

# Jack Pine *Warbler*

**CRITICAL SPECIES:** Species Spotlight: Connecticut Warbler ■ Henslow's Sparrow IBA Report ■  
Cerulean Warbler Weekend Preview ■ Sanctuary Appeal ■ The Great Warbler Challenge



# Jack Pine Warbler

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Cover Photo ■ Connecticut Warbler  
Photographer: David Hale

This Connecticut Warbler image was captured in a one-acre backyard setting in Armstrong, Illinois. Hale is trying to restore his property to native prairie. He writes, "When the seeds start to ripen, all kinds of birds start showing up. I often grab my camera and walk through the prairie to see what birds and bugs I can find. On this particular morning, I spotted the warblers feeding on a prairie plant called Biennial Gaura and managed to get a few frames of them." The photo was taken September 12, 2010 using a Canon 50D with a Canon 300mm F4 lens with IS. The shots were handheld at 1/125 sec, f4.0, at ISO 250.

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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



## A MOST UNUSUAL SPRING

### From a visitor at Baker Sanctuary:

"The Sandhill Cranes are as active as ever, squawking at each other on Big Marsh Lake and feeding in local fields."

**On Facebook:** "We just spotted a BLANDING'S TURTLE from the Michigan Audubon office window!"

**In the office:** "It must be 80 degrees outside, because Jonathan is wearing flip-flops."

From these remarks, you might think that we've skipped an issue of the *Jack Pine Warbler* and sent you the July/August issue two months early. In fact, I'm writing this note in advance of our *May/June* issue—it's only March 19!

Many questions linger about how Michigan's flora and fauna will fare with the early onset of summer-like weather that we experienced in March. The effects of early spring weather are perhaps most obvious when we look at plants. Plants are leafing out and blooming earlier. Early blooms can be especially confusing to insects that gather pollen. In addition, vegetation absorbs a lot of water in the spring, and when warm weather arrives earlier, the system dries out—leaving a much longer dry spell for the rest of the summer.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, warmer springs have led to earlier nesting for 28 migratory bird species on the East Coast of the United States. Similar to plants, the timing of birds' arrival in the spring may not coincide with the availability of insect food sources. Birds play a key role in many ecological processes, including

pollination, seed dispersal, and pest control. The effects of migratory birds' early arrival in Michigan have yet to be measured, but we are almost certainly going to notice some change.

In the meantime, we are keeping our fingers crossed for two successful birding events in May and June: the Tawas Point Birding Festival (May 17–20) and Cerulean Warbler Weekend (June 1–3). If the early registration numbers for Tawas are any indication, we are set to have our most well-attended festival to date. Cerulean Warbler Weekend celebrates its fifth anniversary the first weekend in June. All of the activities will begin and end at the Otis Farm Bird Sanctuary, including a keynote presentation by Dr. Jeff Hoover and a locally-sourced dinner served inside the 1940s-era Sears & Roebuck barn. We are thrilled to be kicking off our signature event series with these two popular festival weekends.

Eastern Phoebe, Eastern Bluebirds, and Red-bellied Woodpeckers are all singing outside my window today. In the background I hear Sandhill Cranes, Canada Geese, and some distant Red-winged Blackbirds. It's hard to believe we've experienced such a warm spring and, despite my concern for the well-being of avian ecology, I am as charged up as ever for another season of great birding. I hope to see you on the trail in May and June.

Best Regards,

Jonathan E. Lutz, executive director



A Blanding's turtle was seen from the Michigan Audubon office window on March 14, 2012. The Blanding's is a Michigan species of special concern.  
© 2011 Jason Ross.

## Tawas Point Birding Festival

May 17–20

Communities of Tawas and Oscoda, MI  
(Iosco County) [www.tawasbirdfest.com](http://www.tawasbirdfest.com)

## Cerulean Warbler Weekend

June 1–3

Hastings, MI (Barry County)  
[www.ceruleanwarbler.org](http://www.ceruleanwarbler.org)

# Michigan Breeding Bird Atlas II

## Connecticut Warbler Account

The following account is adapted from the Michigan Breeding Bird Atlas II—a detailed analysis of the distribution and status of nearly 250 bird species that live in the state of Michigan. The searchable, printable database is available online at [www.mibirdatlas.org](http://www.mibirdatlas.org).



BY VINCENT S. CAVALIERI

Often one of the last eastern wood warblers added to the life lists of many birders, the Connecticut Warbler, *Oporornis agilis*, has a reputation for being secretive and hard to find. The Connecticut Warbler is a summer resident of areas far to the north of the homes of most U.S. birders and is not often seen on migration. These traits make it one of the most wanted birds on many birders' life lists. A large warbler superficially similar to the related Mourning Warbler, which can occur in the same range and sometimes similar habitats, the Connecticut Warbler is distinguished by its voice. The song is loud and distinctive and can be heard ringing out from the bogs and forests where the Connecticut makes its home. Though the warbler is named after the state of Connecticut—where the first specimen was collected—this species does not breed in that state, nor is it even a common migrant there.

### DISTRIBUTION

The Connecticut Warbler has the smallest breeding range of any northern warbler aside from the Kirtland's. The Connecticut Warbler breeds in a band from east-

central British Columbia in the west to Quebec and the northern Great Lakes region of the U.S. in the east. In the U.S., the Connecticut Warbler breeds in northeastern Minnesota, northern Wisconsin, and northern Michigan. Connecticut Warblers winter in northern South America, primarily east of the Andes Mountains, around the periphery of the Amazon basin. The Connecticut Warbler utilizes different migratory routes in spring and fall migrations. During spring migration, the Connecticut Warbler moves primarily up the Mississippi valley, while in the fall it appears to move east across Canada and then down the Atlantic coast of the U.S.

In Michigan, this is a breeding species only in the far northern parts of the state, occurring in the Upper Peninsula and northern two tiers of counties in the Lower Peninsula. In the rest of the state, the Connecticut Warbler is both a spring and fall migrant. This species does not typically begin passing through the southern Lower Peninsula until mid- to late May, and migration through the Upper Peninsula may continue into June. In Michigan, birds begin fall migration in late August and continue through the early parts of October.

### BREEDING BIOLOGY

The Connecticut Warbler is a ground-nesting species that utilizes a wide variety of habitats during the breeding season. These habitats include wet coniferous forests such as spruce and tamarack bogs, dry coniferous forests such as jack pine barrens, and dry deciduous forests usually dominated by aspen. One common feature of these seemingly diverse forest communities is that they are all open, often described as “park-like” by Connecticut Warbler researchers. They also typically have dense ground cover, used to hide the nest.

In Michigan, egg-laying likely occurs in early to mid-June; a nest was observed in Ontonagon County that fledged on July 1, indicating egg laying on or near June 5. Fledglings and adults carrying food have been observed throughout the month of July and into early August in northern Michigan.

### ABUNDANCE AND POPULATION TRENDS

Partners in Flight estimates a population of 1,400 Connecticut Warblers in Michigan, accounting for roughly 0.1% of the total population of this species. This low percentage



of the total population is expected, as Michigan lies at the very southern extreme of this species' breeding range, and much of our state is unsuitable or fringe habitat.

Comparisons between the original and recently-updated Michigan Breeding Bird Atlases (MBBA) point to a decline in the Connecticut Warbler over the last 20 years. MBBA I observers located Connecticut Warblers in 68 blocks during the initial atlas period, but this species was only found in 32 blocks during the MBBA II period. Especially conspicuous is the lack of observations from the northern Lower Peninsula, where nine blocks had Connecticut Warblers during MBBA I but only one block had Connecticut Warblers during MBBA II. In addition, atlas observers confirmed breeding in 11 blocks during MBBA I, but only one block in far western Gogebic County had a breeding confirmation during MBBA II. Due to the inaccessible habitats and secretive nature of the Connecticut Warbler, this species is probably under-recorded during atlas efforts. This leads to low sample sizes and makes it difficult to interpret the extent of the decline of the Connecticut Warbler in Michigan.

## CONSERVATION NEEDS

Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) data show that Connecticut Warblers have experienced a significant decline of about 3%

per year in the boreal hardwood transition bird conservation region, the region that includes northern Michigan. The Connecticut Warbler has shown similar declines in other parts of its range as well (Sauer et al. 2008). These declines likely contribute to the lower number of Connecticut Warblers observed during the second atlas period in Michigan. Due to reasons discussed previously, caution should be used in interpreting this data. In Ontario, there was a several-fold increase in observations of Connecticut Warblers between the first and second breeding bird atlas data collection periods, though BBS data indicates a significant decline in Ontario's Connecticut Warblers since 1981. This conflicting data points out the difficulty in describing trends in species with small sample sizes, including the Connecticut Warbler.

Although the Connecticut Warbler appears to be in no immediate danger, more research should be done to examine the causes of the decline of this species. In Michigan, much of the warbler's breeding habitat occurs in national and state forests and other areas of low population density, and thus should be mostly safe from development and other sources of habitat degradation and fragmentation in the immediate future. It has been noted in Wisconsin, however, that heavy logging of black spruce and balsam fir

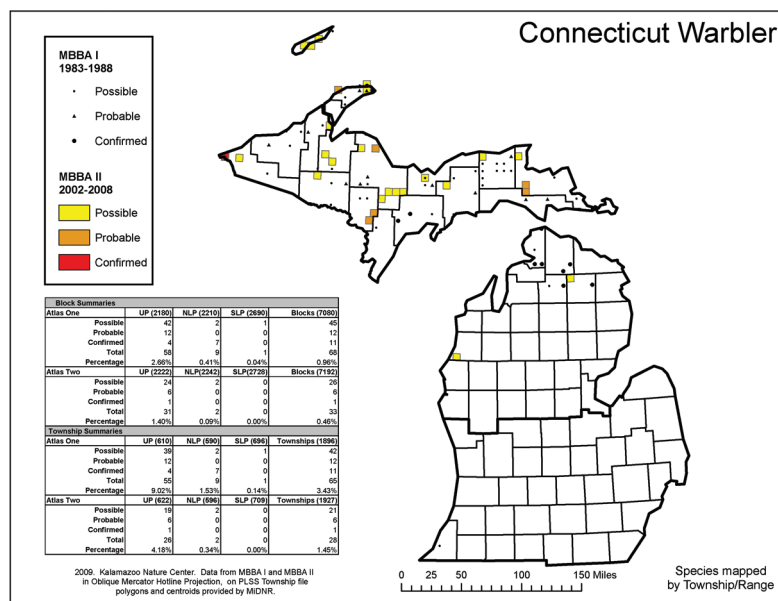
has a potential impact on the Connecticut Warbler. Like other neotropical migrants, changes to the wintering grounds and migratory stopover habitats likely have contributed to the declines of the Connecticut Warbler.

Vincent Cavalieri is an endangered species biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. He is the recovery coordinator for the endangered population of Great Lakes Piping Plovers. Vincent can be contacted via e-mail at [vincent\\_cavalieri@fws.gov](mailto:vincent_cavalieri@fws.gov).

## THANK YOU!

The Kalamazoo Nature Center coordinated the first *Michigan Breeding Bird Atlas* and has just released the web-based publication *Michigan Breeding Bird Atlas II*. Both publications are a statewide collaboration of hundreds of conservation professionals and citizen scientists. Thank you to the following sponsors: The Kalamazoo Nature Center, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Arcus Foundation, Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation, Fry Foundation, Kalamazoo Community Foundation, Consumers Energy Foundation, Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Michigan Audubon, Michigan Non-Game Wildlife Fund, and the Rouge River Bird Observatory. Visit [www.mibirdatlas.org](http://www.mibirdatlas.org) to see the results of this project.

For over 50 years, the Kalamazoo Nature Center has provided education, conservation, and research services. The conservation stewardship department provides leadership in biological research, land restoration, and ecological services for organizations, corporations, and individuals on local, state, and national levels. Some current projects include the development of a Cerulean Warbler atlas for all of the Department of Defense's military installations in the eastern United States, implementing the reconstruction of a 80-acre tallgrass prairie, and providing restoration work for over 1,500 acres of a fen community in Southwest Michigan. For more information about these and other projects, visit [www.NatureCenter.org](http://www.NatureCenter.org) and click on Conservation Stewardship.



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# The Henslow's Sparrow Conservation Initiative:

## *Collaborative Conservation for a Michigan Important Bird Area*

BY CALEB PUTNAM & TOM FUNKE

**G**rasslands are one of the most imperiled ecosystems in the world, and Michigan's grassland habitats are no exception. Michigan's state list of threatened and endangered species includes at least six grassland obligate bird species and several more that use grasslands during parts of their life cycles. Of the four endangered species on this list, just one inhabits Michigan as a core area of its range: the Michigan-endangered Henslow's Sparrow.

This unassuming species, known by many as a "little brown job," is one of the most selective species in Michigan when it comes to nesting habitat and is found in a very small subset of the state's grasslands. Henslow's Sparrows prefer habitat composed of native, warm season grasses with a thick layer of thatch from the previous growing season. Invasive plants such as spotted knapweed create a drier, thinner structure and basically preclude this bird from using a field.

Henslow's Sparrows in Michigan are heavily reliant upon private lands, where relatively little habitat management occurs. The lack of suitable, properly managed habitat places a great limitation on this species, which is often forced to use sub-par habitats to attempt to breed. Early season mowing (prior to July 1) accounts for mortality among young and possibly adult Henslow's Sparrows. Other threats to the species' survival include invasive species, fields in the mid- to late stages of shrubland succession, and an overall deficit of quality nesting sites. It is clear that in order to provide this species adequate nesting habitat in Michigan, management of private lands is an absolute necessity.

Henslow's Sparrows occur in six of Michigan's 102 Important Bird Areas (IBAs). The species occurs elsewhere in the state, but breeding bird survey data is still lacking for many sites. Publicly owned land accounts for only half of the existing IBAs for Henslow's Sparrow. These include the Waterloo Recreation Area, Sharonville State Game Area, and Rose Lake Wildlife Area. The remaining IBA sites where Henslow's Sparrows occur are privately owned: Kalamazoo Nature Center grasslands, Michigan Audubon Otis Farm Bird Sanctuary, and private lands located in Hillsdale County. Of the existing IBA sites, the private lands of Hillsdale County and the Sharonville State Game Area host the largest numbers of pairs—approximately 40 and 25 pairs respectively, though numbers fluctuate greatly between years.

In 2011, the National Audubon Society underwent a rigorous review of all of Michigan's 102 IBAs and determined that the Hillsdale County Henslow's Sparrow private lands IBA ranked high in both conservation need and conservation opportunity. At the time of review, all of the documented Henslow's Sparrows were nesting on privately owned, unmanaged fallow fields and hayfields. Habitat enhancement in this area has great potential for both recruiting new birds and assisting the existing breeding pairs in maximizing their success. Late in 2011,



Henslow's Sparrows use standing dead vegetation to perch upon as they sing.  
© 2009 Bryan Holliday.



National Audubon Society and Michigan Audubon joined forces to organize an IBA support group to take the lead in coordinating and implementing this much-needed conservation work.

The support group, titled The Henslow's Sparrow Conservation Initiative, will emulate a conservation project Michigan Audubon has been involved with in Barry County: the Barry State Game Area (SGA) Conservation Project. The SGA Conservation Project is a consortium of government agencies, nonprofit conservation organizations, a community foundation, and private citizens. These entities are collaborating to conserve lands of high conservation value in and around the Barry State Game Area. One objective of this project is to maintain and increase Cerulean Warbler populations over time in the project area.

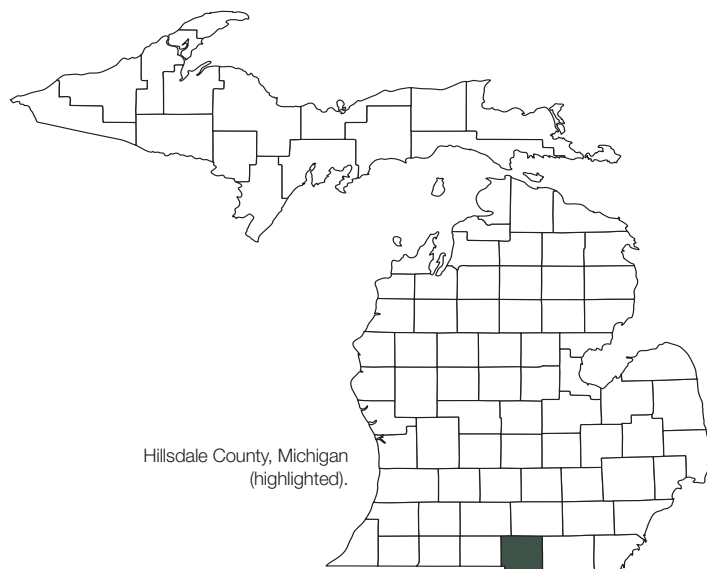
The Henslow's Sparrow Conservation Initiative will invite many of the same types of organizations, including the Hillsdale Conservation District, the U.S. Department of Agriculture—Natural Resource Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS), and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) Landowner Incentive Program. These agencies offer technical expertise, funding, and perhaps most importantly, direct delivery of grassland conservation programs to private landowners themselves. Existing agency-driven programs direct the timing and protocol of mowing hay in agricultural settings as a means for reducing avian mortality and increasing breeding success. Lastly, the project will rely on the expertise of the Mid-Michigan Land Conservancy, which will serve as a resource for private landowners with an interest in placing their land into a conservation easement, or by making an outright donation of land to a stewardship organization.

The Henslow's Sparrow Conservation Initiative will strive to meet the following goals:

- 1) Achieve a long-term agreement with Hillsdale County's private landowners already engaged in agency-driven grassland conservation programs so they continue these practices.
- 2) Increase the amount of native grassland habitat in and around the Henslow's Sparrow IBA in Hillsdale County through direct contact and training sessions with private landowners.

The initiative will serve as a model for future conservation work with Michigan's Important Bird Areas. National Audubon and Michigan Audubon will continue to work with conservation partners for the long-term protection of our state's threatened and endangered birds.

Caleb Putnam, Michigan Important Bird Areas program coordinator, National Audubon, can be reached at [CPutnam@Audubon.org](mailto:CPutnam@Audubon.org). Tom Funke, director of conservation, Michigan Audubon, can be reached at [TFunke@MichiganAudubon.org](mailto:TFunke@MichiganAudubon.org).



## Summary of the Inaugural Hillsdale County Henslow's Sparrow Conservation Initiative Meeting

On April 21, 2012, conservation director Tom Funke and Michigan Important Bird Area coordinator Caleb Putnam led a formal session introducing the Henslow's Sparrow initiative.

*The meeting was attended by individuals representing the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Hillsdale Conservation District, and the United States Department of Agriculture.*

### THE GOAL

The goal of the program is to build a grassland conservation plan for Hillsdale County—a designated Important Bird Area for the Michigan-endangered Henslow's Sparrow.

### THE OUTCOME

The meeting was positive, and Audubon leaders are confident that employing a strategy used in nearby Barry County will provide long-term protection for many grassland bird species.

# PROTECTING AND CELEBRATING RARE SPECIES AT THE OTIS FARM BIRD SANCTUARY

BY WENDY TATAR

**I**f you live near a fallow field or a restored prairie, you already know the special privilege you have each time you hear an Eastern Meadowlark singing its heart out, or see a Henslow's Sparrow climbing a stem of grass.

These are opportunities that many people will never get to experience. Something that used to be so common, such as seeing a male Bobolink hover over his territory while courting a female, is fast disappearing in our countryside. Current farming practices, among other activities, are making these once-familiar sights a thing of the past.

A recent prairie restoration project at the Otis Farm Bird Sanctuary (see *Jack Pine Warbler* volume 89, issue number 1) is hoping to provide rejuvenated habitat for the grassland birds. As the name of the sanctuary implies, the site used to be operated as a farm. When that operation stopped, the woodlands slowly began encroaching.

Henslow's Sparrow had nested at Otis Farm, but at last year's Cerulean Warbler Weekend, the birds weren't there for the first time in many years. We don't know the actual reason, but it could possibly be that the grassland areas of the sanctuary were getting too small. The work that was done at Otis last fall will increase the size of the prairie and has removed the invasive Autumn Olive that was fast taking over the landscape.

Will the sparrow return to Otis this year? We aren't sure, but luckily we know other areas where they do show up. It may take a little bit of travel, but we usually see the bird during the tours at the event. Seeing a Henslow's Sparrow is just one of the treats offered at this great little birding event located in Barry County.

As you may have guessed, the opportunity to see Cerulean Warbler is what this event is all about. Located in the nearby Barry State Game Area are the tall, mature trees that the Cerulean needs for nesting. Tours will take you to several locations to see the birds; hopefully one of these opportunities will allow you to catch one at a level that doesn't strain your neck!

Other tours will provide the opportunity to see nesting Common Loon, Hooded Warbler, four species of Empid- flycatchers (Acadian, Alder, Willow, and Least), Veery, and Red-headed Woodpecker. A tour will head to the Warner Sanctuary to see a variety of warbler species, such as Mourning, Black-throated Green, Magnolia, Chestnut-sided, Blue-winged, and the incredibly beautiful Blackburnian.

On Friday evening Jeff Hoover, avian ecologist at the Illinois Natural History Survey, which is housed within the Prairie Research Institute at the University of Illinois, will present "What Birds Can Tell Us: Conservation Successes and New Insights Into Remarkable Bird Behavior." During the program, Jeff will



In addition to seeing singing males, birders are also likely to see the female Cerulean Warbler sharing nest-watching duties. © 2011 Frode Jacobsen.

highlight what birds have to tell us about how human activities, including habitat degradation, land conservation, and habitat restoration, affect their populations. He will also address how the long-term studies of birds in Illinois have provided new insight into some pretty remarkable bird behaviors. This long-term bird research is also providing new and more accurate information on life expectancy and lifetime reproductive success in migratory warblers, and on the ability of birds to respond to global climate change.

If you've never been to the Otis Farm Bird Sanctuary, why not plan to attend the Cerulean Warbler Weekend this year? Otis is a beautiful location and the event provides a wonderful opportunity to explore the back roads and byways of Barry County and the southwest corner of Michigan.

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).

## CERULEAN WARBLER WEEKEND

**JUNE 1-3**

### Event Information & Registration:

[www.ceruleanwarbler.org](http://www.ceruleanwarbler.org)

### Location:

Michigan Audubon Otis  
Farm Bird Sanctuary  
3560 Havens Road  
Hastings, MI

### Sanctuary Amenities:

- Parking
- Maintained trails
- Canoe/kayak launch
- Canoe rental
- Cabin rental (not available during event)
- Seasonal restrooms
- On-site sanctuary manager
- Picnic tables



# Book Review

## Cerulean Blues


BY KATIE FALLON  
(PUBLISHED BY RUKA PRESS, 2011; 224 PP.)  
REVIEWED BY JENNIFER BALDY

Whether you are an avid birder who has tracked down Cerulean Warblers right here in Michigan and gotten to know more about them by attending Cerulean Warbler Weekend or you simply enjoy watching feeder birds, you will appreciate the journey captured in this book. Join Fallon as she follows the migratory cycle of these amazing birds, along with those who study them. Beginning with an anticipation of that first sighting, it is a personal journey into the heart of the range of the Cerulean Warbler. Unlike some books where the author looms as an anonymous figure, by the end of this book it feels as if the author has become a personal friend with whom you have shared a deeply intimate conversation.

As Fallon explores the declining habitat and relates accounts of nest failure, the plight of the cerulean becomes entwined with and symbolic of the tragedies that have occurred in Fallon's own life. Despite an overwhelming sense of loss, this is a story of hope. Here, the line between what can be changed and what cannot is clearly drawn. This book focuses on the problems that face the Cerulean Warbler and other forest inhabitants that can be changed. The reader gains an understanding of how politics and economics across two continents can exert such pressure on a tiny creature. Issues are brought to light and must be changed in order to reverse the declining trend for the cerulean, while not neglecting the beauty of the journey. Those who are not already a fan of this little bird will more fully recognize the value of this species as a representative of the ecosystem in which it lives.

While this book emphasizes some of the issues known to negatively affect Cerulean Warblers, it also marvels at the mysterious life of a creature that we are still struggling to fully understand. Those who have strained to view a warbler in the canopy will appreciate how much effort goes in to collecting data, which sometimes presents more questions than answers. Fallon describes the joys and difficulties of field study—difficulties that are even greater in the winter, when the birds are silent and political turmoil can literally endanger the researcher—but the joy is ever-present. This journey follows many of the researchers who continue to work to unravel these mysteries that may help to preserve Cerulean Warblers, and to understand and appreciate them more. This book and the works consulted to write it serve as a great introduction to more in-depth study for anyone wanting to learn more about the biology of these birds. Unlike other books, this one doesn't become tedious and is perfect for anyone simply looking for a good weekend read.

"Katie Fallon inhabits the world of cerulean warblers with directness, humor, and real joy."—David Gessner, author of *Return of the Osprey*



# CERULEAN BLUES

A PERSONAL SEARCH  
FOR A VANISHING SONGBIRD

## KATIE FALLON

**\$17.95**

Available at the Michigan  
Audubon Bookstore

Although the birds take center stage, this book is by no means meant solely for bird enthusiasts. Anyone who appreciates the natural environment, travel, adventure, and further understanding the issues surrounding conservation will enjoy this book of loss and recovery. While Michigan birders may feel under-represented in this journey, which is staged in the population center of the Cerulean Warbler, it does help to view our fringe population at the continental scale. This book vividly captures the beauty of the Appalachians to the Andes and leaves readers with the optimistic feeling that trend reversal is possible. Habitat conservation combined with support for the non-destructive economic industry can help ensure that we will be able to enjoy this species in the future.

Jennifer Baldy is a geographer working with GIS and data analysis at Kalamazoo Nature Center. She developed an interest in the Cerulean Warbler through her thesis work while studying earth science at the University of Memphis. She enjoys working with biologists in the field of avian research and has worked on a variety of bird studies as a field assistant in addition to providing mapping services. Jennifer can be reached at [JBaldy@naturecenter.org](mailto:JBaldy@naturecenter.org).

# Get Involved

## Sanctuary Appeal

BY LATHE CLAFLIN

**A** remarkable opportunity has materialized for the Haehnle Sanctuary Committee to acquire the only remaining private land projecting into the sanctuary. The Edward Klee property (see maps) includes 48 acres of wetlands and uplands, and its purchase would ensure protection of the marsh where thousands of Sandhill Cranes normally gather in the fall. About a third of the property is in the marsh, another third is wet woodlands and fen, and the remainder is uplands bordering Seymour Road. The uplands have the potential for residential development, but the owners are offering us the chance to negotiate the purchase before listing it with a realtor.

Why are we so interested? This is a keystone parcel for the sanctuary because it will:

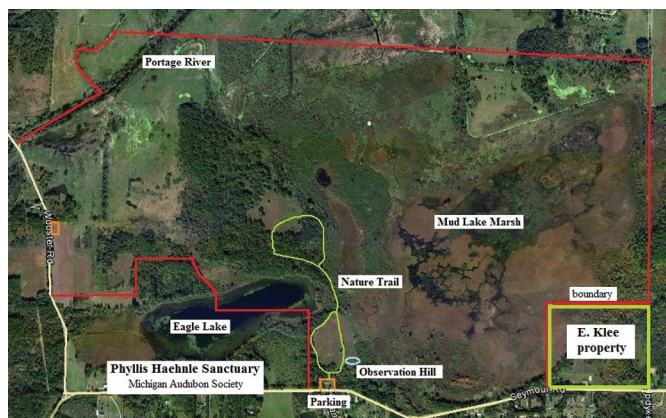
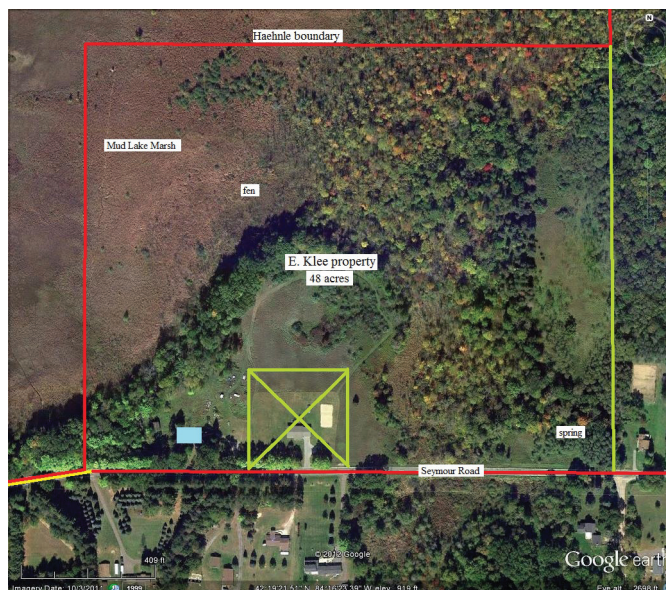
- Ensure that 100% of Mud Lake Marsh will stay natural forever
- Provide added protection for Sandhill Cranes in the event that Michigan follows other states in opening a crane hunting season
- Secure a threatened ecosystem, a prairie fen of more than 29 acres
- Protect a spring that supplies water to Mud Lake Marsh
- Offer additional opportunities for wildlife viewing and photography for the sanctuary's many visitors.

Michigan Audubon and Jackson Audubon Society, the local chapter and stewards of Haehnle Sanctuary, enthusiastically endorse this venture. Both organizations are established conservation organizations, each with a long history in education, leadership, and the preservation of natural areas. Together they have acquired 466 acres at Haehnle through gifts or purchases since the initial gift of 497 acres in 1955. As stewards, Jackson Audubon members have restored more than 150 acres of degraded wetland and established 40 acres of native grasses and wildflowers in the upland. Additional restorations and other activities have helped establish Haehnle Sanctuary as one of the premier sanctuaries of Michigan Audubon.

You can help enrich the quality of life in our community and protect vital crane habitat by enlarging the Phyllis Haehnle Sanctuary. Gifts should be made payable to Michigan Audubon, Haehnle Land Acquisition Fund, c/o Ronald Hoffman, 6142 E. Territorial Road, Pleasant, MI 49272. Michigan Audubon is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization. For gifts other than cash (such as stock, bequests, trusts) or for more information, please call Lathe Clafin at 517-522-3949.

Lathe Clafin is the Haehnle Sanctuary steward, designated by the Jackson Audubon Society. Lathe is Professor Emeritus of the University of Michigan Department of Microbiology and Immunology and an active member of both the Washtenaw and Jackson Audubon societies. He can be reached via e-mail at [lathe.clafin@gmail.com](mailto:lathe.clafin@gmail.com).

**OUR GOAL IS TO RAISE \$200,000**, and we are off to a good start. We have already received commitments totaling \$65,000 from Michigan and Jackson Audubon Societies as well as unsolicited donations of \$20,000 for the purchase of the property. We are in the process of seeking funds from other conservation organizations, foundations, and individual donors.



**TOP:** A close-up view of the Klee property, which, if acquired, will add 60 acres to the existing Haehnle Sanctuary.  
© 2012 Google.

**BOTTOM:** A satellite view of Haehnle Sanctuary, outlined in red, and the potential new addition, outlined in yellow.  
© 2012 Google.



# Volunteer Spotlight

## GENE SCHMIDT



Volunteer Eugene Schmidt assists a young birder with the use of a spotting scope during Cerulean Warbler Weekend. © 2008 Wendy Tatar.

A

ccording to Michigan Audubon records, Eugene Schmidt became a life member in 1988. Some of you may know him as Gene, but more of you know him as Joe (from his middle name, Joseph). Many more of you have met Gene and his wife Jan but probably don't

know their names. If you've ever stopped by the beginning birding booth overlooking Big Marsh Lake at CraneFest, you've met them and undoubtedly enjoyed the time you spent with them. Or perhaps you've met them on one of the many Michigan Audubon trips or campouts that members used to enjoy.

Michigan Audubon has benefited greatly from our association with Gene. Not only do he and Jan devote an entire weekend to volunteer at CraneFest, but Gene helps out in numerous other ways. When we were contacted by a Girl

Scout troop in the Grand Rapids area that was looking for someone to teach the girls about birding, we knew that Gene was our guy. He loves to teach kids about birds and nature. He has volunteered as the treasurer for the Grand Rapids Junior Audubon Club for many years, and when a program calls for building birdhouses or feeders, Gene assembles all of the needed materials and leads those programs.

Gene retired a few years ago from Steelcase, Inc. where he worked in the maintenance department, but he's always done carpentry projects on the side. From house remodeling (Jan's finally getting her new kitchen!) to birdhouse kits, Gene loves to work with wood. He's got a great shop in his backyard that would amaze you. Last year, Gene built six wooden benches to provide seating in the barn at the Otis Farm Bird Sanctuary. Michigan Audubon will get many years of enjoyment from these beautiful pine benches.

Gene doesn't only help Michigan Audubon; he also helps out the Grand Rapids Audubon Club at their Maher Sanctuary. In addition, he has devoted many hours to help out the Blandford Nature Center in Grand Rapids with maintenance issues. Gene has been volunteering since his sons were in Boy Scouts, and even though they've been grown for quite a while, he still helps out the scouts when he can. He has been involved with the North Country Trail since before it became a national organization. The list seems to go on and on.

When told about Michigan Audubon's move to the new office, Gene didn't hesitate before saying, "I can come over with my van to help." Gene drove over to Lansing from Wyoming (a suburb on the west side of Grand Rapids) and then proceeded to move heavy files and cabinets into storage. He made several trips back and forth from the office to the storage area, and then drove all the way back home. That is just the kind of guy he is.

If you've not met Gene or Jan before, we hope you get the opportunity. They're quite a pair—and he's quite a guy.



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

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



# Feathered Lens

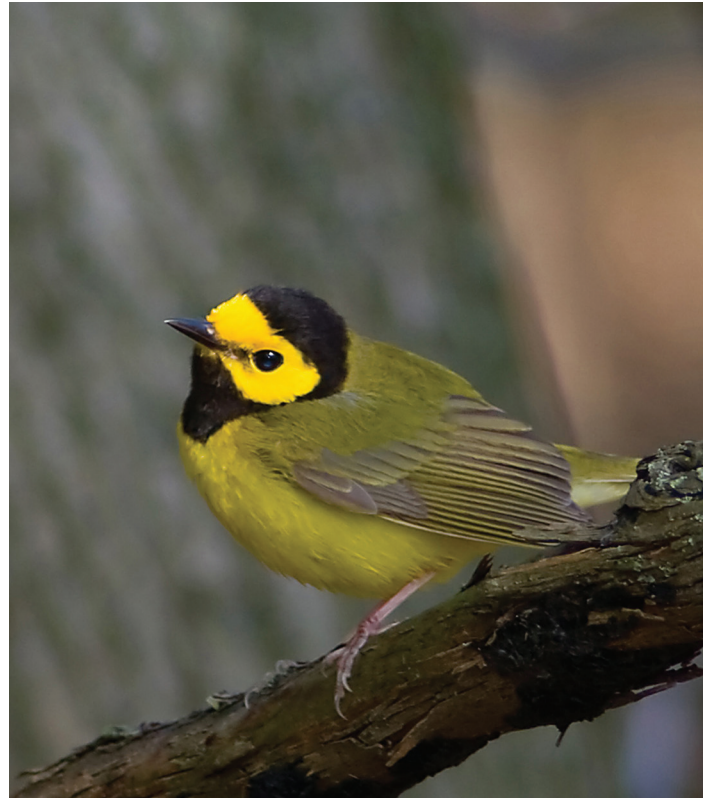
## The Great Warbler Challenge

BY JOSH HAAS



**W**hen it comes to photographing warblers, I'm sure we can all agree on one problem that troubles us all: they don't sit still! It's not their fault; it's just how they've adapted to hunting insects. The other side of this coin, however, is when we do get a shot, the birds can have very interesting poses. After all that work, warbler shots are the ones that we're very proud of because they are that much more difficult to take. Regardless of having all kinds of tricks in your back pocket, warbler photography just takes a lot of time and patience. Not every bird will cooperate, and some species are far worse than others. I've found that by taking my time and working a few different angles with consistency, attractive photos are attainable. Let's dive into some of what I've discovered that just might increase your number of keeper images.

My first tip is to **sit and wait**. There is nothing more painful for me than watching people chasing and even running after warblers for images. Put yourself in the warblers' shoes: if a giant being was running after you like a predator, what would you do? You wouldn't have a snack and pose for photos. So, for the first trick, I prefer to walk through natural areas where warblers should be and slowly move through the area until I find a space with lots of birds. I call these "honey holes," and these are spots where you want to set up and simply wait for action. Always remember where your light source (the sun) is and make sure you're looking at what's in the background! The second tip is to **have your gear ready** so when the birds do hit the area you're targeting, you don't have to spend precious seconds getting your exposure settings right, only to find that your bird has left by the time you're ready. Take photographs of some different areas where you think birds might land, and adjust your exposure accordingly. Now you're ready for the split second a bird hits those areas. For the third tip, **use an attractant**. This is the type of thing that should be done carefully and not in excess, but many warblers will come to a water source or even a perch that has tiny bits of suet stuck



LEFT: Black-throated Green Warbler. © 2011 Josh Haas.

ABOVE: Hooded Warbler. © 2011 Josh Haas.

to it. The water attractant can be as simple as a small dish, but having a jug mounted a couple feet above with a pin hole creating a drip into the dish is helpful. There is something about the sound of water that can attract birds. With regard to suet, when I say "tiny bits," I mean tiny—it doesn't take much at all (bonus tip: place the bits of suet on the back side of the perch you're targeting so they don't end up visible in the images). At this point, you've done everything you can do. The birds will either hit the perch or they won't. This brings me to my last tip: after putting in a good amount of time, you should have the moment in which you **realize it's time to move on**. While time and patience are key elements to excellent photo opportunities, sometimes it's okay to move on to another area and try for different individuals. Like us, birds are very individualized and react differently to various situations. We can read tons of books on how these birds behave, but remember: they aren't reading the same books we are. What you expect to happen may not actually happen. The best advice I can give is to **be as prepared as you can be** and with a little luck, opportunities will arise. It just takes time.

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

### Our Amazing Discovery

BY GABRIELLA & MALAENA CALDWELL



The Twins

Young birders and plover protectors Gabriella and Malaena Caldwell. © 2011 Roger Eriksson.

One day early in July 2011, my sister and I were looking for skippers (flat stones to skip across the water) when a small bird on the beach started chirping at us. The bird acted like it had a broken wing. While we were looking for skippers, we found eggs, so we ran over to tell Gramms.

The day before we left to go home, Grandma read an article from the newspaper that said the bird was a Piping Plover, and it was endangered. Grandma called Peggy Ridgway to tell her about our egg discovery. Peggy told Grandma that people will come to see if the bird really is a Piping Plover.

On the day we were going home, people from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service came to look at the eggs, and they said the eggs were from a Piping Plover. They put a cage around the eggs so animals couldn't eat them. Then they put up signs that basically said, "Don't harm these birds." After they were done, they gave us pins and badges for helping and saving the eggs.

The chicks hatched, and Roger (Eriksson) checked on the chicks and took pictures of them. This all happened because we were looking for skippers.

Gabriella and Malaena are twin sisters who live in Shelby Township with their mother and brother, and they visit their grandma in Oscoda often during the summer.

Last summer, the Lake Huron beach in Oscoda became the second location on Michigan's eastern shore to become a successful nesting site for the endangered Piping Plover. Four chicks hatched; three of them fledged.

A juvenile Great Lakes Piping Plover on the Lake Huron shoreline.  
© 2011 Julie Eriksson.

## Calendar

### May

- 12 **Migration Count Day**
- 15 **Kirtland's Warbler tours begin**  
Grayling and Mio
- 17–20 **Tawas Point Birding Festival**  
East Tawas and Oscoda
- 19–20, 26–27 **International Migratory Bird Day Festival**  
Copper Harbor

### May 30–June 3

**Leelanau Peninsula BirdFest**  
Lake Leelanau

### June

- 1–3 **Cerulean Warbler Weekend**  
Hastings
- 20 **Last day for Forest Service Kirtland's Warbler tours**  
Mio

### July

- 4 **Last day for USFWS/Michigan Audubon Kirtland's Warbler tours**  
Grayling



# 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.

Laurie Allen	Rita Montague
Dea Armstrong	Nancy Moran
Glenn and Maryanne Belyea	Joann Muma
Kes Bennett	Alexander Oswald
Penny Briscoe	Melva and Thomas Parker
Pat Carlson	Robert Parker
Martha Collick	Gregg Perez
Jacqueline Copeland	Pete Peterson
Jim Dawson	Ted Pobud
Janet Delvalle	Linda Pollock
Ann & John Doty	Carol and Steve Rall
Kayne Ferrier	Nicole and Frank Raslich
Linda and Gary Friedman	Donnis Reese
Priscilla Garver	Kay Regester
Jerry Gingrich	Lynn and Don Renkert
Jane Grier	Stephen Ross
Jeanette Hagland	James Salinas
Eve Hansen	Patty and John Schmidt
Paulette Hatfield	Ron Shavaliar
Elsie Jocz	Anne Smith
Justin Kellner	Kim Smith
Jill Knitter	Walter Stansbury
Katie Koch	Charles Stevens
Judy LaPorte	Gerard and Lynette Szydlowski
Andre Lee	Ray VanVelsen
Dale Leitzke	Erin Victory
Paul Lombardi	Kathy Sneden and Sue Wiersum
Rita Mahaffa	Thomas and Kay Wright
Dawn Marsh	David and Maybelle Yarrington
Lisa Maynard	
Elaine McBride	

Black-backed  
Woodpecker  
© 2007 William Norton

# Events

## Schedule Changes for Kirtland's Warbler Tours

Since 2005 Michigan Audubon has been working jointly with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to provide free guided tours to see the Kirtland's Warbler on trips heading out of Grayling. Michigan Audubon hires the tour guide, who then in turn volunteers to work for the FWS. The FWS has been offering the tours since the late 1980s, and tours reached their maximum attendance in the mid-1990s. Tours were offered twice daily from May 15 through July 4. At the same time, the U.S. Forest Service (FS) has also offered tours running out of Mio. This meant that there were four tours operating daily.

In recent years, tour participation has decreased slightly, more so on the second tour than the early tour. For this reason, the FS eliminated their second tour a few years back. **Weekday tours this year will only be held at 7:00 AM. Eleven o'clock tours will only be offered on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays (Memorial Day and July 4, the last day of the tours).** This will still provide the opportunity for people living within a few hours of Grayling to be able to do a day trip to see the bird on the weekends. The FWS/Michigan Audubon tours are free and do not require registration. FS tours require advanced registration and currently have a fee of \$10.

In order to have the best chance to see the Kirtland's Warbler, the optimal time to attend a tour is May 20–June 15. Most people attend tours during that time frame. It is still possible to see the birds up until July 4, and last year the FWS/Michigan Audubon tours saw the bird on every single tour conducted! This was the first time we'd ever hit 100% for sightings on each tour. But due to the fact that tour numbers dwindle after June 15, this year the FS will stop offering their tours on June 20. After that date, they will direct anyone who calls their office to ask about tours to contact either Michigan Audubon or the FWS. The FWS/Michigan Audubon tours will continue to operate until July 4.

Those taking the free FWS/Michigan Audubon tours meet at the Ramada Inn in Grayling. To participate in a tour, meet the tour guide (this year we have Alison Vilag) a few minutes before the scheduled tour time in the Maple Room located in the Ramada Inn's conference center. You will watch a short video there about the conservation effort to protect this endangered species. After the video, you will caravan to the jack pine habitat to see the bird on its nesting ground. You should plan on spending two and a half hours for the complete tour. If you have more than six people in your group, please notify the Michigan Audubon office at least one week in advance of your anticipated participation date.

## Specialty Tours in the Eastern Upper Peninsula

One-day specialty tours to search for the elusive Connecticut Warbler in the eastern Upper Peninsula will be offered again this spring. The tours will also target other species such as the Spruce Grouse, Black-backed Woodpecker, Golden-winged Warbler, and Yellow-bellied Flycatcher. Tours will be offered June 2, 3, 9, & 16, beginning at 6 AM and concluding at approximately 6 PM. Each tour is limited to 12 participants. The cost is \$60 for Michigan Audubon members and \$75 for nonmembers. Reserve your tour spot online at [MichiganAudubon.org](http://MichiganAudubon.org) or by contacting Wendy Tatar at 517-641-4277.







## Sanctuary Programs for Early Summer

The monthly nature walks being held at the Baker, Lake Bluff, and Otis Farm sanctuaries continue. 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 also take place at these sanctuaries, the Hawk Valley and Haenhle sanctuaries, and the Bengel Wildlife Center (the location of Michigan Audubon's office) at intervals throughout the year. For more information on the programs, please visit the Event Calendar page of Michigan Audubon's website at: [MichiganAudubon.org/Education/EventCalendar](http://MichiganAudubon.org/Education/EventCalendar).

### 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       |
| 19 | <b>Otis Farm Bird Sanctuary guided nature walk</b><br>9:00 AM        |
| 20 | <b>Warbler walk at Baker Sanctuary</b><br>8:00 AM                    |
| 26 | <b>Spring migration walk at Lake Bluff Bird Sanctuary</b><br>8:00 AM |

### June

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 2  | <b>Baker Sanctuary guided nature walk</b><br>9:00 AM               |
| 9  | <b>Lake Bluff Bird Sanctuary guided nature walk</b><br>9:00 AM     |
| 9  | <b>Sanctuary open house at Baker Sanctuary</b><br>10:00 AM–2:00 PM |
| 16 | <b>Otis Farm Bird Sanctuary guided nature walk</b><br>9:00 AM      |
| 19 | <b>Nesting program at Otis Farm Bird Sanctuary</b><br>6:30 PM      |
| 21 | <b>Bengel Wildlife Center guided nature walk</b><br>7:00 PM        |

### July

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 5  | <b>Bengel Wildlife Center guided nature walk</b><br>7:00 PM    |
| 7  | <b>Baker Sanctuary guided nature walk</b><br>9:00 AM           |
| 14 | <b>Lake Bluff Bird Sanctuary guided nature walk</b><br>9:00 AM |

## Birding Event News

We have good news and bad news about special events involving birding in Michigan this season. The good news is that the Leelanau Peninsula BirdFest was so successful in its first year of operation that it is being held again this year. The second annual event will be held May 30–June 3 at Lake Leelanau. The historic Fountain Point Inn will serve as the headquarters for this event. You can view the BirdFest event schedule and register by going to [MBirdFest.com](http://MBirdFest.com) or by contacting the Leelanau Peninsula Chamber of Commerce at 231-271-9895.

The bad news relates to the Kirtland's Warbler and Wildlife Festival. This would have been the twentieth year for this festival, which operated out of the Kirtland Community College near Roscommon. Due to operational changes at the college, the festival will not be held this year. The U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources are working together to find a solution so that this event may come back in the future. We will keep you posted on those developments when they occur.

Some aspects of the Kirtland's Warbler and Wildlife Festival will live on this year at the Tawas Point Birding Festival (TPBF). Not only does TPBF offer tours to see the Kirtland's Warbler, but the Friday night keynote program will be about the history of the bird, an afternoon session will discuss its wintering grounds, and the winning artwork for the 2013 Kirtland's Warbler calendar will be on display at the event headquarters, the Tawas Bay Beach Resort.

## Baker Sanctuary to Hold Open House

Saturday June 9 will provide the opportunity for you to see the many sanctuary improvements at the Bernard W. Baker Sanctuary and meet the new resident manager, Jolene Flynn. Jolene and her partner Cam Myers have been hard at work since moving into the residence at Baker. They've been clearing brush, painting in the house, setting up new feeding stations, and cleaning up around outbuildings.

Volunteers, including members of the Doty Wildflower Association and the Battle Creek Brigham Audubon, have also been busy, cleaning up around Baker Lodge and helping to re-establish trails on the east side of the sanctuary.

For those planning on attending the open house, please park in the lot for the Meadow and Marshland Trail on the west side of sanctuary, directly across the road from the driveway for 21145 15 Mile Road.

Volunteers will lead guided walks of the trails and explain some of the projects that are planned for the sanctuary over the next few years. After your initial visit on the west side, stop over to the east side of the sanctuary before you head home so you can see the improvements going on there. The parking area for the lodge and the Iva E. Doty Wildflower Trail is located on Junction Road. For more information regarding the open house, contact Jolene Flynn at 269-763-3090 or contact the Michigan Audubon office at 517-641-4277.

## Kids' Summer Programs at Lake Bluff

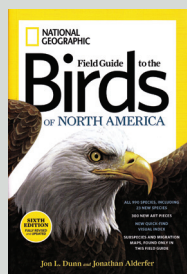
A six-week session of outdoor environmental programming for children will be taking place this summer at the Lake Bluff Bird Sanctuary in Manistee. Michigan Audubon plans to hire an instructor to run the day programs, which are scheduled to operate Thursday–Monday beginning July 12. The programs will be geared toward children under the age of 14. Children can participate in just one or all of the programs, which will have a weekly theme. Watch for more information on these programs in the next issue of the *Jack Pine Warbler* and on the Michigan Audubon website.

Dated Material

## Michigan Audubon Bookstore

*Your purchase from the bookstore supports Michigan Audubon's educational programs.*

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



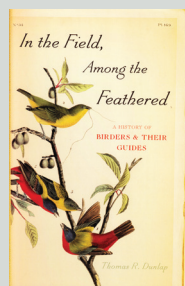
### National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition

compiled and edited by Jon Dunn and Jonathan Alderfer

**\$27.95**

The newest edition of the favorite "Nat Geo" guide, with birds now listed in the most recent taxonomic order. Guides now begin with members of the Anatidae family (ducks, geese, swans).

Thumbnail tabs marking species locations in the book aid in making your bird identification faster.

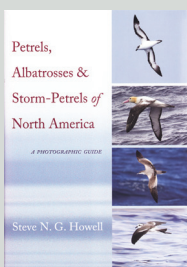


### In the Field, Among the Feathered: A History of Birders & Their Guides

by Thomas R. Dunlap

**\$34.95 (hardcover)**

Birding became a hobby during the latter years of the nineteenth century when informal nature education became popular as a part of outdoor recreational activities. Providing the history that details this cultural phenomenon, this book also discusses the evolution of field guides and explains their progression over the years.



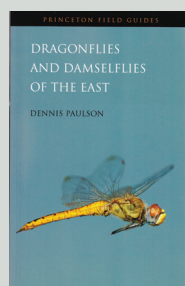
### Petrels, Albatrosses & Storm-Petrels of North America: A Photographic Guide

by Steve N. G. Howell

**\$45.00 (hardcover)**

If you're planning a pelagic trip for 2012 or the near future, this book can provide you with detailed species accounts of the seabirds.

Species accounts describe flight, plumage, distribution, and other useful identification information. The book also contains overviews of ocean habitats and conservation. A must-have if you're heading out on an ocean voyage. Additional shipping charges are required for this large volume.

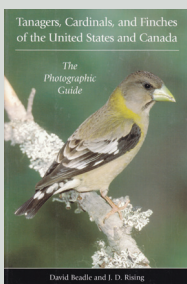


### Dragonflies and Damselflies of the East

by Dennis Paulson

**\$29.95**

At long last it is finally here—an incredible field guide on dragonflies and damselflies. Range maps, many photos of each species, and line drawings that aid in identification of 336 species are included. Although this book is a must-have for the dragonfly enthusiast, it isn't a guide to carry in the field. Additional shipping charges are required for this large volume.



### Tanagers, Cardinals, and Finches of the United States and Canada: the Photographic Guide

by David Beadle and J. D. Rising

**\$29.95**

This book provides detailed accounts of the 46 species of tanagers, cardinals, and finches that call the U.S. and Canada their home. The 200 photographs included illustrate age, seasonal and sexual variations, and also depict rare plumages not found in generalized field guides.

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

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**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.