

# Jack Pine *Warbler*

*THE FALL MIGRATION ISSUE:* Birding Lake Erie Metropark ■ The Keweenaw Raptor Survey's 2011 Season ■ Activities Abound at CraneFest ■ Nature Up Close: Captive Raptors Up Close and Personal



# Jack Pine Warbler

## CONTACT US

**Michigan Audubon**  
6011 W. St. Joseph Hwy.  
Suite 403  
Lansing, MI 48917  
Phone 517-886-9144  
Fax 517-886-9466  
Mon.-Fri. 9 AM-5 PM

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Jonathan E. Lutz**  
JLutz@MichiganAudubon.org

## STAFF

**Tom Funke**  
conservation director  
TFunke@MichiganAudubon.org

**Wendy Tatar**  
program coordinator  
WTatar@MichiganAudubon.org

## GUEST EDITOR

**Bethany Tomaszewski**  
Bethany@BethanyT.com

## GRAPHIC DESIGN & PRODUCTION

**Redhead Design Studio**  
408 East Grand River  
Lansing, MI 48906  
www.VirtualRedhead.com  
Info@VirtualRedhead.com

## ADVERTISING

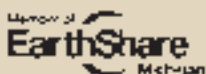
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Cover Photo ■ Screech-Owl

Photographer: Dave Haas

This Eastern Screech-Owl image was captured at an Outdoor Discovery Center photo-shoot in Holland, Michigan. The photo was taken May 21, 2005, with a Nikon E8800, 1/60th sec, f5.8, ISO 50. Adobe Photoshop CS was used to perform post-processing of the image. The goal of the post-processing was to put all the focus on the owl's eyes and bring out the richness and detail of the tree. After isolating the tree from the Owl, different levels of sharpening, mid-tone color corrections, and saturation were applied for the end result.

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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



I'VE ALWAYS CONSIDERED the out-of-doors to be my "big screen." The best entertainment, I find, is in nature—from the microhabitat in the foliage of a pitcher plant to a sprawling shallow wetland featuring Michigan's largest staging population of Greater Sandhill Cranes. Michigan birders have even more to look forward to this season, though, as birding hits the other big screen. This fall, bird watching is going to Hollywood.

Steve Martin, along with comedy co-stars Jack Black and Owen Wilson, will re-create Mark Obmascik's story about three birders competing to spot the rarest birds in North America. The film is based on Obmascik's book, *The Big Year: A Tale of Man, Nature, and a Fowl Obsession*, and is due in theaters in October. We featured a review of the book in the first *Jack Pine Warbler* issue of 2011. There's no doubt that the film will bring even greater attention to the sport of bird watching; with any luck, *The Big Year* will provide some direct benefits to bird conservation.

Star birdwatcher Caleb Putnam will entertain Michigan Audubon's top supporters on Friday October 7 during a "Birders' Soirée." Caleb will present a brand new presentation titled "Chasing Rare Birds in Michigan—Stories and More!" One lucky audience member will walk away with a pair of 10x42 Vortex "Fury" binoculars, courtesy of Eagle Optics. A fundraising auction will also take place, featuring prizes like autographed books, fine art, subscriptions to birding magazines, and gift certificates to top birding destinations statewide. We are eagerly anticipating this CraneFest kick-off event, which will take place at the Convis Township Hall in Bellevue, Michigan, starting at 6:30 pm. Registration is now open online; visit [www.cranefest.org](http://www.cranefest.org).

As the popularity of bird watching continues to grow, we are working hard to continue cultivating interest in birds among young people. This month's Young Birders' column was written by a member of the Grand Rapids Audubon Club and participant in that chapter's Junior Audubon program. Travis Mangione is in his second year of birding and we're proud to feature his writing for this issue. If you know a young birder who would like to contribute to future issues of *Jack Pine Warbler*, please contact our program coordinator, Wendy Tatar ([wendy@michiganaudubon.org](mailto:wendy@michiganaudubon.org)).

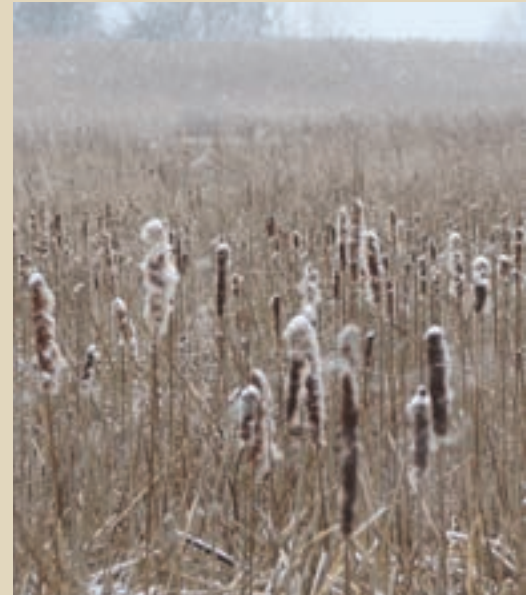
Michigan Audubon programs will continue through the fall and winter months. If you haven't participated in a program at one of our 19 bird sanctuaries, visit the event calendar at [www.michiganaudubon.org](http://www.michiganaudubon.org). Most programs are free, and members receive discounts on paid programs. Programs for 2012 will be listed very soon and include drop-in cross country ski sessions, winter bird watching, and beginning bird watching classes.

I hope you agree that the entertainment nature has to offer is just as good (or much better!) than what we find indoors. This fall, everyone at Michigan Audubon hopes you find a bit of both—whether it's at CraneFest or in a movie theater. Either way, find a way to enjoy birds this fall, and don't forget to share your experiences with others.

Best regards,

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

Jonathan E. Lutz, executive director



A winter cattail marsh at the Lake Erie Metropark in southeast Michigan. © 2010 Gerry Wykes.

# *An Uncommon Place: Birding Lake Erie Metropark*

BY GERALD P. WYKES

**B**IRD WATCHING at Lake Erie Metropark can be an uncommon experience. If, by uncommon, the meaning is taken to mean “rare,” then it is sufficient to say that the place has seen more than its share of rare bird sightings. If “out of the ordinary” is the implication, then this location also fits the birder’s bill (pun intended). Both denotations can be used to define the park.

Lake Erie Metropark, only 20 miles south of Detroit, is one of thirteen parks in the five-county Huron-Clinton Metropark system. It contains a 1,600-acre mix of hawthorn thickets, fields, woodlots, and over 500 acres of rich Great Lakes coastal marsh. Well-placed trails and parkway roads allow easy access to potential birding sites, and the park itself is just two miles east of I-75. The park is located along three miles of shoreline at the mouth of the Detroit River where it enters Lake Erie, and it lies at the intersection of two major flyways. Add the federal green space to the immediate north (Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge) and the vast state lands to the immediate south (Pointe Mouillee State Game Area) and you have the gem within an emerald necklace. The Important Bird Area (IBA) listing by the Audubon Society is recognition of that fact and confirmation of the 323 species (and counting) on the regional bird list.

In this era of listservs and texting, the early word gets the rare bird. Lake Erie Metropark is a frequent destination for those early-word birders. Flamingoes have yet to make an appearance, but the suggestion that it could happen is not that far off. According to veteran birder Walt Pawloski, who has spent the better part of three decades eyeing these shores, “you never know what you’ll find there.”

Included in the park’s long list of unusual records are a Lesser Frigatebird from the Caribbean, Gannets and a Brown Pelican from the Atlantic coast, Glossy and White-faced Ibis from the Gulf States, and a White-tailed Eagle from Siberia. “The winds can bring in all sorts of unusual birds and you go there to find them,” Pawloski advised. He himself spied a rare Gray Flycatcher there a few years ago. Can a real flamingo, born on a hefty south wind, be far behind?

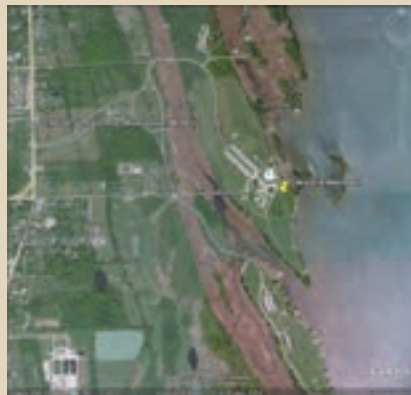
Lake Erie Metropark is perhaps best known for its fall hawk-watching opportunity. It is one of the premier hawk-watching sites east of the Mississippi. From late August until the bitter end of November, the location offers a constant stream of migrant raptors on their southward journey from the Canadian Shield. Over 16 species of “hawks”—falcons, eagles, harriers, buteos, accipiters, vultures, and the like—funnel over the Detroit River mouth in order to avoid crossing the open waters of Lake Erie.

Tens of thousands of Broad-winged Hawks dominate the mid-September skies, while aerial rivers of Turkey Vultures make for some awe-inspiring October flyovers. A few hundred Golden Eagles wait until late in the season to put in their appearance, but the sight of these monumental birds is always worth the wait. The numbers will vary from season to season, but an average year will see 200,000 raptors. The best location to view these migrants is from the boat launch, but a pre-visit to the Lake Erie Marshlands Museum is a must for any interested hawk watcher.

Not to be outdone by their predatory cousins, autumn waterfowl have an equally impressive migration. The sky-darkening flights of yore are now greatly diminished, but thousands of mallards and late-arriving divers do their best to fill the near-shore skyline.

Oddly enough, the winter season provides one of the richest of birding seasons along the Erie shore. Although one must definitely “gird their loins” with long undies to do so, braving the cutting January or February winds will reward the frigid fowler. Tundra Swans, around 1,200 individuals last season, come down from the high north to feed on the vast water celery beds found in the shallow river waters. Dozens of Bald Eagles habitually gather here to feed on fish and ducks once the ice begins to form in mid-winter. Last year, I saw eight eagles (five dark juveniles and three mature) in one spotting scope view. I won’t even mention that there were 52 separate birds seen on the ice on that particular morning—oops, I just did.

Add dense black rafts of coot, chestnut-headed Canvasbacks and Redheads, black and white scaups (Greater and Lesser), hairy crowned Common Mergansers, somber-colored Ruddy Ducks, and hundreds of swirling gulls to the above scene, and you have a river of life in the dead of winter.



LAKE ERIE METROPARK  
32481 WEST JEFFERSON AVE.  
BROWNSTOWN, MI 48173

### ***Hawkfest, September 17 & 18, 2011***

Possibly one of the best birding events for child participation, the annual fall migration of birds of prey is celebrated at this premier hawk watching site. See live birds, demonstrations, and exhibits—bring the whole family! Contact the Lake Erie Marshlands Museum and Nature Center at 734-379-5020 or 800-477-3189 for more information.

#### **Lake Erie Metropark website:**

[http://www.metroparks.com/parks/index\\_all.aspx?ID=7#](http://www.metroparks.com/parks/index_all.aspx?ID=7#)

#### **A bird checklist for Lake Erie Metropark:**

<http://www.metroparks.com/uploads/file/Lake%20Erie/Museum/BirdChecklist.pdf>

#### **Website of the Detroit River Hawkwatch:**

<http://www.drhawkwatch.org/>

Long-eared Owls are another regular feature of the Lake Erie Metropark winterscape. More than a dozen of these slender owls will roost within the cover of the hawthorn thickets. The park staff is usually able to locate these roosts early in the season and will point them out to curious visitors wishing to view them from the trial system.

Oddly enough, the weakest birding season in the park is the springtime. Nevertheless, hitting the park at certain times in early May will yield some pretty impressive warbler days along with some migrant waterfowl (including more than a few loons). It is worth mentioning that many of the ibis sightings are in the spring as well.

By the time summer rolls around, this uncommon place settles down into a pleasant birding routine. Caspian and Common Terns can be seen rocketing down to retrieve fish in the river and nearly every expected form of swallow can be recorded. Walking the boardwalks and marsh trails will serve up a decent order of marsh birds, such as long-billed Marsh Wrens, and numerous flotillas of Wood Duck females with their attending string of ducklings. Semi-regular sightings of Soras and an occasional Least Bittern allow the birder to begin charging up for the renewed excitement of the coming fall season.

I asked Walt Pawloski to sum up a visitor’s view of the bird situation at Lake Erie Metropark with a favorite time of year, but he was uncharacteristically at a loss for words. “I don’t really have a favorite season,” he says, “I like them all.” After all, the place is uncommonly great.

Gerald Wykes is the supervising interpreter of the Lake Erie Marshlands Museum & Nature Center located in Lake Erie Metropark and home of Hawkfest. He has been with the Metroparks for 30 years—first serving as exhibit preparator/naturalist at Oakwoods Nature Center and later transferring to the Lake Erie Museum in 1994. He and his wife are empty nesters residing in Monroe. Gerald maintains a blog called “Naturespeak” through the Monroe Evening News and he is a freelance author, artist, and story-teller (most of which are true). He can be reached at [gerry.wykes@metroparks.com](mailto:gerry.wykes@metroparks.com).



## Still Soaring:

# The Keweenaw Raptor Survey's 2011 Spring Season

BY SKYE CHRISTOPHER G. HAAS

**T**he Keweenaw Raptor Survey (KRS) concluded its second successful season at Brockway Mountain on June 15, with a surprising 90 raptors tallied that day, most of them first-summer Broad-winged Hawks that will not breed this year. In all, 13,992 individual eastbound raptors were recorded this season, surpassing last year's total of just under 10,000. The count was run for three months beginning on March 15 with an impressive 584.5 hours of counting. The lion's share of the count was run by our hired human telescope, Arthur W. Green from New York State. Arthur had previously been a counter at Chestnut Ridge Hawk Count in New York and thoroughly enjoyed his time escaping the hustle and bustle of the East Coast in favor of the timeless feel of the north Keweenaw coastline. Hardly a bird escaped Arthur's roving eyes, and he was well received as an ambassador of the birds among the local community of Copper Harbor.



A Northern Parula near Copper Harbor, Michigan. © 2011 Skye Haas.

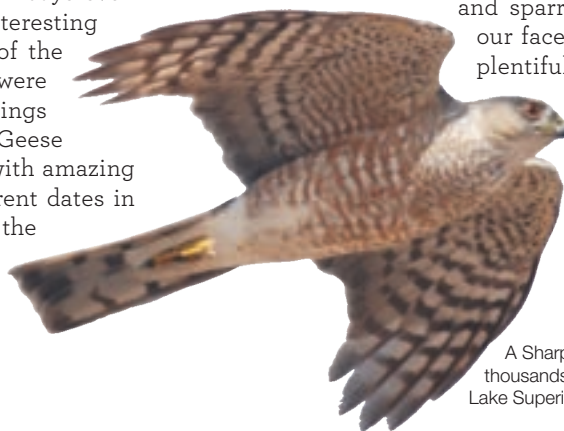
The season was very slow to start this year; only 171 raptors were counted during March—just over 500 birds fewer than the previous March. Prevalent north winds were to blame and tragically continued over most of April with only six days even cracking the 100-bird mark. Still, a number of interesting observations were had during the first six weeks of the count; 16 Northern Goshawks and 21 Golden Eagles were recorded, and Bohemian Waxwings and Snow Buntings were common visitors to the count site. Canada Geese were the only species to pass by in large numbers with amazing high counts of just under 5,000 geese on two different dates in April. Even on a slow day, getting a chance to see the aerial acrobatics of a Golden Eagle evading a pair of local nesting ravens was worth the trip to Brockway.

By the end of April, pretty much all the players had arrived, but the numbers were still low. Excitement was building, however, as Arthur recorded the first ever Black Vulture for the KRS project on April 26. Much to the delight of those visitors present, the Black Vulture made an appearance on two additional dates, again on April 29, and a final time on May 2.

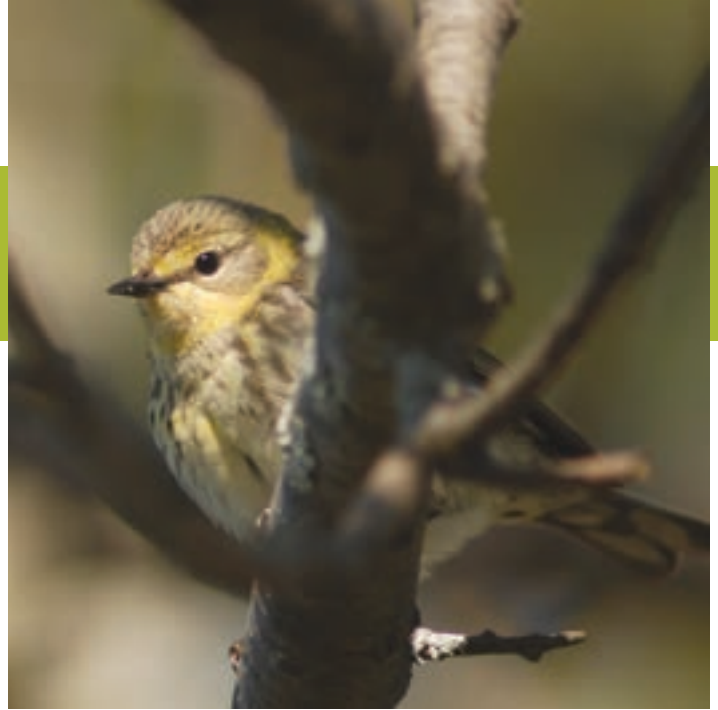
Finally, the door blew open on May 5 with 2,500 raptors counted—just under a fifth of the entire season's total in one day! Broad-winged Hawks, as expected, were the most prevalent species with 1,613 individuals tallied. Twelve other species of raptors were counted, including 614 Sharp-shinned Hawks and 104 Red-tailed Hawks, along with lesser numbers of Rough-legged Hawks, American Kestrels, and Peregrine Falcons. Two Swainson's Hawks, a species desired by many Michigan birders, were seen sailing by the mountain that day by a lucky few. Raptors were not the only birds migrating that day, and we recorded our season-high day total of 123 Common Loons ripping past the overlook.

Numbers of Broad-winged Hawks remained good for the rest of May, and Swainson's Hawks were seen on two additional dates. By May 31, KRS had crossed the ten-thousand-bird mark, something we were unable to do last year. American White Pelicans were also observed on several dates in May, and when birders were not scanning for hawks, there were always plenty of sparrows to pick through, coming into the seed that Arthur kept scattered on the ground for them. Some of the more notable songbirds that dropped in at the count shack included a Northern Mockingbird, Eastern Towhee, and a Western Meadowlark.

However, some of the most exciting action this month was below the mountain in the village of Copper Harbor. Steeped in birding lore, many exciting birds have been found in Copper Harbor. This year was no exception, with a snazzy Scissor-tailed Flycatcher spending several days in mid-May at the local sewage lagoon. Few spots in the Keweenaw Peninsula can boast such an incongruent mix of glorious scenery and, well... inglorious odors. Still, the birding is fantastic here, and on several days in late May, we saw epic numbers of migrant warblers, vireos, and sparrows, most right in front of our faces as they stocked up on the plentiful midges hatching from the reclamation ponds.



A Sharp-shinned Hawk—one of thousands in spring migration on Lake Superior. © 2011 Skye Haas.



The month of June saw a continuation of the Broad-winged Hawk flight right up to the end of the count, with over 1,700 raptors tallied. This is in stark contrast to last year, when the count abruptly died and only 300 birds were recorded over two weeks. This serves as another example of the dynamic fluidity of migration each year. We have barely begun to wrap up the finishing touches of this season's count, and I am already brimming with curiosity to see how next spring will unfold. Most assuredly, it will be exhilarating to watch, and I highly recommend making time to make the trek northward to witness this amazing migration for yourself.

Skye Christopher G. Haas is an avid birder and student at Northern Michigan University in Marquette, Michigan. He is the author of the UP Rare Bird Report, which is distributed via listserv and can be found at [UPBirders.org](http://UPBirders.org). Skye has run birding tours for Michigan Audubon, conducts field surveys for the Nature Conservancy, is a former counter at the Whitefish Point Bird Observatory, and most recently is a coordinator of the Keweenaw Raptor Survey.

*Keweenaw Raptor Survey is a joint project of the Laughing Whitefish Audubon Society and the Copper Country Audubon Club, with additional support from Michigan Audubon. KRS is a donor-based organization and thanks every one of you for your support.*

## Double-Crested Cormorant Management Decision Announced

THE WILDLIFE SERVICES PROGRAM of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA-APHIS), the Department of the Interior's U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Park Service have released a final environmental assessment (EA) on Double-crested Cormorant damage management for Michigan. This EA replaces the one completed in 2004 and revised in 2006. The EA was prepared with consultation with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and numerous Native American tribes.

According to a press release from the federal agencies, "The management alternative uses an integrated wildlife damage management approach to reduce cormorant damage to property, aquaculture, and natural resources, as well as cormorant-related risks to public safety. Physical exclusion, habitat modification, or harassment would be used, when appropriate, to reduce damage. In other situations, birds may be humanely removed by shooting, egg oiling/destruction, nest destruction, or euthanasia following live capture." The new EA increases the maximum number of cormorants that may be lethally removed statewide from the current limit of 10,500 to 15,500 birds per year. It requires that 5,000 breeding pairs of cormorants be allowed to remain in the state.

Copies of the EA may be downloaded from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's website at <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/midwestbird/cormorants.htm>. Hard copies may be obtained by contacting USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services, 2803 Jolly Rd., Suite 100, Okemos, MI 48864, or calling 517-336-1928.

Double-crested Cormorant numbers have rebounded dramatically since the days when they were on National Audubon's Blue List (1972–81). The current conservation status of the bird is "least concern." According to the Cornell Lab, the Double-crested is the most numerous and widespread of the six cormorant species in North America.

The birds are colonial and nest either on the ground or high in trees, but, according to The Birder's Handbook, not both in the same colony. One major problem with the birds that nest in trees is their destruction of habitat from the acidic guano that they excrete. According to the Cornell Lab, "Accumulated fecal matter below nests can kill the nest trees. When this happens, the cormorants may move to a new area or they may simply shift to nesting on the ground." Total vegetation destruction on some small islands has occurred.

Because the bird eats small, schooling fish, it is blamed for devastation at fish farms and declines in sport fishing species on the Great Lakes. According to the Birds of North America website, "Cormorants feed opportunistically on fishes that are readily available and often congregate where these fishes are most easily caught. In natural environments, fish species of direct interest to recreational or commercial fishermen rarely make up a large part of the cormorants' diet. Exceptions may occur, especially after fish-stocking releases or at aquaculture facilities, but even here, the magnitude of the economic impact is difficult to establish unambiguously."

During the 1950s, cormorants disappeared from Michigan thanks to DDT, and it wasn't until 1977 that they began to nest here again. Since those first eight nests in '77, they have had an amazing resurgence with over 2,000 nests in 1988, a growth of 38% per year in those 11 years (The Breeding Bird Atlas, 1991). In 2004, there were 5,500 nests in the Les Cheneaux Islands in northern Lake Huron alone. Management efforts in this island area started in 2004 and seem to be working. The number of nests in 2009 was down to 500, and perch populations were rebounding, according to a 2009 report by the Michigan DNR.

So what are the current population numbers for the cormorant in Michigan? According to the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service website, "the current continental population of double-crested cormorants is 2 million birds, with nearly 70 percent of this number in the interior population centered in the Great Lakes and the prairie region of central Canada."

# Websitings

## Fall Migration and More

BY MARCUS E. WILSON

With this issue, we'd like to offer readers a variety of fall-season resources to assist with making the most of your time outdoors. In keeping with the year-long theme of "budget birding," Michigan Audubon wishes to remind all members and readers of this magazine that quality bird watching and nature appreciation can always be found close to home. For making longer trips, there are a number of useful mobile phone applications and websites available to help with finding the best price of gas in your area. Gas Buddy (1) is an excellent website and mobile application that provides gas price updates for most gas stations and includes station locations and trends.

When time or the gas prices threaten to put a damper on your fall birding, look for a county park, a land conservancy property, or public lake access sites near where you live. The Michigan Association of County Parks website (2) allows its visitors to search for parks within 25 miles of their local zip code. Your nearest land conservancy can be found by visiting the website of the Heart of the Lakes Center for Land Conservation Policy (3). Not only is this site an excellent resource for finding nature preserves with trails open to birdwatchers, but it also provides excellent insight into the importance of protecting habitat throughout Michigan. Finally, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources website (4) provides a listing of public access sites on Michigan's lakes and rivers—excellent places to spot fall waterfowl, raptors, and passerines.

If weather or work schedules prevent you from getting outdoors entirely, keep in mind that studying your field guides and online resources can improve your next bird watching trip. With Sandhill Crane migration soon to be in full swing, we recommend boosting your overall crane knowledge and appreciation by visiting the website of the International Crane Foundation in Baraboo, Wisconsin (5). Here, you can learn more

about efforts to save the endangered Whooping Crane (there's one that visits the Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary each year) and even become a member of the organization.

Of course, our fall migration season could not be so accommodating for birds and bird watchers without an abundance of high-quality wetlands. The Michigan chapter of Ducks Unlimited is instrumental in protecting our state's wetlands, and we encourage you learn more about their efforts by visiting their website (6) as well. In 2010 at Big Marsh Lake, Michigan Audubon and the Kiwanis Club of Battle Creek, together with Ducks Unlimited, installed a first-of-its-kind water control structure, which will protect the staging grounds for Sandhill Cranes for decades to come. The project was highlighted in the September/October 2010 issue of the *Jack Pine Warbler* magazine.

When you do make it out on the birding trail, be sure to take in some of the other harbingers of fall. If you're after magnificent fall color, stay tuned to the color reports in your local newspaper. Fall color reports submitted by Michigan Audubon volunteers and staff can be found on the website of the West Michigan Tourist Association (7).



Whooping Crane and Sandhill Crane flying over Haehnle Sanctuary in Jackson County, Michigan. © 2010 Per H. Kjeldson.

Marcus E. Wilson is a volunteer for Michigan Audubon. He enjoys fall birding and resides in East Lansing, Michigan. You may contact him at [riversweep@gmail.com](mailto:riversweep@gmail.com).



Support Michigan Audubon while on the birding trail. © 2011 Jonathan E. Lutz.

## Visit These Sites:

- (1) [www.gasbuddy.com](http://www.gasbuddy.com)
- (2) [www.micountyparks.org](http://www.micountyparks.org)
- (3) [www.heartofthelakes.org](http://www.heartofthelakes.org)
- (4) [www.michigan.gov/dnr](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr)
- (5) [www.savingcranes.org](http://www.savingcranes.org)
- (6) [www.ducks.org/michigan](http://www.ducks.org/michigan)
- (7) [www.wmta.org](http://www.wmta.org)





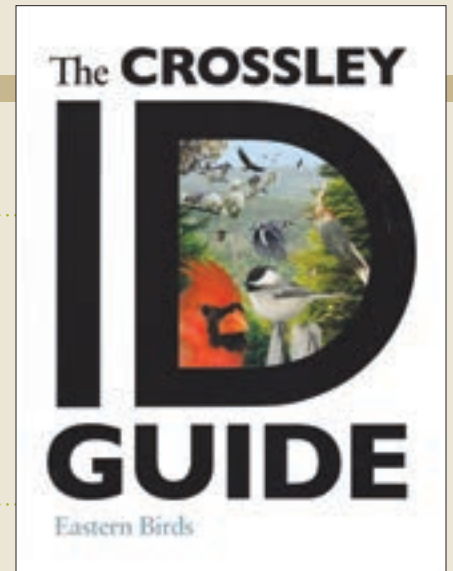
# Book Review

## THE CROSSLEY ID GUIDE: EASTERN BIRDS

BY RICHARD CROSSLEY  
(PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2011, 530 PP.)

REVIEWED BY ED MERZ

\$35.00 (Flexibound)  
Available at the Michigan  
Audubon Bookstore



**I**n this book, the author's preface is immediately followed by pages of small photos divided into eight groups of similar species to begin the birder's identification quest. The following introduction is full of justifications for the unusual layout and presentation of the guide. The author's first justification tells us that he chose not to follow the normal taxonomic sequence but instead divided it into eight similar species groups to enable easy comparisons. The introduction of the plates, which is the most unique feature of the book, is a lengthy explanation of why he chose a new format. The actual plates are composed of over 10,000 images and 660 species and are a dizzying array to say the least. Crossley gives eight reasons for this new plate format. One unique feature is his use of many different photos superimposed on habitat backgrounds, which Crossley reasons is to educate the birder to "reality birding" by sharing visual images that show feeding, flight, and molts.

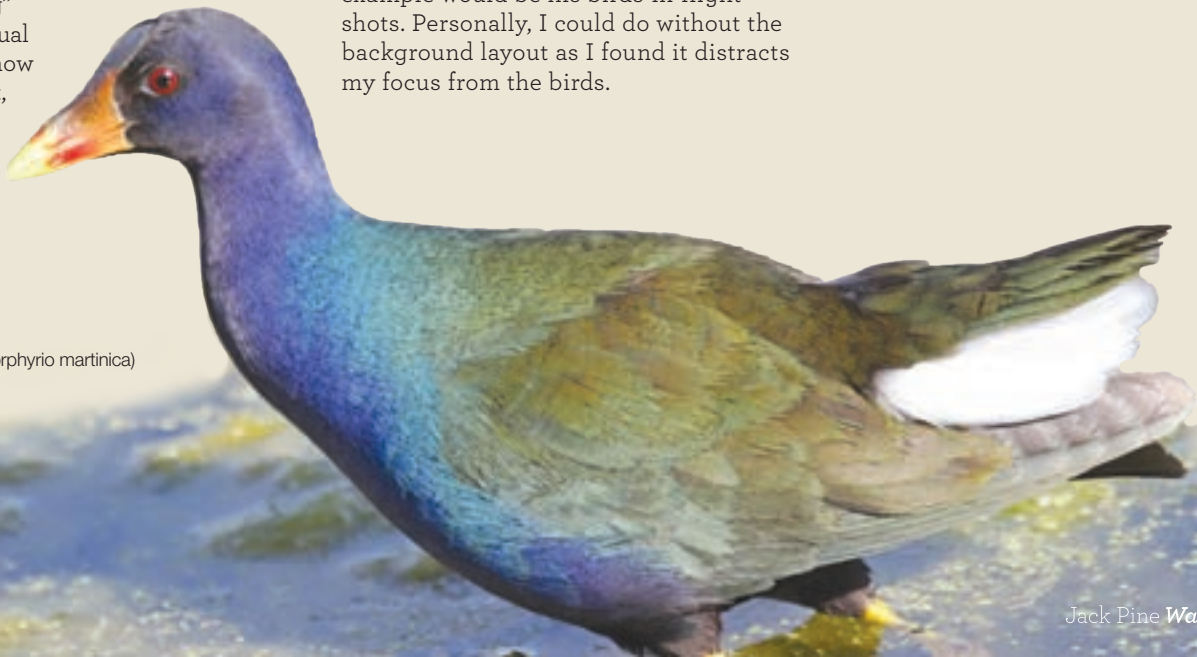
The plates are accompanied by captions, a much-abbreviated text, and small maps. The small text is justified by the author/photographer to allow more space for the extensive gallery of shots. There is a website to access for additional species information, which, in my exploration, did not contain that much more material. This site, however, will provide viewing of the plates ([www.CrossleyBirds.com](http://www.CrossleyBirds.com)). The book must be viewed with the idea that it is an identification guide first and foremost, but the size and weight is not something I want to tote around in the field.

The photographic content is immense and demonstrates hours of field and technical work to compile the plates. Identification markers are given in the text for the profile shots.

The author admits the shortfall of the guide is not giving field markers for the other poses of the birds. One example would be his birds-in-flight shots. Personally, I could do without the background layout as I found it distracts my focus from the birds.

The photographic format far exceeds *The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Birds* of 1977, but my guess is that this book will be a hard sell for experienced birders. With that said, however, I believe the advent of digital photography and electronic technology will greatly alter the field guides of the future.

Ed Merz is a retired executive minister and chair of the earth stewardship standing committee. Prior to retirement, he worked as a research specialist for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and for the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife. Ed currently serves as the vice president of the Capital Area Audubon Society and as a volunteer at the Michigan Audubon office.



Purple Gallinule (*Porphyrio martinica*)  
© Steve Byland

# Activities Abound at CraneFest

BY WENDY TATAR

If you've never attended CraneFest during the past seventeen years, I'm here to tell you that you've missed quite a bit. Obviously from the name, the fly-in of the migrating Sandhill Cranes is the main attraction of the event, but there is so much more to CraneFest.

The complete title of the event is the Sandhill Crane and Art Festival. The art show portion of the festival is small compared to many art shows, but we select around 30 of the best artists to be a part of the show every year. Some of the favorites are here year after year, but others will be new to the event in 2011. Some of the favorite photographers returning this year are Roy Van Loo Jr., David Murray, Josh & Dave Haas (Glances at Nature), and Dan Wolin (Redtail Photography), and they will be joined by newcomer Ageless Memories Photography. Another returning favorite, Bear Tracks Studio, will bring the drawings, woodworking, and mixed media work of Marie Rust, Lori Taylor, and Lisa Ramlow. In the pottery category, in addition to returning favorites Louise Slager and Kizmit Clayworks, we have new artists: Black Cat Pottery and Pots by Rita. Woodworkers/carvers Michael Van Houzen and Joseph McAllister will be at the event, as will Jerry Haley with his rustic hiking staffs and benches. Pressed flower favorite Randy Wilcox will be accompanied this year by Flower Sisters. Other new artists will have gourd art, metal art, artistic bird houses, and beautiful watercolor bird Christmas ornaments. You won't want to forget your wallet when you attend!

Another artistic aspect of the event is the display of wooden cranes that greet visitors as they enter. For the past five years of CraneFest, students of Audrey Haddock, a teacher at Bellevue High School and Junior High, have painted wooden crane cutouts, which are positioned along the entrance to the event. Approximately 20 cranes will greet you, some looking like cranes and others looking like pirates, clowns, other animals, or even superheroes. The art enlivens the woods and is a fun way to start your visit to the event. This year, visitors will be able to vote

for their favorite wooden crane, and the young artist will receive a membership in Michigan Audubon and a prize.

## • CraneFest •

**When:** Noon until 7:00 PM on  
Saturday October 8 and  
Sunday October 9

**Where:** At the Kiwanis Youth Area

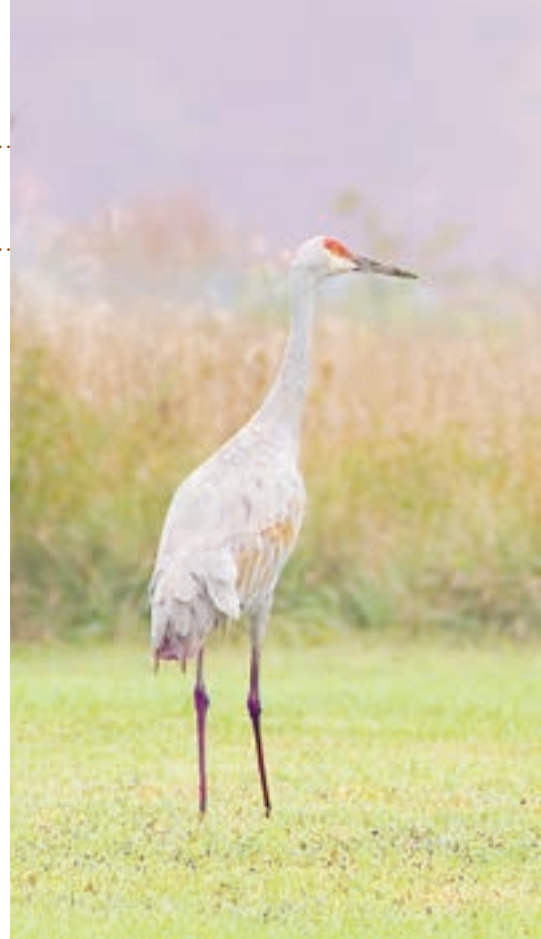
*Owned by the Battle Creek Kiwanis Club (BCKC), the Youth Area is located northwest of the intersection of I-94 and I-69, only minutes south of Bellevue. Enter the Kiwanis Youth Area from 15 Mile Road (between T Drive and Junction Road), three and a half miles north from the blinker at N Drive North and 15½ Mile Road (at Turkeyville) in north central Calhoun County.*

**Why:** To celebrate the fall migration  
of the Greater Sandhill Crane,  
of course!

*The event is free, however, a \$3 parking fee is charged, which goes to support the youth projects of the BCKC.*

Other activities at the event include guided nature hikes through the beautiful Kiwanis Youth Area, where CraneFest is held. Live birds of prey are on exhibit by the Hawking Club of Michigan, and the Earthbound Environmental Awareness Organization of Olivet College always brings a menagerie of live reptiles and other creatures for visitors to see. Children can participate in a handful of activities hosted by the many environmental non-profit organizations, such as Binder Park Zoo, Kingman Museum, and the Bluebird Society of Michigan. Life-size cutouts of all 15 cranes species, created by local artist Joanna Learner, will be on display so you can learn more about the cranes of the world.

A special photography workshop instructed by Josh Haas will take place during the event for a limited number of participants. An intermediate photography class will take place on Sunday. Participants will have the opportunity to practice their newly acquired skills when the cranes



## CRANE VIEWING ..... at the ..... KIWANIS YOUTH AREA

The Battle Creek Kiwanis Club has graciously agreed again to let Michigan Audubon hold crane viewing during weekend evenings at their Kiwanis Youth Area property. We hold the crane viewing and CraneFest at the Kiwanis property, as it is the only locale that provides a view overlooking Big Marsh Lake, the roosting area for the Sandhill Cranes. Dates for crane viewing have changed slightly from past years to provide the opportunity to see more cranes as they gather for their fall migration.



The first weekend for the evening viewing sessions will occur after CraneFest, on October 15 & 16.

Plan on attending at least once, with sessions beginning October 15 through November 13 on Saturdays and Sundays, 4:00–7:00 PM.





Sandhill Cranes have been the focus for CraneFest for 17 years. Michigan's largest bird watching event draws nearly 5,000 people to Calhoun County each year. © 2010 Josh Haas.

begin to fly in. Registration for this special class is a must and can be done on the event website, [cranefest.org](http://cranefest.org).

There is so much to do and see at the event. And, oh yes, we do have Sandhill Cranes—lots of them. Some of the cranes spend the day feeding in the marshy edges of Big Marsh Lake, but the majority of the cranes spend the day in nearby corn fields fattening up for the long migration south (they're headed to Georgia and Florida for the winter). Each afternoon, starting around 4:00 PM, the cranes will begin returning from the fields to roost in Big

Marsh Lake for the night. It can be quite a spectacular sight when large groups of them all start flying in at once. And the sound is quite spectacular too!

So make it a point to attend CraneFest this year. You'll have a great time, see many things, and possibly learn something new. What a great way to spend an autumn weekend in Michigan.

Wendy Tatar is the program coordinator for Michigan Audubon.

## 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.

Paul M. Brown	Robert & Marcia	Alec Lindsay	Union Township
Terry Heisler	Brown	Conrad Rattay	Library
Angie Hurd	Peter Kronk	Amy Shaw	The Warren Family
Tim Tesar	Stan Lilley	Lorrie Vit	Harry Werth

Please remember to check your magazine's 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.

## CraneFest SOCIAL EVENT

To get your CraneFest visit off to a good start, Michigan Audubon will hold a Birder's Soirée on:

**Friday October 7  
at 6:30 PM**

We will gather at:  
**The Convis Township Hall,  
19500 15 Mile Road**

for hors d'oeuvres and drinks  
before a special presentation  
by Michigan's own:

**Caleb Putnam**

Caleb will present "Chasing Rare Birds in Michigan—Stories and More," telling us the tales of some of his most exciting and strange bird sightings while chairing the Michigan Bird Records Committee. Our evening will prepare you to see the antics of Steve Martin, Owen Wilson, and Jack Black in the film *The Big Year* (due in theaters October 14), in which the three birders compete to be the person that sees the most species in North America in one year.

.....  
*As part of this special evening, every ticket holder will be entered in a drawing to win a pair of Vortex 10 x 42 Fury binoculars, provided by Eagle Optics.*  
.....

Tickets are \$30 for Michigan Audubon members and \$40 for nonmembers. To take part in this limited-seating event, you may register online through the Michigan Audubon website, [michiganaudubon.org](http://michiganaudubon.org), or the event website, [cranefest.org](http://cranefest.org). Alternatively, you can call the Michigan Audubon office at 517-886-9144 to register.



The Bernard W. Baker Sanctuary is home to Michigan's largest gathering of Sandhill Cranes each fall. Cranes wow onlookers with dramatic over-flights before landing in Big Marsh Lake. © 2010 Dave Haas.



# Feathered Lens

## Nature Up Close: Captive Raptors Up Close and Personal

BY JOSH HAAS

**T**he pure awe and inspiration of birds of prey is something that will get the blood pumping in just about everyone. The power and wonder behind these amazing creatures, the accuracy with which they hunt, and the in-charge demeanor they portray makes for wonderful viewing and even better images. Have you ever had issues getting a natural looking image of a raptor in a cage? Have you ever wondered if there are places or ways to photograph captive raptors outside the cage? For part two of our “Nature Up Close” series, we’re going to look at better ways of photographing captive raptors.

When photographing a caged raptor, the most important first step is to use a large **aperture** (small f-stop number) and shoot from as close to the cage wall as safely possible. This will throw the front fencing blurry enough that it will appear invisible in the image, making the overall scene look more natural. Also make sure to position yourself in such a way that the back fence is blocked in some way by vegetation, making it blend in to the natural surroundings. In some cases, this won’t be possible. If it’s not, know your limits and do the best with what you have. While these birds are in cages, it’s important to realize that they all have injuries (some aren’t even visible). Spend more time on birds that have less noticeable injuries, which will make more natural photographs. At the same time, remember they were all wild birds at one time, which means you can still get wild looking poses from the birds. All it takes is a little time and patience.

Taking it to the next level, keep your eyes on nearby nature centers that have captive birds. Some will feature programs with the raptors out of the cage. From time to time, I will lead photo workshops at the **Kalamazoo Nature Center** where we’ll feature a couple of their raptors in the same fashion. Being a bird handler with a photographic background has its perks! I use the natural environment to place birds in such a way that will yield good imagery for participants. Taking it a step further, the **Outdoor Discovery Center** in Holland, Michigan has raptor photo shoots each year where they take their birds away from cages and pose them in natural environments, allowing for extremely good photographs. Their program even features local falconers with a more diverse array of birds, allowing the photographer to go home with images of many species that are sometimes harder to find. Also look for events where the **Michigan Hawking Club** will be featured. They usually have birds on the glove for large periods of time and allow visitors to get photographs. In situations such as these, work on getting shots that don’t show the equipment on the birds, and again, strive for different and interesting poses from the birds. When these raptors get in front of new people, though they can handle it and have been trained to do so, they will still be on edge. Don’t go crazy with your camera at first. Take some time to allow the



This captive Barred Owl image is altered so the handler’s equipment is hidden; subsequently, the photographer used image-altering software to place the bird in an old growth forest, a habitat where a wild Barred Owl might be found. © 2010 Josh Haas.

birds to settle and become more comfortable. Your shots will be exponentially better. Use the rule of thirds and composition to place the birds outside of center, enjoy the rare time to be so close, and have fun!

### GLOSSARY and REFERENCE

**Aperture** determines how much light hits the film or digital sensor (f-stops)

**Kalamazoo Nature Center** [www.naturecenter.org](http://www.naturecenter.org)

**Outdoor Discovery Center** [www.outdoordiscoverycenter.org](http://www.outdoordiscoverycenter.org)

**Michigan Hawking Club** [www.michiganhawkingclub.com](http://www.michiganhawkingclub.com)

To read more about Josh, visit [www.glancesatnature.com](http://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.



## Young Birders



Travis Mangione birding the Lake Michigan shoreline.  
© 2010 Greg Mangione.

### Tawas Point Roadtrip

BY TRAVIS MANGIONE

My name is Travis Mangione and I am a member of Grand Rapids Junior Audubon. I have been birding for two years. One day, friends of mine invited me to go with them to the Tawas Point Birding Festival. With high expectations, a month later, we began our three-hour road trip to Tawas.

We arrived in East Tawas on Thursday at six o'clock in the evening. Without even taking the time to unpack, we started birding. That first night, we saw and heard many birds, including a Cliff Swallow, an American Pipit, a Northern Harrier, and an Eastern Whip-poor-will, which were all new birds for me. I couldn't wait for the next morning to see how many more we could find.

On the morning of May 13th, we went on the Kirtland's Warbler tour. Some of the birds we saw were Kirtland's Warbler, a Common Nighthawk, a Red-headed Woodpecker, and a Trumpeter Swan. The last bird of note that we saw was a Long-tailed Duck, swimming alone on a large lake, showing its beautiful plumage to our group of excited birders. Later that day, we went to a coffee place, and while the others were getting something to drink, I went out to bird. I was surprised to see a Purple Martin fly by me. Then we went to the East Tawas harbor docks and saw Double-crested Cormorants, a Common Loon, Common Terns, Black Terns, and some Common Mergansers. Afterward, I saw an Eastern Meadowlark. That night, we saw a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and an American

Woodcock fly up into the sky, and a Common Nighthawk flew by four feet away from where we were. The first day was very exciting.

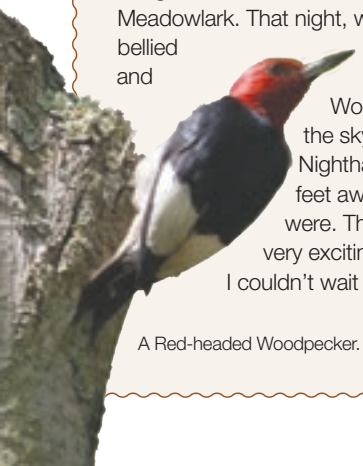
I couldn't wait for the next day.

The next day, May 14, we went on the Oscoda Parks tour. We saw about 35 bird species, 14 of which were warblers. The rarest of the warblers I saw was the Golden-winged Warbler, whose numbers are declining. All the warblers we saw were within a short time, making the sighting that much more awesome. That night, we went on the Tuttle Marsh tour, in the pouring rain. We saw an American Bittern and many Rusty Blackbirds. We heard Sora and Virginia Rails. Although those were great sightings, we could have seen a lot more if the weather had been better. Considering the weather, we still saw many impressive birds.

On the last day of the event, I went on the Tawas Point tip tour, and saw a Clay-colored Sparrow, a Field Sparrow, an Orange-crowned Warbler, a Swainson's Thrush, a Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and Blue-gray Gnatcatchers. The weather continued to be against us. We didn't end up seeing as many birds as we hoped, but we still felt it was a profitable tour. On my way home, the last birds I saw were Bonaparte's Gulls and a Bald Eagle.

The Tawas Point Birding Festival is a great time and place to bird, and I will surely go again if I can. Overall, I saw and heard about 101 bird species. About 35 were new birds for me. Even though the weather was rainy and windy most of the time we were there, we saw so many wonderful birds; I anticipate going again next year. I would like to thank Susan Laidlaw and Will Graham for taking me along with them to this spectacular event.

Travis Mangione lives in Belmont in northeast Kent County. He has been a member of the Grand Rapids Junior Audubon Club, along with his brother Isaac, since 2010.



A Red-headed Woodpecker.

## Calendar

### September

- 10 **Migration Celebration**  
9:00 AM–3:00 PM  
Lake Bluff Bird Sanctuary,  
Manistee
- 17 **Fall Migration**  
Whitefish Point Bird  
Observatory, Paradise
- 17 & 18 **Hawk Fest**  
Lake Erie Metropark,  
Brownstown
- 17 & 18 **Heritage Harvest Fest**  
Seven Ponds Nature  
Center, Dryden

### October

- 8 & 9 **CraneFest**  
Noon–7:00 PM  
Kiwanis Youth Area,  
Bellevue
- 9 **Washtenaw Audubon  
Society Big Sit**  
5:00 AM–4:00 PM  
Independence Lake  
County Park, Webster
- 15 **Haehnle Sanctuary  
Open House**  
10:00 AM–2:00 PM  
Haehnle Sanctuary,  
Jackson

# Announcements

Baker Sanctuary Resident Manager,  
Jolene Flynn © 2011 Wendy Tatar.



Steve Minard with his award  
from the Grand Rapids  
Audubon Club, 2011  
(photographer unknown).



## Events

### Sanctuary Open House

An open house will be held at Michigan Audubon's 963-acre Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary located near Jackson on Saturday October 15. With the assistance from members of the Jackson Audubon Society, tours of the sanctuary will be taken from 10:00 AM until 2:00 PM. Mud Lake marsh, located in the sanctuary, hosts the second largest gathering of Sandhill Cranes in Michigan and for the past several years has also been the favorite roosting site of a Whooping Crane.

The Haehnle Sanctuary is located on Seymour Road approximately six miles northeast of Jackson. For more information on the sanctuary or to download a map to get you there, visit <http://www.haehnlesanctuary.org>. To find more information about the open house, visit the event calendar page of Michigan Audubon's website ([michiganaudubon.org](http://michiganaudubon.org)) or call Wendy Tatar at 517-886-9144.

### Volunteers Needed

Michigan Audubon will host an open house at the Lansing office on Tuesday September 20 from 10:00 AM until 2:00 PM and 6:00–7:30 PM. The objective of the open house is volunteer recruitment. During the open house, guests will get a chance to meet current volunteers, learn more about Michigan's bird sanctuaries, enjoy a snack or two, and find out why becoming a Michigan Audubon volunteer is one of the most rewarding things you can do.

The volunteer program is a vital part of Michigan Audubon. Our organization benefits from trained volunteers who donate their time and energy assisting with birding festivals and the bookstore, editing newsletters, and stewarding bird habitat across Michigan (to name just a few things).

Check the Michigan Audubon event calendar on the website ([www.michiganaudubon.org](http://www.michiganaudubon.org)) or call Wendy Tatar at 517-886-9144 for more information about the open house.

## News

### Life Member Receives Award

Michigan Audubon life member and Grand Rapids Audubon Club (GRAC) member Steve Minard was recognized at the GRAC annual meeting with the presentation of the 2011 Charlotte A. Runnells Volunteer Environmentalist Award. The award is given by the GRAC conservation committee "not more than once every two years, to one whose initiative and dedication as a volunteer environmentalist defends our environmental health and natural treasures." The conservation committee chose Steve for the way in which he connects people with a sense of wonder for birds.

According to a GRAC press release, "In leading over two hundred birding field trips and walks over the past twenty years, always taking time to make sure new birders are seeing and hearing what he sees and hears, Steve Minard graciously and generously shares his birding skills and knowledge, as well as his great love of birds and birding, with others." In addition to leading field trips, Steve has served GRAC as president (1987–89), treasurer (1990–91), conservation committee chairman, the GRAC representative to Michigan Audubon, Christmas bird count section leader (1981–present), field trip coordinator (2001–present), and the North American migration count coordinator (1999–present). Congratulations, Steve, on this prestigious award!

### New Baker Resident Manager Announced

Michigan Audubon is very pleased to announce that Jolene Flynn has accepted the position of Resident Manager at the Bernard W. Baker Sanctuary. Jolene and her partner, Cam Myers, are very excited to be taking on the oversight and maintenance of the 1,000-acre sanctuary. Both Jolene and Cam are avid outdoor enthusiasts and natives of the Marshall area.

Jolene was raised on a farm and currently works for Bosserd Family Farms. The business has two greenhouses and extensive fields of fresh flowers, fruits, and vegetables, as well as cattle. Jolene says she is "a product of that good old 4-H scene" and loves to do many types of crafts on top of her outdoor activities.

Jolene has a son, Forrest, and a daughter, Allison, who are both grown and on their own. Cam has a 13-year old daughter, Audrey, who is the light of his life. Jolene and Cam bring with them to the Baker house their other children, Bear, an Alaskan malamute, and Willow, a very large mixed breed dog.

Michigan Audubon is very excited to have Jolene on board. She and Wendy are currently working on a full schedule of programs to showcase the Baker Sanctuary during 2012. Watch for an announcement of those programs in the next issue of the *Jack Pine Warbler*.



# Many Thanks

Michigan Audubon would like to thank all the volunteers, partners, and sponsors that helped make the Cerulean Warbler Weekend such a great success. This event continues to grow and attract participants from all over North America. Without the assistance of the following folks, it would be impossible for Michigan Audubon to put on great birding events like this.

## LEADERS

Mark Bishop  
Greg Bodker  
Eldon Dodd  
Tom Funke  
Donna Keller  
Dick Leonard  
Sue Merrill  
Greg Nelson  
Caleb Putnam

## PRESENTERS

Josh Haas  
Alicia King  
Ranger Steve Mueller  
Greg Swanson

## VOLUNTEERS

Elizabeth Abood-Carroll  
Kara Haas  
Terry Hewlett  
Shelley Martinez  
Richard Yarsevich

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Volume 19 will begin January 2012 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.



# News

## Michigan Projects Receive Federal Funds

Michigan's U.S. Senators Debbie Stabenow and Carl Levin have announced that three Michigan projects have won funding to support bird conservation from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, a funding project of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The federal support is for projects designed to protect, restore, and enhance Great Lakes wetlands and wildlife habitat.

The Nature Conservancy received \$150,000 for a project designed to protect 41 acres of land on Lake Huron's shoreline, which hosts mixed northern hardwoods, conifer swamp, wooded dunes, and open sand dunes. According to the senators, the property is an important habitat for several species of birds, including Blue-winged Teal, Black-throated Blue Warbler, and Canada Warbler.

Ducks Unlimited received \$208,000 for a project to enhance 344 acres of existing wetland habitat at the Maple River State Game Area (MRSA) in central Michigan, which will help improve habitat for important species of birds and help stop the spread of invasive plants. The project will remove some outdated water control infrastructure and install a new pump and water control structure. MRSA is an important stopover point for many species of waterfowl on their migration north.

The third project funded is with the Southwestern Michigan Land Conservancy, which received \$250,000 to protect 120 acres of habitat along Lake Michigan and the Black River (South Haven area). The funds will be used to protect the property and conduct an ecological restoration of the land by removal of invasive species and work to restore the stream banks.

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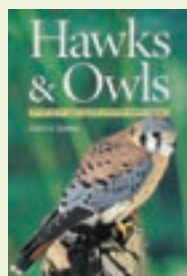
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## Michigan Audubon Bookstore

Support our educational programs by shopping at the Michigan Audubon Bookstore

Information or phone orders

**517-886-9144**



### Hawks & Owls of the Great Lakes Region & Eastern North America

by Chris G. Earley

**\$16.95**

For a small book (128 pages), it contains over 180 full-color photos that show all 30 bird of prey species that call the Great Lakes area home. Comparison pages are included in the back for quick reference. Range maps, immature

plumages, morphs, and distinctive markings are all included to help you with your raptor identification.

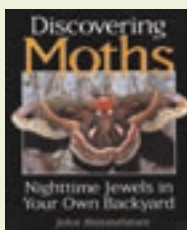


### A Guide to Night Sounds

by Lang Elliott

**\$ 19.95 (includes audio CD)**

This book and CD includes the nighttime sounds of 60 mammals, birds, amphibians, and insects. Information on appearance and behavior, plus illustrations and color photographs add to the recordings of common calls, songs, and other sounds made by these animal groups. Includes non-nocturnal species.



### Discovering Moths: Nighttime Jewels in Your Own Backyard

by John Himmelman

**\$18.95**

Not a field guide, but a well-rounded book about the underappreciated cousin of butterflies. Illustrations and over 90 color photographs accentuate the chapters on moth natural history.

Information included guides you to where to find moths, ways to attract them, how to photograph them, and even how to raise them. A must-have for anyone wanting to explore this topic more.



### How to Grow a School Garden: A Complete Guide for Parents and Teachers

by Arden Bucklin-Sporer and Rachel Kathleen Pringle

**\$24.95 (flexibound)**

This is a complete school garden handbook. It includes strategies for planning, funding, and building the garden, plus lesson plans for the classrooms. Garden projects are geared for grades K-8.



### Night Science for Kids: Exploring the World After Dark

by Terry Krautwurst

**\$19.95 (hardcover)**

From stargazing to spider watching, you'll become a night science explorer as you use this book to discover the night life right outside your back door. The book includes many fun

science activities and projects so you can enjoy the other half of the day that we normally miss while sleeping.

**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.

Prepayment includes list price + 6% sales tax + \$3.75 postage and handling for the first item + \$.85 for each additional item.

**By e-mail.** Wendy@MichiganAudubon.org.