpse of the great birding Michigan has to offer.

2010 TAWAS POINT BIRDING FESTIVAL

Thursday May 13

- Choose among pre-conference trips and workshops.
- View the birds from a canoe or kayak as you glide down the famous AuSable River.
- Board a bus for a birding and sightseeing tour on the Scenic River Byway.
- Register for the Birding 101 workshop, if you're new to birding or want to improve current skills.
- Learn the history of Tawas Point and climb to the top of the lighthouse for a bird's eye view.
- End the day with an evening field trip to Tuttle Marsh searching for Rails or the elusive American Bittern.

May 14–16

- Follow skilled and charismatic trip leaders on hikes around Tawas Point (in the mornings, all three days).
- Search for Kirtland's Warblers in their nesting habitat via bus trips into Forest Service land.
- Search for the Black Tern and many other wetland species at Tuttle Marsh.
- Find wetland and forest species on a guided hike of Eagle Run Park in Oscoda.
- Take guided carpool trips to local hotspots for birds and spring wildflowers.

MICHIGAN AUDUBON ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Friday May 14

The conference gets underway on Friday at the Tawas Bay Beach Resort, the festival headquarters. Concurrent sessions on bird watching and conservation continue through the afternoon. Some of the best birders in Michigan will present programs such as Getting it Right with Warbler ID, Was That another LBJ, Building a World List, and many others.

On Friday evening we'll head to Wiltsie's Brew Pub in Oscoda for Michigan Audubon's annual meeting. We'll have great food and conversation, and also get to enjoy "Birds on the Wind: the Miracle of Migration," presented by our keynote speaker, Kevin Karlson. His name may ring a bell: he's one of the authors of *The Shorebird Guide*, which was featured in the July/August issue of the *JPW* and is considered the top companion for shorebird identification.

Saturday May 15

Morning field trips will be followed by presentations in the afternoon. Caleb Putnam will update us on how the Important Bird Area program in Michigan is developing. Tim Barksdale will present "The Power of Birders in the Media and Conservation." If you have downloaded birding videos from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology website, chances are they were created by Tim. In 2011, he'll be featured on "Adventures with Birdman," a new PBS show.

On Saturday evening at the Tally Rally, report your sightings and join the fun—maybe even win a prize. Afterward join fellow birders for dinner at the Tawas Bay Beach Resort restaurant to wrap up the conference. Watch your mailbox for the conference brochure, or go to www.tawasbirdfest.com for more information, including a registration form.

Michigan Audubon's program coordinator, Wendy Tatar, can be reached by e-mailing Wendy@MichiganAudubon.org or calling 517-886-9144.

Superiorland: Birding the Upper Peninsula

BY SKYE CHRISTOPHER G. HAAS

ANY GOOD U.P. BIRDING STORY should start in late winter, when the steel-grey clouds roll away and the sun's return is greeted by the uplifting whistle of a Black-capped Chickadee calling out over the melting snow. Of course, the first thing any bird watcher wants to do on a sunny day in the early spring is to go watch hawks. Many head straight for a hawk hot spot like Whitefish Point in the eastern U.P. or Brockway Mountain up in the Keweenaw Peninsula. These locations always sport excellent views of Golden Eagles, Northern Goshawks, Rough-legged Hawks or a feisty little Merlin. Down in the lowlands, the courtship of Spruce and Sharp-tailed Grouse also kicks off at this time of year, with exuberant dancers gathering on their traditional leks, seeking to pass on their genes to the next generation.

Lake-watching is generally better in the fall, but a trip to Whitefish Point in mid-May usually produces some of the best looks one will ever have of a White-winged Scoter or Red-throated Loon. Often these species pass right overhead, cutting over the point and giving a birder an opportunity to actually see the red throat of the loon. Spring is also an opportunity to catch the brief window of Whimbrel heading north to the tundra. This large, curve-billed shorebird is typically only seen in the last ten days of May. Whitefish Point is one of the few places in Michigan where birders can see large flocks, sometimes even walking around on the beach cobble.

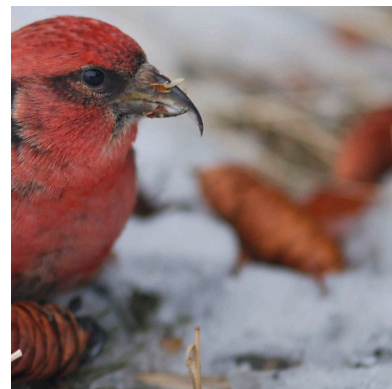


Awaiting birders in Michigan's Upper Peninsula is a wide variety of birds, including Le Conte's Sparrows. © 2009 Skye Haas.

Of course, for many people, spring migration is about the return of colorful neo-tropical migrants to the breeding grounds. Here in the U.P., migration can be fantastic due to the Great Lakes' concentrating effect on migrants along the shoreline. Passerine migration begins in earnest by the second week of May and can last into June. Obviously,

Whitefish Point is a great spot to observe spring warblers and other songbirds, but you shouldn't limit your adventures to there. Spots along Lake Michigan that merit a birder's attention include Pt. LaBarbe in Mackinac County, Seul Choix Point in Schoolcraft County, and the Garden and Stonington Peninsulas in Delta County, all of which are major migration funnels. On the Superior side, places such as Presque Isle Park in Marquette, Sand Point in Munising, and the entire Keweenaw Peninsula can be brimming with migrants. Another tip for birding along Lake Superior is to visit the small villages like Grand Marais or Copper Harbor. In a sea of dense forest, these towns create temporary habitats for species that prefer more open country. Recent examples of some rarities found in these small towns include Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Western Tanager, and Painted Bunting. This is truly an excellent time to be in the field, and I have quit more than one job to bird-bum in May.

OF COURSE A REAL LURE of the U.P. is a chance to observe northern boreal species on their breeding grounds. Several species such as Black-backed Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Mourning and Connecticut Warblers, and Le Conte's Sparrows can all be difficult to find during migration. Ensconced away in boggy, mosquito-infested forests, the rich diversity of the northern forests draw birders, as one can observe twenty or more species of warblers in a day while tromping around in the U.P. Also of great interest is the most enigmatic of birds, the Yellow Rail. Rarely seen, this species gives its diagnostic clicking song for only a few weeks early in the summer. Seney Wildlife Refuge has been a traditional location to search for these shy rails, but enterprising birders have located Yellow Rails in expansive sedge marshes in Luce and Chippewa Counties as well.



A White-winged Crossbill in winter, observed in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. © 2009 Skye Haas.



However, the breeding season is ephemeral, with many species departing all too soon. Shorebirds are particularly renowned for their succinct breeding activities. I am often amused to see my first southbound sandpipers within two weeks of watching the last spring birds headed to the arctic tundra. Shorebirding in the U.P. is often best in July and August, with large concentrations of birds found at Portage Marsh in Escanaba or in the small sewage ponds that dot the Keweenaw Peninsula. Late summer can be the best time to find a U.P. specialty: after fledging from the nest, Boreal Chickadees will form large multi-family groups marauding through the spruce-woods. Late summer is also a good time to look for Spruce Grouse: hens with their half-grown chicks can be easy finds at this time of year.

FALL MIGRATION IN THE U.P. is a delightful, prolonged affair that for songbirds can start in late July and go well into October. Most passerine migration peaks in September and gives way to the passage of large numbers of water birds over Lake Superior. Scaup, scoters, loons, grebes, and jaegers—who can resist the urge to bundle up and trudge out to some windswept knob sticking into the lake and wait for a delicate-winged Sabine's Gull or silvery-headed Pacific Loon to go winging past? Another facet of fall migration can be the mega-rarities that seem to show up in the fall. Some recent unexpected visitors to the peninsula include Vermilion Flycatcher, Tropical Kingbird, and one of the most surprising birds to ever be seen in Michigan, a Short-tailed Hawk.

They say all good things must pass, but for U.P. birding, perhaps it is better to say that we save the best for last. In late fall in most years, highly desired irruptives vacate the boreal forests of Canada. Bohemian Waxwings, Townsend's Solitaires, finches, Pine and Evening Grosbeaks, crossbills, and Hoary Redpolls can be found, some species more regularly than others. The Keweenaw Peninsula or the wilds of the Michigamme Highlands in Marquette County can be excellent spots to look for these winter visitors. Perhaps the most thrilling visitors, though, are the northern owls—Snowy, Boreal, Northern Hawk, and the mysterious Great Gray Owl. Truly lucky birders may even spy the emperor of the arctic, a Gyrfalcon.

I must make mention of one more special "Yooper" bird that is always present in the remote woods of the boreal forest—the Gray Jay. Curious and intelligent, they will follow along to see what you are up to, and if there is a tidbit of trail mix to be offered, I usually can't resist.

Inquiring Birders

Q: I often hear or read about rare bird sightings in the Upper Peninsula via the Internet, e-mail list serves, and updates sent to my mobile phone. A recent example was the Yellow-billed Loon, a first-ever record for the state of Michigan. My concern about driving from my home near Brighton is that I will be too disconnected from my business and family if I make the trip north to chase a bird. How reliable is the cell phone coverage in the U.P., and do local establishments offer wireless Internet service?

Curious Birder from Brighton, MI

Submitted via the Michigan Audubon website, www.michiganaudubon.org.

A: You'll be happy to know that many folks share your concerns about staying connected with work and family while in pursuit of a rare bird. Many of us long to leave technology behind when we hit the trail, but sometimes it's useful. You never know when an Ancient Murrelet or Yellow-billed Loon will show up in Michigan!

Cell phone coverage in the U.P. is better than many people assume. Coverage will be best when you're close to bigger towns such as Houghton, Marquette, and Sault Ste. Marie, but you can almost always make a call or check voice mail when you're traveling in Michigan's U.P. The other factor to consider is your cell phone service provider: some companies have better coverage in the U.P. than others. Be sure to make considerations for your birding adventures when choosing a provider.

As for wireless Internet coverage, you will be happy to know that many of the "Mom and Pop" establishments in the U.P. offer high-speed wireless Internet. If you have the benefit of a few minutes to plan for your bird-chasing trip, check out motels and restaurants online. Often, free wi-fi is a feature that U.P. businesses are promoting to bring in more customers.

Staying connected, while it can be a burden, can make for safe, enjoyable birding adventures. Not only can you keep in touch with your family and business, but you can post updates and pictures of your rare bird sightings. We hope you find this information useful, Curious Birder, and we look forward to seeing you on the trail in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

Jonathan Lutz, Michigan Audubon's executive director, answered this question.

Send questions to Birds@MichiganAudubon.org.

Websitings

Birds and Brews from Keweenaw to the Sault

BY BRITTANY BAKER

Michigan's Upper Peninsula, with its six Michigan Audubon bird sanctuaries and abundant public land, is a perfect vacation spot for downstate birders looking to get out of their own backyard. But the U.P. doesn't just offer places for great birding; it also offers fantastic, locally brewed beer. There's nothing better than sitting down with a pint and a pasty to cheer you up after an exhausting search for the Yellow-billed Loon.

Copper Harbor, in the Keweenaw Peninsula, functions as a rest stop for birds—especially raptors—about to cross Lake Superior. Over seventeen species of raptors have been spotted at Brockway Mountain. With six designated birding areas, you have the opportunity to see anything from an American Bald Eagle to a Purple Martin (1). While you are up in Copper Harbor, don't forget to visit Michigan's northernmost coffeehouse: Boreal Beans Coffeehouse. Coffee is just the thing to perk you up before an owl prowls. The shop also offers field guides and bird song identifiers in addition to its warm beverages.



A first-ever recording of a Yellow-billed Loon in Michigan drew birders to the Upper Peninsula late in 2009. © 2009 Skye Haas.

A visit to Keweenaw isn't complete without a stop at the Keweenaw Brewing Company in Houghton (2). It's solely a microbrewery, so no food is served, but the establishment encourages you to order delivery, so you can relax and enjoy the homey ambiance of the taproom along with your Pick Axe Blonde Ale. There's even free Internet access so you can upload your Copper Harbor birding photos to your birding blog or the image library at UPBirders.org.

Further east, near Paradise, Whitefish Point is a global Important Bird Area and one of the best birding sites in the country. The Whitefish Point Bird Observatory hosts field trips and nature programs at the site, and each year it celebrates the migratory season with an annual Spring Fling. The event features a banquet and the promise of "magnificent overflights of raptors—Golden Eagles, Peregrine Falcons, Sharp-shinned Hawks, and Long-eared Owls—[to complement] the start of the passerine and water bird migrations" (3).

Eventually, your growling stomach will make you leave the trails and search out some place to eat. Set against the beauty of the Tahquamenon Falls State Park in Camp 33, the Tahquamenon Falls Brewery and Pub is only ten miles from Whitefish Point, and it boasts gourmet food and world-famous microbrews like the Lumberjack Lager and the Porcupine Pale Ale. The rustic brew-pub "cradles a vision created in the days of lumberjacks and adventurers" and is the perfect place to revel in your Whitefish Point sightings (4).

Visit these sites!

- (1) http://www.copperharbor.org/birding_s.html
- (2) <http://www.keweenawbrewing.com/>
- (3) <http://wpbo.org/calendar/springfling/>
- (4) <http://www.superiorsights.com/tahqfallsbrew/pub.html>

Brittany Baker (bakerb18@msu.edu) is a senior studying English and professional writing at Michigan State University. She still gets excited when she spots a Blue Jay at her feeder.



Book Corner

Wild About Michigan Birds: A Youth's Guide to the Birds of Michigan

BY ADELE PORTER
(ADVENTURE PUBLICATIONS, 2009. 200 PP.)

REVIEWED BY WENDY TATAR

\$17.95 (paperback)
Available at the Michigan
Audubon Bookstore



When I first started working at Michigan Audubon, the Nature Bookstore sold a book entitled *Wild About Minnesota Birds*. I asked why we carried that book, given that it dealt with Minnesota, and was told that “it’s the only bird guide out there created for children and most of the birds listed in it can be found here.” It has taken a few years, but last year a book by the same author was finally published for children, focused on both Michigan and Wisconsin.

For the past eight years, I’ve volunteered to lead the Junior Audubon Club for Grand Rapids Audubon. During that time, we’ve used the simplest of the bird field guides to help members with identification. Even the most basic of these guides was written for adults, until now.

Late in 2008, the Peterson Field Guide series published *The Young Birder's Guide to Birds of Eastern North America* (there is also a western version) by Bill Thompson III, of *Birder's Digest* fame. This is a good pocket-size field guide written for young birders. It was the first step in the right direction for educators trying to get children aged 8–12 into birding.

Membership in Grand Rapids Junior Audubon Club is for children ages 7 and up, but members’ families join us for programs, and many families bring younger siblings. Thankfully, *Wild About Michigan Birds* has come along to help with the younger crowd. The book is a great guide; however due to the size (10” x 7.5”), it’s not a book to be taken into the field with you. It’s an incredible teaching tool—one that children will want to look at over and over again.

The first thing that struck me about this book are the photographs of each species. A two-page spread is devoted to each bird. One page is a full-size photograph with notes about markings that help with identification. The second page of the spread includes natural history information on the species, presented in an entertaining way. Michigan range maps, the best viewing times, and where to look to see the birds are all included. For each species there’s also some interesting tidbit of information that will make children want to learn more about birds. These are highlighted by a comical little cartoon bird to make them stand out from the other information.

Although this book is marketed for children ages 5–12, I’d say you’d be hard pressed to find a five-year-old that can read the text. They will, however, love the photos. I would say that most adults will enjoy the book too, as it contains some information that you don’t find in the guides written for adults.

Unlike adult guides, the birds in *Wild About Michigan Birds* are listed by the type of habitat in which they live. The book is broken down into coniferous forest; deciduous forest; prairie and grasslands; and wetlands, rivers, lakes, and shores. The book also contains quizzes and brain-teasers (with answer keys), and a very helpful glossary of birding terms. There are also a few journaling pages included in the back of the book and a list of the species in taxonomic order.

The book is not without fault. The bigger of the two problems is the list of “Great Places to Learn More About Birds” located in the back of the book. This normally would be a valuable addition to the book; however, the list of nature centers, state parks, and other locations with maps was clearly created by someone that does not know anything about Michigan. The list contains 57 locations, and most of their locations are correct. Once you get to #42, however, the remainder of the sites on the list are incorrectly marked on the map. For instance, the map shows the Whitefish Point Bird Observatory located in Lansing, and when you look at the map where WPBO is located, you find the number for the University of Michigan, Dearborn Environmental Interpretive Center!

The other problem with the book is what’s missing: an urban bird section. However much we love to hate them, the book does not include House Sparrows, Starlings, Brown-headed Cowbirds, or Rock Doves. These species are the ones that most children are going to see quite often, and the book misses a great opportunity to educate children about these “pests” of the avian world.

I urge anyone who wants to encourage a young child in becoming a birder to pick up this book. Even with the above-mentioned faults, it’s the best thing out there to get the next generation started in birding.

Michigan Audubon Bird Sanctuaries: 2010 Resident Managers' Summit

BY TOM FUNKE



On January 5, 2010, Michigan Audubon's sanctuary staff, including Rich and Deb Krieger (Lake Bluff Bird Sanctuary), Mike Boyce (Baker Sanctuary), and Tom Funke (Otis Sanctuary) met for the first-ever resident managers' summit at Ferris State University in Big Rapids, Michigan. The purpose of the four-hour session was to share information and coordinate sanctuary activities and programs for the year.

For over 25 years, Michigan Audubon has benefited from the presence of a resident manager at the Bernard W. Baker Sanctuary near Battle Creek. In 1989, Michigan Audubon installed its first team of resident managers at the Lake Bluff Bird Sanctuary near Manistee. Finally, in 2002, Michigan Audubon introduced me as the first resident manager of the Otis Farm Sanctuary. All the resident managers, along with executive director Jonathan Lutz, have been sharing communications over the past year regarding habitat maintenance, sanctuary guidelines, attendance, programs, and wildlife sightings at the sanctuaries.

In 2010, resident managers will ramp up efforts to collect data on attendance and program participation. The results will assist the organization with ways to improve the sanctuary experience for visitors in years to come. We are particularly interested in developing opportunities for visitors of all ages to enjoy the sanctuary on a year-round basis; we would like to combine recreational opportunities by season—snowshoeing, paddling, geocaching, etc.—with ongoing activities that fit with Michigan Audubon's mission of connecting birds and people for the benefit of both. Bird watching and nature study will, of course, continue to be mainstay activities at Baker, Lake Bluff, and Otis.

I encourage you to look for sanctuary-specific fundraisers this year. Each resident manager is charged with developing and leading a fundraiser to benefit their respective sanctuary. Ideas are still being considered, but fundraisers may include a photography contest, a raffle for a week's stay at a sanctuary, and a bird-a-thon. The money raised through these efforts will assist with the ongoing control of invasive species at the properties, with the purchase of new program materials and interpretive signage, and with repair and maintenance costs throughout the year.

In 2010, the Kriegers, Mike, and I will also hold a friendly competition to increase memberships in Michigan Audubon. As resident managers at three of the most-visited bird sanctuaries in the network, we have the ability to encourage greater participation in Michigan's oldest conservation organization. Our goal is to gain 50 new Michigan Audubon members per sanctuary for a combined total of at least 150 new members.

The remainder of our summit was spent discussing topics such as volunteer recruitment and development of management tools for resident managers, focusing on reinforcing the fact that each sanctuary is an extension of Michigan Audubon. I am pleased to report that our sanctuary inventories and management plans are moving from draft form to final copies for all three properties. These documents will contain information about the natural features of each sanctuary and the goals we hope to achieve for managing the sanctuaries for avian diversity.

This is a great time to assist us with championing Michigan Audubon's three most popular bird sanctuaries. Tell your friends to visit a sanctuary and consider becoming a member of Michigan Audubon—and let us know, so we can count it towards our total for the year. If you are passionate about Baker, Lake Bluff, or Otis, please consider volunteering your time and expertise to help us achieve some of these goals. You can e-mail us any time:

Mike Boyce, Bernard W. Baker Sanctuary
baker@michiganaudubon.org

Rich and Deb Krieger, Lake Bluff Bird Sanctuary
lakebluff@michiganaudubon.org

Tom Funke, Otis Farm Bird Sanctuary
otis@michiganaudubon.org

The next resident managers' summit will take place in July at the Lake Bluff Bird Sanctuary. I look forward to sharing with you the results of our efforts at the end of the year. In the meantime, you can look for updates in future issues of the *JPW*, or on Michigan Audubon's Facebook page.

Tom Funke is the director of conservation for Michigan Audubon.

Feathered Lens

Photo Equipment for Rugged Birding in Michigan's Upper Peninsula

BY WAYNE POPE

So, you're going to the fabulous Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Great! Just remember, it's a long way between Wal-Marts and Radio Shacks, so you'd better have plenty of one-time use batteries or a charging unit in your vehicle for NiCads. Take extra camera bodies, memory cards and lenses too. If your only camera falls off the Porcupine Mountains, it's a long way to the nearest camera store.

Use filters to protect your front lens element. If you plan a kayak trip to Lake Superior, consider an underwater housing or a dustproof, cold-proof, waterproof, shockproof "tough camera" made by Olympus or Pentax. Take your laptop computer and an external hard drive for backups. If you haven't already established a daily, weekly, or monthly workflow of saving, filing, and backing up your files, now is the time to start. The longer you put it off, the easier it is to procrastinate. Once your memory cards are full, you'll feel overwhelmed like Cinderella.

Prepare yourself for a grand adventure. On Drummond Island, my dog and I bounced a black bear from an Aspen forest. I fired six shots before the bruin showed me his backside. Another time, along the Fox River Trail, I found a new-fledged Goshawk. He stood tall, hissed, and clacked his beak while I documented his coming of age.

Take a tripod to capture the aurora borealis under a clear night sky. If three-legged camera supports bother you, use a monopod or walking stick. I always take my 5-foot hickory staff to the thick woods, cedar swamps, and mucky bogs. It sweeps away cobwebs and foot-tangling debris and supports my telephoto lens when snapping photos of a Ruffed Grouse or Barred Owl. As a probe, it keeps me from sinking knee-deep in ooze. Twice it has defended me against large, aggressive dogs running loose through nature areas.

A handy photo vest or backpack keeps your heavy gear distributed across your upper body. Here are some items to take, some of which may save your life: A flashlight to find your way back to your vehicle or embarkation point at night. A shrill whistle for signaling humans or warning bears and cougars. A map or GPS. A small first-aid kit. Enough food and clothing to sustain you overnight in case you get lost. A cell phone. And finally, if you're the hardy type and pride yourself on bushwhacking alone, some basic survival skills could ensure that you collect Social Security and not create a manhunt. Happy birding, and remember this: the best camera for avian photography is the one you always have on your person.



TOP: "The best camera for avian photography is the one you always have on your person."
© Melinda Jo Pope 2009.

BOTTOM: Grouse species await the well-prepared photographer in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Shown here: Sharp-tailed Grouse. © Skye Haas 2009.

Wayne Pope teaches photography at Lansing Community College. He may be contacted at popew@lcc.edu.

Calendar

April

- 7–10 **MiBCI Conference**
North Central Michigan College,
Petoskey
- 10 **Invasive Species Wand
Workshop**
Convis Township Hall, Bellevue
(contact Wendy Tatar)
- 17 **Clean-up Day**
Baker Sanctuary
- 17 **Spring Wildflower Walk**
Baker Sanctuary
- 23–25 **Spring Fling**
Whitefish Point Bird Observatory

May

- 1 **Spring Wildflower Walk**
Lake Bluff Bird Sanctuary
- 7–8 **International Migratory Bird Day
Festival**
Copper Harbor
- 9 **Wood Warbler Walk**
Baker Sanctuary
- 13–15 **Michigan Audubon Annual
Conference**
East Tawas and Oscoda
- 14–16 **Tawas Point
Birding Festival**
East Tawas
- 14–16 **West Michigan
Birding Festival**
Ludington
- 15 **Kirtland's Warbler Festival**
Roscommon

June

- 4–6 **Cerulean Warbler Weekend**
Hastings



Knight Center
for Environmental Journalism

Teaching journalists to cover the earth

Specialized master's degree in environmental journalism

- This new program includes courses in environmental **reporting, science** and **policy**, and requires an **internship** in science or environmental journalism.
- The School of Journalism at MSU is one of the nation's **largest, oldest and best** journalism schools. It is ranked among the top 10 programs by the Gourman Report.

For information see ej.msu.edu/ej_option.php

Contact the Knight Center for Environmental Journalism, Room 382,
Communication Arts and Sciences Building, Michigan State University, East Lansing,
Mich. 48824-1212. Phone: 517-353-9479 or 517-432-1415.

Web: <http://ej.msu.edu>



School of Journalism

**MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY**

MICHIGAN BIRDS and Natural History

January–March 2009

Volume 16 Number 1



Subscribe today at michiganaudubon.org.



A publication of Michigan Audubon



Kids' Corner



Hummingbirds

BY MICHELLE DORSHIMER

Right now there is lots of snow on the ground and yet there are still pretty birds. My favorite bird is a hummingbird. My dad would put out a hummingbird feeder and I would watch them. Their wings go back and forth super-fast compared to other birds. They have tons of color so they're like a rainbow, and they're super entertaining to watch. Sometimes they will stay at the feeder for a while, but other times they stay for only a second and then they leave. Sometimes it's sad that winter is here because they stop coming, but I always remember how beautiful the hummingbirds are.

Michelle Dorshimer, age 11, lives with her family in Portland, MI, and loves birds, cats, and dogs, as well as her pet rabbit, Bun-Bun.

Messenger Pigeons During World War I

BY ASHER DORSHIMER

A common method for passing information in World War I was the use of birds. At the time, wireless stations for sending crucial data were not yet portable. So a cheap way to pass information on the ground was using birds. Usually the unit would have the bird with them and write a small message on parchment that was then wrapped around its leg. The bird would be released and fly back to its home, which was back behind allied lines. It was then caged with the hundreds of other birds. The parchment was read, and soon the information was used. Most of it was used to warn of enemy units or to ask for help if the allied unit couldn't send a runner. It also was used to correct or lay down coordinates for the artillery to fire on. The most commonly used bird species was the pigeon.

One of the most famous of these birds helped save a lost battalion. A battalion of 194 American infantry soldiers from the 77th Infantry Division was pinned in heavy fighting after German units suckered them into an ambush in France, during 1918. They were trapped for several days and the enemy machine gunners inflicted heavy casualties. Supporting artillery was unknowingly inflicting casualties on this battalion as it tried to knock out German machine gun nests. A pigeon was sent to fix this problem, but it first flew only a few yards and sat on a tree, oblivious to the war around it. The lost battalion hurled rocks and boots at it until it finally flew away. Enemy fire tried to bring it down, shooting it through the chest, but it made it back to base, twenty-five miles away, and the error was fixed. After the battle, the unit felt they owed their lives to this bird, named Cher Ami, as it helped saved all of them. Later when the bird died, it was stuffed; after the war it was put in the Smithsonian Museum of American History to show how birds can fight too.



Asher Dorshimer, age 14, lives with his family in Portland, MI. He is an avid war buff and loves reading, hunting, and playing sports.



Nationally Known Author to Speak March 29.

The Grand Rapids Audubon Club (GRAC) will host a special program on Monday March 29. Dr. Douglas Tallamy, author of *Bringing Nature Home: How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in Our Gardens*, will speak on how native plants play a key role in the restoration of landscapes. This special program will be held at the Ladies Literary Club, located at 61 Sheldon NE, Grand Rapids. Join us at 6:30 p.m. for a social hour and at 7:30 for the start of the program.

For more information, go to www.glsa.org/graud/special_events.htm.

(June 4-6, 2010) Cerulean Warbler Weekend

See page 12 or visit
<http://ceruleanwarbler.org>
for more information.



Cerulean Warbler. © 2009 Frode Jacobsen.

Announcements



Tours/Trips

Whitefish Point Bird Observatory to Host Spring Fling

Spring Fling 2010 kicks off the fourth decade of avian research at Whitefish Point. The Observatory welcomes recreational bird watchers from around the world to Whitefish Point during Spring Fling 2010 weekend, April 23–25. Birders can expect excellent birding along with opportunities to learn more about avian migration and conservation in the Great Lakes. Attendees will learn from fellow birders, field trip leaders, and guest speakers. Norman Smith, director of Blue Hills Trailside Museum and Norman Smith Environmental Education Center in Milton, MA, will be the keynote speaker. For more information or to register visit WPBO's website at www.wpbo.org.

Drummond Island Adventure

On the field trip to Drummond Island on May 20–23, the Wa-Wen Resort and R.V. Park will be our base of operation. We hope to see the nesting pair of eagles that call the island home, along with Ospreys and many spring migrants. We will explore the island's alvar, which is a biological environment based on a limestone plain with sparse vegetation. We'll also take a boat to Harbor Island National Wildlife Refuge. For more details and the latest information, go to www.michiganaudubon.org or the resort's site at www.wawanresort.com.

Trip to Southeast Arizona Scheduled

Join Michigan Audubon and tour guide Bill Sweetman August 3–10 as we travel to southeastern Arizona for the incredible birding of the region's second breeding season.

Seven days of birding begin in either Tucson or Phoenix, depending on the best flight prices. Price includes ground transportation, all lodging, breakfasts, picnic lunches, and all entry fees. The cost is \$1,265 (double occupancy) for Michigan Audubon members, and \$1,295 for non-members. For single occupancy add \$300. A \$200 deposit holds your reservation, with final payment due July 1. To make sure you don't miss out on this incredible trip, call Wendy at 517-886-9144 to register. Additional trip information, including a complete itinerary, is available at www.michiganaudubon.org.

Education & Events

Register Now for Ornithological Congress

If you are interested in bird research and conservation and haven't yet registered for the Michigan Bird Conservation Initiative (MiBCI) Ornithological Congress, it isn't too late. The Congress will be held April 7–10 at North Central Michigan College in Petoskey. Join other like-minded individuals from Michigan's bird conservation and research community at this great event. Visit www.mibci.org for more information.



Spring Cleaning at Baker Lodge

We need your help! The Lodge at Baker Sanctuary is in need of a serious spring cleaning. Join Baker Sanctuary resident manager Mike Boyce on Saturday April 17 to get the Lodge in tip-top shape for the coming season. We'll concentrate not just on the Lodge, but the trails too. Woodchips will be spread and the boardwalk repaired. After a day of hard work you can relax and enjoy a wildflower walk at 3:00 p.m. or enjoy learning about the frogs that call Michigan home at 6:30 p.m. To participate in any or all of the activities that will take place that day, contact Wendy Tatar at 616-886-9144 or Wendy@MichiganAudubon.org.

Cerulean Warbler Expert to Speak at Cerulean Warbler Weekend

Paul Hamel, one of the world's leading experts on Cerulean Warblers, will be the keynote speaker at the Friday night banquet during Cerulean Warbler Weekend June 4–6. Paul will be speaking about the coffee, coal, and Cerulean Warbler connection at the dinner that will be held at the Pierce Cedar Creek Institute. Join us for an excellent meal followed by important information on North America's fastest disappearing song bird. Paul will also present a session on the peculiar ecology of the Cerulean Warbler in breeding season on Saturday afternoon. You may remember that Paul wrote "Working on Behalf of Cerulean Warblers," which appeared in the May/June 2009 issue of the *Jack Pine Warbler*. Event details are still being completed as of this writing; check www.ceruleanwarbler.org for the complete schedule or to register for the event.

Darwin Exhibit at MSU

Birds in the Development of Darwin's Theories on Evolution, an exhibition at the MSU Museum in East Lansing, runs through June. According to an MSU press release (news.msu.edu/story/7319/), "This exhibition will showcase examples of birds from the Museum's extensive ornithology research collection, including species that Darwin encountered in Patagonia, and some extraordinary domestic pigeon and chicken breeds that he studied while investigating artificial selection."

No one has had a greater impact on ornithology than Charles Darwin. He collected 38 new bird species during his time on the Beagle voyage, from 1831 until 1836. Most of these were from the Galapagos Islands, the most noted of which—Darwin's Finches—are frequently cited as a prime example of evolution. The exhibition was made possible by a grant from MEEMIC Insurance Company.

Program Schedules

Late Winter and Early Spring Programs at the Sanctuaries

The following programs will be held at the Bernard W. Baker, Lake Bluff, and Otis Farm bird sanctuaries. For detailed information on these and other programs, visit www.michiganaudubon.org.

March 20—9:00 a.m.

Marsh Madness: Those Wonderful Wetlands, Otis

March 27—9:00 a.m.

Marsh Madness: Those Wonderful Wetlands, Baker

March 27—9:00 a.m.

Creating a Wildlife Habitat, Lake Bluff

April 6—6:30 p.m.

Aerial Display of the Woodcock, Otis

April 10—10:00 a.m.

Invasive Species Wand workshop, Baker

April 17—3:00 p.m.

Spring Wildflower walk, Baker

April 17—6:30 p.m.

Michigan Frogs program and walk, Baker

April 24—9:00 a.m.

Top 10 Invasive Species program, Lake Bluff

April 24—6:30 p.m.

Snipe Search, Otis

May 1—6:30 p.m.

Michigan Frogs program and walk, Otis

May 1—10:30 a.m.

Spring Wildflower walk, Lake Bluff

May 9—9:30 a.m.

Wood Warbler walk, Baker

2010 Sanctuary Open Houses

We had such a good time hosting open houses at some of our sanctuaries last year that we're going to continue this year. We begin on Saturday April 17 at the Mildred Harris Sanctuary near Kalamazoo for an open house from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Join us for guided walks through the mature beech-maple forest on this 40-acre preserve. The spring wildflowers should be spectacular. See www.michiganaudubon.org for more information.

There will be an open house and ribbon cutting on June 5 at the Otis Farm Bird Sanctuary during the Cerulean Warbler Weekend. Come see the improvements that turned the barn into a usable classroom. The Voorhees Sanctuary, northeast of Marshall, will host an open house in the fall. Students from the Mar-Lee School have adopted this 40-acre sanctuary and will help us show it off. Check future issues of the *Jack Pine Warbler* or the website for updates.

2010 Member Benefits

BENEFITS & GIFT LEVELS	\$30	\$50	\$100	\$500	\$1K+
Michigan Audubon membership, including a one-year subscription to the <i>Jack Pine Warbler</i> (6 issues)	■	■	■	■	■
10% discount in the Michigan Audubon bookstore	■	■	■	■	■
Discounts at selected Michigan Audubon events	■	■	■	■	■
Recognition in our Annual Report	■	■	■	■	■
Embroidered Michigan Audubon member patch*	■	■	■	■	■
One night of lodging at the Lake Bluff or the Otis Sanctuary			■	■	■
VIP invitation, Michigan Audubon conference				■	■
Nameplate at a Michigan Audubon bird sanctuary					■
Invitation to a donor recognition luncheon					■

*Applies to new members only

We Welcome New Michigan Audubon Members

We thank you—our newest members as well as our renewing members—for your support of Michigan Audubon's bird conservation efforts.

Dane G. Adams
Barbara Arndt
Mark R. Bishop
Brad & Anita Blasius
Mr. Carmine E. Calibeo
W.H. Campbell
Gary Campbell
Julia Chambers
Margaret Cloutier
Walter Colyner
Marilyn Conley
Ela Jiga & Roger
Corpolongo
Micheal & Joanne
Cromley

Maryann Dahlgren
Meryl Domina
Diane Stielstra
Don Fry
Cindy Farina
Brian Feige
Steve Foster
Pamela J. French
William Fulton
Debra Gerow
Gail L. Good
Craig Gough
Doris Griffith

Steven Hansen
O.J. Harris
Gloria Henry
Debbie & Don Hense
Toni L. Herrick
Anthony Horabin
Marilyn Hudson
Linda Hutchison
Nancy Johnson
Sarah Jordan
Julian Joseph
Alan Katz
Anne M. Klien
Dan Laur
Arlinda Lautt
Violet Lentz
Joseph Lipar
Ann Lipkowitz
Geraldine Lowery
Nancy McArthur
Gene McGraw
Phyllis Meek
Michigan Taiwanese Bird
Watchers
Anne Liu
Mark & Sheryl Miller
Native Connections
Owen Neils
Michelle Norton

Olga Z. Ovenhouse
Summer Palmer
Kenneth Partridge
Ronald & Mary Peterson
Janice Porter
Paul D. Revard
James & Helena Riekse
Ann Shannon
Beckie & Steve Shotwell
Sherman C. Shultz
Daryl & Ella Smith
Dennis & Linda Snider
Patrick & Celese Spencer
Michael & Valerie Sulfaro
John H. & Marylou Tanton
Belinda Miller Topa
Marilyn Towar
Clara Tranquilla
John L. Trapp
Jennelou L. Trudgen
Fred Walton
Jennifer Weglarz
Jim & Sandy Williamson
Cathy Winters
Joan Wolfe
Mary Wyatt
Spencer Wycoff
Kathleen Zerbe

Please remember to check your expiration date and renew early. If you share your *Jack Pine Warbler* with friends, family, and neighbors, please encourage them to use the enclosed remittance envelope to join you in your support of Michigan Audubon. Members moving or changing to a seasonal residence should contact the office by phone, post, or e-mail so that we can update your address in our database.

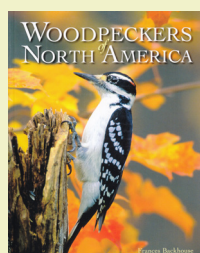
Dated Material

Michigan Audubon Bookstore

Support our educational programs by shopping at the Michigan Audubon Bookstore

Information or phone orders

517-886-9144

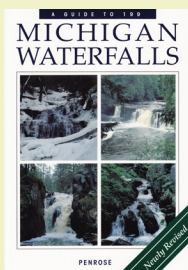


Woodpeckers of North America

by Frances Backhouse

\$24.95

Published in Canada, this book provides the natural history profiles of all 28 species of woodpeckers that live in North America. Featuring over 70 photographs and range maps for each species, the book also delves into the relationships that woodpeckers have with other wildlife and with humans.



A Guide to 199 Michigan Waterfalls

by Bill and Laurie Penrose

\$19.95

This guide book contains directions to all the waterfalls located within the state of Michigan, 198 of which are located in the Upper Peninsula. The authors hope the book will save others from problems in finding these remote falls.

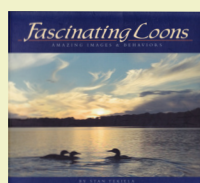


Michigan Gardener's Guide, Revised Edition

by Tim Boland, Laura Coit, and Marty Hair

\$24.99

This comprehensive guide to gardening in Michigan includes plant profiles on species ranging from annuals to bulbs and from groundcovers to trees. It also includes a list of public gardens and plant sources throughout the state. It has great photos and was authored by horticulturalists who attended Michigan State University.

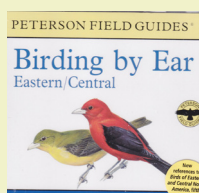


Fascinating Loons: Amazing Images & Behaviors

by Stan Tekiela

\$14.95

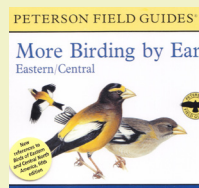
Another in the long list of books by Tekiela, this one provides an intimate look at Common Loons. The book contains an impressive number of incredible photos that capture the loon in action and reveal some surprises. A must-have for "loon-atics."



Birding by Ear and More Birding by Ear: Eastern and Central North America (Peterson Field Guides) (Audio CDs)

by Richard K. Walton and Robert W. Lawson

\$30.00 each set



These two sets of audio CDs (three in each set) teach the listener how to bird by ear. The authors use techniques such as phonetics, mnemonics, and descriptive words to provide a context for learning the songs and calls. *Birding by Ear* covers 85 species found east of the Rockies. *More Birding by Ear* covers an additional 96 species.

Order by phone, mail, or e-mail

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

By mail. Send name, address, phone number, and payment to Michigan Audubon Bookstore, 6011 W. St. Joseph Hwy., Ste. 403, Lansing, MI 48917. Prepayment includes list price + 6% sales tax + \$3.25 postage and handling for the first item + \$.85 for each additional item.

By e-mail. Wendy@MichiganAudubon.org.

10% off for all Michigan Audubon members!