

Jack Pine *Warbler*

THE HOLIDAY ISSUE: Berrien Birding ■ Promote, Protect Bird Habitat for \$10 ■ Christmas Bird Count ■ Managing a Year's Worth of Images ■ A Very Birdy Christmas to You and Yours



Jack Pine Warbler

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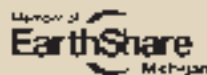
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Cover Photo ■ White-breasted Nuthatch
Photographer: Skye Christopher G. Haas

White-breasted Nuthatches are common feeder birds; they are active and possess an appetite for insects and seeds. The name “nuthatch” comes from their habit of using their sharp bill to “hatch” out the seed from the inside of large nuts, which are wedged purposefully into the bark of a tree. This individual was photographed at the Moosewood Nature Center in Marquette, Michigan, on January 28, 2009, with a Nikon D80 300mm at f/4.5, 1/320 (0.003 sec), ISO 125.

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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



ROLLING, WRAPPING, AND WRITING—five Michigan Audubon volunteers are seated around the conference table this morning, helping us prepare for CraneFest. It's Wednesday, so our entire staff is here too—our entire staff of three. Eight might not seem like that many people, but in our funky, 1,200-square-foot office, it's crowded.

With rooms dedicated for storing program supplies and housing the Michigan Audubon archives, we're forced to stuff boxes under desks and stack signs behind doors. When we hold board meetings at the office, there's a need to accommodate up to 14 people; configuring the office for this purpose is a two-hour chore involving moving furniture and chairs and making sure extension cords can reach and not be tripping hazards.

Why I am telling you this? Our office space woes don't seem to have anything to do with birds.

FALSE.

Suite 403, located at 6011 West St. Joseph Highway in Lansing, has been the home of Michigan Audubon for more than ten years. From here we do it all: connecting birds and people from the rugged coastline of the Keweenaw Peninsula to the rural countryside of Calhoun County. Your membership dollars and year-end donations fuel our environmental education program planning, our coordination of habitat stewardship activities, and our drive to support avian research. Increasing our capacity to continue these statewide, mission-driven activities will require a larger home. Fortunately, a new home already exists for Michigan's longest-active conservation organization: Hawk Valley Farm. Read the article on page six to learn more about supporting this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Throughout 2011, we've acknowledged that your opportunities to go birding or share the beauty of birds may be limited due to financial situations. We've brought you a year's worth of stories related to “budget birding,” which we hope you've enjoyed. We're curious to know if these stories were helpful; feel free to drop us a line any time—call, e-mail, or post to our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/michiganaudubon). Did you employ any of Bill Stovall's solutions for budget bird feeding? Did you buy your first pair of quality binoculars following Bill Sweetman's advice? Perhaps you discovered the joys of nature photography using that old camera you've been keeping around, or maybe (hopefully) you discovered a new place to bird within 25 miles from home. Please, let us know; we're curious.

You may be curious what we have in store for 2012. A yearlong theme for the *JPW* will return next year. I can't give you many details, but rest assured, you're going to see some of your favorite Michigan birds on each cover, thanks to the talented and generous photographers who donate their work. You might consider planning a trip to the Lake Bluff Bird Sanctuary; the updated manor house is now operating as a bed-and-breakfast, thanks to resident managers Rich and Deb Krieger. Lake Bluff is the ideal “base camp” to launch day trips to Manistee Harbor and Arcadia Marsh in search of spring migrants. On the research front, we will be looking to expand our program in the Elk River Chain of Lakes Watershed, monitoring Common Loons. In fact, our overall efforts to monitor Michigan's threatened and endangered birds will expand to include Spruce Grouse and Red-headed Woodpecker in 2012, which will bring our total number of species-monitoring programs to 15, four of which Michigan Audubon is leading.



Conservation director Tom Funke and executive director Jonathan Lutz joined Copper Country Audubon leaders Dana Richter and Bill Deephouse on a tour of Brockway Mountain in the late summer of 2008. Photo: Dana Richter.

Additionally, our annual signature events will offer you more than they ever have before! As our support from sponsors and registrations improve, we can do more to bring the world's most talented and knowledgeable birders to Michigan. Join our e-mail list at www.michiganaudubon.org to become one of the first to know the details of our signature event series and when online registration will open.

I know this is a busy time for you and your family. Soon you will be wrapping gifts and writing season's greetings. Please make time for conservation this holiday season; consider making a special gift to two great Michigan bird conservation projects using the special yellow remittance envelope included with this issue. You can help Michigan Audubon achieve great things in 2012—for less than the cost of a 30-pound bag of “oilers!” Our three-person staff, all of our great volunteers, and, of course, the birds will appreciate your gesture.

Jonathan E. Lutz, executive director

Please don't forget to add these dates to your 2012 calendars:

- May 17–20: Tawas Point Birding Festival
- June 1–3: Cerulean Warbler Weekend
- October 13–14: Sandhill Crane & Art Festival, or CraneFest XVIII

Berrien Birding

BY ALISON VILAG



I am plagued by observer bias. If you were to search for the definition of this malady in my dreary intro to psychology textbook, you'd assume this meant that my observations were error-riddled for my benefit. And although bird records committee members might support that conclusion, I prefer to use the term "observer bias" to convey that after birding in Berrien County for nearly 12 years, I have become unabashed in my praise for Berrien. After all, I have many fond memories of connecting with

the gaze of a Short-eared Owl in the Three Oaks grasslands, hearing an Ancient Murrelet squeak like a rubber duck off the pier at Tiscornia—even simply walking a little-known path within Warren Dunes State Park on one of those May mornings exploding with birdsong. Oh, Berrien—often cursed by eastside twitchers while taken for granted by its nucleus of jaded inhabitants ("Yeah, didn't have anything outstanding... got a nice look at a Connecticut though,"). It's a great place to bird.

As Michigan's southwestern-most county, Berrien is a diverse medley of quality deciduous forest, inland wetlands, and agricultural land, bound on the western edge by Lake Michigan. Its diverse habitats, proximity to the bottom of the lake, and active birding community have culminated into an exceptional Michigan county list, and it has been essential to many a Michigan (and Indiana!) birder.

There's never a dull moment in Berrien—spring migration really starts gathering speed in mid-March, when Greater White-fronted and Ross's Geese show up with regularity. Soon, duck migration begins in earnest, with scoter rafts forming off the Red Arrow overlooks, the Grande Mere lakes harboring good numbers and diversity, and even the smallest ponds having a few Ring-necked Ducks, a Hooded Merganser, or a Bufflehead pair. As duck migration tapers off, land bird and shorebird migration seem to peak simultaneously—the first week of May is a hectic time, with Smith's Longspurs to be searched for along Buffalo Road, warbler flocks to pick through at Warren Dunes, and shorebirds to sort at Three Oaks.

Migration remains strong throughout the latter half of May, and even after then, nesting Prairie and Worm-eating Warblers and Summer Tanagers at Warren Dunes and Dickcissel and Henslow's Sparrows singing from hayfields provide spice throughout the summer. By late June, shorebird migration has begun again, and Lake Michigan's sandy beaches are a great spot to try your luck with large shorebirds—Willet, American Avocet, godwits, Whimbrel—they're all very possible! By late August, svelte Baird's and sometimes Buff-breasted Sandpipers turn up, and land bird migration, which continues strongly through early October, is never disappointing.

Fantastic lake watching is to be had from September through early December. Shorebirds, terns, and—if you're really lucky—Long-tailed Jaegers start the stream southward, turning the stage over to dabblers. October sees excellent duck migration, with the occasional jaeger. By November, scoters and Red-throated Loons cruise down the shoreline, with Little Gulls and Black-legged Kittiwakes occasionally making an appearance. This is also a good time to start scanning gull flocks along the lakeshore and at Forest Lawn Landfill for less-common species including Iceland, Thayer's, and rarely California Gulls. If you're lucky, you might connect with a Western Grebe or Harlequin Duck along the lakeshore; braving the icy jetties at New Buffalo may furnish Purple Sandpiper.

Berrien County is amply endowed with accessible Lake Michigan shoreline. Whether you like stalking large shorebirds in late summer, enduring northwest gales in hopes of snagging a jaeger or Black-legged Kittiwake, or even just

watching thousands of Red-breasted Mergansers stream by in late November, the shoreline will have something for you. The most-used lake watch spots include New Buffalo Public Beach, whose jetty regularly hosts Purple Sandpipers in late fall and early winter, and the famed Tiscornia Park, which has seen Ancient Murrelet, Magnificent Frigatebird, and Northern Gannet over the last few years. These two locations are also fairly reliable for Western Grebe and Harlequin Duck in late fall. There are also a few great overlooks accessible from Red Arrow Highway between New Buffalo and Bridgman: Townline Rd. (Union Pier), Pier Rd. (Lakeside), and Cherry Beach (Harbert). These spots are especially worth a stop during late fall and early spring, when large rafts of Red-breasted Mergansers with a sprinkling of scoters and loons form.

Just inland from New Buffalo, the Galien River floodplain is a prime example of quality, mature woodland. This area is especially famed for its breeding Yellow-throated and Cerulean Warblers, Louisiana Waterthrush, and White-eyed Vireo, but land bird migration is never disappointing, with well over 20 warbler species possible on any given day in May. Warren Woods State Park, located north of Three Oaks, and the Forest Lawn Rd. area encompassing the Kesling Preserve and Lakeside Rd. are the best spots to access this beautiful location. Of course, Forest Lawn Landfill, of Fish Crow fame, is just around the corner from Kesling Preserve, and even if you're not too excited about crows with head colds, the winter gull flock is generally worth a look. While in the Three Oaks area, it's often prudent to make a stop at the Three Oaks Sewage Ponds, located just north of US-12 on Schwark Rd. Water birds (and, when conditions are suitable, shorebirds) use these ponds as a stopover, and Purple Martins nest here as well.

Another great spot for spring and fall land bird migration (and nesting Hooded Warblers!) is one of my personal favorites in Berrien County—Warren Dunes State Park (WDSP). The Yellow Birch Trail and Nature Trail, accessed via Floral Lane (just north of the main park entrance), are a typical springtime haunt of most



local birders in search of warbler diversity, including Golden-winged, Black-throated Blue, Connecticut, and Kentucky. Prairie Warblers nest in several dune blowouts in the park, but the population requiring the least dune-summitting is located in the blowout a short walk from the picnic area (turn right just after the tollbooth at the main entrance, look for the picnic area on the left—if you reach the campground you've gone too far—and walk towards the lake). This is also where a pair of Summer Tanagers have been on territory the last few summers. The ravines behind the Weko Beach campground often have Worm-eating Warblers starting in late spring, and the group camp area by the Yellow Birch Trail sometimes snags a Harris's Sparrow or Olive-sided Flycatcher during migration. Slightly north of Warren Dunes, Grande Mere State Park offers many of the same birding opportunities that WDSP does, and also has lakes that harbor good waterfowl numbers and diversity in spring and fall.

This is by no means a comprehensive guide to birding in Berrien County, but rather a summary of some of my favorite locations. Space limitations prevent me from elaborating on the Prothonotary Warblers at Sarett Nature Center's Brown Sanctuary, of the many (and constantly changing!) spots to find shorebirds and grassland breeders, and the smattering of other worthwhile spots to check. There is simply not enough space for me to elaborate on where to bird if you decide to visit, but hopefully this sampler will give you an idea of where to start.

Those intent on visiting Berrien County should visit the Berrien Birding Club's web page (go to www.berriencounty.org/parks and click the "birding" link on the left side of the page). This will give you some resources to begin planning your trip. Happy birding!

A freshman studying natural resources management at Grand Valley State University, Alison Vilag has birded in Berrien County for the past 11 years. Alison, 18, was also Michigan Audubon's Kirtland's Warbler Tour Guide during 2011. In her quickly diminishing spare time, Alison enjoys wilderness trips and distance running.



Warren Dunes State Park has plenty to offer birders in southwest Michigan. © 2006 Andre Moncrieff.

Christmas Bird Count

BY TOM FUNKE

Are you looking for an excuse to visit a Michigan Audubon bird sanctuary this winter and to do something meaningful for bird conservation? If you haven't ever participated on a Christmas bird count (CBC), consider taking part in the longest standing bird monitoring program on earth.

The Christmas bird count started on Christmas Day, 1900 by ornithologist Frank Chapman. He proposed counting birds on Christmas day as opposed to shooting them, as was the tradition with "side hunts," in which shooters would choose a side, or team, to participate in shooting feathered quarry. The team with the biggest pile would be the winner. On this day, twenty-five CBCs were held, mostly in the Northeast, including Toronto. These counts tallied 90 species total for all counts.

So began the Christmas bird count. Today, CBCs are conducted by a team of volunteers scouring a designated area that is 15 miles in diameter, commonly referred to as a "count circle." The time period to conduct



a CBC survey is December 14 to January 7, inclusive. During the most recent count from which data is available (2009-2010), over 61 million birds were counted in 2,215 Christmas bird counts throughout North America.

Michigan boasts 69 active Christmas bird counts, from the tip of the Keweenaw to the southernmost corners of the Lower Peninsula. In this same time period, 1,169 Michigan birders donated 3,350 hours, drove 23,718 miles, and counted nearly 750,000 birds of 146 species. Birds found on all counts were Downy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, crow, chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, and American Goldfinch. 60,398 Canada Geese were counted statewide, making it the most numerous species counted.

Each count produces different mixes of species and numbers of individuals counted. For example, Eagle Harbor in the Keweenaw documented 28 species, including 39 Herring Gulls, 19 Common Goldeneyes, and two Bald Eagles. Oscoda, on the northeast coast of the Lower Peninsula, tallied 35 species including five Bald Eagles, one Common Goldeneye, and 283 Mallards. Albion, in south-central Lower Peninsula, had 42 species with 292 Mallards, three Sandhill Cranes, and even

a Northern Harrier. The Whitefish Point CBC documented 26 species, including a Great Gray Owl!

Interestingly enough, eleven of our nineteen bird sanctuaries fall within a CBC "count circle". Volunteer birders of all ages and ability scour the landscape for a day, physically counting every bird by species they see. This is a great way to get outdoors and participate in a birding activity that adds valuable information to what we know about birds. Plus, it is a chance to visit one of our sanctuaries in the winter months.

Nearly all the Michigan CBCs are coordinated by a chapter or member of Michigan Audubon. Some coordinate multiple count circles, which is the case with the Kalamazoo Nature Center.

If you need another reason to trudge around in your mukluks in the dead of winter, know that the information collected by the CBC has contributed greatly to bird conservation for over 100 years. The CBC has confirmed the northerly range expansion of the Tufted Titmouse, Mourning Dove, and Common Grackle. It also has demonstrated that the American Kestrel experiences fluctuations in their populations over time. In the case of the American Black Duck, a significant



The little gray bird with big black eyes—a Tufted Titmouse—is a common feeder bird, even in winter. © 2010 Judy Howle.

decline was detected through the CBC in the 1980s. Conservation measures were put in place, which led to a rebound in their numbers. Share that success story with anyone that tells you birding in the winter is a waste of time!

If you are a bird watcher who hasn't yet participated in at least one monitoring program, the Christmas bird count is probably one of the easiest and shortest programs, taking one day. Consider participating, and your efforts will be included in the long-term data that helps conserve bird populations.

Tom Funke is the conservation director for Michigan Audubon.

Interested?

Here are a few selected CBCs

12/31—Kalamazoo CBC, Audubon Society of Kalamazoo
Russ Schipper, 269-375-7210

12/17—Manistee CBC, Manistee Audubon
Brian Allen, manisteeaudubon.blogspot.com

12/17—Macomb CBC, Macomb Audubon
Barb Baldinger, 586-263-6530 or barbarab@tir.com

12/31—Grand Rapids CBC, Grand Rapids Audubon
Ranger Steve Mueller, 616-696-1753 or odybrook@charter.net

Michigan Audubon sanctuaries in CBC count circles

- **Harris and Mott Sanctuaries**
Kalamazoo CBC
- **Baker and Voorhees Sanctuaries**
Olivet CBC
- **Haehnle Sanctuary**
Waterloo CBC
- **Lake Bluff Sanctuary**
Manistee CBC
- **Little Lake and Shroyer Sanctuaries**
Whitefish Point CBC
- **Riverbank Sanctuary**
Manistique CBC
- **Brockway Mountain and Lake Bailey**
Eagle Harbor CBC

If you are ready to don the gloves, strap on the scarf, and bring the hot chocolate in tow in the name of conservation, visit the Michigan Audubon website:

http://www.michiganaudubon.org/research/surveys_forms_data/christmas_count

to find COUNT LOCATIONS, DATES, TIMES, and CONTACT INFORMATION.

There is a \$5 participation fee, which supports the ongoing research and compilation of the data collected. Find the count you are interested in and contact the local coordinator for details. Even if you are a beginner or this is your first count, you'll be welcome and probably paired with an experienced birder, one familiar with the protocol of the survey.



ABOVE LEFT: Black-capped Chickadee. © Ron Rowan.

ABOVE: Winter can reveal some very interesting results for the willing birder. © 2010 Amy Kovach.

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. 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.

Karen Arquette
Tamara Crupi
Deborah Diesen
Darwin & Nancy Evers
Marta Fisher
Elise C. Forrest
Elisabeth French
Deb Friedrich
Jean Marie Galang
Judy Gaspar
Callie Gesmundo

Charles & Bethany
Goodman
Keith & Sheryl Helmus
Scofield Hemphill
Elizabeth Heys
Susie Hughes
Susan Kendall
Carol LaFramboise
Sue Lantz
Ron & Eileen Millard
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Torrey Wenger
James Wilson D.O., P.C.

Protect, Promote Bird Habitat for \$10

BY JONATHAN E. LUTZ



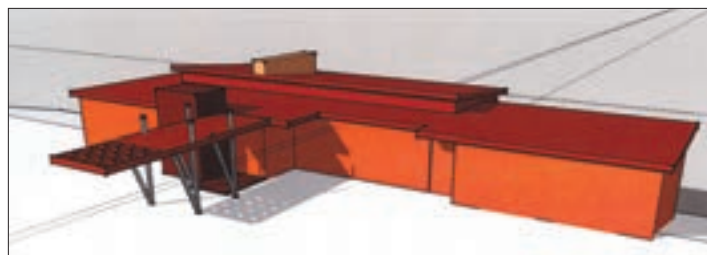
YOU CAN HELP COMPLETE A 30-YEAR EFFORT—the vision of Michigan Audubon leaders Carl Haussman and his friend Bob Whiting—to create a permanent headquarters for Michigan Audubon at Hawk Valley Farm. Likewise, you can help Michigan Audubon members protect the best place in Michigan to watch the spring migration of raptors: Brockway Mountain. You can do either of these things for just 10 dollars.

This issue of the *Jack Pine Warbler* features a special donation envelope. I urge you to remove the envelope and make a decision that will directly benefit Michigan's birds.

As a private residence, Hawk Valley Farm was enjoyed by a dedicated, though relatively small group of Lansing birders. Today, the 60-acre property is an ideal "outdoor classroom" and learning center for teaching stewardship, birding basics, and nature study to birders and educators from across the state. © 2010 Skye Haas.

HAWK VALLEY FARM

Located only six miles from the steps of the Capitol in Lansing is a 60-acre parcel of land and the commercially built former residence of Carl and Marian Haussman. The Haussmans could be considered early adopters of bird-related habitat management; Carl and his friends planted fruit-bearing plants, established a bluebird trail, created seasonal swales for migrating waterfowl, and maintained an open field for grassland birds. The enjoyment of birds was also key for the Haussmans, who hosted an annual Christmas bird count on their property. Trails continue to be maintained, offering scenic views of the Grand River, the southern border of Hawk Valley Farm.



The Haussmans lived at Hawk Valley for more than 60 years. When the project is completed, Michigan Audubon will have its first permanent home in more than a century of operation—a place where birders can walk the trails and experience firsthand the efforts of connecting birds and people for the benefit of both on a statewide level. At more than 5,000 square feet, the former Haussman residence will convert easily to feature workspaces for staff and volunteers, a multifunctional meeting and event room, archives, a retail area, and more. In 2010, Michigan Audubon staff, along with representatives from partner organizations and members of the Lansing community, participated in a series of visioning sessions that would help create the "next step" in the Haussman's legacy at Hawk Valley Farm. We are now ready to move forward with the construction phase of the project, but we need our members's help.

You have the opportunity to write the next chapter in Michigan Audubon's history. Your ten-dollar gift will be used to create a nerve center for statewide bird conservation, education, and research efforts. Even if you never visit Hawk Valley Farm, your contribution will help welcome thousands each year—from teachers-in-training to Audubon groups from outside of Michigan to members of the local community simply taking a stroll. Your gift will help thousands of birders, schoolchildren, business professionals, and friends of birds learn about the history and mission of Michigan Audubon.

TOP LEFT: Conceptual drawing of a Hawk Valley residence-turned-headquarters. © 2010 Celeste Novak.

LEFT: Conceptual drawing of the reconfigured parking and entrance to the new Michigan Audubon headquarters. © 2010 Celeste Novak.



YES! I want to be part of building a Michigan Audubon headquarters for connecting birds and people across Michigan.

YES! I want to help purchase and protect the raptor lookout Brockway Mountain, one of the most valuable natural resources in the state of Michigan.

DOUBLE YES! I want to double my gift and support both of these important bird conservation projects.

We've spent the year bringing you feature articles and columns about "budget birding." These stories have encouraged birding new areas close to home, getting started or starting a friend watching birds on the cheap, and how to capture amazing photographs with a simple point-and-shoot camera. Our appeal to you to support two amazing projects that will directly influence bird conservation is also a budget concept. Helping build a bird conservation headquarters and helping purchase a bird migration observation post will cost you less than a night at the movies, a tank of gas, or a week's worth of groceries.

Helping to build a headquarters at Hawk Valley and buy Brockway Mountain are investments that will last for generations.

BROCKWAY MOUNTAIN

Brockway Mountain is the namesake of the Copper Country Audubon's newsletter, *The Brockway Mountain Lookout*. For many years, the pages of the *Lookout* have featured the marvelous raptor migrations that occur in this location. In fact, Brockway Mountain may be the most compelling place to witness the migration of hawks, falcons, and eagles in the Great Lakes region.

Today Copper Country Audubon members, with the support of Michigan Audubon, are partnering with The Nature Conservancy and several local entities to obtain federal and grant funding to acquire 320 acres at Brockway Mountain—including the pinnacle—to protect this Michigan treasure forever. Securing the land and placing it under conservation easement will preserve the 360-degree view of the Keweenaw Coastal Wildlife Corridor, which extends from Eagle Harbor to Copper Harbor on the Keweenaw Peninsula.

Surprisingly, few people know that Brockway Mountain is private property; the property owners have been generous over the years, allowing tourists and birders the opportunity to gaze over Lake Superior and conduct seasonal bird counts. Purchasing the land will ensure that the road to Brockway remains open (except in winter), and that public access will always be part of the site's heritage.

The partnership, which includes Copper Country Audubon and Eagle Harbor Township, has applied for a Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund grant to purchase Brockway Mountain. The 320-acre parcel will cost a total of \$680,000; the grant request is for \$500,000, but the remaining \$180,000 will need to be raised. The partners have already pledged \$30,000, including \$10,000 from Copper Country Audubon's member-supported land fund.

Recognizing the gravity behind saving Brockway Mountain, the Michigan Chapter of the Nature Conservancy has agreed to match, one-to-one, all dollars raised for the Brockway Mountain Project up to \$100,000. I encourage you to use the attached envelope



The view from atop Brockway Mountain, Michigan's best place to observe the spring migration of raptors. © 2008 Dana Richter.

to make a gift of at least 10 dollars. Your generosity will be doubled instantly, and you will help save one of Michigan's greatest natural treasures.

Jonathan E. Lutz is the executive director for Michigan Audubon. Since his tenure began in May 2008, he's visited both Hawk Valley Farm and Brockway Mountain on multiple occasions. Jonathan can be reached anytime via e-mail at jlutz@michiganaudubon.org, or during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, by calling 517-886-9144.



Students making a visit to Brockway Mountain during the 2011 Keweenaw Raptor Survey. © 2010 Dana Richter.

A Very Birdy Christmas to You and Yours!

BY KATIE MURRAY

With Christmas just around the corner, Michigan-based companies have equipped their stockrooms with the perfect gifts for the birds and birders in your life. Whether you are searching for the perfect feeder, seed blend, or a Purple Martin house, these businesses and nonprofit vendors have thought of it all. The best part is that they are all located in beautiful Michigan, and some offer the option of online ordering. Here is a list of retailers that we believe will help you fill the empty space underneath your tree with unique birding gifts for friends and family.

Nestled between Grand Rapids and Muskegon, Coopersville, MI is home to the ever-popular **Heath Outdoor Products (1)**. Started by the Heath family in 1948, their main goal was to manufacture quality bird feeders. Today, Heath is a household name in the world of bird and bird watching accessories. Specializing in suet bird feed, Heath also offers many one-of-a-kind bird feeders that will keep your birds happy and your garden beautiful.



Blue Jay © 2011 Ron Rowan.

Each product category on their website offers a list of best sellers, featuring premium suet cakes for songbirds and a variety of flavors with "Peanut Crunch" being among the top-selling. If it is a bluebird, Purple Martin, or wren house you seek, Heath has options ranging

anywhere from \$11.00–\$212.00, depending on the desired style. With new products being added everyday and expedited shipping available, Heath will make your holiday shopping nothing less than enjoyable.



To get your complete bird fix, make a visit to the **Kellogg Bird Sanctuary (KBS) (2)**, just north of the area between the towns of Battle Creek and Kalamazoo. With sanctuary director and Michigan Audubon chapter leader Kara Haas at the helm, you know this place is worth a visit. The gift shop at KBS offers plenty of easy-to-use, specially designed feed assortments that are a favorite for wild birds and those that feed them. In addition, the shop carries feeders, books, apparel, and bird-friendly coffee that originates from sustainable crops that leave rainforest parcels in tact.

If you live in the greater Detroit metropolitan area, stopping into **Wild Birds Unlimited (3)** is a must. Situated in the trendy, up-and-coming city of Royal Oak, MI, they offer "EcoClean" and revolutionary birding products. Included in their line of EcoClean feeders are seed tubes, finch feeders, and a dinner bell feeder that all protect against bacteria, mold, mildew, yeast, and fungi. These feeders are a great value and are made with high-quality organic materials that won't contaminate your birds's food.

If you are searching for a gift for the fashion-conscious bird watcher, look no further than **Bivouac Ann Arbor (4)**. This company has a long history in the world of extreme outdoor clothing and will have you falling in love with their many styles and colors. Weather-resistant backpacks, hiking boots, and binoculars are all a part of the merchandise catered towards outdoor activities. Some of their hats come adorned with bird graphics, which are more than appropriate for your bird-loving friends and family. If you are looking for a gift that your loved one can use in the next few months of cold Michigan weather, let Bivouac be your guide!



Katie Murray is a sophomore in the professional writing program at Michigan State University. Katie assists fellow students as a consultant in the MSU Writing Center. She can be reached via e-mail at murra150@msu.edu.

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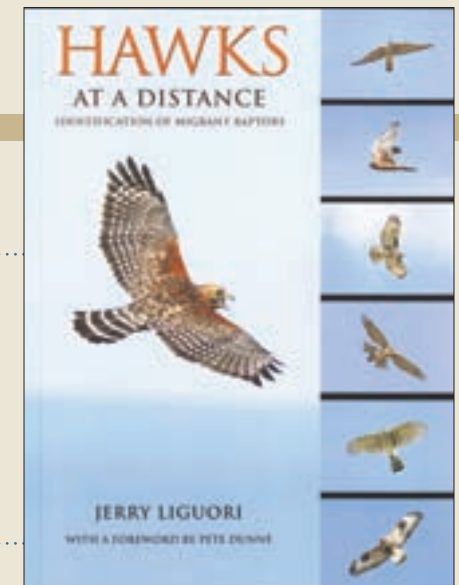
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Hawks at a Distance: Identification of Migrant Raptors

BY JERRY LIGUORI
(PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2011, 192 PP., 558 COLOR PHOTOS, 896 HALFTONES, AND 2 TABLES)

REVIEWED BY BOB PETTIT

\$19.95
Available at the Michigan
Audubon Bookstore



In 1988, the pioneering publication *Hawks in Flight: The Flight Identification of North American Migrant Raptors* by P. Dunne, D. Sibley, and C. Sutton laid the foundation for modern raptor identification. This work incorporated the holistic principles of raptor identification by using line drawings of raptors in flight, descriptions of flight behavior, and black-and-white photographs of birds in flight.

In 1995, B. Wheeler and B. Clark published *A Photographic Guide to North American Raptors*, the first ID guide that used color slide photographs of raptors to assist in their identification. They followed in 1998 and 2001 with a member of the Peterson Field Guides series, *Hawks of North America*. This guide contains plates with multiple color drawings of each species, range maps, and refinements in species descriptions.

The next addition to the raptor ID list was a two volume set, *Raptors of Eastern (and Western) North America* by B. Wheeler, published in 2003. Each utilizes excellent color photographs depicting near and far-away views of raptors perched and aloft with supporting text.

Jerry Liguori has now produced a pair of raptor publications that incorporate new photographic technology to assist in mastering the identification of birds in flight. *Hawks from Every Angle: How to Identify Raptors in Flight* (2005) is the first guide to use color in addition to black-and-white digital images to convey identification knowledge to the reader. Digital photos can now be manipulated with software so that a variety of birds can

all be made the same size, face the same direction, or be made into black-and-white images. These computer enhancements allow comparisons of individuals or groups of raptors in similar flight positions to be simultaneously viewed on one page.

In 2011, *Hawks at a Distance: Identification of Migrant Raptors* was published. The book incorporates the same technology to illustrate identification of raptors but does so with birds at a distance. Here, Liguori depicts smaller images of raptors in flight at eye-level, overhead, and from above. He then emphasizes methods of identifying these distant raptors with binoculars by relying less on plumage features and more on general impression, size, shape, and flight behavior as clues.

This is a stand alone guide, but it could easily be the last chapters of *Hawks from Every Angle*, since this first book lacks images of distant raptors. This combination might be overwhelming for the beginning hawk watcher; nevertheless, I find it extremely beneficial to use both guides. Both books have sections on how to use the book, terminology, a glossary, migration, hints, anatomy, flight positions, counting, optics, photography, and digital imaging, but this not-verbatim duplication of content is necessary, especially since the second work is a stand alone guide.

Both guides have sections that contain descriptions of each species, and there is some duplication of headings but not content. In *Hawks at a Distance*, Liguori incorporates discussions of flight, similar species, and ID pitfalls in captions on numerous pages that illustrate these comments with six color images of distant raptors in flight.

To get a feel for this format, the publisher encourages viewers to use these PDF downloads of three hawk species examples.

<http://press.princeton.edu/birds/hawks/cooperspread.html>
(Cooper's Hawk, pgs. 25–29)

<http://press.princeton.edu/birds/hawks/red-shoulder.html>
(Red-shouldered Hawk, pgs. 47–50)

<http://press.princeton.edu/birds/hawks/rough-legged.html>
(Rough-legged Hawk, pgs. 91–100)

Hawks at a Distance: Identification of Migrant Raptors is a necessary and welcomed addition to the raptor library. The evolution of raptor ID is continuing rapidly toward that point of identification with few errors, and Liguori is near that mark.

I find this book and other similarly sized guides are more useful in the field if they're laying flat for no-hands usage. I like to replace their current binding with a spring coil one, available from FedEx Office for about \$6. See you at the hawk watch!

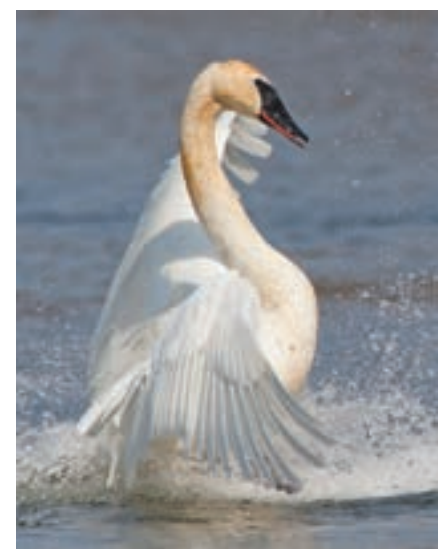
Bob Pettit is biology professor emeritus at Monroe County Community College with 42 years of teaching service. His birding travels include much of the U.S., parts of Costa Rica, the mainland of Ecuador, and the Galapagos Islands. He is a former chair and current board member of Whitefish Point Bird Observatory and former secretary and chair of the Hawk Migration Association of North America. With over 1,500 hours of counting/observation, he is currently president of Holiday Beach Migration Observatory (hbmo.org), where he has developed a hawk identification workshop. He can be reached at redknot@earthlink.net.

Managing a Year's Worth of Images

BY JOSH HAAS

You've slowly acquired the gear, you've bought the computer and software, and you've spent the last birding season shooting like crazy. Now what? Not only do you need to find and post-process images, but what about safe photo storage? These types of things are always thought of second. Good images, no matter how old, should be easily reached at all times and stored in a way that is reliable and safe. There is nothing worse than going back to find an image with no luck, or to find that a prized image has been erased forever because of a failed drive. It's important to realize there are many photo storage processes to use and what works for someone else may not be perfect for you. Ask around to see what others are doing and make the decision based on what works best for you.

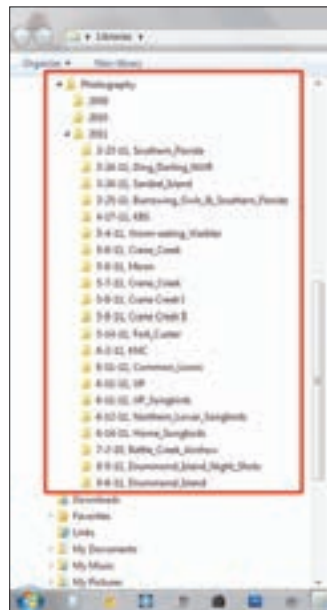
Storing and managing images starts with a well-thought-out plan. Images need to be searchable, quick to bring up, and safe. Many programs can help with creating libraries of images based on keywords, dates, and more. Adobe Lightroom and Bridge within Photoshop are great tools for this, but if you don't have these tools, there are other ways. One of the tried and true methods of storage I have been using for years involves using simple folder hierarchies within Windows Explorer (also possible with Macintosh's Finder). This costs nothing extra above the computer and storage (hard drives). Deciding where to store the masses of images is the first step to this method. An easy solution would be two external hard drives. The basic premise is to store everything on one drive, and then mirror that data on the second drive as a backup.



The author rediscovered this image of a Trumpeter Swan after losing track of it for two years. © 2009 Josh Haas.

One recommendation is to store the second drive off-site (e.g., at work) in the event that something catastrophic happens to your home. Keep the second drive updated at least quarterly to minimize large losses of data if something does happen. Once you've decided on the location of your storage, now comes the hierarchy of folders. Think of this as a tree diagram. The top folder would be called

"Photography," while the next folders within would be named as years (e.g., "2009," "2010," "2011," etc.) Within those folders would be more folders that would be titled with the date of shoot and a rough synopsis of the shoot (e.g., "5-4-11, Worm-eating Warbler"). Think of these folders as albums. Within that folder or album would be where all your images are actually stored (see accompanying photo to see example structure). A trick to quickly view lots of images from a shoot would be to use a separate viewer program that can view image types such as RAW and JPEG. These viewers are extremely fast and yield an efficient way of searching a folder of images quickly for that one great photo. For me, that program is Digital Photo Professional (Canon Software that comes with all of their SLRs). I quickly view the images and camera data and then open the "workable" images in Photoshop.



Taking some time to archive during the off-season can help every photographer keep track of his or her photographs. © 2011 Josh Haas.

Aside from storage, not everyone has their own website for showing off their latest creations. Websites such as Picasa and Flickr are fantastic ways of displaying your work. Be careful, however, to only post low-resolution images (72dpi) with some sort of copyright to protect yourself. In the six years I've been showing my work, I've had images used without my permission several times (that I know about). These websites also offer password protection to only allow certain viewers inside your galleries. Also consider starting a blog, which is a great way to showcase your work while also telling stories of how you created those images. This is one more way of allowing viewers to truly connect with your work. Google offers free blog space at blogger.com.

When all is said and done, keep things simple and use descriptive titles for folders so that they can be easily searched. Showcase your work, even if you're nervous about getting mixed reviews. The harsh reviewers are the ones that make you work hard at creating that next masterpiece.

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.

CraneFest Special Thanks

ANOTHER SANDHILL CRANE and Art Festival is come and gone. CraneFest XVII is history now, but the good memories of a successful event remain. Michigan Audubon would like to thank everyone involved in helping us with the event.

CraneFest wouldn't be possible without our partnership with the Kiwanis Club of Battle Creek. Big Marsh Lake, where the cranes go to roost at night, is located in Baker Sanctuary, but due to the geography of the sanctuary, the lake isn't visible from there. The Kiwanis have graciously allowed Michigan Audubon to run the event from their property, which overlooks the lake. Kiwanis members Sam Conklin, Dick Gillespie, and Don Stilwell dedicate many hours to getting the site ready for the event and also working during CraneFest. Their dedication to Kiwanis and their assistance is greatly appreciated.

The advent of major sponsorship for CraneFest was a new aspect of the event this year, and Michigan Audubon hopes it will continue. We would like to thank Heath Outdoor Products for their event sponsorship at the Whooping Crane level. Also contributing at the Sanctuary Friend level was Independent Bank. At the donor level of sponsorship was the Eaton County Federal Credit Union. Eagle Optics, BradsDeals.com, Vanguard USA, and Stovall Products all contributed incredible products to our raffle and silent auction. Also contributing to our kick-off evening were Nottawa Wild Bird Supply, Schuler's Restaurant and Pub, Sandhill Crane Winery, Dark Horse Brewery, Olivet College, Wild Birds Unlimited—Portage & Kalamazoo stores, Roger Eriksson, Don & Lillian Stokes, Richard Yarsevich, The Inn at Black Star Farms, Douglas J Companies, Rockport Birding & Kayak Adventures, Moosejaw, Arcadia Brewing Co., Bird Watcher's Digest, and the Seasonal Grille.

Jolene Flynn, the new resident manager of Baker Sanctuary, deserves our deepest gratitude for making many local arrangements during one of her busiest times of the year.

We would also like to thank the following organizations, businesses, and individuals that donated funds and/or assistance to CraneFest 2011:

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Bernie Holcomb and family | Asian Studies Center of MSU | Elizabeth Abood-Carroll |
| Audrey Haddock and her art students | Pierce Cedar Creek Institute | Jim Hewitt |
| Earthbound Environmental Awareness Organization | Boy Scouts of America Troop #309 | Greg Bodker |
| Kellogg Bird Sanctuary | Michigan Hawking Club | David Weliky |
| Battle Creek Brigham Audubon | Dr. Richard Fleming | Loretta Gold |
| Audubon Society of Kalamazoo | Dr. Leah Knapp | Elena Millard |
| Michigan Loon Preservation Association | Kara & Josh Haas | D J McNeil |
| Michigan Bluebird Society | Richard Yarsevich | Greg Nelson |
| Kingman Museum | Terry Hewlett | Katelyn Liming |
| Binder Park Zoo | Gail & Harold Hladky | David Gardner |
| All Species Kinship | Mike & Nancy Boyce | Patrick Fields |
| Kalamazoo Astronomical Society | Eugene & Jan Schmidt | Alice Daily |
| Daughters of the American Revolution | Vee Bjornson | John Baumgartner |
| | John Goergen | Cam Myers |
| | Roger & Debbie Wolf | Meijer Inc.—Charlotte Store |
| | Janet Green | The Song Bird Co. |
| | Carolyn Rourke | |

Subscribe today to volume 19 of Michigan's only ornithological journal.



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.

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Calendar November

- 19 **Gently used nature book sale,** Saret Nature Center, Berrien Springs
- 27 **Getting ready for winter program—2:00 PM** Seven Ponds Nature Center

December

- 3 **Chickadee Christmas—10:00 AM—2:00 PM** Lake Bluff Bird Sanctuary, Manistee
- Dec. 14-Jan. 5 **Christmas Bird Count** Check with your local chapter for exact date and time

January

- 14-15 **Winter birding at the Soo fieldtrip** Hosted by Whitefish Point Bird Observatory

Announcements

Get ready for spring warblers and Michigan Audubon's 2012 signature event series!
© 2010 Michael Mill.



News

American Ornithologist's Union Has Been Busy

If you thought you had seen all the birds in the USA, think again. The American Ornithologist's Union (AOU), the group devoted to the scientific study of birds, has added seven more birds to the United States checklist this year. This brings the total number of AOU-recognized species for all of North America to 976. All of the species that were added to the United States list were sighted in coastal states or states that share the border with Mexico.

The AOU also split a few bird families and renamed a few birds; the most important of these changes to us Michiganders is that the Common Moorhen is now known as the Common Gallinule. The biggest change that the AOU instituted, though, was to reorganize the wood-warbler family tree. Forty species were transferred from one genus to another, and six genera were done away with! Just when you thought you had those warblers all figured out—oh well. The 52nd supplement to the Check-List of North American Birds has all the details of these changes and additions and can be found at www.aou.org. Let the field guide revisions commence!

Check Your Expiration Date

On the back page of this issue of the *Jack Pine Warbler*, just above your name on the mailing label, is your membership expiration date. If it says December 31, 2011, please take a moment to renew your membership. Doing so now will reduce the number of renewal letters that we will need to send out, which in turn will save the organization money that can then be used toward bird conservation issues. Thank you in advance for renewing early.



A winter birding walk around the grounds of the Lake Bluff Bird Sanctuary. © 2009 Jonathan E. Lutz.

Events

Chickadee Christmas Just Around the Corner

Michigan Audubon hosts a fun little event at the Lake Bluff Bird Sanctuary in Manistee each December. Now called Chickadee Christmas, the original name of this event was Chocolate Christmas, which came from the fancy chocolate goodies that members of the Manistee Audubon Society made and donated to sell at the event. The event will be held this year on December 3, running from 10:00 AM–2:00 PM. There are still chocolate goodies and other items that you can purchase at Chickadee Christmas, but the event also has nature walks and other activities that highlight this beautiful sanctuary on the shores of Lake Michigan. If the cold temperatures don't suit you, enjoy a cup of coffee inside while watching the birds at the feeders. The manor house will be decked out for the holidays and is a great location to while away the time in a relaxing atmosphere. If you're looking for field guides or nature-related books to give as gifts this holiday season, the Lake Bluff Nature Gift Store carries many titles to help you with your shopping list.

The Lake Bluff Bird Sanctuary, a 76-acre property of Michigan Audubon, is located two miles north of Manistee at 2890 Lakeshore Road. The home located on the property of Lake Bluff is operated as a bed-and-breakfast; reservations can be made by calling 231-723-4042. For more information on Lake Bluff or Chickadee Christmas visit Michigan Audubon's website at www.michiganaudubon.org.

Chickadee Christmas is just one of the activities held during Manistee's Victorian Sleighbell Parade and Old Christmas Weekend, December 1–4. For more information on all the activities taking place in Manistee that weekend, visit the event page at www.visitmanistee-michigan.com.

2012 Event Schedule Set

If you have purchased a 2012 calendar already, you will want to get it out to mark down the following upcoming events.

- Michigan Audubon's first event of the year will be the **Tawas Point Birding Festival**, taking place May 17–20 in East Tawas and Oscoda.
- The Otis Farm Bird Sanctuary near Hastings is home to **Cerulean Warbler Weekend**, which will be June 1–3.
- **The Sandhill Crane & Art Festival, CraneFest XVIII**, will be held October 13 & 14, 2012 at the Kiwanis Youth Area near Bellevue.
- The last event of the year will be **Chickadee Christmas** at the Lake Bluff Bird Sanctuary on December 1.

The date for Migration Celebration, which occurs at Lake Bluff during fall migration, is still up in the air. Michigan Audubon staff is currently evaluating this event and will determine a date soon.

Monthly nature walks are also planned at five of Michigan Audubon's sanctuaries. A schedule of these walks and other programs will be included in the January/February issue of the *Jack Pine Warbler*. The sanctuaries where activities are planned are the Bernard W. Baker Sanctuary near Bellevue, Phyllis Haenle Memorial Sanctuary in Jackson, Hawk Valley Farm in Lansing, Lake Bluff Bird Sanctuary in Manistee, and the Otis Farm Bird Sanctuary near Hastings.

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THANK YOU
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Spectators wait for the arrival of the cranes during CraneFest XVII. © 2011 John Goergen.

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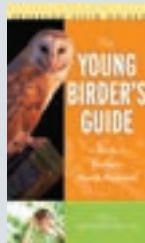
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WINTER MAY BE THE BEST TIME OF YEAR

to get children involved in birding. Having them participate in a Christmas bird count will get them excited, and you can purchase them their first field guide as a gift for the holidays. There are currently two excellent choices in field guides written for children:



Peterson Field Guides: The Young Birder's Guide to Birds of Eastern North America

by Bill Thompson III

\$14.95 (flexibound)

A great guide for ages 10-15.



Wild about Michigan Birds

by Adele Porter

\$17.95

For the younger crowd; this would be a good guide for children aged 7-10.

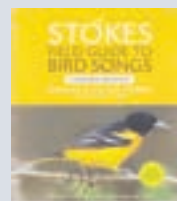


Kaufman Field Guide to Advanced Birding

by Kenn Kaufman

\$21.00

The subtitle to this book is *Understanding What You See and Hear*. In this book, birding guru Kenn Kaufman concisely provides the principles of identification to help you in the field. He promises that this book will make the learning process more effective, which, in turn, will make birding more fun.



Stokes Field Guide to Bird Songs: Eastern Region

by Don & Lillian Stokes

\$24.98 (set of 3 CDs)

This audio field guide includes birdcalls with voice narrative for 372 species of birds of eastern North America. As a bonus, an MP3 CD of songs without the narrative is included for you to use on your MP3 device; also included is a PDF booklet that provides call and song descriptions for all the species.



Birding Journal: Through the Seasons

by Vanessa Sorensen

\$12.95

Start your 2012 birding off right by keeping a journal of your sightings and escapades. Divided by seasons, the book actually starts with March and runs through February. Each month includes pages to list sightings, note pages, monthly trip listings, and an end-of-the-month sighting list. Hints on different aspects of birding are spread

throughout the book, and the artwork is simply beautiful.



Into the Forest: Nature's Food Chain Game

\$15.95

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By e-mail. Wendy@MichiganAudubon.org.