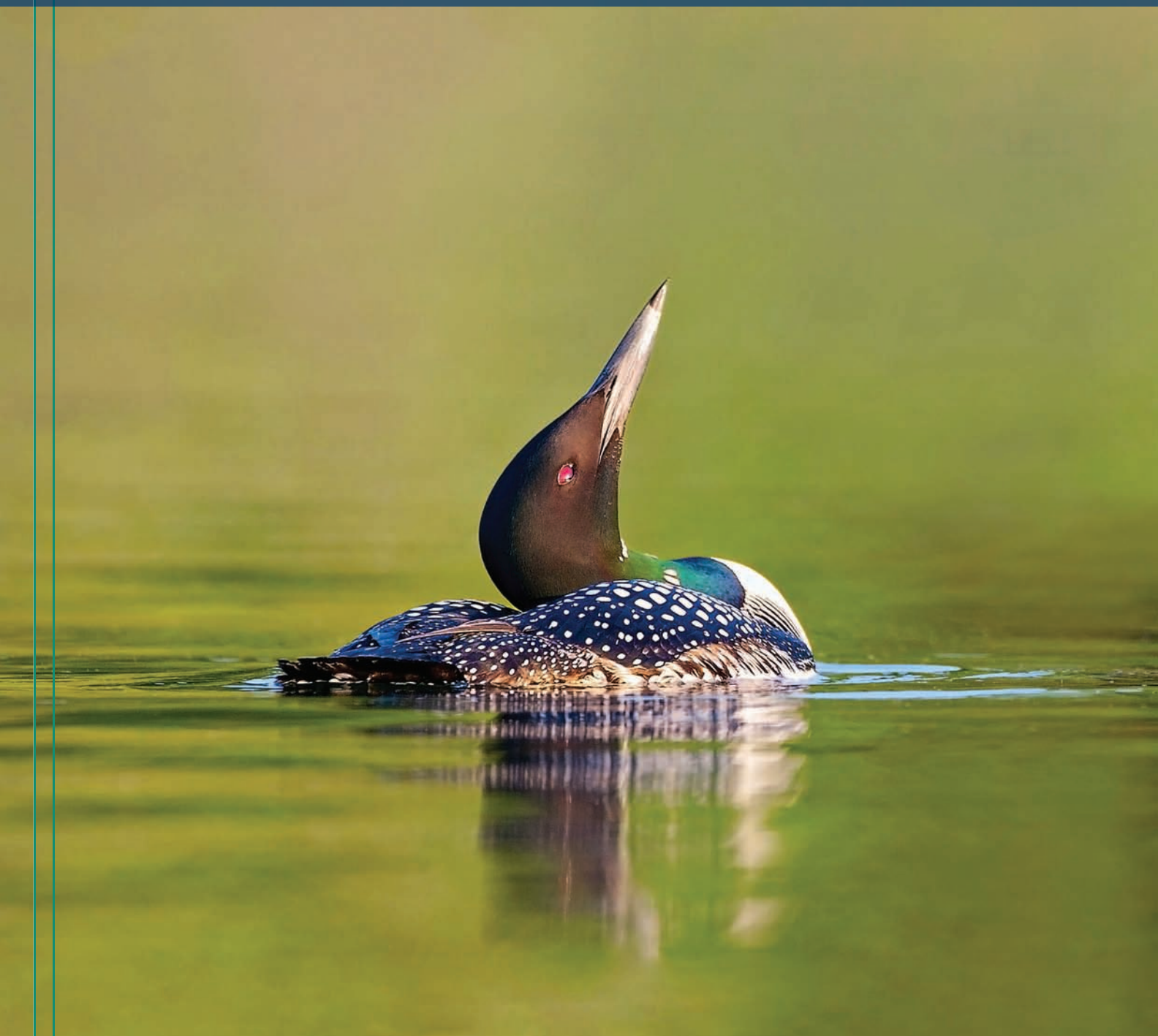


# Jack Pine *Warbler*

*LISTED SPECIES ISSUE:* Saving the Common Loon ■ Remembering Robert Whiting ■ Michigan's Most Vulnerable ■ Mute Swan Management to Benefit Trumpeter Swans



# Jack Pine Warbler

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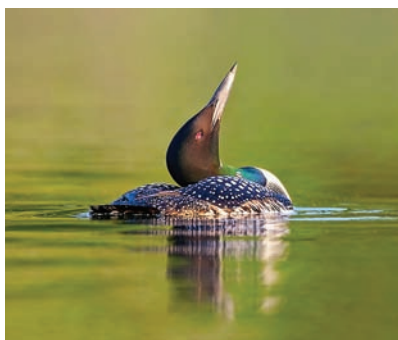
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## Cover Photo ■ Common Loon Stretching Photographer: Josh Haas

This Common Loon was photographed at Bass Lake, north of Baldwin, Michigan, on May 29, 2010. The lakes of Michigan's northern lower peninsula and upper peninsula provide breeding, feeding, and stop-over opportunities for this species. This particular loon was photographed at last light. Photographer Josh Haas was shooting from a kayak. The bird was photographed with a Canon 1D Mark III body and a 500mm f4 lens. The shutter speed was 1/800 second and an aperture of f5.6 was used.

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## 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



**BIRDS MIGHT BE** the toughest creatures in the world. I was standing waist-deep in cool ocean water the first time I saw a Red Knot. It was spring and I was surf-fishing at Folly Beach, South Carolina, with my friend and the field trip coordinator of the local Audubon chapter, Don. A small flock of shorebirds sped past us, migrating up the coast, and I noticed their rufous plumage. I glanced at Don who nodded, already sensing my curiosity. "Those are Red Knots. They're in spring migration, just like the fish," he noted while checking the tension on his line.

After a natural history briefing from my fishing partner—Red Knots travel nearly 10,000 miles to their arctic breeding grounds, and they rely on the availability of horseshoe crab eggs to fuel the trip—I decided that this was one tough bird. I stared at the Atlantic Ocean while making a mental list of the Red Knots' migration challenges: finding safe beaches to stop and rest, finding enough food to sustain long flights, navigating through inclement weather conditions. How can a bird weighing less than 5 ounces possibly survive such a journey?

To this day, I am in awe of the Red Knot, an uncommon visitor to Michigan's shores. But birds are challenged by more than just the sheer magnitude of their migrations and the naturally-occurring resources and conditions that can make or break their success. Birders and conservationists

know that habitat loss, physical obstacles, and the absence of food are elements on a growing list of concerns we have for birds worldwide. In Michigan, initiatives to permanently protect and steward land, address the need for dark cities during migration, and advocate for the use of native plants in the landscape are signs of hope that our birds will continue to find safe refuge in the Great Lakes state.

Of course, there are birds that receive special attention because of conservation status. As 2010 draws to a close, we are highlighting two of Michigan's threatened species: the Trumpeter Swan and the Common Loon. Both birds will become part of the joint monitoring efforts of Michigan Audubon and its partners in 2011. Our conservation director, Tom Funke, provides insight about the collaborative approach to Trumpeter Swan monitoring and controversial measures that may be implemented in the future to manage invasive Mute Swans. Regarding Common Loons, grassroots conservationist Peg Comfort sheds light on an intensified effort to monitor and understand loons in the Elk River Chain of Lakes Watershed.

Impressed as we may be with the fortitude of birds that enables them to migrate great distances, dive to great depths, or endure harsh weather conditions, bird enthusiasts are compelled to acknowledge the challenges humans present to the birds. They may be tough, but they still need our help.

Best regards,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink.

Jonathan E. Lutz



The Red Knot is an uncommon visitor to Michigan. This endangered species faces both natural and human-induced challenges along its 10,000-mile migration. © 2006 Jan van de Kam.

When you contribute to Michigan Audubon, you support our efforts to monitor the state's threatened and endangered bird species. Make a donation online: [michiganaudubon.org](http://michiganaudubon.org)

Learn more about birds, the challenges they face, and the conservation status of bird species in Michigan:

- Cornell University's online guide to birds: [allaboutbirds.org](http://allaboutbirds.org)
- 2010 Report on Climate Change: [stateofthebirds.org](http://stateofthebirds.org)
- MDNRE Threatened and Endangered list: [michigan.gov/dnr](http://michigan.gov/dnr)



# *Saving the Common Loon: A Watershed Approach to Conservation*

BY MARGARET PETERSON COMFORT



**T**HE ELK RIVER Chain of Lakes Watershed covers more than 500 square miles, takes in all or part of four counties, and includes 14 connected lakes, plus more than 200 miles of high quality streams. In the watershed, more than 85% of shoreline is now developed and personal watercraft and motorboat activity continues to rise. The watershed hosts popular tourist destinations and a dozen noted golf and ski resorts. Yet in the midst of this human activity, the Common Loon population is

increasing. At present, it's estimated to be 50-75 birds, including 15-20 pairs.

How is it that this species—considered endangered, threatened, and/or of special concern in the northern U.S. and in Canada—is thriving in the watershed? We believe it is local individuals and organizations working together and taking appropriate conservation measures to assure loon pairs can successfully reproduce—at least this is the trend emerging in the Chain of Lakes Watershed.

## **Lake association efforts maintain water quality**

The Chain of Lakes Watershed contains some of the highest-quality water in the world, motivating riparian property owners to support lake association water-quality testing for more than 30 years. The Elk-Skegemog Lake Association, Three Lakes Association, Torch Lake Protection Alliance, Friends of Clam Lake, Intermediate Lake Association, and Six Mile St. Clair Lake Association have also undertaken lake-wide efforts to deal

Once the loon has been banded, biologist Joe Kaplan places him gently in the water. Then the loon calls and swims back to his family. © 2010 Christine Williams.

with shoreline erosion, non-point pollution, and failing septic systems. The result of these actions is clean, clear water with lower levels of pollutants and lots of dissolved oxygen.

Loons need clear water in order to see their prey, and they require a variety of fish species for a healthy diet. In the Chain of Lakes Watershed, clear waters make easily visible the lake trout, suckers, and perch that adult loons love. The adults feed the chicks a large number of small forage fish along with a diverse offering of aquatic insects such as caddis flies and dragonfly nymphs. Mollusks, leeches, and crayfish are also available to the loon population. According to researcher Jack Barr, loons prefer fish with small heads, soft scales, slender bodies and no spines, species common in the Chain of Lakes.

## Conservancy partners protect critical habitat

The Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy has partnered with local townships, villages, counties, and individual landowners to protect nearly 5,500 acres of wetlands. These protected wetlands provide essential habitat for loon nesting and chick-rearing. As development continues, protecting undeveloped shoreline becomes critical for maintaining nesting loons and other species that depend upon adjacent riparian zones for survival. According to researcher Dr. Judith McIntyre, "Locations where chicks go to hunt food for themselves are far back in the recesses of the territory and in shallower water than that in which adults hunt."

These wetland areas also provide important breeding grounds for fish and other aquatic species. Five of the connected lakes in the watershed with nesting loons have extensive wetland habitat along more than six miles of protected shoreline. The Forest Home Township Loon Nursery Preserve, established on Lake Bellaire in 2002, is the first preserve of its kind in Michigan and perhaps in the nation. Hundreds of local donors along with the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, Michigan foundations, the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund,

the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment, the Great Lakes Aquatic Habitat Network and Fund, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service worked together to fund these habitat projects.

## Active volunteers form teams

People are an important part of a successful equation that protects a pair of loons on the busy lakes in the Chain of Lakes Watershed. A few hearty individuals are needed to install artificial nesting islands as soon as the ice leaves the lakes in April. Once the loons are nesting in May, other volunteers put in buoys to alert boaters and fishermen. During June, July, and August, many more volunteers spend weekends talking with boaters about the importance of staying far away from the loons and their chicks during the 10-15 week chick-rearing period. Still other volunteers post signs at boat launches, distribute brochures to marinas, and teach workshops at the Grass River Natural Area to inform the community about the Common Loon.

## Research helps us connect with our loons

In the late 1980s, Dave Evers from Western Michigan University developed the safe-capture technique that is now used successfully by loon researchers around North America. And in 1991-1992, Evers banded 12 loons in the Chain Watershed. Loon observers on the lakes began to look for the marked loons and reported their observations.

One male loon, banded as a juvenile on Clam Lake in 1991, returned to Lake Bellaire in 2000. For several years, he nested unsuccessfully on the Intermediate River. Then, this loon found a nesting platform in the south arm of Lake Bellaire, and has raised two chicks every year since. This year, Joe Kaplan and Chris Williams of Common Coast Research and Conservation recaptured this banded male at age 19 and gave him new colored bands. They also banded one of his chicks, a known, third-generation, Chain of Lakes



Watershed loon, bringing the 2010 banding total to ten adults and five juveniles. With an annual return rate of over 90% for adults, we should expect to see these same birds back on territory next year. Meanwhile, the juveniles remain on the ocean for at least three years before returning as adults to the northern lakes to seek out their own breeding territories.

Researchers also added an archival tag to the 19-year-old male. This small computer will record his migration route, the maximum depth to which he dives, and the date he enters and leaves salt water. Next year when he returns, the tag will be removed and the data downloaded.

## Commitment is the critical factor

Perhaps the most important factor that has led to successful loon populations in the Elk River Chain of Lakes Watershed is the shift that comes when people begin to think of these majestic birds as "their loons." Many groups and individuals now recognize the loon as a keystone species, an indicator of high water quality—and of high quality of life for both people and wildlife. This recognition motivates them to take action, which has made all the difference.

---

Margaret Peterson Comfort is coordinator for the Elk River Chain of Lakes Watershed LOON NETWORK, an informal group of volunteers committed to using a watershed approach to protect threatened Common Loons. The LOON NETWORK is a project of Michigan Audubon and Common Coast Research and Conservation.



# Remembering Mr. Audubon: Robert Whiting, 1909–2010

BY HELENA ROBINOVITZ

**W**HEN PEOPLE PASS from us who have been around as long as Bob Whiting was, it can be difficult to find contemporaries who remember or know them well. Until just months before he died at the age of 100, Bob was still involved in the various activities that had filled his days for decades.

Bob first taught ornithology at Boy Scout Camp. He taught at Owosso High School and Jackson High, and then for almost three decades at Jackson Community College (JCC). As Jack Lapinski (former Michigan Audubon president) said, “Half of Jackson Audubon Society members are former students of Bob!” Nancy Lapinski, who took biology at JCC, called Bob “one of the best teachers I ever had.”

Bob joined Michigan Audubon and Jackson Audubon Society (JAS) in the 1920s while still in high school. He helped solicit funding for a 53-acre plot of land in Spring Arbor Township, which was purchased in 1926 and became the Michigan Audubon Kate Palmer Sanctuary.

In 1941 JAS disbanded because of the war, so the Palmer Sanctuary was given to Jackson Public Schools, re-named Bird Haven, and used for environmental education—until the early 1980s, when the school district began to sell off some land. Kate Palmer Sanctuary was returned to Michigan Audubon in 1982 and some believe it was due in large part to Bob’s determined efforts behind the scenes. During the 27 years that Bob taught various science classes at JCC, including ornithology, he used the sanctuary for field science labs and spent many hours there photographing bird nests from his blind.

Bob had a gift for working quietly and effectively from the sidelines over the years, encouraging his colleagues, convincing benefactors to donate land or money, or generating goodwill in the community. After many years of encouragement by Harold Wing and Bob Whiting, Cap Haehnle deeded the property for the Phyllis Haehnle Sanctuary to Michigan Audubon in 1955. Throughout his life, Bob remained actively involved in Haehnle, taking photographs of the resident and migrant birds, giving talks on cranes, coming to work-bees, and serving on the Haehnle Sanctuary Committee.

While Bob played a pivotal role in the establishment of these Audubon sanctuaries, he was a very active member in the Jackson Audubon Society, serving on the board and as president. When he returned from World War II, Jackson Audubon had disbanded. Myrna Berlett, retired faculty member of the Biology Department at JCC, attributed to Bob “the resurrection of the Jackson Audubon Society from the ashes.”



Bob gives a presentation at Michigan Audubon’s Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary in 2001. The event was a dedication of additional lands purchased jointly by Michigan Audubon and Ducks Unlimited. © Hugh Zernickow.

In the late 1970s the JCC Board approved the idea of using some donated land for an environmental education center, but it required financial backing. Bob introduced Betty Dahlem Desbien to Myrna Berlett, and the Dahlem Environmental Center—of which Bob was an active member—became a reality. Diane Valen, former Dahlem program coordinator and currently the naturalist services director of the Geauga Park District in Ohio, said, “He never hesitated to serve as a bird walk leader at Point Pelee, where I remember him patiently sharing the joy of Red-winged Blackbirds with beginners.”

Bob Whiting served in many roles for Michigan Audubon, including president, field representative, and campout host. However, his greatest contribution may have been establishing the Endowment Fund and the many years he spent growing it. Bob expanded the endowment by \$500,000, visiting all 40 chapters, giving programs with his own beautiful slides, and lugging and selling 50-pound bags of birdseed, books, birdhouses, and other crafts and clothing, all handmade by chapter members. Even after Bob retired from Michigan Audubon, he continued to sell these collected items at the Bluebird Festival, the Christmas Bazaar at Dahlem, the CraneFest at Baker Sanctuary, and the Haehnle 50<sup>th</sup>

anniversary celebration—even at Vista Grand Villa, where he sold them to his fellow residents. Bob added an estimated \$55,000 to the Endowment Fund with these sales.

Michigan Audubon is what it is today thanks in large part to Bob's efforts. As Diane Valen put it, "Birds are loyal to their home territory but many also travel great distances. Among Michigan birders, Bob was Mr. Audubon! He worked tirelessly to educate the public, and promote and support the Audubon cause, while traveling thousands of miles." Perhaps Bob lived so long because he felt he just had too much to accomplish to leave this world any earlier, or maybe it was just his passion for life. Either way he provides inspiration for us all.

---

As members of Jackson Audubon, Michigan Audubon, and the Whitefish Point Bird Observatory, Helena Robinovitz and her husband, Stew, are long-time supporters of bird conservation in Michigan. Her memorial article on Bob Whiting—from which this is excerpted—originally appeared in the Fall 2010 installment of the *Haehnle Sanctuary News*. Helena may be contacted at [helena@robinovitz.com](mailto:helena@robinovitz.com).



Bob celebrating his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday with good friends. © Hugh Zernickow.

## Inquiring Birders



Dear Michigan Audubon,  
I am planning to make my year-end contribution to Michigan Audubon

soon—something I've done for many years. This year I would like a portion of my donation to go towards efforts to restore the Lodge at the Bernard W. Baker Sanctuary in Bellevue. I have many fond memories of gathering with Audubon friends at the Lodge, including a few overnight stays. We would roll out our sleeping bags on the floor and then wake early to watch the cranes depart from Big Marsh Lake and the surrounding wetlands.

How do I go about ensuring that my donation dollars are designated for restoration of Baker Lodge?

Thanks for all that you do for Michigan's birds!

**Dorothy M.**  
*Battle Creek, Michigan*



Dear Dorothy,  
Thank you for sharing your fond memories of the Bernard W. Baker Sanctuary and Baker Lodge.

We are slowly beginning to evaluate the building and decide how it is best suited for helping Michigan Audubon achieve its mission of connecting birds and people for the benefit of both. As you may know, the Lodge has been used in many ways over the years: as a meeting place for Audubon groups, as a retreat facility for Boy Scouts, and a staging area for projects along the Doty Native Wildflower Trail. In the future, Michigan Audubon envisions using the Lodge for a wide variety of activities, such as seasonal research and intern housing, or as a rustic retreat facility for business groups from the surrounding area.

Your donation dollars towards improvements to Baker Lodge will be greatly appreciated. When you complete your remittance form, simply add a note "For use at Baker Lodge," so we know that is a project you wish to support. As always, your donation is tax-deductible and we will provide you with a letter to file with your annual return.

If you ever have any questions about making a donation—or if you wish to learn more about how you can support projects such as the restoration of Baker Lodge—please contact us any time at 517-886-9144.

Thanks for writing, and happy holidays.

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

Send questions to [Birds@MichiganAudubon.org](mailto:Birds@MichiganAudubon.org).

# Websitings

## Michigan's Most Vulnerable: Threatened and Endangered Species

BY MICHELLE BARBER



**M**ichigan is rich in fascinating wildlife. From Robins to Hummingbirds, Orioles to Bald Eagles, the state has an abundance of beautiful birds. Unfortunately, Michigan's diversity does not mean that the state has avoided having species that become endangered (i.e., in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant part of its habitat) or threatened (i.e., likely to become endangered). Michigan currently has nine endangered and 14 threatened species of birds (1). In addition, there are 21 species of birds in Michigan that are on the special concerns list, or birds that receive no special protection under any legislation but are experiencing rapidly declining populations throughout the state.

The endangered species list includes such birds as the Barn Owl, Kirtland's Warbler, and Henslow's Sparrow—birds that were once abundant in Michigan. The Peregrine Falcon also makes this list as a bird that was not initially native to Michigan, but was introduced to the state in 1987. At the beginning, Michigan's goal was to be home to 10 nesting pairs by 2000. Surveys found that in 2005, Michigan housed 17 territorial pairs and 33 young—a significant increase from the days when the Peregrine Falcon did not exist in Michigan (2). Though these falcons were removed from the federal list of endangered species, they are still protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and they remain on Michigan's endangered species list.

Michigan currently has fewer endangered birds than birds that are not yet endangered but will soon make their way onto that list if action is not taken to protect them. Among these birds is the Common Loon. This bird requires an undisturbed habitat and is very sensitive to human presence—a lifestyle that has contributed to its diminishing numbers. The majority of Common Loons in Michigan breed only in the Upper Peninsula and the very northern parts of the Lower Peninsula. The best way we can help these birds is to minimize disturbance of their breeding, feeding, and chick-rearing behaviors. Because loons are known to abandon their nests if approached by a human or disturbed by wake from watercraft, it's best to leave a wide berth for loon nests so that they may raise their young and one day be removed from the listing.

Bird lovers don't like to think about birds that have difficulty surviving in our environment. But it is important to realize that not all endangered species stories end badly.

In 1967, the Bald Eagle, our nation's emblem, was added to both the state and federal endangered species lists after a rapid and

sudden population decline in the 1950s and 1960s (3). According to Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment officials, there were fewer than 100 existing nests in Michigan in 1969. After being put on the endangered species list, however, the population slowly began to rise. In 2006, there were almost 500 occupied nests in the state, and the number continues to increase rapidly (4). Even more impressive is that because of conservation efforts made by the state and its citizens, Michigan ranks among the nation's largest Bald Eagle populations (with 482 breeding pairs). You can see these majestic birds for yourself if you keep your eyes open and search for known nests around you. If you find yourself in northeast Michigan, make your way to Oscoda, a quaint town on Lake Huron. Located just north is the much smaller Lake Van Etten, where an active Bald Eagle nest is located (5). Watching the great bird soar above the lake in search of prey is worth the drive.

You can help protect endangered species of birds from your own backyard. Because of the massive quantities of pavement and lawns, natural habitats are quickly being destroyed, resulting in more and more species needing government protection. You can help protect the endangered and threatened species and help other species avoid those lists by planting a native plant garden in your yard, creating natural food and shelter for these birds. As an added bonus, you just might attract some fantastic avian creatures to your property.

You can also help protect natural habitats by purchasing a specialty wildlife habitat license plate. Each plate features a depiction of a loon and her chick resting in quiet waters and can be purchased for \$35 (6), \$10 of which is used to support habitat restoration projects through the Nongame Fund.

## Visit these sites:

- (1) [www.michigan.gov/dnr](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr)
- (2) [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)
- (3) [www.baldeagleinfo.com](http://www.baldeagleinfo.com)
- (4) [www.record-eagle.com](http://www.record-eagle.com)
- (5) [www.oscoda.com](http://www.oscoda.com)
- (6) [www.michigan.gov/sos](http://www.michigan.gov/sos)



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Michelle Barber is a professional writing senior at Michigan State University and is currently working as a communications intern for Michigan Audubon. She can be contacted at [barberm7@msu.edu](mailto:barberm7@msu.edu).



# Book Corner

## *The Curse of the Labrador Duck*

BY GLEN CHILTON  
(SIMON & SCHUSTER, 2009, 305 PP.)

REVIEWED BY ANNE DORSHIMER

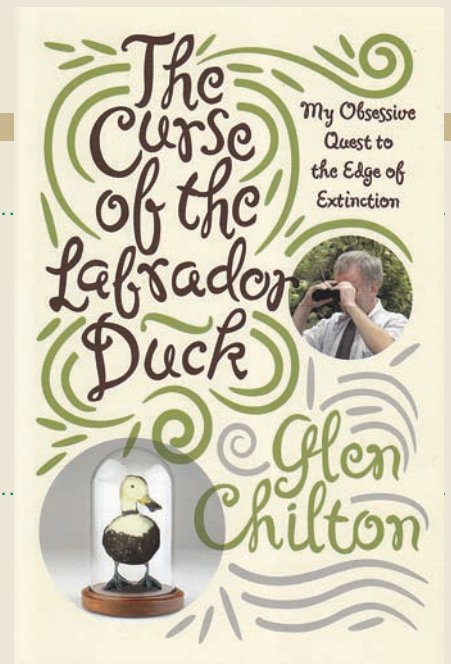
**T**he *Curse of the Labrador Duck* is the comical account of Dr. Glen Chilton, a world renowned ornithologist and behavioral ecologist, and his “obsessive quest to the edge of extinction.” The object of his obsession is the Labrador Duck, and the quest he sets out on is daunting: to locate and document every Labrador Duck on the planet. What makes this task even more interesting is the fact that the Labrador Duck has been extinct for about one hundred and fifty years.

And so his four-year, nine-month, and eighteen-day journey begins, with you the reader along for the ride every step of the way. Chilton’s quest takes him many places, from wintry Newfoundland, Canada, to Cambridge University in England, to Paris, France, and more. He encounters rich collectors, blackmail, black flies, infamous museums, unheard-of museums, people happy to help, and people happy to tell him to “bugger off.” He discovers beat-up specimens that barely resemble what a live duck would have looked like, and beautiful ones that would put live ones to shame. And along the way, he also fills in the reader on the history behind certain towns, people, and museums, as well as any witticisms and advice he may have picked up during his travels.

In the end, he finds a total of fifty-five specimens. As Chilton writes, “The end of the quest left me with a sense of elation at having completed the task that no one had ever attempted before, and that no one would ever bother to repeat.” And so he pokes fun at himself and his task that would seem irrelevant to many people—but as a reader, I never once found his quest irrelevant. It is a fascinating, fact-filled, and comical account that is full of surprises. In fact, the epilogue of the story has the biggest surprise of all: Chilton dares all of his readers to locate another Labrador Duck that he himself has not discovered yet. The prize Chilton is willing to pay if you can find one? A whopping ten thousand dollars. Now that’s obsession.

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Anne Dorshimer is a nature lover and currently a junior at Michigan State University, majoring in Chinese language and international relations. She contributed the Websitings column in the January-February 2010 issue of the *Jack Pine Warbler*. She may be contacted at [dorshim1@msu.edu](mailto:dorshim1@msu.edu).



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# Mute Swan Management to Benefit Trumpeter Swans

BY TOM FUNKE

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A Trumpeter Swan lands on a Michigan lake, as authorities decide how to better protect the endangered species. © 2010 Josh Haas.

**A**LTHOUGH GRACEFUL, beautiful, and admired by many lake-goers and residents, the non-native Mute Swan is starting to wear out its welcome. According to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment (MDNRE), these swans have almost tripled in population, from about 5,000 to 15,000 over the past ten years. Compare that to a statewide population of about 2,000 Trumpeter Swans—a Michigan native that is listed by the MDNRE as an endangered species.

Recently, Michigan Audubon was asked to attend a meeting called by the MDNRE regarding the statewide management of Mute Swans. In attendance were wildlife biologists from various government agencies such as U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Department of Agriculture. Invited were representatives from other stakeholder groups such as lake property owners, animal welfare groups, Native American tribes, and conservation organizations including representatives from Michigan Lakes and Streams Association, Michigan United Conservation Clubs, Ducks Unlimited, Michigan Duck Hunters Association, and the Michigan Humane Society.

Since my first years as a biologist in the early 1990s, I've been told that Mute Swans chase off other native birds—including Trumpeter Swans—from their breeding grounds. Although this is true, Trumpeter Swans avoid most lakes with human activities and

seek quiet refuge to raise their young. Mute Swans will tolerate human activity on these lakes, but are quickly moving on to smaller lakes and wetlands that attract Trumpeters. The behavior change among Mute Swans is predicted to cause a problem with the population recovery goals for Trumpeter Swans if this trend continues.

Mutes still chase off other wildlife, including Canada Geese, Mallards, and other waterfowl. But it was new to me that they decimate the native underwater food source for these birds and other wildlife. Less food means less wildlife on these lakes.

But how do you get a lake owner to care about plants they rarely see, especially when you live on a lake where certain plants with similar names are being harvested/controlled because they are invasive? People love to see the graceful Mute Swan swimming on a lake, but is it necessary to have 20 or even 100 of these birds on each lake? Most would be happy to see any swan, such as a Trumpeter, as long as it's big and white.

"Both populations continue to increase, and we do not yet know what balance the two species of swan will strike when available habitat is filled," says Christopher Hoving, endangered species coordinator with the MDNRE. Northern lakes property owners who were in attendance said that Mute Swans have displaced the Common Loon on their lakes. They and their neighbors would rather have loons than Mute Swans.





Many boaters and swimmers recall being chased by Mute Swans while spending time at small lakes throughout Michigan. The birds are considered a nuisance and will displace native species. © 2010 Josh Haas.

The stakeholders agreed that a management program is in order for Mute Swans. States such as Minnesota have a zero tolerance towards Mute Swans, and you'll be hard pressed to find one, because they are actively removed from the state. In Michigan, Mute Swans hold a high social value with many lake residents, and as a result, you'll always see some of these non-natives in Michigan. You just may not see hundreds of them at a time.

Michigan Audubon will continue to work with the MDNRE and other stakeholder groups to address this issue. A tool for measuring the success of managing Mute Swans will be an increase in population of our native Trumpeter Swans.

Tom Funke is the director of conservation for Michigan Audubon and may be reached at [tfunke@michiganaudubon.org](mailto:tfunke@michiganaudubon.org).

## Trumpeter Swan Natural History

*Cygnus buccinator*

North America's largest waterfowl used to be one of the rarest until re-introduction efforts brought their numbers up to levels where biologists are not worried about their extinction. Their stronghold is in Alaska; however, they are also found in scattered locations mostly between the Great Lakes and Pacific Northwest.

Trumpeters are best discerned from Mute Swans and Tundra Swans by their solid black bill. Trumpeters prefer quiet wetlands to place their raised nest made of wetland vegetation. Their diet consists of submerged aquatic vegetation.

## Mute Swan Natural History

*Cygnus olor*

This native of Eurasia was introduced as an ornament on the ponds and parks of estates. Unfortunately, these birds escaped and compete with native waterfowl for habitat and food. They are voracious eaters, consuming great quantities of aquatic vegetation. Although they are more likely to be found on lakes with human activity, they are moving into preferred Trumpeter Swan habitat as their population swells.

Similar in appearance to the Trumpeter Swan, the Mute Swan is slightly smaller and has the characteristic orange bill and knob. The knob on the male's bill swells to a much larger size during breeding season.

# Special Thanks

The 16<sup>th</sup> annual CraneFest is now history. The huge success of this event is due in part to the many who work together. First and foremost, Michigan Audubon would like to thank our partners in the event, the Kiwanis Club of Battle Creek: without the use of its Youth Area property, visitors would not have the opportunity to see the cranes and other wildlife in Big Marsh Lake. The following Kiwanis members deserve special recognition for the many hours they dedicated to the event: Sam Conklin, Dick Gillespie, and Don Stillwell. So much of their work is overlooked by the public but the event couldn't function without it.

Michigan Audubon would also like to thank Michael and Nancy Boyce for creating CraneFest, and for being persistent over the years in keeping it running. As you may know, Mike is retiring as the resident manager of Baker Sanctuary at the end of the year, but he promises that he isn't retiring from volunteering at future CraneFests. We're going to hold him to that promise.

Michigan Audubon would also like to thank the following list of businesses and individuals that donated funds and/or assistance to the 2010 CraneFest:

Stovall Products	Kingman Museum
Nottawa Wild Bird Supply	Binder Park Zoo
Vanguard USA/Camera Shop, Lansing	Wild Ones, Calhoun County
The Songbird Company LLC	All Species Kinship
Carl Freeman	Kalamazoo Astronomical Society
Earth Images	Susan Clark
Josh Haas	Richard Yarsevich
Dr. Leah Knapp	Terry Hewlett
Dr. Richard Fleming	Ron Eckles
D. J. O'Neal	Gail & Harold Hladky
Jay Secord	Samantha Svacha
Kara Haas	Lori Bailey
Dr. Patrick Fields	Lolita Downs
Bernie Holcomb & family	Elizabeth Abood-Carroll
Audrey Haddock and her art students	Vee Bjornson
Earthbound Environmental Awareness Organization	Kathy Kulchinski
Kellogg Bird Sanctuary	Nick Pierce
Battle Creek Brigham Audubon	Sandy Capel
Audubon Society of Kalamazoo	Pat Ely
Michigan Loon Preservation Association	Janet Miller
	Jim Louis
	Janel & John Litchford
	Carolyn Terrell
	Joanna Learner

... and the many artists who participated in the art show.



# Feathered Lens

## Photographing Michigan's Endangered Birds

BY ROGER ERIKSSON

**M**ichigan's Endangered Species list includes both the Kirtland's Warbler and the Great Lakes Piping Plover. In addition, both species are listed as endangered at the federal level. Birders and wildlife photographers alike seek out these species, and sightings of warblers and plovers are considered by many to be big-time additions to a life list. However, due to their vulnerability and critically low numbers, bird enthusiasts need to be aware of and abide by the rules designated under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act.

### Kirtland's Warbler

The Kirtland's Warbler is one of the rarest warblers in North America. There are around 4,000 individuals in the entire world and almost all of them nest in Michigan. Kirtland's Warblers are prolific singers and during breeding season prefer to sit near the tops of dead snags and jack pine trees. Often they can be photographed from the road without ever entering their sensitive breeding and nesting habitat. Pay special attention when pursuing Kirtland's Warblers on state or federal land, as the property may be posted to exclude all forms of entry—a measure to minimize disturbance of these rare birds. Photographing from a vehicle can be ideal, as cars make great photography blinds.

During migration, it's possible to find and photograph Kirtland's Warbler outside of their breeding and nesting habitat. They have been recorded several times as they migrate through Tawas Point State Park. Tawas Point is well known for its diversity of birds during migration season; the second and third weeks of May

are the best opportunity for photographing Kirtland's Warbler at the site. The keen observer may also be able to locate female warblers.

Remember that playing recorded warbler songs or using any other attraction method is not allowed, regardless of where you find the species.

Each year, from May 15 through July 4, the USFWS and Michigan Audubon conduct guided tours to view Kirtland's Warblers near Grayling, MI. The tours are offered daily at 7:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. and are free of charge. The U.S. Forest Service also conducts tours from May 15—July 2 (except Memorial Day), with tours departing at 7:00 a.m. from the U.S. Forest Service District Ranger Office in Mio. The charge for this tour is \$10 per person.

For more information on seasonal Kirtland's Warbler tours contact:

Chris Mensing, wildlife biologist  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,  
517-351-2555

Kim Piccolo, wildlife biologist  
U.S. Forest Service, Mio Ranger  
District, 989-826-3252

**LEFT:** Male Kirtland's Warblers are prolific singers and most often sit on top of a dead snag or jack pine tree. This male was photographed from a vehicle stopped along a nesting area in Iosco County, MI.  
© 2010 Roger Eriksson.

### Great Lakes Piping Plover

The Great Lakes population of the Piping Plovers went from a low of 12 pairs in 1990 to a high of 61 pairs this past season, according to the USFWS. Nest disturbance, predation, and habitat loss all contribute to the plovers' slow recovery in the region. Piping Plovers' nesting success is made even more challenging by the fact that their presence on Great Lakes beaches coincides with beach tourism season. This species is particularly sensitive to the presence of humans, dogs, and any recreational activities; too much disturbance will cause the adult birds to abandon their nests. The Gulf oil spill could bring the slow recovery of the Great Lakes Piping Plover to a halt as the birds seek wintering grounds in 2010 and 2011.

Photographers are encouraged to limit their pursuit of Great Lakes Piping Plovers to migration periods. The best times to look for birds are the first part of May and mid- to late-August, in non-posted areas. One of the best techniques for photographing skittish plovers is to find a location where they are likely to feed. Find a comfortable spot to set up your gear, and then sit and wait for the birds to come to you. It's critical for photographers to remember that harassing or stressing the endangered plovers is a federal crime; even the perfect shot is not worth negatively impacting the birds. As with the Kirtland's Warbler, playing Piping Plover calls is prohibited throughout the species' range. The patience required to obtain good images allows you to witness the habits and action of your subject. Many times the experience is most important and the photo becomes a bonus.





## 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

One way for photographers to assist researchers is to report Great Lakes Piping Plovers bearing leg bands. Researchers from the University of Minnesota have banded Great Lakes Piping Plovers since 1993. Each chick receives a unique numbered aluminum metal band and a combination of color bands to signify the nest from which it hatched. Contact the USFWS to report banded birds and their locations.

Roger Eriksson is an avid bird photographer and may be contacted at [r.eriksson@att.net](mailto:r.eriksson@att.net).

For more information about Great Lakes Piping Plover recovery efforts, contact:

Jack Dingledine, Region 3 Piping Plover coordinator U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 517-351-6320

**TOP:** "X,b:-,YO" is a male Piping Plover that was first reported nesting on Lake Michigan at Petoskey State Park in 2005. In 2006, he nested in the same vicinity, but on private land. In 2007, the bird was photographed on Lake Huron in Iosco County, Michigan. © 2007 Roger Eriksson.

## 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.

Malinda Bell  
Susan Bond  
Diane Cloutier  
Nancy DeJoy  
Christopher Grove  
Alan & Becky Henney  
Mark Hill  
Thomas Holt

Wes Knollenberg  
Linda Miles  
Eric Myers  
Debora Novak  
Tom & Diane Piskorowski  
Marilyn Roble  
Dave & Linda Smith

Deborah Stuart  
Chad Swanson  
Brianna Taylor  
Karen Tetzlaff  
Stephan Wailes  
Dayna Walton  
Amy Widenhofer

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.



© Roger Eriksson

# Announcements

## Oops!

We goofed... The last issue of *JPW* contained a statement in the Book Corner that should be clarified.

The sentence "I could better understand the forces that motivated hunting after reading that the price for a Whooping Crane skin was \$8.00 in 1890 ..." referred to market hunting. The word "market" was inadvertently omitted from the manuscript. Although market and sport hunting contributed to the decline of Whooping Cranes prior to the 1916 Migratory Bird Treaty, the specific text referred to market hunting, i.e., hunting for profit. We apologize to Ron Hoffman for the error.

## Program Schedule

We are winding up a fairly successful year of educational programs at Michigan Audubon's sanctuaries. In 2011 we will be adding one more location where programs will be held: Hawk Valley Farm in Lansing. Watch the calendar of events at [www.michiganaudubon.org](http://www.michiganaudubon.org) and the January/February issue of the *Jack Pine Warbler* for a listing of the 2011 programs.

In the meantime, here are the remaining programs scheduled for the last months of 2010.

### November

- |    |            |  |
|----|------------|--|
| 6  | 9:00 a.m.  | Gull Identification with Dave Dister, Lake Bluff |
| 20 | 10:00 a.m. | Basics of Bird Feeding, Lake Bluff               |

### December

- |    |            |  |
|----|------------|--|
| 4  | 10:00 a.m. | Basics of Bird Feeding, Convis Township Hall (located near the Bernard W. Baker Sanctuary in Bellevue) |
| 11 | 10:00 a.m. | Basics of Bird Feeding, Otis Farm Bird Sanctuary (located near Hastings)                               |

For detailed information on these and other programs throughout 2010, visit [www.michiganaudubon.org](http://www.michiganaudubon.org).

## Events

### 2011 Annual Conference

We had such a great time in Iosco County for our conference this year that we've made the decision to have the conference be a part of the Tawas Point Birding Festival again in 2011. Not only did the event help to draw a larger crowd than we've had at a conference in a number of years, but everyone had a great time and the opportunity to see 173 species of birds, including a Purple Gallinule. We hope for the same success next year so please mark your calendar for May 12–15, 2011 for the 6<sup>th</sup> annual Tawas Point Birding Festival and Michigan Audubon Annual Conference. Be sure to check [www.tawasbirdfest.com](http://www.tawasbirdfest.com) often for the latest updates

### Mark Your Calendars

Having just wrapped up another CraneFest, we want to make sure that you don't miss the chance to participate in next year's Michigan Audubon events. Mark your calendars for the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Cerulean Warbler Weekend, which will take place in Barry County on June 3–5, 2011. The 17<sup>th</sup> annual CraneFest will be held on October 8–9 next year. Be sure to check upcoming issues of the *Jack Pine Warbler* as well as [www.ceruleanwarbler.org](http://www.ceruleanwarbler.org) and [www.cranefest.org](http://www.cranefest.org) for the latest information as planning continues for these events.

### Winter Birding at Sault Ste. Marie

After many dedicated years, Chuck and Colleen MacDonald have decided to retire from leading the annual Soo birding field trips that Michigan Audubon offered. We thank them for volunteering to lead these trips twice a year, sometimes even on their wedding anniversary. The trips have raised a significant amount of money for Michigan Audubon, due to the MacDonalds' generosity in leading them at their own expense. Until a replacement for the MacDonalds is found, the Michigan Audubon Soo field trips are temporarily on hold for 2011. We're working to find a new leader and will post information on the website as soon as it's available.

### Lake Bluff's Chickadee Christmas Will Be a Chocoholic's Dream

On Saturday December 4, the Lake Bluff Bird Sanctuary near Manistee will hold its Chickadee Christmas event from 10 a.m.–2 p.m. If you are looking for a great place to have some fun, enjoy the birds (and possibly the snow), indulge in handmade chocolates, and celebrate the start of the holiday season, you need to attend. You'll be able to bid at a silent auction on a variety of items including handmade evergreen wreaths. Works from local wildlife artists will be for sale. Guided nature walks around the sanctuary will be scheduled throughout the four-hour event.

Chickadee Christmas is part of Manistee's annual Victorian Sleighbell Parade and Old Christmas Weekend—a great weekend to spend in Manistee. For a complete schedule of activities, go to the event calendar page of the Michigan Audubon website. For more information on the Victorian Sleighbell Parade and Old Christmas Weekend, go to [www.manisteecountychamber.com](http://www.manisteecountychamber.com).





## Kids' Corner

Numerous "cranes" decorate the woods of the Kiwanis Youth Area during CraneFest.



### CraneFest 2010

Every year for the last five years, Audrey Haddock, a teacher in the Bellevue High School and Junior High, has her art students create cranes that are displayed along the entrance to CraneFest. Students are given a wooden crane cutout as soon as the school year begins in September, and using their creative imaginations, they paint approximately 20 cranes that look like anything from a pirate to a one of the Superheroes. The cranes provide a fun start to a visitor's day at CraneFest and enliven the woods where they're stationed. Several of the cranes are chosen to be auctioned off at the event's silent auction, with the money raised going to support CraneFest.



Some of the imaginative cranes created by art students from Bellevue High School.



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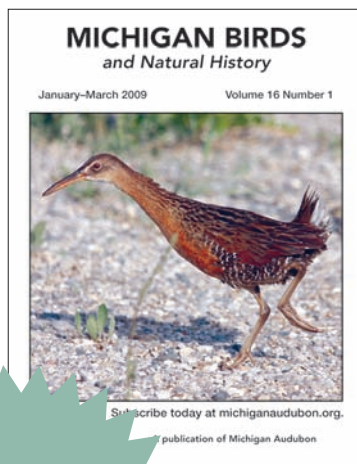
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to subscribe!

## Calendar

### December

4 **Chickadee Christmas**  
Lake Bluff Bird Sanctuary

Dec. 14-Jan. 5

**Christmas Bird Count**  
Check with your local chapter for exact date and details

### January

8 **Muskegon Wastewater System Field Trip**  
Hosted by Capital Area Audubon Society

15-16 **Winter Birding at the Soo**  
Hosted by Whitefish Point Bird Observatory

29 **Allegan State Game Area Winter Trip**  
Hosted by Grand Rapids Audubon Club

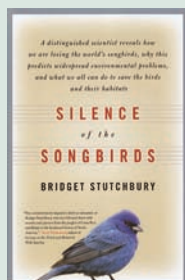
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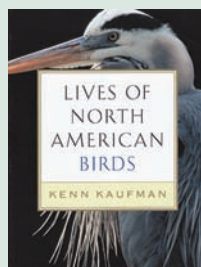
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### Silence of the Songbirds

by Bridget Stutchbury  
**\$24.95 (hardcover)**

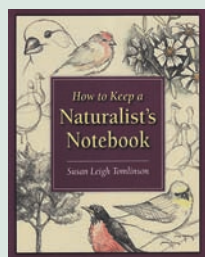
A leading authority on migratory songbirds, Stutchbury explains the dangers of migration in a clear and eloquent manner. The book explains why the decline of migratory birds may predict widespread environmental problems, and provides practical suggestions about what we can do to help songbirds.



### Lives of North American Birds

by Kenn Kaufman  
**\$25.00**

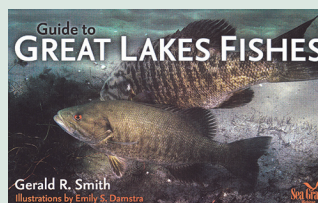
This hefty book provides complete life histories of the 680 species of regularly occurring birds of North America. It also contains shorter accounts for 230 species that visit our continent occasionally. Range maps and beautiful photos of over 600 of the birds are included.



### How to Keep a Naturalist's Notebook

by Susan Leigh Tomlinson  
**\$19.95**

This 148-page book offers detailed instruction for keeping a naturalist's journal, with many great tips on sketching and drawing, and wonderful examples. A great gift for anyone—from beginner to experienced naturalist—who loves the outdoors.

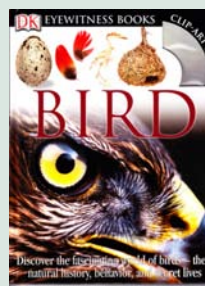


### Guide to Great Lakes Fishes

by Gerald R. Smith with  
illustrations by Emily S.  
Damstra

**\$24.95**

A new field guide published by University of Michigan Press in cooperation with Michigan Sea Grant. Incredible illustrations of 62 of the Great Lakes' most commonly found fish species make this guide a must for anglers, conservationists, naturalists, or anyone who loves the water. Printed on waterproof paper.



### Bird

by David Burnie  
**\$15.99 (hardcover)**

Published by DK, this is one of the Eyewitness Books written in association with the Natural History Museum. Anyone familiar with these books knows they pack an amazing amount of information into a beautifully designed and well-written text. Created for older children, this book would make a great addition to any bird lover's library. It includes a poster and a clip-art CD, making it a great gift for teachers.

### 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.

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