

# Jack Pine *Warbler*

*SPRING BIRDING:* Species Spotlight: Long-tailed Duck ■ Avian Apps ■ Framing the Flock ■  
Tawas Point Birding Festival Preview ■ Osprey Banding Adventures



# Jack Pine Warbler

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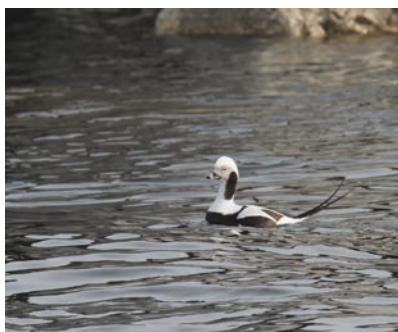
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Cover Photo ■ Long-Tailed Duck

Photographer: Roger Eriksson

Long-tailed Ducks can be difficult to capture on film because they often don't allow photographers to get close enough for a quality shot. Au Sable Valley Audubon member Roger Eriksson captured this image at the mouth of the Au Sable River in Iosco County, Michigan in late March 2008. He used a Canon EOS-1D Mark III at f/9, 1/1250 sec, ISO 800.

# Contents

## Features

2

Long-tailed Ducks in the  
Great Lakes

4

Osprey Banding with Sergej

6

Michigan's Great Spring  
Birding Destination

## Columns

7

Book Review

Avian Architecture

8

Websitings

Better Birding Through  
Technology: Avian Apps and  
Our Favorite Website

9

Volunteer Spotlight

Richard Yarsevich

10

Feathered Lens

Framing the Flock

## Departments

1

Executive Director's Letter

11

Young Birders

Finding a Job in Bird  
Conservation

12

Announcements



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

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

# Executive Director's Letter

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## BIRD CONSERVATION ISN'T ALWAYS GLAMOROUS.

Bird conservation is sifting through hundreds of crinkled and coffee-stained data forms. Bird conservation is dealing with illegal trash dumping at a remote corner of a bird sanctuary. Bird conservation is painstakingly creating online registration forms for a recreational bird watching event.

I am proud to say that our three-person staff, supported by volunteer managers in Manistee and Bellevue, does a remarkable job compiling bird monitoring data, keeping the sanctuaries clean and safe, and coordinating a top-notch schedule of signature bird watching events.

When thick, hand-addressed envelopes arrive labeled with "Attn: Bird Monitoring" on them, I immediately pass them along to conservation director Tom Funke. For the third year in a row, Tom has coordinated volunteers for at least a half-dozen threatened or endangered bird species-monitoring projects. Cerulean Warbler monitoring is an effort to which we devote a lot of time and energy. Two Michigan Audubon bird sanctuaries either border or occur within the warbler's nesting habitat. While I'm thankful for our volunteers when I see those bulky envelopes arrive, I'm never jealous of Tom for the many hours he spends painstakingly compiling the data.

Rich and Deb Krieger are the resident managers at the Lake Bluff Bird Sanctuary in Manistee. The 76-acre property overlooks 1,500 feet of Lake Michigan shoreline and features an arboretum and several intriguing nature trails. In addition to stewarding this unique property, the Kriegers have gradually revitalized the pre-World War II

manor house residing there. The home now features three guest rooms that are rented on a regular basis with a continental breakfast for guests, making Lake Bluff the ideal base for birding adventures in northwest Michigan.

The 2012 Tawas Point Birding Festival will be May 17–20 in Iosco County. We ended 2011 with the news that Jon Dunn would be one of our keynote speakers at the event. If you want to learn from one of the top bird watchers in the United States, be sure to arrive early for the festival, as Jon will be speaking on Thursday evening at the Tawas Bay Yacht Club. The Tawas festival features some of the best and most diverse birding you can find in the Midwest during spring migration season. The best part: you won't have to compete with crowds of birders and mega-lens photographers to get looks at 30 species of warblers. I'm sure you've been hearing the term "buy locally," as it's recently become a mainstream concept. This year we ask you to "bird locally" and consider making Tawas Point your spring birding destination.

Bird conservation might not always be glamorous. The reward is in the results that shape Michigan Audubon's conservation agenda. A handwritten note about a unique day of bird monitoring, an unexpected volunteer offering help to maintain a sanctuary trail, or a smile at the end of a good day of birding—these are just a few of the rewards we get from connecting birds and people.

Best regards,

A stylized handwritten signature of Jonathan E. Lutz in black ink.

Jonathan E. Lutz, executive director



Rich and Deb Krieger comprise the management team at the Lake Bluff Bird Sanctuary in Manistee, MI.  
© 2009 Tom Funke.



# A Duck by Any Other Name

BY WENDY TATAR

**V**olume 3 of *Michigan Birds and Natural History* was issued in 1996. The first article in issue number 4 is entitled “Possible Factors in Increased Populations of Oldsquaw and White-winged Scoter in Northeast Lake Michigan.” It was written by Brian Allen and Tim Granger, both members of Michigan Audubon’s local chapter in Manistee. Long-tailed Ducks aren’t called “Oldsquaw” very often now; it’s been more than a dozen years since the politically incorrect name was changed.

Long-tailed Ducks migrating to the Great Lakes for the winter is a somewhat recent phenomenon. The following account is adapted from the aforementioned article in volume 3, number 4 of *Michigan Birds and Natural History*:

On 20 March 1994, a count of several large rafts of Long-tailed Ducks (*Clangula hyemalis*) off Pierport in Manistee County, Michigan totaled 35,000 individuals.

This number reflects an increased number of the species in Lake Michigan along the Manistee and Benzie County shorelines at the end of the 1993-94 winter season.

...In Michigan, there have historically not been large numbers of Long-tailed Ducks wintering on Lake Michigan. That situation has recently changed. Michigan CBC [Christmas Bird Count] totals of Long-tailed Ducks have increased over 200% as measured in both individuals and individuals per party-hour in the 1990s when compared to totals during the 1970s and 1980s.

The authors go on to report that numbers of Long-tailed Ducks in states bordering Lake Michigan have declined for unknown reasons:

While apparently no reason has been proposed for decreases in other states, two factors may be influencing the recent

increase in numbers of Long-tailed Ducks in northeastern Lake Michigan. One, the cold winter of 1993-94 could account for temporary concentrations in localized areas of open water. The other, the introduction of zebra mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha*) in the Great Lakes, has long-term implications.

Winters of the late 1980s through 1992 tended to be mild with relatively short cold spells. The winter of 1993-94 was a dramatic change. Record cold weather lasted from late December until mid-February.... Open water on the Great Lakes was scarce except near the usual areas of thermal effluent from power plants. The only other area of substantial open water (20% to 40% ice cover) was in north-central Lake Michigan and the western quarter of Lake Ontario.

These areas of open water apparently served as refuges for diving ducks during the winter of 1993-94....



Zebra mussels are native to eastern Europe and western Asia. They were accidentally introduced into the Great Lakes in the ballast water of cargo ships. They were first found in Lake St. Clair in 1988. By August 1990, colonies were found in Lake Michigan at Bridgman and St. Joseph (Berrien County), and the following year they were located in Manistee (Manistee County) and Northport (Leelanau County). In October 1994, one of the authors accompanied divers to zebra mussel sites in Lake Michigan off Pierport and Arcadia in Manistee County and off Inspiration Point in Benzie County. In five sites surveyed where large concentrations of ducks had been found the previous winter and spring, all bottom rocks and gravel beds were completely encrusted with zebra mussels.... The timing of the increase in the numbers of Long-tailed Ducks seems to correlate with the arrival and spread of the zebra mussels in this region.

Mollusks are present in the diets of both Oldsquaw and White-winged Scoter....

Continuing surveys of the duck concentrations off the Manistee and Benzie County shorelines of Lake Michigan will further clarify the extent and persistence of the population increases of these two species in Lake Michigan. Spring migration counts could also help elucidate the numbers of Long-tailed Ducks wintering in Michigan. Continued increases in wintering Long-tailed Duck populations should be reflected on future spring migration surveys.

A table included with the article shows the number of Long-tailed Ducks seen in the winter of 1990-91 as 0, in 1991-92 as 2, in 1992-93 as 0, in 1993-94 as 420, in 1994-95 as 15,800, and in 1995-96 as 10,000.

Referencing subsequent issues of *Michigan Birds and Natural History*, I found that number 3 of each volume contains Christmas Bird Count (CBC) data and the results of the Michigan Winter Bird Survey. The third issue of volume 12, published in 2005, shows the numbers of

Long-tailed Ducks a decade after the published findings of Allen and Granger. The CBC numbers were 6,716 in the northern Lower Peninsula, 55 in the southern Lower Peninsula, and 26 in the Upper Peninsula. Twenty-four thousand Long-tailed Ducks were counted on January 8 at Orchard Beach State Park in Manistee. Less significant numbers of birds were reported elsewhere in Lakes Michigan, Huron, Erie, and St. Clair, as well as the Detroit River.

Volume 18, number 3 (2011) provides survey data from winter 2010-11. During the CBC, a total of 15,069 Long-tailed Ducks were counted; 13,027 of these were in the southern Lower Peninsula. The results of the Winter Bird Survey indicate that 22,313 ducks were seen January 8 off Grand Haven State Park, 118 were seen on December 19 at Tawas Point State Park, 2,400 were seen on January 23 off Big Sable Point, and 500 were seen on December 6 in Port Huron. Smaller groups of birds were also reported at various locations around the state. By these accounts, it appears that Long-tailed Duck numbers are still high, though the birds are now more widely dispersed around the state.

Could the fact that zebra mussels are now found in great numbers throughout the Great Lakes be contributing to this phenomenon? What are the numbers being seen off the shore of Wisconsin, Illinois, and Indiana now? The next time I talk to Brian and Tim, I will suggest that they continue their research on this and to please let us know what they find out.

Michigan Audubon's program coordinator, Wendy Tatar, can be reached by calling 517-641-4277 or by e-mailing [Wendy@MichiganAudubon.org](mailto:Wendy@MichiganAudubon.org).



A Long-tailed Duck in flight over open water.  
© 2011 Matt Hysell.

## *Clangula hyemalis*— LONG-TAILED DUCK

The tail feathers of the male Long-tailed Duck extend up to 15 centimeters from the body, making it easily identifiable in flight. The female lacks these long tail feathers and is much smaller than her male counterpart.

These ducks dive deeper than other species, reaching depths of 200 feet in search of crustaceans, mollusks, small fish, insects, and some aquatic plants. Long-tailed Ducks breed in tundra pools and marshes along the sea coast within the Arctic Circle. This territory includes the northern coasts of Russia, Asia, and Europe; Greenland; Alaska; and the Canadian provinces of Yukon Territory, Northwest Territory, and Nunavut, as well as part of Newfoundland and Labrador.

These ducks make shallow nests of grasses and leaves on the shoreline, usually concealed in weeds or under bushes. Here the female duck lays five to twelve eggs. She incubates them alone, and once they hatch, she may take her brood and join one or two other females with their broods to watch their offspring together—a day-care effect.

Long-tailed Ducks arrive in large flocks on the Great Lakes to spend the winter. The species usually won't arrive until November. Large rafts of birds are reported by boaters on the Great Lakes, and a group of approximately 300 ducks was seen during a trip to Charity Island at the Tawas Point Birding Festival in 2011. The species also winters off the coast of British Columbia and the state of Washington in the Pacific Ocean and in the Atlantic off the coast from Maine south to North Carolina. Wintering birds can also be found in the St. Lawrence River.

# Osprey Banding With Sergej

BY LINDA KLEMENS

**O**n Thursday July 28, 2011, two pontoon boat-loads of Thunder Bay Audubon Society (TBAS) birders left Jack's Landing for a tour of Fletcher Pond in Alpena County. Ornithologist Sergej Postupalsky was on board and guided the boat driver to one of the Osprey platforms he had checked earlier that day. Birders enjoyed ideal weather and spotted Caspian Terns, Ring-billed Gulls, Canada Geese, and three or four duck species before reaching the platform. Maneuvering took a few minutes, but once the boat was securely held against the base of the platform, 6'3" Postupalsky climbed on the boat railing and gently picked up one of the young birds to bring it down into the boat. A second bird was handed down, and everyone gathered to hear Sergej's comments as he worked with the youngsters. Meanwhile, the parent birds circled overhead vociferously raising protests of nest robbing, though neither adult dive bombed or tried to attack Sergej as he explained, "I'm out here a lot, and from their behavior, it's apparent the birds seem to recognize me."

After he's spent 50 years dedicated to research of the Osprey population at Fletcher Pond, it's not surprising the birds know this researcher. In mid-April, Sergej's long-time friend Pete DeSimone, who manages an Audubon sanctuary in California, comes to Alpena to repair or replace any platforms that are damaged by ice. Using an airboat and GPS coordinates, Pete and his crew first check the platforms for damage. Some may be a total loss and have to be built anew, using new or salvaged pipe and new wooden tops, the latter built by TBAS member Arnie Pokorzynski, who also helps with the repair work. Sergej then returns to check for nesting activity and identifies the breeding pairs. An accurate count of eggs per nest is then taken with a pole mirror. Sergej admits he's not thrilled climbing the ladder resting on the mucky, stumpy bottom of the shallow pond and precariously balanced against the tripod platform, but his age (76) doesn't seem to slow him down. Then it's time to band and record the vital statistics for each bird. Sergej has nicknames for some birds—which aren't always flattering—and knows where and when he banded each bird, its mating and reproductive history, and if they've mastered successful parenting skills.

On that day, he concluded both birds were females because there was some brown spotting of the feathers in the upper chest, and females are more heavily streaked in this area than males. Larger body size and more robust tarsi also indicated that these were young females. As he talked to each bird, he checked for parasites, feather development, and the bird's overall condition. He then banded each young bird with a service band issued by the Bird Banding Lab as well as a plastic color band to identify its hatching year. Most of the adults nesting on Fletcher Pond are marked by a unique combination of color bands which allow Sergej to follow

individuals from one year to the next. Before putting the birds back into the nest, he dipped their legs and bellies in the pond to cool them off. While we were at the nest, we watched the adult birds dragging their feet along the surface of the water to cool themselves on this hot day.

After the young have fledged, Sergej covers the platforms (by tying a metal garbage can lid over them) to keep Canada Geese from taking over the platforms before the Osprey return in spring. The lids are removed after the Osprey arrive in April. Each year, Sergej sends a detailed scientific report of his findings to the TBAS, National Audubon, and Mr. Steven Stackpole, the main sponsor of this research program since it began.







Within minutes of our departure, the adult birds swooped down and reconnected with their young, noisily squawking about our intrusion and obviously relieved to find their young unharmed.

This banding was a thrilling experience, and fortunately TBAS member Lynn Galea captured some amazing photos of the outing. Needless to say, this has become a planned yearly event for area birders!

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Linda Klemens is the current president of the Thunder Bay Audubon Society and has been birding since she retired in 1995. She participates in the North American Migration Count and the three Christmas Bird Counts held in the Alpena area each year, is involved with Birding School at Nettie Bay, and delivers presentations to groups and schools. She's traveled the world to go birding and is headed to Costa Rica in March—a bucket list trip of a lifetime. Linda can be reached at [lklemens@gmail.com](mailto:lklemens@gmail.com).



**FAR LEFT:** A juvenile female rests on a towel prior to being evaluated, panting from the heat.

**LEFT:** This adult remained on the snag nearest to the birders, ready to fly in and defend the young birds if they gave a threatened call.

**RIGHT:** Sergej carefully examines the young bird to evaluate its overall condition, looking for signs of disease, feather development, and growth factors.



# MICHIGAN'S GREAT SPRING BIRDING DESTINATION

**H**ow many times have you been talking to your birding friends when they mentioned that they are going to Point Pelee, Crane Creek, or Magee Marsh to go birding in May?

Maybe you go there too. When we inquire how their trip was, invariably we hear “there were so many birds, but it’s so crowded,” when referring to Magee Marsh. Or “the birding was great, but the border crossing took forever,” when speaking about Point Pelee. This year, why not plan a trip to a Michigan destination that will get you the same birding results without the hassles?

We’ve seen it on the faces of famous birders when they come in from a birding jaunt at Tawas Point State Park. Lillian Stokes had tears in her eyes as she talked about “warblers like I’ve never seen, just dripping from the trees” at last year’s Tawas Point Birding Festival. Kevin Karlson wondered why “anyone would go to Crane Creek when there’s everything except the crowds at Tawas Point.” And Jon Dunn lists Tawas Point as one of his favorite birding spots in the entire **world**.



Birders from all over have made the Tawas Point Birding Festival an annual destination for spring birding. © 2008 Wendy Tatar.

Speaking of Jon Dunn, he will be at the 2012 Tawas Point Birding Festival. Is this name ringing a bell with you? If you have National Geographic’s *Field Guide to the Birds of North America* (now in its sixth edition) or one of the subsequent regional versions, you will see his name in the front as an editor of the guide. You will also see his name as an author of *Gulls of the Americas*, possibly one of the most definitive guides to gull identification that has ever been published.

Jon will present a program about warblers on Thursday evening. That’s right—we are going to shake things up a bit at this year’s event. There will be a keynote speaker each night (Thursday–Saturday) of the event. As always, there will be a large selection of birding tours, and some special trips will be offered.

Best of all, you’ll see birds—lots of them. At the 2011 event, a total of 170 species were seen. White-throated Sparrows covered the ground at the lighthouse. With most of their body camouflaged in the winter-killed grass, their white spots looked like popcorn popping on the ground. If you want to know what birds you might see at the event, check out the event website, [tawasbirdfest.com](http://tawasbirdfest.com). The bird lists for all of the past events are listed there. Everyone has a good time at this event, and we hope you’ll join us this year.

Michigan Audubon’s program coordinator, Wendy Tatar, can be reached by calling 517-641-4277 or by e-mailing [Wendy@MichiganAudubon.org](mailto:Wendy@MichiganAudubon.org).

BY WENDY TATAR

**WE ARE SO EXCITED** to again be heading to the Tawas Point Birding Festival for our annual conference! Four days of field trips, seminars, and social gatherings will introduce attendees to the great birding our state offers and the opportunities that Michigan Audubon provides.

## 7TH ANNUAL TAWAS POINT BIRDING FESTIVAL & MICHIGAN AUDUBON ANNUAL CONFERENCE

### THURSDAY MAY 17

Choose from these and other fun trips and workshops:

- Board a bus for a birding and sight-seeing trip on the Scenic River Byway.
- Learn how to get that perfect shot in a birding photography workshop.
- Head by boat to Charity Island, in the middle of Saginaw Bay, for some great birding opportunities.
- Join participants for an evening of refreshments and birding entertainment with Jon Dunn. Learn about the warblers that migrate through Tawas Point and why this world birder ranks Tawas Point as one of his favorite birding locations.

### FRIDAY MAY 18, SATURDAY MAY 19, & SUNDAY MAY 20

Some of the tours offered during the festival:

- Search for Kirtland’s Warblers in their nesting habitat, the jack pine plantations, via a bus trip into U.S. Forest Service land.
- Follow skilled and charismatic trip leaders on hikes around Tawas Point State Park in search of hundreds of species of migrating songbirds, lingering waterfowl, and early shorebirds.
- Take a bus to Tuttle Marsh for a guided tour in search of the challenging species that call this federally protected wetland home.
- Join a carpool trip to local hot spots for birds and spring wildflowers.
- Bird Charity Island on Sunday with a boat cruise.

Afternoons on Friday and Saturday will be filled with sessions held at the festival headquarters, the Tawas Bay Beach Resort.

- Discover the secrets to birding by ear.
- Hear about the Kirtland’s Warbler’s winter home in the Bahamas and the efforts to protect it from development.
- Learn how to listen for the flights of migrating songbirds at night and how to detect which is flying overhead from the chips and chirps that they make.
- Find out how to identify those challenging warblers.
- Hear about the history of Kirtland’s Warbler protection and what the future holds for one of the rarest songbirds in North America at Friday’s special session with Bill Rapai.
- Join Irish birder Harry Hussey and Michigan’s IBA coordinator Caleb Putnam as they present trans-Atlantic migration tales at Saturday’s special session.

Fun and entertaining activities will bring Friday and Saturday nights to a close. Join us both nights for a tally rally, which provides an overview of the day’s events and sightings. Evening birding fieldtrips are planned for both nights to take you in search of migrating birds and species roosting in wetlands.



# Book Review

## *Avian Architecture*

BY PETER GOODFELLOW

(PUBLISHED IN THE USA AND CANADA BY PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2011; CONCEIVED, DESIGNED, AND PRODUCED BY IVY PRESS, EAST SUSSEX, UK, 160 PP.)

REVIEWED BY JIM HEWITT

**I**n the foreword to this book, Professor Mike Hansell makes three interesting observations about bird nest building. First, he notes that among the vertebrate animals, it is birds, rather than our nearest relatives, the mammals, that are the most consistently excellent builders. The second point he raises is that no matter how intricate the nest, birds generally spend relatively little time constructing it. Thirdly, Hansell reflects on the equipment that a bird brings to the task. While feet are often used, the work is primarily done by the beak. He likens building a simple nest with just a beak to making a ham and cheese sandwich with one hand behind your back.

Most of the book's twelve chapters are organized around a particular type of nest construction, beginning with the minimalist scrape nests of, among others, the plovers. The book continues through the many different kinds of nests, such as the platform nests of eagles and egrets and the hanging, woven, and stitched nests of orioles, caciques, oropendolas, and weaverbirds. Other chapters deal with colonial nesters and the unique constructions of bowerbirds. Over a hundred species of birds worldwide are covered.

Each of these chapters focusing on a certain nest type begins with an overview of how that particular type of nest is constructed and which families of birds build them. This is followed by a section titled "Blueprints" in which, for example, the cup-shaped nest of a Red-winged Blackbird is explained in detail using dimensional diagrams and drawings. The next section, "Materials and Features," shows a sketch of a different cup-shaped nest builder, describes the materials used to build the nest, and discusses the special features of the nest, such as camouflage, that allow it to be successful in its singular goal of being a secure container for eggs. The chapters conclude with case studies of several different birds; for example, the chapter on hole and tunnel nests features the Great Hornbill, the European Bee-eater, the Burrowing Owl, and the Red-cockaded Woodpecker. The range and classification of each bird are given, and habitat and breeding behavior are described. The site, construction, materials, insulation, defense, and adornment of the nest are all topics included in this section.

Photographs and drawings are used very effectively throughout the book—there are some 300 full-color images spread over 160 pages. Some of the photographs take up the full page (nearly 8" x 10"), and many of these are just superb. I especially liked one of a Winter Wren with a crane fly in its beak, flying in front of its nest of open-mouthed young. Unfortunately, however, the name of the creator of

## AVIAN ARCHITECTURE

How Birds Design, Engineer & Build

PETER GOODFELLOW



**\$22.95**

Available at the Michigan  
Audubon Bookstore

this image, as well as the names of all the other photographers, are buried somewhere within the oddly arranged picture credits in the back of the book. The case studies mentioned earlier often include a small reproduction of a painting of the featured bird. Some of these are recognizable as the work of John James Audubon, but I could find no attribution.

The author, Peter Goodfellow, is a retired English teacher and lifelong birdwatcher. That is about all we can know of him, at least within the pages of this book. Likewise, the editor, Mike Hansell, is described only as a professor. Despite whatever more complete biographies may or may not reveal, they have created an excellent book that is both informative and attractive. As a near-lifelong birdwatcher, I learned a great deal in reading *Avian Architecture* and gained a deeper appreciation of what is really involved in nest construction. It is truly something to be marveled.

Jim Hewitt is retired from a career in computer systems management with the automotive industry. He lives in Okemos, where he is an active member of the local chapters of Michigan Audubon, Michigan Botanical Club, and Wild Ones. He performs volunteer stewardship for Michigan Audubon, Michigan Nature Association, and the Stewardship Network.

# Websitings

## Better Birding Through Technology: Avian Apps and Our Favorite Website

BY JONATHAN E. LUTZ & BETHANY TOMASZEWSKI

**W**e're happy to report that the internet and the vast array of electronic gadgets have not replaced our field guides or imperiled monthly Audubon meetings. Instead, online resources and high-tech devices like smartphones and tablets have enhanced birders' knowledge of natural history and conservation, and in some cases even reinvigorated an interest in field identification. We've highlighted three go-to resources here for you to consider the next time you hit the birding trail or spot a bird through your kitchen window.

You may have seen advertisements of a program called Larkwire in the most recent national birding magazines. Well, we took notice and investigated, and we're pleased to report that this is a great resource for new birders and seasoned veterans alike. Larkwire **(1)** can be experienced via your web browser or downloaded and accessed as a smartphone application. Many of our members have discovered that birding by ear can help you find more birds. It also helps you enter their world in a new way and discover what's going on in their lives, as they are constantly using sounds to communicate and express themselves. Larkwire helps you listen in by teaching you how to identify birds by the sounds they make. The website and app are a game-based learning system to help you identify bird sounds—even variations of bird songs that you might encounter in the field. The program is customizable—you only learn the sounds you want to learn—and also includes identification tips from Michael O'Brien, one of the top "ear birders" in North America.

Of course we'd be amiss if we didn't mention the excellent suite of natural history applications available through Audubon Guides **(2)**. These smartphone applications are fun, affordable, and a great way to supplement your existing field guide collection. If you're heading out for a day of birding and expecting to see some butterflies, dragonflies, and native wildflowers along the way, instead of lugging a bulging bag around with four field guides inside, you can take your favorite bird book along and rely on your mobile device to assist with identifying the other animals and plants you hope to see.

Not a smartphone user? That's fine; you don't need one to access our favorite online bird resource, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's "All About Birds" website **(3)**. We know we've featured the site before—it's worth bookmarking! Cornell makes it easy for users to describe a bird they've seen to assist with identification. There's also a searchable database with tons of information about a plethora of species. Our favorite feature of the website is that it allows visitors to listen to bird sounds. In fact, we've used it right here in the Michigan Audubon office to help identify bird sounds out the window!

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Bethany Tomaszewski is the editor of the *Jack Pine Warbler*, and Jonathan E. Lutz is the executive director at Michigan Audubon. They can be reached at [Bethany@BethanyT.com](mailto:Bethany@BethanyT.com) and [JLutz@MichiganAudubon.org](mailto:JLutz@MichiganAudubon.org).



With online tools, keeping a record of your bird sightings has never been easier. © 2012 Michigan Audubon.

### Visit These Sites:

- (1)** <http://www.larkwire.com>
- (2)** <http://www.audubonguides.com>
- (3)** <http://www.allaboutbirds.org>

### Share Your Tips!

We know that there's always a new way to use technology to become a better birder, whether it's by listening to bird songs on your Android or by identifying our feathered friends in their natural habitat with a field guide on your iPad. Let us know some of the apps and websites that have made you a better birder by e-mailing us at [MIBirdLife@MichiganAudubon.org](mailto:MIBirdLife@MichiganAudubon.org).





# Volunteer Spotlight



IN 2012, Michigan Audubon will be shining a light on volunteers. We'll salute the volunteers who go above and beyond the call of duty—volunteers who help us connect birds and people for the benefit of both. Without our volunteers, Michigan Audubon would not be able to provide much beyond the daily operations of the office. We owe them much gratitude, and we hope this column will let them know that what they do for us is greatly appreciated.

## RICHARD YARSEVICH



Michigan Audubon's spotlight shines on a single volunteer in this issue. Preceding all of the current staff members, Richard Yarsevich has been volunteering for Michigan Audubon since 2007.

Richard had just retired from the U. S. Army and moved back to Michigan when he started working with Michigan Audubon. One of his first duties as a volunteer involved data input at the Lansing office. This is the type of work that Richard did in the Army, and he soon wanted new experiences. Richard has a keen interest in books and was more than willing to travel to events, so it was only natural to have him assist in the nature bookstore. He even willingly helps staff haul the books to wherever they happen to be going. His help in this way has saved Michigan Audubon a lot of money in mileage fees. You'll see Richard at CraneFest, Tawas Point, and the Otis Farm Sanctuary. Anywhere the bookstore goes, Richard is sure to follow.

If the Lansing office has a job, whether it is assembling a mailing, staining benches, or helping move the office, Richard is there. He devotes many hours to the organization, and it's apparent that he loves to do it.

Many of you have probably met Richard. He might have been on a birding adventure with you, waited on you in the bookstore, or checked you in at an event registration table. The next time you happen to run into Richard, please thank him for his dedication to Michigan Audubon. We deeply appreciate all that he does for us.



TOP: Black-and-white Warbler. © Kevin Karlson.

RIGHT: Michigan Audubon volunteer Richard Yarsevich. © 2007 Michigan Audubon.



Use your smartphone to keep up with the Michigan Audubon Society!

Scan this QR code to visit [MichiganAudubon.org](http://MichiganAudubon.org)



# Feathered Lens

## Framing the Flock

BY JOSH HAAS

**E**very time I see a large group of birds taking off, I think of my three-year-old niece shouting, “THREE! TWO! ONE! BLAST OFF!” Photographing rafts of ducks, groups of Sandhill Cranes, or tornadoes of Broad-winged Hawks is a type of photography in a category all by itself. While some may see this as a simple point and shoot technique, it can be much harder than that. Some of the nicest photographs of Snow Geese lifting off or Sandhill Cranes coming in to roost are images that took hours or days of prep time and lots of time in the field, and these photos have to have just the right composition to tell the story.

This style of photography starts off with a wider field of view, which typically means you can put away your telephoto lenses. Depending on how far away you are from the action, a focal length of 50–150mm should suffice. A zoom will give you some working room, and this is a nice style of photography for those without super-telephoto lenses. Choosing a wider focal length increases your depth of field automatically, which means more of the birds in your image will be in focus. Because your birds will be moving, you will want to shoot with enough light that allows for fast shutter speeds. If the lighting doesn’t allow for this, experiment with slightly slower shutter speeds that will start to blur your birds, giving the appearance of motion. Set your camera up to shoot in burst mode so when the action does happen, you can fire away.

As with any good image, composition and pleasing backgrounds are the keys. Simply finding the flock and putting the hammer down is not enough. Spend time finding spots to set up that offer more environment around the birds so your images will have desirable backgrounds. One tip I’ve learned over the years is to know your wind direction. If the wind is blowing in your face, chances are that the birds will take off or land flying away from you. If you want birds flying at you, wind at your back is what you want. Be creative with your light source, the sun. Silhouetted shots can tell a unique story all by themselves. In the case of the silhouetted cranes image (page 13), there were unnatural objects all over the place. By isolating the group of birds above the problem areas, pleasing images were still attainable. Also in that situation, because I was shooting from a low vantage point, isolating a smaller subset of birds within the flock was the way to go. When you find yourself in circumstances where you have little control over backgrounds and unwanted elements, see these as opportunities. It’s best to understand the problems and work around them the best you can.



There's more to finding the flock—in this case a flock of Royal Terns—if you're hoping to capture great group images of birds. © 2011 Josh Haas.

For those who don't have wider focal length lenses, your main telephoto lens can still be used. Isolating one bird in or around a huge flock can bring to the table a whole new category of images. Coming across a blanket of terns on Sanibel Island, I sat down and began watching as individual birds would come and go while the large group stayed content to rest on the beach. I didn't even touch the camera for a good 10 minutes while I studied how the individuals would take off and land. I began shooting from my low vantage point and targeted landing birds. The goal was to have the blurred flock in view but retain the landing individual as the primary element. This combination of a single bird with an out-of-focus flock tells a story that can bring viewers back to summer days on the beach.

Remember to always think about how to best photograph the situation in front of you. Don't shoot aimlessly; shoot with a purpose, and have attainable goals. The perfect moment will only happen once. Being prepared will give you the best chance of capturing it forever.

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To read more about Josh, visit [www.glancesatnature.com](http://www.glancesatnature.com). He specializes in bird and nature photography, trips, and workshops, and his work can be seen at numerous art shows throughout Michigan as well as online.





## Young Birders



### Finding a Job in Bird Conservation

BY TORREY WENGER

So you've been birding since you were in diapers and can identify hundreds of species by sight and sound. Now you're hoping to put these skills to good use and maybe even get paid for it.

The good news is that there are lots of jobs in bird conservation. Researchers are always looking for staff to help with mist-netting or nest-searching projects. If you like rustic conditions or backcountry camping, there's a project out there that could really use you. Non-bird-related skills, such as videography and GIS, are also needed.

The bad news is that many of these jobs are temporary or seasonal. Some are volunteer positions, while the rest typically don't pay well. Many field work positions are considered entry-level jobs designed for interns, students, and recent graduates.

Before committing to a career in bird conservation, ask yourself these questions: Can I handle the conditions? Is the experience valuable? Can my budget get by on what I'll be making?

The best website for bird conservation internships, jobs, and even careers is run by the Ornithological Societies of North America: [www.osnabirds.org/jobs.aspx](http://www.osnabirds.org/jobs.aspx). This site collects job announcements from its member organizations, universities, and state and

federal agencies. The jobs titles listed range from unpaid intern to executive director. The work sites are primarily in the United States, but a few foreign countries add excitement—want to help study Silver-throated Tits in China or Lance-tailed Manakins in Panama? Competition for these spots can be fierce.

There are other ways to use your bird skills. Nature centers, zoos, and Audubon clubs are always looking for volunteers with both people skills and bird knowledge to lead hikes, be docents, or run Facebook pages. Any facility that keeps birds on display probably also needs volunteer animal feeders and cage cleaners. What bird-related places are near you? Do they have interesting positions available?

If you really want a job working with birds, you should be able to find one. It may require travel or creative thinking, but the possibilities are there. And to be honest, the entry-level positions are generally the most fun. Enjoy the search and the job!

Torrey Wenger is the conservation education assistant at the Kalamazoo Nature Center (KNC). She started at KNC as a volunteer during college, working first with the education staff and then assisting with bird banding. Contact her at 269-381-1574 ext. 12 or by e-mail at [twenger@naturecenter.org](mailto:twenger@naturecenter.org).



## Calendar

### April

- 22 **Baker Lodge Clean-up Day**  
Baker Sanctuary
- 27 & 28 **Thornapple Woodpecker Festival**  
Middleville
- 28 **Raptors of the Keweenaw Dinner & Program**  
Tamarack Inn, Copper Harbor
- 27–29 **Spring Fling**  
Whitefish Point Bird Observatory, Paradise

### May

- 15 **Kirtland's Warbler daily tours begin**  
Grayling, 7:00 AM
- 17–20 **Tawas Point Birding Festival**  
East Tawas & Oscoda

# Announcements

## 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.

Marija Andrijonas	Steven Meyers
Joy Ashteneau-Butler	Arnold Michels
Carrie Blauwkamp	Lori Miley
Tina Briggs	Joyce Montante
Annie Broderick	Holly Moylan
Robert Coffey	Maureen Musser
Gary Corbin	Karen Perzyk
Jack Cruise	Jim Pickens
Jim Dawe	Rosemary Rader
Tessa Eger	Amy and Kim Ranger
Jim Etheridge	Edward Rich
Addie Goymerac	Scott Schupbach
Kristen Goymerac	Fred Sharp
Anna Graham	Richard Slaughter
Velda Hammerbacher	Carol Snook
Phyllis Hamrick	Marilyn Stolberg
Provenance Wildflower Farm	Terry Swick
Eve Hansen	Emily Z. Tabuteau
Louise Hefka	Catherine Allen and Bing Tai
Terry Hoenle	Elizabeth Theile
Russell and Doris Holmes	John and Karen Thornton
Sarah Hopkins	Deloris Vanderhoof
Matt Ihnken	Kathy Sneden and Sue Wiersum
Barbara Jacob	Cheryl Wisdom
Thomas Johnston	Thomas Yocum
Molly Lachniet	Greg and Sarah Yoder
Judy Lindstrom	Charles Zampich
Donnie Lytle	
Christine Mack	
Sue Ann Lee-Makinen and John Makinen	



Cooper's Hawk.  
© 2011 Skye Haas.

## Events

### Attention Photographers!

The Gillette sand dune visitor center, located at P.J. Hoffmaster State Park in Muskegon, is holding a Michigan birds photo contest. The deadline for submissions is April 27. Photographers are invited to submit their best photo.

Photos will be judged by Hoffmaster volunteers, and the results of the contest will be announced May 5. The top three winners will receive gift cards worth \$100, \$50, or \$25. For details see [gillettenature.org](http://gillettenature.org) or call 231-798-3573 for more information.

### Early Spring Birding Festivals

Two birding festivals will take place in April. Unfortunately, they will be held on the same weekend about 300 miles apart, so participation in both of them would be difficult. It's time to make some tough choices!

The 24th Annual Spring Fling will be held at the Whitefish Point Bird Observatory (WPBO) in Paradise April 27–29. This event is dedicated to spring migration, so participants will have plenty of opportunities to see migrating hawks and other species as they make their way north across Whitefish Bay on their way to Canada. This year's banquet speaker is Richard Crossley, author of *The Crossley ID Guide*. Registration information for the event can be found on WPBO's website, [wpbo.org](http://wpbo.org).

This year will be the second year the Thornapple Trail Association in Middleville (Barry County) holds the Thornapple Woodpecker Festival. The event will be held April 27 & 28 at Middleville's Village Hall, on the banks of the Thornapple River. If walking a distance to see birds is no longer an option for you, this is your event. Golf carts are used to take participants down the paved Paul Henry–Thornapple Trail, which follows the river, allowing you to ride the three-mile distance and see the birds along the way. Participants of the 2011 event got to watch Red-headed Woodpeckers demonstrate territorial and mating displays, as well as an American Bittern walking through the cattails along the trail. The Michigan Audubon Nature Bookstore will be on hand for anyone needing a new field guide or the latest natural history books. For more information or to purchase an admission button for \$10, visit [woodpeckerfest.webs.com](http://woodpeckerfest.webs.com).

Up in the Keweenaw Peninsula, raptor migration is in full swing, and Copper Harbor Birding holds birding programs each weekend for the entire month of May as part of the Keweenaw Migratory Bird Festival. This year, the festival will open with dinner and a program by Vic Birardi on April 28. Vic's program will be a photo presentation of raptors migrating over Brockway Mountain. The dinner will begin at 5:00 PM with Vic's program to follow. Check out the complete list of weekend activities at [copperharborbirding.org](http://copperharborbirding.org).



Pileated Woodpecker. © 2011 Marie Daloia.



## Events

### Sanctuary Programs for Early Spring

As mentioned in the last *Jack Pine Warbler*, monthly nature walks will be held at Baker, Lake Bluff, and Otis Farm sanctuaries. Below is a schedule of those walks, which will be led by a volunteer naturalist who will help you identify the flora and fauna that you see along the way. Themed programming will take place at intervals throughout the year at these sanctuaries, as well as the Hawk Valley and Haenhle sanctuaries and the Bengel Wildlife Center (the location of Michigan Audubon's new office). The monthly nature walks are free for anyone who would like to participate and do not require registration. Themed programs will require registration, and some will have a participation fee. For more information on the programs or to register, please visit the Event Calendar page of Michigan Audubon's website at [michiganaudubon.org/education/eventcalendar](http://michiganaudubon.org/education/eventcalendar).

### April

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 7  | <b>Baker Sanctuary guided nature walk</b><br>10:00 AM              |
| 14 | <b>Lake Bluff Bird Sanctuary guided nature walk</b><br>10:00 AM    |
| 21 | <b>Otis Farm Bird Sanctuary guided nature walk</b><br>10:00 AM     |
| 22 | <b>Baker Lodge clean-up day</b><br>10:00 AM                        |
| 24 | <b>Evening frog program at Otis Farm Bird Sanctuary</b><br>6:00 PM |

### May

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 5  | <b>Baker Sanctuary guided nature walk</b><br>9:00 AM           |
| 12 | <b>Lake Bluff Bird Sanctuary guided nature walk</b><br>9:00 AM |

## News

### Great News from Whitefish Point Joint Committee

In January, the Whitefish Point Joint Committee, comprised of representatives from Michigan Audubon, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society (GLSHS), as well as staff of the Whitefish Point Bird Observatory and volunteers of the Whitefish Point Preservation Society, held a meeting to discuss the future management of Whitefish Point. The group agreed to amend the 2002 Whitefish Point management plan in order to permanently withdraw plans to construct two museum wing additions, two parking lots, and a service drive on the former U.S. Coast Guard property now owned by the GLSHS. As this development plan had been in the works for over 25 years, creating difficult relations between the organizations at times, we are very happy to share this good news with birders. The decision to amend the plan was met with unanimous support from all parties involved in the stewardship of the site.

According to the plan, the Whitefish Point Joint Committee will work together to find an appropriate location for a historic boathouse that will be returned to Whitefish Point and restored by the GLSHS. In addition, the Whitefish Point Preservation Society was invited to join the joint committee as an ex officio, non-voting member. Other ex officio members include representatives from the Whitefish Point Bird Observatory, the State Historic Preservation Office, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and Whitefish Township.

### Attention Teachers!

Each year, the Huron-Manistee National Forest holds the Kirtland's Warbler Young Artist Calendar Contest. Winning entries are used to create a calendar for the following year. It's time to submit artwork for the 2013 calendar! The contest is open to all students in grades K-8. Entries are due April 20, and only one entry per student is allowed. Winning artwork will be on display at the Tawas Point Birding Festival in May. Information on how to submit an entry and the rules for participation can be found on the website of the Huron-Manistee National Forest (<http://www.fs.usda.gov/hmnf>) or at [michiganaudubon.org](http://michiganaudubon.org).



Finding medium-to large-sized groups of Sandhill Cranes is easiest in the fall. © 2011 Josh Haas.

Dated Material

## Michigan Audubon Bookstore

Every so often, Michigan Audubon needs to clear some titles out of the Nature Bookstore. The following books are on sale. Please note that there may be only one copy of each of these titles. To request a title, please call Wendy at 517-641-4277. The member discount does not apply to items on sale.

Information or phone orders **517-641-4277**



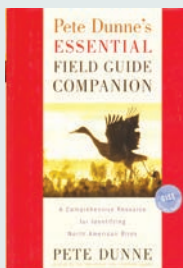
### National Geographic Reference Atlas to the Birds of North America

compiled and edited by Mel Baughman

~~\$35.00~~ **SALE: \$28.00**

A companion guide to the *National Geographic Field Guide*, this book contains over 700 maps detailing the migration routes and ranges of

birds. The book is organized by families of birds and covers over 800 species. It is an invaluable reference tool as it also provides more detailed species information than the *Field Guide* has room for.



### Pete Dunne's Essential Field Guide Companion

by Pete Dunne

~~\$29.95~~ **SALE: \$23.95**

This book will tell you everything you want to know about each North American species. It provides information on each bird's status, distribution, behavior, and vocalization. It also describes the habitat the bird calls home and its flight patterns and lists other species that might be found with it.

This great book can tell you more about birds than a field guide ever could.

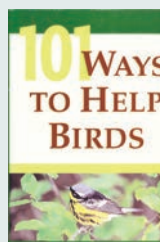


### Why Birds Sing: A Journey into the Mystery of Bird Song

by David Rothenberg

~~\$26.00~~ **SALE: \$20.80** (hardcover)

Blending scientific research and musical form, the author investigates why it is that birds sing. The answer lies beyond the standard answer of territory defense or mate attraction—this book will give you a greater appreciation for what you hear.

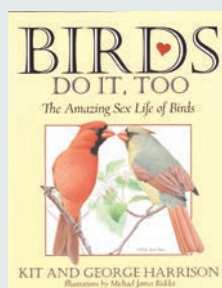


### 101 Ways to Help Birds

by Laura Erickson

~~\$19.95~~ **SALE: 15.95**

Our daily routine can have a large impact on birds. This book provides 101 doable things that will provide a positive impact on our feathered friends. The author's suggestions go beyond feeders and backyard habitat, even providing tips for things you can do when you're birding.



### Birds Do It, Too: The Amazing Sex Life of Birds

by Kit and George Harrison

~~\$18.95~~ **SALE: \$15.15**

Mating rituals of birds go on all around us, but how many of us have ever witnessed birds mating? This book describes not only the courtship activities of many species (including some birds from other continents), but also how birds mate and raise their young. New information regarding bird

relationships is being discovered through DNA testing, and this book talks about some of the new information that has been discovered.

**10% off** for all Michigan Audubon members!

### Order by phone, mail, or e-mail

**By phone.** Visa or MasterCard. Phone 517-641-4277.

**By mail.** Send name, address, phone number, and payment to Michigan Audubon Bookstore, PO Box 15249, Lansing MI 48901. 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.