

Jack Pine *Warbler*

THE ALTERNATIVE BIRDING ISSUE: Great Birding, Limited Distance ■ Arcadia Marsh: Northwest Michigan's Birding Hotspot ■ Butterflies and Dragonflies: A Rainbow of Insects ■ Nature Up Close: Thinking Outside the Macro Box



Jack Pine Warbler

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Cover Photo ■ Great Blue Heron

Photographer: Josh Haas

A staple of Michigan wetlands, the Great Blue Heron is the largest and most widespread heron in North America. These birds can be found stalking urban ponds and drainage areas, as well as the pristine rivers and wetlands of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Because of the rebounding population of Great Sandhill Cranes in Michigan, the Great Blue is sometimes confused with these large birds. However, the herons fly with their necks folded in an "S" shape, while cranes fly with their necks fully extended. Josh Haas captured this image on July 15, 2007, near Augusta, Michigan using a Canon 1D Mark II Camera Body with a 300mm f4 Lens. His shutter speed and aperture were 1/320th at f4.

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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



SUMMER IN MICHIGAN.

For thousands of Michigan residents and visitors, those three words inspire excitement for a wide range of outdoor activities. Likewise, the summer season causes employers to lose hundreds of hours of productivity as employees gaze out the window at green leaves and blue skies. I'll let you in on a secret: I am one of those employees.

Of course, the summertime activity we are most excited about here at Michigan Audubon is bird watching. We love that the summer season brings us Great Lakes Piping Plovers, Great Egrets, and Grasshopper Sparrows. Summer also allows us to get outside and discover new places to go birding—places that we can return to each season and find something different to appreciate each time. Arcadia Marsh is one of those places.

All year long we've been bringing you feature articles on great places to bird in Michigan. For this issue, Manistee Audubon member Brian Allen gives readers a yearlong look at birding Arcadia Marsh. From spring warblers to fall waterfowl, Arcadia Marsh will keep birders of all skill levels busy year-round.

We're also excited to bring you the fourth installment of articles about "budget birding." Recent Michigan State University graduate Michelle Barber provides a sampling of great birding locations within 25 miles of six Michigan cities and the Saginaw Bay region. Our goal is to highlight the great birding opportunities that lie within Michigan's borders, while being mindful of tighter personal budgets.

For Michigan Audubon members and Audubon members throughout Michigan, birding is what brings us together.

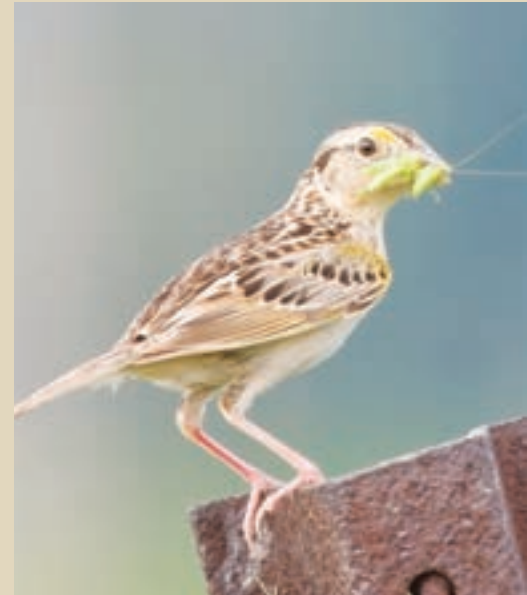
Watching birds is the recreational activity that the majority of us enjoy, but none of it is possible without bird conservation. On May 13, 2011, Michigan Audubon hosted the author-photographer duo of Don and Lillian Stokes during the annual meeting of members at the Tawas Point Birding Festival. Prior to introducing Don and Lillian, I encouraged attendees to balance their birding with some form of stewardship. The Stokes find time to steward their 40-acre property in rural New Hampshire, despite a busy writing and speaking schedule, and I believe that every birdwatcher has some opportunity to give back to birds.

This summer, while birding someplace new or simply enjoying the birds in your own backyard, please consider a way that you can contribute to conservation. Stewardship can be as simple as joining your local Audubon chapter or a nearby land conservancy. Stewardship can be in the form of volunteering for a habitat improvement or clean-up project. Stewardship can be putting up a new bird house or bird feeder, or learning new ways to prevent birds from colliding with your home windows. Please take the opportunity while the summer season is upon us and do something that will benefit birds. I think you will find that it benefits your birding as well.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan E. Lutz".

Jonathan E. Lutz, executive director



Grasshopper Sparrow, *Ammodramus* *savannarum*. One of the grassland sparrows whose presence is indicative of summer in Michigan. 2010 Frode Jacobsen.

Great Birding, Limited Distance

BY MICHELLE BARBER

BIRDING IS A HOBBY like no other. Birders can do so from the comfort of their own homes, never leaving their seat at the kitchen table. They can walk about the backyard or down the street to observe the creatures in their natural environment. But to see new and exciting species, it is often necessary to find a new haunt, somewhere you have never been that is different from your backyard, hosting a new variety of birds.



Lansing Great birding spots can be found within 25 miles of Michigan's major cities, saving time and money. For Lansing residents, the best summer birding can be found at Rose Lake Wildlife Research Area and Dansville State Game Area.

Rose Lake is about 11 miles northeast of the center of Lansing and includes almost six square miles of land. With woodland, fields, and both natural and man-made lakes, Rose Lake is home to birds like Great Crested Flycatcher, Indigo Bunting, Scarlet Tanager, and many, many other breeds. Summertime birding will likely yield birds like Cerulean Warbler and Acadian Flycatcher.

Dansville State Game Area is located 20 miles southeast of Lansing, with nearly 5,600 acres of land. This area will produce the best results in the spring and summer, and during these times, birders can expect to see Acadian Flycatcher and Yellow-throated Vireo. One trail along Hewes Lake is an ideal place to see American Redstarts in the summer. With the variety of woodlands, fields, marshes, and lakes, birders won't be disappointed with Dansville State Game Area.

Detroit Within 25 miles of southwest Detroit, the best summer birding is found at Pointe Mouillee State Game Area. On the 2,604 acres of marshland, you can see Marsh Wrens, Yellow-headed Blackbirds, Great Blue Herons, and Great Egrets. The Least Bittern is a summer resident of Pointe Mouillee State Game Area, but is not frequently seen. Spend enough time here, though, and you might get lucky.

Grand Rapids In Grand Rapids, the Howard Christensen Nature Center offers 6,000 acres of marked scenic trails with upland oak forests, pine plantations, bogs, ponds, and deciduous wetlands. Commonly seen species during the summer months include Wood Thrush, Red-eyed Vireo, a variety of warblers, and Scarlet Tanagers. Only 20 miles north of Grand Rapids, it would be easy to visit this center all summer long with the possibility of seeing something new each time.

Ann Arbor If you live in Ann Arbor, Stinchfield Woods is a great option for staying close to home. Only 15 miles from the city, Stinchfield Woods offers what is possibly the largest tract of contiguous publicly owned forest in Washtenaw County. With 777 acres of mainly coniferous forest and patches of oak-hickory woodland, you will see large numbers of Blue-winged and Pine Warblers, as well as Wild Turkey, Ruffed Grouse, and Cooper's Hawk.

Saginaw Bay If you live in the Saginaw Bay region, make sure to visit the Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge. It offers 9,000 acres of wetlands, grasslands, bottomland-hardwood forest, and cropland. In addition, four rivers (Tittabawassee, Flint, Cass, and Shiawassee) create wetlands, which are an excellent source of food for migratory waterfowl and shorebirds. With 777 acres of mainly coniferous forest and patches of oak-hickory woodland, you will see the large numbers of Blue-winged and Pine Warblers, as well as Wild Turkey, Ruffed Grouse, and Cooper's Hawk. You will also probably see American White Pelicans, Snowy and Cattle Egrets, American Avocets, and Marbled Godwits. While uncommon, there have also been sightings of King Rail, Black-necked Stilt, and Short-eared Owls.

Another top Saginaw Bay area birding site is Crow Island State Game Area. While this area has limited access, it can be viewed from the road for some spectacular results. You might see herons and egrets; Yellow-headed Blackbirds occasionally rest here, too. A rare Little Blue Heron has been noted here, so keep your eyes open so you don't miss anything spectacular.

Traverse City Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore offers the very best summer birding, with over 35 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline and a variety of terrain, including forests, beaches, dune formations, and ancient glacial phenomena, you'll have no problem keeping yourself busy looking for new birds to check off of your list. This site offers the greatest concentration in the state for the endangered Prairie Warbler. Also common in the summer are Eastern Bluebird, Veery, Scarlet Tanager, and Bobolink.



The American Redstart is readily obtainable for birders making short trips from home. © 2010 Skye Haas.

Marquette The city of Marquette offers some beautiful summer birding. With waterfront, dams, bogs, and brush areas, you are sure to see a variety of birds. Some common summer sightings include Red-breasted Merganser, Green Heron, Northern Harrier, and Great Horned Owl. Moose sightings are also common outside the city, so be sure to have your camera ready.

These birding hotspots are only a few of the spectacular areas Michigan has to offer. To find more birding locations in Michigan, be sure to pick up a copy of *A Birder's Guide to Michigan* by Allen Chartier and Jerry Ziarno. The book includes extensive descriptions of the best birding places in the state, sorted by location, and also includes maps. It is a must-have for any birders looking to expand their experience.

Michelle Barber has a B.A. in professional writing from Michigan State University. She spends her summers in Oscoda, Michigan, sipping iced tea and watching the dragonflies frolic around the lake.



American Bitterns are a treat to find in Michigan's wetlands, but to see them requires patience and a sharp eye. © 2010 Skye Haas.

Arcadia Marsh:

Northwest Michigan's Birding Hotspot

BY BRIAN ALLEN

WHEN BIRDERS think of the best spots to go birding in Michigan, the following places get the most attention and coverage and deservedly so: Pointe Mouillee in Monroe County, Whitefish Point in Chippewa county, Tawas Point in Iosco County, and Tiscornia Beach in Berrien County.

Then again, all of us have our favorite local hotspots we go to when we can't pack the bags or fill the gas tank, and Arcadia Marsh is that place for northwest Michigan in the Lower Peninsula. Its location next to Lake Michigan concentrates migrant birds in a southeast wind in spring, and its great diversity makes it possible to build up a good list in a small area.

Arcadia has had its share of rarities to catch any birder's attention, including Bewick's Wren, Black-billed Magpie, Purple Gallinule, Nelson's Sparrow, some eiders, and southern overshooting migrants rare this far north such as White-eyed Vireo and Kentucky Warbler. In low-water years, the marsh is great for shorebirds, and in high-water years, it's one of the easiest places in the state to see American and Least Bittern.



Invasive Phragmites threatens the native cattail habitat in Arcadia Marsh, though efforts are underway to eradicate this invasive species. ©2010 Brian Allen.

One of the most appealing aspects of birding here is the ease of access. State highway M-22 crosses Arcadia Lake on a causeway with the marsh visible for nearly a mile on the east side and the open lake on the west. It is easy to just pull off on the side of the road

and set up your scope to scan either the marsh or the lake, with the elevated causeway helping viewers to see out over the marsh. One drawback to birding the causeway is the high-speed traffic on M-22. Be very careful here, keeping well away from the roadway. While leading field trips, I've noticed that some people are so excited about seeing the birds that they forget the traffic zooming a few feet away. Fortunately, during some of the best birding months in spring and fall, traffic is very light. At sometime in the near future, the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy may complete a trail on the north side of the marsh with observation towers and off-road parking that may make marsh viewing easier. The conservancy has been active in purchasing a majority of the marshland and also has plans for restoration of the natural water flow and elimination of invasive species such

as Phragmites. With the elimination of the Phragmites, a perennial grass, we hope to see an increase in the population of Marsh Wrens, rails, and bitterns that depend on foraging for insects hosted by native cattails.

MY FAVORITE WAY TO GO BIRDING in the marsh is to launch a kayak at the causeway near the bridge and paddle into the eastern recesses of the canals and creek. Carl Freeman and I have found Nelson's Sparrows on two occasions this way and have found that it is easy to drift close to shorebirds, rails, and bitterns for good views and pictures. Kayaking can be very difficult in late summer or other times with low water levels—you may end up in a muck-trudging session!

The marsh is bounded on all sides by county roads, and it's easy to park along the side of the road and check habitats from grassy, grazed pastures to alder-tamarack swamp. Please carefully respect private property, as not all of the marsh is owned by the conservancy. The southern road, Churchill Road going east of M-22, is a good location to watch Sandhill Cranes and hawks with a clear view slightly elevated over the marsh. St. Pierre Road on the west of the marsh borders farm fields that are good for pipits, longspurs, and American Golden-Plovers in the fall. It was here that Barry Barto found a Black-billed Magpie feeding on a deer carcass one lucky spring day. Glovers Lake Road on the north goes through good habitat for Sedge Wrens on the south and Veeries in the tamaracks to the north.

On the south side of the marsh and Arcadia Lake, Chamberlain Road goes west to dead-end at the dunes on the Lake Michigan shore. About a half mile west of M-22, Chamberlain is bordered by dense second-growth forest next to a mature hardwood forest. On early mornings in May, this area can be fantastic for warblers and other neotropical migrants. It is not too unusual to have twenty species of warblers on a day with southeast winds. You can park at the end of the road and walk out to the rock breakwater, or breakwall, which is a very good location in late fall for Harlequin Duck and Purple Sandpiper. There is public access to the breakwall here, but land is private on either side of the straight walk to Lake Michigan and the pier.

I also like the north side of the lake for spring migrant songbirds. Going back to M-22, go north across the causeway and take a left on Lake Street into the village of Arcadia. This street dead-ends at Sunset Park on Lake Michigan. A private roadway for Starkey Point subdivision goes to the south here and borders a wooded dune and wetland sandwiched between Lake Michigan and Arcadia Lake. This little spit of land seems to concentrate migrants and is where Bewick's Wren and other rarities have been found. This land has also been preserved with the help of the local Camp Arcadia of the Lutheran Camp Association and the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy.

The Hooded Warbler is a spring migrant that can be seen during May and June. © 2010 Josh Haas.



NORTH ON M-22, THE HIGHWAY CLIMBS a steep hill before crossing into Benzie County, and here, on the county line, is a roadside stop locals have named Inspiration Point. Although there is no point of land here, the view certainly is inspirational and is worth checking for birds, especially in winter—more so than the other seasons. In mid-winter, it may be hard to park and trudge across the unplowed lot, but the view of the usually open Lake Michigan waters is worth the effort. From this vantage, hundreds and even thousands of Long-tailed Ducks, Common Goldeneyes, and White-winged Scoters are often seen. In spring, this is another good spot on a southeast wind to watch for migrating hawks and is always a great stop for a picnic lunch after a successful day of birding.

Arcadia Dunes Preserve of the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy protects over a thousand acres of hardwood forests along M-22, just north of Inspiration Point. Summering Hooded Warblers as well as Black-throated Blue, Magnolia, and occasional Blackburnian Warblers are the attraction here. An extensive trail system exists and maps are available from the conservancy.

Arcadia Grasslands is another nearby stop. From the Arcadia Marsh, go east about five miles to the curve on the intersection of Keilor Road. Take a hard left turn onto Keilor and go north about one mile until you see the parking area and kiosk on the right. Park here for a view of the restored grasslands or to hike the area in search of Grasshopper Sparrows and Upland Sandpipers in summer or migrating sparrows in fall. The local Benzie and Manistee Audubon clubs, along with the conservancy, host an annual fall sparrow migration field trip here.

Anytime is a good time to be birding at Arcadia, especially with possible marsh access improvements and restoration on the horizon. And with great opportunities to bird the trails at the dunes preserve and the continued work on the grasslands, the Arcadian future looks good.

Brian Allen can be reached at tanager@manistee.com.

Special Thanks

Not even rain could dampen the spirit of participants, volunteers, or supporters of the 2011 Tawas Point Birding Festival. The continued success of this great birding event is due in part to the cooperative efforts of many people, organizations, and businesses. Michigan Audubon would like to take the opportunity to thank all those involved in supporting one of the best birding events in the country.

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Long-tailed Ducks can be seen on nearby Lake Michigan. ©2010 Skye Haas.



Websitings

Butterflies and Dragonflies: A Rainbow of Insects

BY MICHELLE BARBER

As you sit in your backyard with a large glass of ice water, you're probably enjoying the wildlife surrounding you. Whether you live in a city or in the country, on a farm or on a lake, there is likely a plethora of wildlife in your line of vision. Butterflies and dragonflies alike are majestic creatures, and are always a thrill to see in your backyard or elsewhere. Both are often colorful, always beautiful, and fascinatingly diverse. With the Internet constantly making information more accessible, it is wonderfully simple to learn more about these interesting insects.



Butterflies, like this Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, are an excellent quarry for birders during summer months, when birds have gone silent or left the area. © 2010 Josh Haas.

People who live in a more prairie-like setting are likely to see butterflies flitting around the yard. From the well-known Monarch butterfly to the *Phoebis philea*, a butterfly that looks deceptively like an autumn leaf, North American butterflies are abundant and never make for a boring topic. A great place to start your Internet research is the Lepidopterist Society's website (1). With members in over 60 countries, the Lepidopterist Society studies moths and butterflies. Their site offers information on the society, identification aids for when you are viewing butterflies and moths, information on conservation efforts, internet links, and much more.

If you prefer to have a comprehensive database on hand to reference, you should visit Butterflies and Moths of North America (2). This database offers a variety of searching options. Users can find butterflies by scientific or common names. There is also an option to search by state and county to easily identify the types of butterfly that may reside near you.

For people living in a wetter region, by a lake, river, or even a pond, dragonfly and damselfly sightings may be a common occurrence. These insects are aquatic creatures during their larval stage, so they are most abundant near large bodies of water. A great place to start your research is the University of California's Museum of Paleontology website, which has a page devoted to the Odonata, the order of insects to which dragonflies and damselflies belong (3). The Michigan Department of Natural Resources is another great resource to learn about these insects (4), with information on their diets, habitats, and predators.

Dragonflies and butterflies are extraordinary creatures. With appearances ranging from flamboyant, bright colors to camouflage, these very unique insects are fun to watch. As you visit the above websites, you might be surprised to learn ways that both butterflies and dragonflies affect the environment around you.

Michelle Barber has a B.A. in professional writing from Michigan State University. She spends her summers in Oscoda, Michigan, sipping iced tea and watching the dragonflies frolic around the lake.

Visit these sites:

- (1) <http://www.lepsoc.org/index.php>
- (2) <http://www.butterfliesandmoths.org/>
- (3) <http://www.ucmp.berkeley.edu/arthropoda/uniramia/odonatoida.html>
- (4) http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-10370_12145_12204-60844--,00.html



Young Monarch Caterpillar. © James Laurie.

Feathered Lens

Nature Up Close: Thinking Outside the Macro Box

BY JOSH HAAS

In the avian world, birds like Peregrine Falcons are at the top of the list for being masters of flight. Many people, though, fail to think about dragonflies, which are some of the fastest and most aerobatic fliers in the animal kingdom. The following information is the first of a two-part series about macro photography. Below I will discuss new ways to capture dragonflies and butterflies in a macro fashion without using a macro-specific lens.

Adult dragonflies are visual hunters and communicate visually much more than most other insects. Because of their large eyes, they also have much better long-distance vision than most insects. This characteristic accounts for the many times I've tried to get close to a perched dragonfly, simply to watch it fly away before I'm within shooting range. Getting close enough for taking quality macro pictures of dragonflies is a common challenge for nature photographers.

The best way to think about dragonfly photography is to think outside the normal "macro box." My favorite way to capture dragonfly images is with a standard 300mm telephoto lens. I know what you're thinking: "Josh, we're photographing insects, not birds!" However, a 300mm lens gives the photographer two advantages: 1) distance from the subject and 2) a **close-focus range** of around five feet. Most start-up DSLR packages include a basic 300mm lens, which makes capturing dragonfly and butterfly images much easier. A good rule of thumb for nature photography is to utilize morning and evening light, but this may be especially true for these winged creatures, which typically wait for enough warmth to begin their flights. As an added bonus, morning dew makes dragonfly images particularly striking.

As with birds, fast **shutter speeds** are important for taking pictures of butterflies and dragonflies. Remember to think about **depth-of-field** as well. As you get closer to subjects and stay closer to a wide-open **aperture**, the depth-of-field will be very small. This may or may not be desired, but if you want more of the insect in focus, stopping-down to f8-f11 will help (if lighting allows.) When approaching perched dragonflies, move slowly, and don't worry about getting full frame images. Attempt to shoot your subject in a way that showcases the dragonfly with its surrounding environment. This technique typically yields



Halloween Pennants mating. Good stalking skills and attention to detail can yield remarkable results for beginning photographers in search of dragonflies. © 2010 Josh Haas.

better images and also means you don't have to get as close. Placing the dragonfly away from the center of the image will also add a lot compositionally.

My advice is to not waste your time chasing dragonflies that keep fleeing. Instead, let them go and find another subject. In the hot days of summer, they're typically easy to find. Picking up a book on dragonflies and reading about their behaviors can also up your odds (be sure to check the Michigan Audubon bookstore!).

When thinking about butterflies, many of the above techniques apply. If you live near a nature center that features a butterfly garden or butterfly house, use this to your advantage! These professional gardens feature the right plants for healthy, flourishing butterflies and can be a budding nature photographer's dream. Don't

be afraid to explore different angles, always be cognizant of your backgrounds, and follow subtle lighting changes throughout the day. Be respectful of other visitors while shooting in these public settings. I encourage you to share your images with them and help others get excited about nature photography.

GLOSSARY of TERMS

Close-focus Range minimum distance from which a lens can focus on a subject

Shutter Speed length of time the camera's shutter is open

Depth-of-Field zone of what's in focus from in front of and behind the focused subject

Aperture determines how much light hits the film or digital sensor

To read more about Josh, visit www.glancesatnature.com. He specializes in bird and nature photography, trips, and workshops. His work can be seen at numerous art shows throughout Michigan as well as online.

Alternative Birding

BY GREG SWANSON

AS THE SPRING nesting season winds down and birding wanes for another year, we begin to search for something outdoors to occupy our interest and satisfy our curiosity. Insects are delightful to watch with their interesting and unusual behaviors. Butterflies and dragonflies are particularly interesting and enjoyable to observe and are frequently found in the same habitats where we do our birding. Let's take a few moments to look at these insect groups.

Activities of adult butterflies and dragonflies primarily revolve around thermoregulation, feeding, and reproducing. While similar in the ways in which they bask to gain heat, these insects have vastly differing methods of feeding and reproducing, which we will look at in a moment.

Insects are poikilothermic, or "cold-blooded," and most species will bask in sunshine to increase their body temperature. Dragonflies characteristically rest with their wings open to absorb solar heat into their thoracic flight muscles. On extremely hot days, watch for dragonflies that look as if they are standing on their heads. This "obelisk" position reduces the bodily surface area exposed to the sun and prevents overheating. Butterflies can be observed using several basking techniques to warm their thoraxes to the optimal flight temperature range of between 85 and 112 degrees Fahrenheit. Most species will typically hold their wings open to direct heat to their thorax. The diminutive Hairstreaks of the Lycaenid family bask sideways to the sun, wings over their backs, carefully turning to achieve the best angle. Skipper butterflies often bask with their hind wings down and forewings folded up, resembling miniature fighter jets.

Each butterfly and dragonfly species has a certain flight period during which they can be found in the adult stage. For some, such as Elfins butterflies and Boghaunter dragonflies, this time

frame is relatively short and early in the season. For others, such as Sulphur butterflies and Green Darner dragonflies, the flight period is longer and there are multiple broods. Later in the summer, Monarchs, fritillaries, and sulphur butterflies are common. Frequently seen late-summer dragonfly species include skimmers, Widows, and red-bodied meadow-hawks. As you gain more experience, you'll learn this seasonal flow of species in the natural areas you frequent.

Butterflies and dragonflies occupy different ecological niches in relation to how they obtain food. Dragonflies are strictly carnivorous in both the aquatic larval (naiad) stage and the aerial adult stage. Naiads have an extendable, hinged, grabbing "lip" on the front of their face which shoots rapidly out to capture prey and pull it to the insect's mouth. Naiads will opportunistically prey on animals up to the size of small fish and can become cannibalistic when other creatures are in short supply.

With the ability to fly backwards, hover, and maneuver effortlessly, dragonflies are fast, efficient killing machines—some can fly nearly 25 mph. Adult dragonflies will eat virtually anything they can capture, even other dragonflies and damselflies. I once witnessed a clubtail capture a damselfly and take it to a leaf to eat it. It began chewing its feast at the head and, in spaghetti-like fashion, continued to eat down to the tip of the abdomen, allowing the wings to drop away.



This skimmer is an excellent example of the beauty and complexity that dragonflies offer the patient birder or nature photographer. © 2010 Josh Haas.

After leaving the water, juvenile adult-stage dragonflies leave the wetlands and fly upland to open areas to feed and mature sexually. This makes field habitats great locations to observe dragonflies. Many species develop mature adult coloration during this teneral stage. After about a week, the dragonflies return to wetland nurseries to mate and lay eggs in the water.

Adult butterflies must drink their food through a straw-like proboscis and are commonly pictured sipping from flowers, but they also feed upon unusual and often unsavory fare. Swallowtails, sulphurs and blues are often seen sipping from puddles to obtain salts needed by males to aid in sperm production. Likewise, male butterflies will also dine upon sweat. Butterflies will also sip at urine and animal droppings, especially that of predators, to obtain amino acids. While in college on a spring weekend at Wilderness State Park, my fellow students and I hiked over a hill and stirred up a large cloud of Compton Tortoiseshell butterflies. The heavy stench of a winter-killed deer taught us that butterflies will even feed upon carrion!

Male and female butterflies find each other through pheromones and visual cues. Many male butterfly species have scent-producing patches that emit female-attracting pheromones. For instance, scent patches on male Monarchs are located on



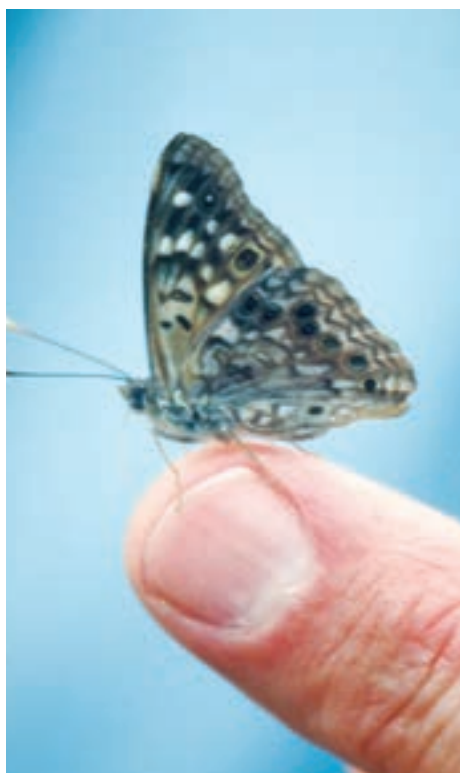
We Welcome New Michigan Audubon Members

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

Robert Anderson
Ron & Penny Bach
Gail M. Baumer
Suzanne Brandt
Marc Dwoskin
Michael Robert Emelander
Elizabeth Gerson
Fredrick Guyor
Vikki & Clifford Jones
David E. Larson
Elise Levasseur
Justin McCarthy
Myles McNally
Chris Mensing
Steven Moore
Michael Motta
Jolene Flynn & Cam Myers
Barbara O'Hair
David Overholt
Linda Patterson
Donna Pennington
Felix Perdue
Mary Ann Poma
Becky Ralls
Paula A. Richardson
Michele & Ken Rooy
Gigi Saunders
Margaret M. Sauve
Kathryn Schmidt
Nathan Stouffer
Doris Sutherland
Gregory Swanson
Allen Vanderplow
Craig White

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.

hind wing veins. Males will flutter around a female, wafting pheromones toward her, attempting to get her in a receptive mood. The pair couples abdomen to abdomen, their heads at opposite ends, and may remain coupled for many minutes while the male passes a packet of sperm to the female. Once mated, the female searches out the proper host plant for her offspring by smelling with her antennae and by tasting the plant with receptors on her feet and legs. By following a female butterfly and observing with close-focusing binoculars, you may be able to witness her ovipositing on a leaf.



Butterflies are often a second choice for birders when they are looking for animals in their natural habitats.
© 2011 Greg Swanson.

Dragonflies have one of the strangest mating systems in nature. Males produce packets of sperm near the tip of their abdomen and then curl the abdomen to transfer this spermatophore to secondary genitalia, called a hamulus,

a visible bump on the underside base of the abdomen. The male then patrols a territory over a suitable breeding site, searching for receptive females and defending against male intruders. The act of mating is achieved when the male grabs the female with claspers located on the tip of his abdomen. Depending upon the species, he clasps her neck, head, or even unromantically pierces her eyes. The female then curls the tip of her abdomen to attach like a lock and key to his hamulus to receive the spermatophore. Watch for dragonfly pairs in this “wheel” or “heart” position near bodies of water. The male's hamulus has the ability to push aside or remove spermatophores from previous mates, thus assuring that his own genes are passed to the next generation.

Insect watching has become increasingly popular over the last decade. With this increase in interest, there have been a plethora of field guides published on butterflies and dragonflies. I've found *Michigan Butterflies and Skippers* by Mogens C. Nielsen and *Common Dragonflies of Wisconsin* by Karl and Dorothy Legler and Dave Westover to be very useful guides. By focusing only on Great Lakes species, confusion with out-of-range species is avoided. Both guides are formatted with pictures, range maps, and text, making them very user-friendly in the field.

I encourage you to take time to observe butterflies and dragonflies this summer. Allow yourself to be captivated by their beauty and behaviors. Challenge yourself to learn ten or more species that you encounter. By broadening the scope of your nature knowledge, you will deepen your understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of our natural world.

Naturalist Gregory B. Swanson teaches at Howard Christensen Nature Center in Kent County. He can be reached at swansongb@juno.com.

Book Review

Amazing Hummingbirds *Unique Images and Characteristics*

BY STAN TEKIELA

(ADVENTURE PUBLICATIONS, 2010. 144 PP.)

REVIEWED BY BRENDA KEITH

\$14.95

Available at the Michigan
Audubon Bookstore



Hummingbirds are truly amazing! They fascinate hardcore birders, non-birders, and all those in between.

Their colors, size, and flying abilities alone are enough to capture our attention. Add to that their huge personalities, and you have an amazing bird. As a hummingbird bander, I have witnessed the toughest high school boy get a huge smile on his face when one of these tiny jewels was held to his ear so he could hear its heartbeat.

This book is an easy read. It is full of beautiful photos illustrating the author's information. The book focuses on the ecology of hummingbirds, which includes feeding strategies, nesting, relationships within the species, reproduction, and anatomy. While all 16 North American hummingbird species are mentioned, the Ruby-throated, which has the largest range of any U.S. hummingbird, is discussed in more detail.

Many fascinating facts and hummer myths are presented throughout the book. Life span, distance and timing of migration, territory size, and speed of flight are only a few of the areas covered. The section on attracting hummingbirds to your yard with native plants and feeders is very good, and I found the discussion of reflective feathers useful. People often tell me they have more than just Ruby-throats at their feeders, which is not common in Michigan. An explanation for this confusion is the reflectivity of hummingbird feathers. In good light, the back feathers reflect green light causing them to shine bright neon green, but in dull light, these feathers appear gray. The same is true for the adult males' bright red gorget, or throat patch: depending on the light, the feathers look brilliant red or black.

The topic of bath time brought back a good memory for me. Hummingbirds love to bathe and will do so during a gentle rain, on wet foliage, and in backyard sprinklers or misters. My father-in-law would aim a gentle spray from his garden hose into the air, just for the joy of watching the hummingbirds flying through. We commissioned a painting of this happy memory.

This book is packed with so much material that it's a must-read for anyone wanting to understand more about hummingbirds. How fast is a hummingbird's heart rate? How do they "drink" nectar? Do they have feet? You will find the answers here. Other books worth noting for the hummingbird enthusiast are Robert Sargent's *Ruby-throated Hummingbird* (Stackpole Books, 1999) and *Hummingbirds of North America*, a Peterson field guide by Sheri L. Williamson (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001).

Brenda Keith is a research biologist at the Kalamazoo Valley Bird Observatory, a program of the Kalamazoo Nature Center. Her focus is on bird-related projects including surveys and banding of passerines, raptors, and hummingbirds. She has served on the Audubon Society of Kalamazoo board of directors and is currently on the Whitefish Point Bird Observatory board. Brenda can be reached at bkeith@naturecenter.org.



Ruby-throated Hummingbird.
© Steve Byland



Young Birders



Michigan is home to some of the top young birders in the United States, including Alison Vilag and Harold Eyster. © Dan Elbert.

Teens Take Tawas

BY WENDY TATAR

You hear it every time you go to a chapter meeting: "How can we get more young people interested in birding?" If you go out birding, you may realize that young people are out there already—lots of them. They don't go about it casually either; they're hitting the hotspots and chasing the rare sightings. They don't want to be inside talking about birds; they want to see them and check them off their list. They want to see their list grow—you remember what that was like, don't you?

Take for instance the recent 2011 Tawas Point Birding Festival. One of the presenters was 17-year-old Harold Eyster. Harold was the 2010 ABA (American Birding Association) Young Birder of the Year, and he presented a program on "Better Birding Through Journaling." His 14-year-old sister was there too. The Eysters had spent the morning out birding Tawas Point State Park before coming inside for the presentation. During the presentation, someone asked Harold how many birds he had drawn. His reply was startling. "I've drawn every bird I've seen—around 820 species," Harold stated quite nonchalantly. I've not seen a quarter of that number. And he's only 17. I won't tell you how old I am, but I will say that I have a daughter that is ten years older than Harold.

Also in the audience that day was Alison Vilag. Michigan Audubon had recently hired Alison to be the 2011 Kirtland's Warbler tour guide for the season. Alison started her new job a few weeks before she graduated high school. Yes, I said high school. She's been birding since she was seven. At the age of 13, she reported sighting a Black Vulture in her yard in Berrien Springs. It was verified by the Michigan Bird Records Committee. At 13.

Earlier, when Michigan Audubon had posted the tour guide position, the number of applications we received was amazing.

There were five times as many applicants as we normally get. All but three of them were either in or just graduating college. One of those exceptions was Alison, and the other two were older. But Alison was the best qualified for the position. She's now the ripe old age of 18.

During the festival, two members of the Grand Rapids Junior Audubon Club (GRJAC) attended and were on the field trip to the Kirtland's Warbler habitat management area. Travis Mangione is 14 and his friend Will Graham is 11. I'm not sure if Travis found the Common Nighthawk sitting on a tree branch or if it was someone else, but I do know that Travis was given credit for correctly identifying the bird. Paul Thompson, Forest Service biologist and leader of the field trip, even quizzed Travis on why he thought it was a Common Nighthawk and not a whip-poor-will. Travis correctly stated that the bird had white markings on its wing and that the whip-poor-will doesn't have those. Smart kid.

I'm the co-leader of the GRJAC and I remember the first trip that Travis and Will came on. I thought, "these kids know birds better than I do and can find them much faster too—I'm sunk." But we've had a great time. You can't beat their enthusiasm, and it rubs off on you too. Sort of makes you feel young again.

So the next time you're thinking about going to a hotspot, why not take a kid with you? Grab your grandchildren, a niece or nephew, or a neighbor, and see how excited they get looking through a scope at a Bald Eagle. You may even feel like a kid again yourself.

Wendy Tatar (wendy@michiganaudubon.org) is the program coordinator for Michigan Audubon.

Calendar

July

Jul. 1–Aug. 25

Owl Banding

Whitefish Point Observatory,
Paradise

14 & 21

Bird Banding Demonstration

Chippewa Nature Center,
Midland

16

Hawk Valley Farm

CANCELLED
Lansing

August

20

Birds, Blooms, and Butterflies

Dahlem Conservancy,
Jackson

September

6–10

Migration Celebration Week

Lake Bluff Sanctuary,
Manistee

17

Fall Migration Birding Field Trip

Whitefish Point Bird
Observatory, Paradise

17 & 18

Hawk Fest

Lake Erie Metropark,
Brownstown

Announcements

Black-throated Blue Warbler. © 2010 Josh Haas



Events

Open House Cancelled

The Open House that was scheduled to occur at the Hawk Valley Farm in Lansing on July 16 has been cancelled. The Open House will be rescheduled on a future date. Watch upcoming issues of the *Jack Pine Warbler* for an announcement.

WPBO Saw-whet Owl Study Continues

This summer at the Whitefish Point Bird Observatory (WPBO), you have the opportunity to see chocolate teddy bears. Not really, but that is the nickname given to the Saw-whet Owls that are netted and banded during the summer as part of a juvenile Saw-whet Owl study. From July 1 until August 25, WPBO will be conducting the study, which will provide the opportunity for visitors to see these little owls up close and personal. During this time WPBO will conduct owl programs and other fun educational events. Why not plan a visit to WPBO in the eastern Upper Peninsula this summer to see the chocolate teddy bears?

News

Doty Wildflower Trail Temporarily Closed

The boardwalk that is part of the Doty Wildflower Trail, located on the east side of Baker Sanctuary, has been temporarily closed. Plans to repair the boardwalk are currently underway. The re-opening of the trail will be announced in an upcoming issue of this magazine.

Join the Michigan Audubon Board of Directors

If you would like to take an active role in shaping the future of Michigan Audubon, join us as a board member. The organization is looking for volunteer board members that are engaged and excited about the future of Michigan's oldest conservation organization and believe in the mission of connecting birds and people for the benefit of both. Ideal candidates bring strengths in one or more of the following areas:

- Fundraising
- Community outreach
- Building the membership base
- Program planning
- Board policy-making
- Advocacy

Individuals who have questions about serving or are interested in becoming a member of the board should contact the Lansing office at 517-886-9144.

Record Number of Species Seen at Tawas Point Birding Festival

You can't say that rain keeps the birds away, or the birders for that matter. A record number of birders turned up at the Tawas Point Birding Festival and even the weather couldn't dampen their spirits. A record-shattering total of 174 species of birds were seen over the four-day event. Attendees traveled from as far away as the Pacific coast of Washington state and the Atlantic coast area of Maryland, with a few other states and even Canada thrown in. Read our thank you to participants and the Tawas and Oscoda communities elsewhere in this magazine or online at www.tawasbirdfest.com.



Michigan Audubon Board members' retreat. © 2011 Jonathan E. Lutz

This Skimmer is an excellent example of the beauty and complexity that dragonflies offer the patient nature photographer. © 2010 Skye Haas.



News

Grand Rapids Audubon Club Partners with Art Museum

The Grand Rapids Audubon Club (GRAC) is helping to sponsor an exhibit of John James Audubon original artwork at the Grand Rapids Art Museum (GRAM). *Birds of America: Audubon Prints from Shelburne Museum*, which will be on display until August 14, showcases 32 original prints of the famous artist and ornithologist John James. A complementary exhibition, *Understanding Audubon: "Birds of America" in Context*, is ongoing and features a bound edition of *Birds of America* displayed next to comparative ornithological volumes. GRAM has many programs scheduled to highlight the exhibits, including a summer camp for children. GRAC is partnering with the museum on several special activities, including a lecture series.

For any chapter that may be interested in planning an outing to the exhibit, GRAM offers group discounts for groups of more than ten people. They do, however, require a group reservation two weeks prior to when you plan on visiting. To find out more about the exhibit and the special programs that GRAM will be hosting, visit their website at <http://www.artmuseumgr.org>. It is important to note that this is *not* the same exhibit that visited the Ella Sharp Museum in Jackson in 2009.

The Great Blue Heron is the largest and most widespread heron in North America. © Josh Hass



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Volume 18 began January 2011 and includes five issues. The journal is home to the Michigan Bird survey, Michigan Christmas bird counts, North American migration counts, and the proceedings of the Michigan Bird Records Committee.



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Hawks at a Distance: Identification of Migrant Raptors

by Jerry Liguori

\$19.95

Written by the author of *Hawks at Every Angle*, this new field guide illustrates 29 species. It is a guide that focuses on identifying hawks viewed from a great distance and it includes flight style and behavior clues for each species. Chock-full of photos (558 color and 896 black-and-white), this 190-page book is a must for those looking to perfect their hawk identification skills.



Attracting Butterflies & Hummingbirds to Your Backyard

by Sally Roth

\$21.99

This book not only lists the plants you should have in your yard to attract butterflies and hummingbirds, it goes beyond the other books on this subject. The author includes how-to instructions for building and creating feeders and other items that will make your yard the most attractive one in the neighborhood to the pollinators. One chapter is dedicated solely to garden design with helpful illustrations and color charts. An illustrated guide for both hummingbird and butterfly identification is included in the back of the book.



Outdoor Stonework

by Laurel Saville

\$24.99

Take your backyard sanctuary from ordinary to fabulous with the ideas for creating walls, pathways, waterfalls, and garden features that are in this book. It even includes ideas for entertaining areas. The book is set up in two parts: part one deals with ideas and inspirations, and part two provides DIY projects.



The Secret Life of Caterpillars

by Densy Clyne

\$14.95 (hardcover)

Incredible photos take you into the life of caterpillars, from eggs to metamorphosis into moths and butterflies. This book is written for children, but it's worthwhile for any adult that wants to learn more about the larval stage of insects. Did I mention it has incredible photographs?



Garden Insects of North America

by Whitney Cranshaw

\$29.95

The subtitle of this book is *The Ultimate Guide to Backyard Bugs*, and they aren't kidding. A hefty read at 575 pages, not including appendixes and the index, which bring it to 696 pages, it is worthwhile to have even if you don't garden. The book includes both "good" bugs and those considered pests. Note: there is an additional \$1.00 postage and handling charge.

10% off for all Michigan
Audubon members!

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.

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By e-mail. Wendy@MichiganAudubon.org.