

Jack Pine *Warbler*

THE SPRING BIRDING ISSUE: Michigan's Top Birder ■ Birding the Saginaw Bay Watershed ■
The Birder's Handbook: A Must Have ■ Woodpeckers: In the Eyes of John James Audubon



Jack Pine Warbler

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ADVERTISING

Guidelines available on request.

PRINTING

Jack Pine Warbler (ISSN 0021-3845)
is published six times per year and
is received by all Michigan Audubon
members. It is printed by

Foresight Group
2822 N. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Lansing, MI 48906
www.foresightgroup.net



Cover Photo ■ Common Nighthawk

Photographer: Kevin Karlson

The cover image was taken by Kevin Karlson in New Jersey using a Canon EOS-1D Mark II N with a EF600mm lens with an exposure of 1/3200 sec and an ISO setting of 400. Common Nighthawks have been confirmed in 66 counties in Michigan according to the MBBA II Survey.

If you would like to see your image featured in the *Jack Pine Warbler*, please email Marketing and Communications Coordinator Mallory King via mallory@michiganaudubon.org. We would love to see your work!

Contents

Features

2
Michigan's Top Birder:
Adam Byrne

4
**A Goatsucker by Any
Other Name**

6
**The Saginaw Bay
Watershed:**
Quality of Life

Columns

8
Book Review:
The Birder's Handbook:
a Field Guide to the Natural
History of North American
Birds

9
Conservation UPDATE:
Haehnle Sanctuary Expansion

10
Chapter Spotlight:
Chappee Rapids Audubon
Society

11
Feathered Lens:
Audubon's Woodpeckers

12
Young Birder:
My Big Year Completed by
Will Keller

Departments

1
Executive Director's Letter

9
Calendar

13
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.



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Executive Director's Letter



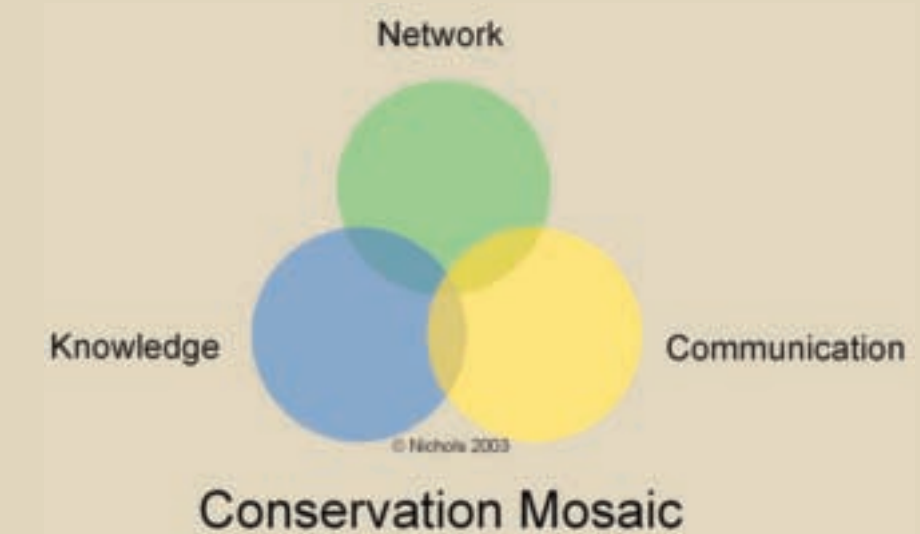
THE (BIRD) CONSERVATION MOSAIC

Prior to accepting my position with Michigan Audubon, part of my work in coastal South Carolina included in-the-field sea turtle conservation. As the state permit-holder for Dewees Island—a ferry-accessed barrier island north of Charleston—I was charged with organizing volunteers and managing the sea turtle nesting activity and sea turtle stranding that occurred on 3 miles of pristine Atlantic beach. This responsibility led me to attend the 2007 International Sea Turtle Symposium in Myrtle Beach, where I met Dr. Wallace J. Nichols.

Dr. Nichols promotes a model he calls the “Conservation Mosaic” (pictured at right). His model overlaps the elements Network, Communication, and Knowledge and suggests that these are the keys to success for conservation. I believe the Conservation Mosaic is an excellent application for bird conservation in Michigan, much as it has been for sea turtle conservation on beaches around the globe.

The key elements of Network, Communication, and Knowledge were on display March 21 through March 23 at the seventh edition of the Michigan Bird Conservation Workshop (formerly the MiBCI Ornithological Congress). The annual event of the Michigan Bird Conservation Initiative (MiBCI www.mibci.org) hosted 85 registered participants, including three of the world's leading experts on Common Loons, dozens of agency and non-profit conservation professionals, and 30 university-level students. Two Michigan Audubon chapters were also represented: AuSable Valley Audubon and Audubon Society of Kalamazoo. The award for the best student presentation went to Nathan DeBruine, age 14 (yes, you read that correctly), for his presentation on the nocturnal flight calls of birds.

The future of bird conservation in Michigan depends on the strength of the network, how partners communicate, and the



© 2013 Wallace J. Nichols

strength of our overall knowledge base. The Michigan Bird Conservation Initiative welcomes participation from agencies, non-profit organizations, academic institutions, grassroots leaders, and individuals. Likewise, Audubon entities throughout Michigan—from individual members like you to chapter leaders—are encouraged to support the network through volunteerism, attending and presenting at the annual bird conservation workshop, and to help grow the network by sharing it with others.

Spring is the time when birdwatchers come out in force. I know many of you are enjoying the activity at your feeders and planning trips to places like Tawas Point, Magee Marsh, and Point Pelee. If you are looking to bridge the gap between recreational birdwatching and bird conservation, then the ongoing work of MiBCI is an additional item for your to-do list. I encourage you to keep these dates handy:

- The fall meeting of the Michigan Bird Conservation Initiative General Assembly will be Thursday, September 12, 2013 at the Bengel Wildlife Center

in Bath (near Lansing).

- The next Michigan Bird Conservation Workshop in Tustin, Michigan (near Cadillac) will take place March 20-22, 2014.

As the current elected Chair of the MiBCI General Assembly's coordinating council, I welcome your calls and emails with questions about the initiative, its mission, and how you can become an active participant in Michigan's bird conservation network. In the meantime, clean those feeders and dust off your gear because spring has arrived!

Best regards,

Jonathan E. Lutz, Executive Director

Michigan's Top Birder: Adam Byrne

BY HOWARD MEYERSON

Adam Byrne has ruffled a few feathers over the years. The 42-year-old secretary for the Michigan Bird Records Committee has had to say “No” to more than one birder submitting a sighting to the committee of experts that vets them.

Their documentation has sometimes been lacking, he said. And as a result, it doesn't get listed, often to the dismay of an indignant birdwatcher.

“People see it as a judgment thing,” said Byrne, who chaired the committee for several years. “It's ‘How dare you question what I saw.’”

But, that's not what we are doing. I've taken the brunt of it for the records committee, but I'm not losing sleep over it, either.”

Focused, hard working, and keen-on-accuracy are all terms that describe Byrne, who lives in DeWitt with his wife, Jan and their three children. He is the chairman of the research committee for Whitefish Point Bird Observatory and the Michigan eBird reviewer, in essence the gatekeeper for Michigan submissions to the international database managed by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology in Ithaca, N.Y. Byrne's friends and colleagues know him as a bird “chaser,” and it is not unusual for Byrne and others to pile into a van at a moment's notice and drive all night to see an unusual

species reported in the western Upper Peninsula.

His Michigan list of bird sightings has 398 species out of 444 known in the state. It is the longest list on record. Byrne also holds the Michigan Big Year Record, having sighted 329 bird species in 2005.

“He's a controversial guy,” said Caleb Putnam, the Michigan Important Bird Areas Coordinator and a personal friend. The two have spent many days bird watching together. “What he really cares about is that the ornithological archives are really accurate. And he's as qualified a person as we have in the state.”

“No one would put as much effort into it as Adam. But he takes a hardline approach and that sometimes rubs people the wrong way.”

Byrne's birding interest took flight while in junior high. His seventh grade science teacher, Ben Blazier, offered extra credit for going with him bird watching. Highly motivated to succeed, Byrne took him up on the offer.

“He had a knack for working with troubled kids and I was not one of those kids,” said Byrne, a plant pathology research assistant at Michigan State University. “I was a book-nerd and (later) a valedictorian in college, but he gave me the opportunity to get out and see birds I never knew existed. I started keeping lists and it kept growing.”

Byrne's grandmother, Elsie Deeb, now 92 years old, proved a crucial figure in the development of what Byrne calls his “passion.” She was his birding companion for many years and lives with Byrne's parents at their Davisburg home. As a young man he watched her feed birds in the yard.

“I was a 13 to 14 year old kid without a driver's license who wanted to go around the country and see birds,” Byrne said. “My grandma would do it. Weekend after weekend she would drive me all over the state. When I graduated from high school she took me to England and Scotland on a Michigan Audubon trip. We birded around Wales and Scotland. It was just awesome.”

Byrne went on to Cornell University where he earned a bachelor's degree in natural resources and later a master's degree in entomology from MSU. His time at Cornell was filled with bird studies, research, and competition. Students at the university were aggressive and highly motivated bird watchers.

“When I was younger it was all about the game, what would make me the best: more birds and bigger lists,” he said. “But fortunately, as I got older, I was surrounded by really good birders. I realized they weren't doing it out of

The view that most birders see of Adam Byrne: the state's leading eBirder concentrating on finding the next rare bird.
© 2008 Caleb Putnam.

Adam Byrne is both a dedicated birder and family man.
© 2012 Lindsey O'Neil Bouhana.

competitiveness. They were doing it to get out and enjoy the birds and that totally changed me."

Putnam chuckles at that statement, knowing Byrne perhaps better than he knows himself.

"That's laughable," Putnam said, playfully mocking Byrne. "He's the most competitive person I've ever met. He's going to die with the highest state list ever. I have 354 species on mine and I will never beat him."

Jan Byrne, his wife for 17 years, said her husband has been dedicated to birding for as long as she's known him. He asked her out while the two were students at Cornell. The date proved a bit of a shock: bird watching, of course, at the local landfill.

"I'd never envisioned that hard-core birders don't necessarily go to beautiful scenic places," she said humorously. "They go to landfills and waste-water treatment plants."

Byrne said he now directs his competitive urges to those he likes to trounce on the basketball court in pick-up games a few times a week.

"I mean I am competitive, I don't like to be eked out by anyone," Byrne said. "But to me the game part of birding has become secondary. It's more about friendship and camaraderie."

Family life is top priority for Byrne. He speaks with relish of spending time with his wife and children, 15-year-old Jason, 10-year-old Caitlyn and 4-year-old Kylie, who wants to see a snowy owl. Jan Byrne has gotten used to him running off at any hour to chase rare birds. She also knows his hard-nosed side.

"He's not afraid of conflict and he is always fair," Jan Byrne said. "He has a very strong sense of ethics and is all about right and wrong. He is competitive. He gives 150 percent if he does things,



or not at all. But when I say that it's not necessarily against other people as much as competing with himself."

Byrne's friends have taken to calling him "Birdman." And perhaps with good reason: Adam Byrne's eyes are fixed squarely on the number 400; his goal is to have his Michigan list break that milestone soon.

Howard Meyerson is a lifelong outdoor enthusiast, a freelance writer and photographer in Michigan, and the outdoors columnist for MLive Media Group. His work also appears in *Michigan Outdoor News* and other outdoor publications. He can be reached at howardmeyerson@gmail.com.

Byrne enjoys observing charismatic waterbirds like the Pomarine Jaegers at WPBO." © 123RF.com



A Goatsucker By Any Other Name

BY TORREY WENGER

Look! Up in the sky! It's a goatsucker! It's a bull-bat! It's the Common Nighthawk! No, it's not a super-villain-turned-hero from the Marvel comic books. The nighthawk is a real bird with several very imaginative nicknames.

Goatsucker? The ancient Greeks spotted these birds flying over the fields with their mouths wide open and somehow surmised that in the middle of the night, these birds crept up to goats and drank all their milk. Bull-bat? This one comes from the erratic flight pattern of feeding birds and the booming noise, reminiscent of a bellowing bull, created by the male's wings during his courtship display. Nighthawk? Well, they're active more at dusk than during the night and while they do look a little like small hawks in flight, they're absolutely not raptors ... so the official name isn't very accurate either. The European species is called a nightjar, because it "jars" the air with its call at night. In Australia, related species are called frogmouths, for their gaping maws. Perhaps we should just use the scientific name, *Chordeiles minor*, from the Greek words chorde (stringed instrument) and deile (evening), which at least puts the courtship display at the proper time of day.

Whatever you call it, the nighthawk is not as common as it used to be. Breeding Bird Survey route data show this species has been declining both in Michigan and throughout North America since the survey began in 1966. The Michigan

Breeding Bird Atlas shows a similar trend. In the first MBBA, conducted during the 1980s, nighthawks were documented in all 83 counties and 32 percent of the townships; when fieldwork for the second Atlas ended in 2008, the species had been found in 66 counties and only 15 percent of all townships (and another 13 counties had birds in only a single township).

Several possibilities have been suggested to explain this decline. Nighthawks are ground-nesters, requiring bare open areas like recently burnt forests, gravel rooftops, or even agricultural fields. But farmlands are becoming strip malls, roofs have been "rubberized," and fire is still suppressed in most places. Additionally, medium-sized predators like raccoons and house cats, both common in cities and suburbs, can find even the best camouflaged eggs or nestlings. Pesticide use may also be a factor: Scientists investigating a chimney full of 48 years of Chimney Swift guano discovered that DDT lowered the proportions of highly nutritious beetles captured and eaten and, more disturbingly, that beetle numbers did not rebound after DDT was banned.



The Common Nighthawk blends with its habitat exceptionally well © 2010 123RF.com

However, the news might not be that dire. Nighthawks are hard birds to study. They're most active at times when most people aren't out. The nests are mere scrapes, the eggs look like mottled rocks, and both the young and adults have excellent camouflaging plumage. (Plus, rooftop nests are inaccessible.) When they're roosting in trees, adults perch parallel with the branch, blending in even more. The numbers of birds documented during the Atlas may be low.

Scientists with Michigan Natural Features Inventory have designed a protocol to document members of the nightjar family (Common Nighthawks, Eastern Whip-poor-wills, and Chuck-will's-widow). If you enjoy driving around on clear moonlit nights, they could use your help. Contact Dave Cuthrell at cuthrell@msu.edu for more information or to offer your assistance.

The Common Nighthawk is just one of more than 200 species featured in the two editions of the Michigan Breeding Bird Atlas, available online at www.mibirdatlas.org. Each species has a map showing the results of both Atlases,

so changes over the intervening two decades can be easily seen.

Torrey Wenger, conservation education assistant at the Kalamazoo Nature Center, has been a birder since college. This month she is preparing for the start of nestbox season. Contact her at twenger@naturecenter.org.

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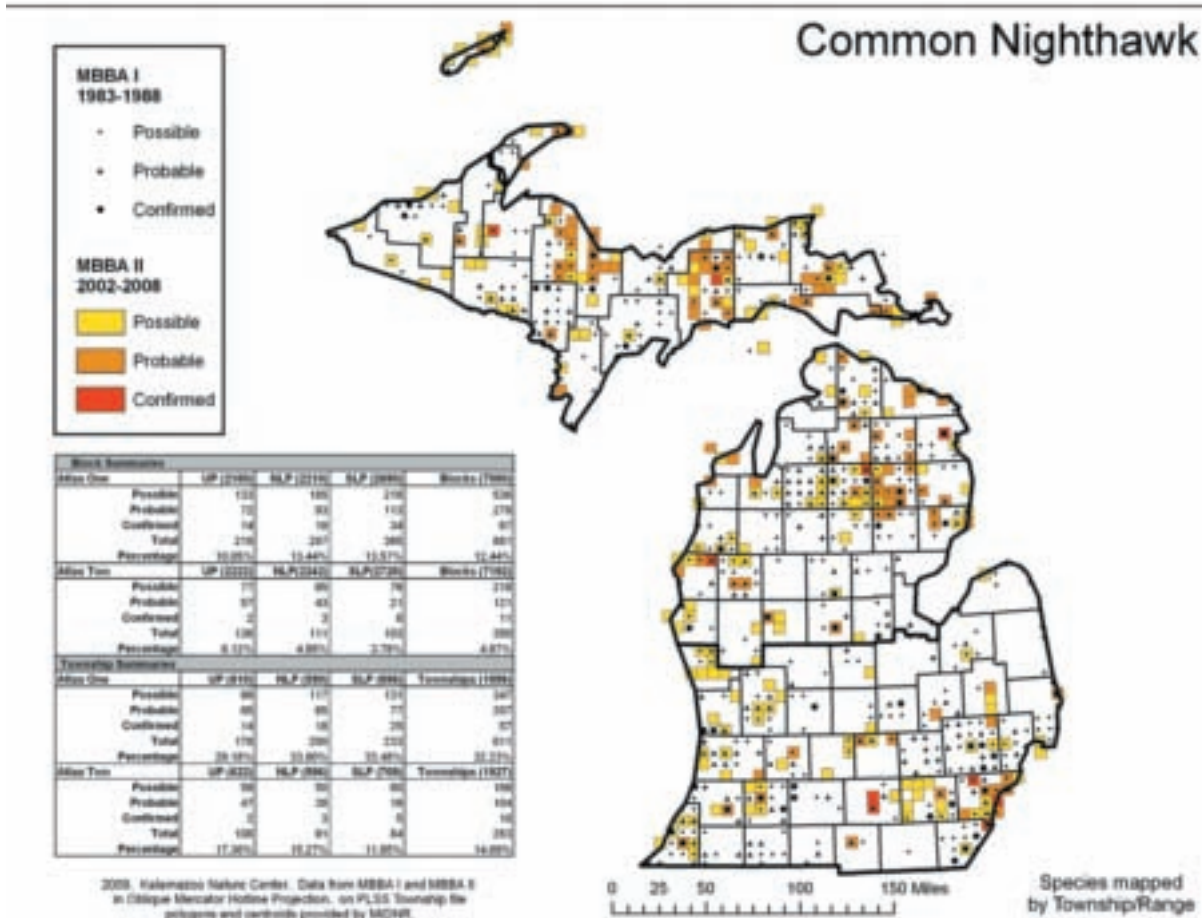
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Common Nighthawk Comparison of MBBA I and MBBA II. © 2012 Michigan Breeding Bird Atlas.

The Saginaw Bay Watershed: Quality of Life

BY ZACHARY BRANIGAN

When I reflect on the idea of “quality of life,” I usually fall back on the basics: clean water, clean air, natural beauty, and opportunities to have fun outside. In my life, I have found these things to sustain me even in small doses, no matter how stressful I find my life. Defining “quality of life” is personal, however. For some, affordability and cultural opportunities, for instance, may be more important than nature. While I am busy wandering in the woods, camping, or looking for birds, others would prefer a night on the town.

This is the challenge facing many conservation non-profits like the Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy. Though maintaining “quality of life” is a cornerstone of our mission, we can’t necessarily define what that means. In our case, we exist, “To conserve land and water resources to promote sustainable communities and a higher quality of life in the Saginaw Bay Watershed.” The first parts of that mission statement—conservation and sustainable communities—are easy to quantify. The latter, however, can divide dedicated volunteers and staff members. What is “quality of life”? Is it safe, clean water? Is it recreational opportunities? Habitat enhancement? All of the above? And what happens when some of those things come into conflict? In our case, we’ve been looking in on ourselves in the past year, developing a vision for what we, as an organization believe, we want to pursue to make our contribution, and how we want to measure success.

A good place to start is what we call our three pillars of sustainability. We weigh our objectives against this test: Is the project going to benefit the watershed socially, economically, and environmentally? Work that addresses all three of these elements make the most widespread contribution to quality of life, no matter what your definition. We believe that natural lands preservation and restoration enhance the community in all these ways and more.

Socially, we believe access to nature provides recreational and educational experiences that restore body and mind. Access



Map of the SBLC - Saginaw Bay Watershed. © 2013 SBLC.

to wildlife and nature provides the kind of enjoyment that can be shared across generations, by anyone, anytime of year. Economically, we believe that people will seek out places that value and conserve nature. Tourism is just one way this manifests itself. Protected natural lands enhance surrounding property values as well, which is perhaps the best indicator of how people value open country. Environmentally, of course, wetlands protection and water quality are at our core. The benefits we provide to the rivers, streams, and lakes of our watershed are many, and the flourishing wildlife within our protected lands is a symbol of that success.

This region is authentic Michigan. The Saginaw Bay is emblematic of the immense wildness and beauty that characterize our state, and the legacy of neglect we must now overcome. I am amazed at what a resource we have in this watershed, and I believe that this resource is underappreciated. We hope to change that.

The Saginaw Bay Watershed is immensely diverse and is the largest in Michigan; 8,709 square miles over 22 counties. It contains the largest contiguous freshwater coastal wetland system in the United States. The Saginaw Bay is positioned

at a critical stopover point for migratory birds and provides tremendous habitat for waterfowl and shorebirds, among others. It is not uncommon to see as many as 75 species in one day by visiting the many protected lands along the Saginaw Bay shoreline during migration. It is this shoreline wetland resource that has long been the focus of the Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy's work.

Our conservancy is the only fully staffed conservation non-profit working exclusively throughout the entire Saginaw Bay Watershed. As a regional organization, we are growing into our role of responsibility as a leader throughout our region. As a grassroots, non-profit membership organization, we receive support from more than 300 individuals and businesses throughout the Saginaw Bay Watershed and from across the United States.

In 2013, SBLC is rolling out a new community engagement program that consists of educational and recreational activities designed to engage the public and grow our base of support and it includes a series of birding events. We have found the connection with the bird conservation and recreational birding communities in Michigan to be a perfect way to "open our doors" to the watershed, and we have been involved with Michigan Audubon and the Tawas Point Birding Festival for several years.

In 2013, we are working with Michigan Audubon to create the Saginaw Bay Birding Trail. The 142-mile trail will guide visitors to the best natural places along our shoreline and will provide opportunities to see any of our 200-plus species of birds. At least 50 sites will be featured, starting at the tip of Michigan's Thumb in Port Austin, and stretching around the Saginaw Bay to East Tawas. In partnership with Michigan Audubon, we will be developing a website, print materials, an outreach campaign, and a coordinated signage program. At a new urban nature preserve in Bay City to be opened this summer, the Conservancy will develop a "hub" for the trail, just minutes off of I-75.

The Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy recognizes that birds are one of our most cherished attributes and they signal the health of our natural areas. We are working at the grassroots level to ensure that quality of life in our watershed is supported by multifaceted efforts—like bird conservation—that have an inspiring outcome for all three facets of sustainability. We are proud to do this work and are grateful to be part of this community!

To learn more about the Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy or to order a free copy of the SBLC's Saginaw Basin Field Guide, a 40-page book about where to see nature in the Saginaw Bay Watershed, visit www.sblc-mi.org.

Zachary Branigan is the executive director of the Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy.



The author and his son Leo look for cranes at CraneFest 2012.
© 2012 Moira Branigan

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 others 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 e-mail, post, or phone so that we can update your address in our database.

For the past few issues we've lacked room in the magazine to publish the names of new members. The list below contains all new members since December 1, 2012. We thank you for your support!

Carolyn Allen	Charles Crowford	John H. Graffius
Mary Almer	Tom Crosby	Nancy Grassmid
Sarra Barailly	Ginger Daggett	Dr. Toulia Guilfoyle
Shirley Bates	Sharon M. Daly	Margaret A. Hammond
James and Cynthia Berkey	Deborah O. Dell	Thomas H. Hammond
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Ellen Brisbin	John and Judy Dunn	Joseph Honeck
Dean E. Brodberg	Mary Edgar	Larry L. Hood
Dan and Lauren Browne	Candace Elisevich	Jean Howell
Jewel Burdette	Sue B. Elsner	Elizabeth Ingell
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Adam M. Byrne	John Erickson	Steve Jerant
Laura Chomiuk	Jim Fair	Cynthia Johnson
John Christner	Bruce Fisher	Erick Johnson
Donna Chrzanowski	Michael Foley	Helen Jositas
Douglas Clary	Vicki and David Gabrielson	Wendy Kopolka
Sylvia Coffey	Frank Galante	Hans Kappus
Claire R. Coles	Doris Ganzhorn	Timothy Keinath
Marie Connors-Gilmore	Nancy George	Megan Kleo
Alice Cooper	Dorald L. Giddings	Andras Komaromy
Mary K. Copehagen	Kenneth Glowski	Virginia M. Kraft
		Brianna Krauss

Continued Next Page

Book Review

My Favorite Birding Guide - The Birder's Handbook

BY TOM FUNKE

If you were to look on my shelf where I keep my field guides and natural history reference books, you could without hesitation say that the one book I use the most is the first Michigan Breeding Bird Atlas. That compendium sits high on a shelf at home, bound in duct tape. I've opened it so many times that the spine has disintegrated. Many pages have stains of unknown origin, and there is the occasional tear mended with tape. Another book that sits on the same shelf and looks rather new is *The Birder's Handbook: A Field Guide to the Natural History of North American Birds* by Paul R. Ehrlich, David S. Dobkin, and Darryl Wheye. Here is where I give full disclosure: This is probably my third or fourth copy of this valuable reference guide to the natural history of birds.

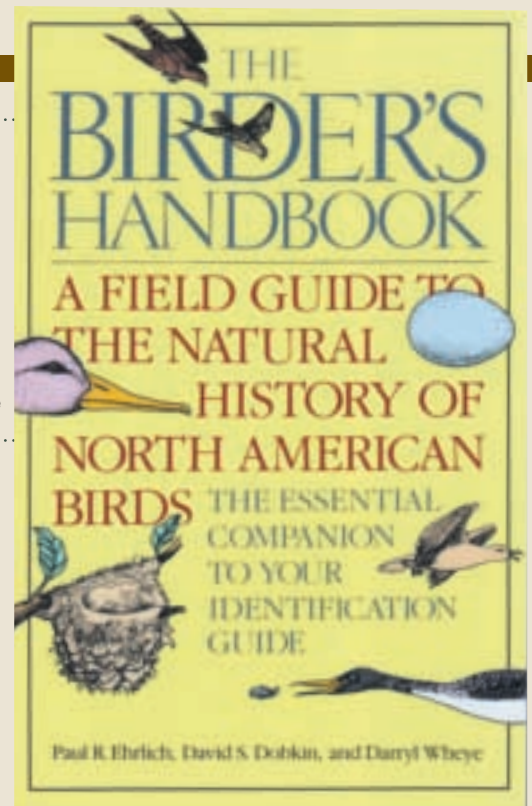
When I leave the office and go on an out-of-town birding foray, it is a sure thing that I'm carrying the appropriate Peterson's bird guide. Back in the car, you can count on finding *The Birder's Handbook* stashed away either in a plastic tub or a zippered plastic bag. If you aren't familiar with this book, yes, it is that large (785 pages) and heavy. After all, it's a reference guide that contains a plethora of natural history information about each of North America's regularly occurring bird species.

Why do I carry *The Birder's Handbook*? Mostly, because I want to read about each bird I've sighted during the day. I want to learn more about their natural history after I've logged it into a checklist. At the end of a long day of birding, I'll sit down with my field guides and thumb through the pages. To me, it is just as important to learn about these birds than to check them off some list. I'm most curious about their breeding behaviors, since that

is something you rarely see or have time to truly observe in the wild. For those of you who don't have a copy, *The Birder's Handbook* tells the reader the average number (and

range) of eggs laid, type of nest, nest location type, the number of days from hatch until fledgling, etc. This, to me, is fascinating information and can even come in handy when birding. The thing is, this book is too wieldy to carry around unless you hire a Sherpa. And if I had a Sherpa, I'd have him carry more than just this book.

My first copy was purchased at John Rollins Bookstore in Kalamazoo a few weeks after I bought my first bird guide, *The Golden Guide to North American Birds*. I found myself spending 10 times as much time reading the articles and the natural history notes in *The Birder's Handbook* than *The Golden Guide*, which essentially became a place to log my bird observations. I still have my *Golden Guide*, but my first *Birder's Guide* has long ago been recycled. I found my current copy of *The Birder's Handbook* after it was discarded from a local library! Seeing that my previous copy was held together by a couple of rubber bands and several yards of tape, I felt no guilt in helping the library find a new home for this valuable resource.



\$21.95

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Michigan Audubon
Nature Bookstore

New Members *Continued*

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Celia Larsen
Mary A. Lawler
Joseph Lelli
Gary and Judy Lipe
Cynthia and Bruce R. MacDonald
Sherry Mapes
Alice Marotti
David Massura
Jean McCarty
Ruth L. McCarty
Sally J. Means
Jeri Meehle
Ann Mellert
Paul Messing
Loretta Moeller
Leah Monger
Martha Moore

Norma A. Morales
Kathleen Hogan Morrison
Anne Morse
T. Mullaney
Randy Neilson
Michele A. Nerone
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Helene Zimmerman
Lucy Zimmerman

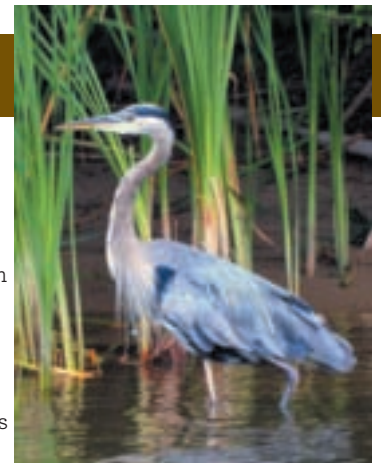
Haehnle Sanctuary Expansion

As announced in the Jack-Pine Warbler last spring, Michigan Audubon and the Haehnle Sanctuary Committee began the process of acquiring property adjacent to the southeast corner of the sanctuary. The Klees, owners of that property, have recently accepted our offer for purchase of 46 acres of land! We hope to close on the property in April. This is an exciting time for us, and we look forward to exploring this piece fully and incorporating it into the sanctuary as a whole.

The capital campaign, which began with \$65,000 seed money from Michigan Audubon, Jackson Audubon Society, and Phyllis Haehnle Sanctuary accounts, was a great success. We were able to raise more than \$195,000 toward our campaign goal of \$200,000. This amount will allow us to purchase the property and ready it for public access. More than 200 individuals donated more than \$52,000. Four other Audubon Societies in southern Michigan gave \$8,000. Three foundations, Consumers Energy,

Carls, and J.A. Woollam foundations, contributed \$70,000. More than \$70,000 was raised to meet the Woollam Foundation match of \$40,000. These are outstanding results, especially in the current economic climate. It speaks volumes about people's feelings for our sanctuary. All those associated with the sanctuary appreciate your generous contributions and are grateful that there are individuals like you who value nature the way we do.

We would like to thank the following additional people for their donations to the MA/Haehnle Land Acquisition fund.



Conservation efforts at Haehnle have improved habitat and population numbers for the Great Blue Heron.
© 2012 Richard Grzeskowiak

Dea Armstrong
Arthur & Madeline Carpenter
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Joanne Lowery
Sheila Schuller
David and Elvera Shappirio

Marion Spencer
David & Kim Stringer
Henry Van Dyke
William & Joan Weber
Nancy Wierenga

Calendar

April

- 20-21 **Late Departures, Early Arrivals Birding Trip**
Eastern Upper Peninsula
- 20-21 **Lake Erie – A Taste of Early Spring Birding Trip**
Monroe County
- 26-27 **Spring Fling**
Whitefish Point Bird Observatory, Paradise
- 26-27 **Thornapple Woodpecker Festival**
Middletown

May

- 4 **Baker Sanctuary guided nature walk**
Bellevue
- 4-5 **Thumbs Up! Birding Trip**
Lake Huron coast, Thumb Area
- 11 **Migration Count Day**
- 11 **Lake Bluff Bird Sanctuary guided nature walk**
Manistee

May Continued

- 15 **Kirtland's Warbler tours begin**
Grayling and Mio
- 16-19 **Tawas Point Birding Festival**
East Tawas
- 18 **Otis Farm Bird Sanctuary guided nature walk**
Hastings
- 29-June 2 **Leelanau Peninsula Birding Festival**
South Lake Leelanau
- 31-June 2 **Cerulean Warbler Weekend**
Otis Farm Bird Sanctuary, Hastings

June

- 2 **Baker Sanctuary guided nature walk**
Bellevue
- 2 **Birding the Mighty Muskegon River**
Newaygo
- 2,3,16,17 **Connecticut Warbler Specialty Tours**
Eastern Upper Peninsula
- 8 **Lake Bluff Bird Sanctuary guided nature walk**
Manistee



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Chapter Spotlight



Chaptee Rapids Audubon Society

This issue's spotlight features the Chaptee Rapids Audubon Society. This chapter was established in 1981 and is a Michigan-Wisconsin organization that consists of around 50 members with headquarters in Marinette, Wisconsin. Although the chapter is chartered to Michigan many members are Wisconsin residents. "People who live there do what is right for the community and forget about the border," explains Denise Taylor, Chaptee Rapids Audubon Society president. This mindset has led the chapter to make huge strides in their community and for the birds that inhabit the land through meaningful and effective projects.

A very successful project the Chaptee Rapids Audubon Society was heavily involved in was the dedication of Carney Fen as a Michigan Natural Area. Carney Fen is more than 2,300 acres of high quality northern fen and rich conifer wetlands in Menominee County that is home to the largest and most diverse population of orchids in Michigan. The area is also home to several rare plants and wildlife species including American Bittern and Northern Goshawk.

In May 2012, after 10 months of construction, the Chaptee Rapids Audubon Society completed the Wyneger Pond Observation Deck located in the Peshtigo Harbor Wildlife Area. The project was funded solely by the chapter and work was completed by members and community volunteers. The observation deck is ADA accessible with a 48-foot ramp and a 30-foot-by-30-foot deck that sits five feet above the pond. On May 19, 2012, chapter members used the deck to record 77 species in a Big Sit Day as part of the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative's Bird-a-thon. The chapter recently had Marinette, Wis., designated as a Bird City. The recognition demonstrates that the community is preserving and protecting bird habitats.

The Chaptee

Rapids Audubon Society also holds an annual educational event for third and fourth graders in the Menominee River Region at the Chaptee Webber Learning Center. Members of the chapter volunteer their time to teach children about the history, culture and biodiversity of the region through interactive activities. September 2013 will mark the 14th year of the program.

In addition to major projects, the chapter also hosts local birding events, including birding walks, observation days and work/clean-up days in the region. The Chaptee Rapids Audubon Society also participates in three Christmas Bird Counts.

Chaptee Rapids Audubon Society has worked hard to create and preserve high quality bird habitat for more than 30 years. The chapter has helped make Michigan history while putting birds in the forefront of citizens' minds. For more information on the chapter visit their website (craudubon.com) or attend a meeting.

Meeting information

*Meetings are not on a regular schedule; check the website for future dates.

Next Meeting

Date: April 18, 2013

Time: 7 p.m.

Where: University of Wisconsin-Marinette, Room 110

Chapter Information:

P.O. Box 1133

Marinette, Wis. 54143

<http://craudubon.com/>

Denise Taylor, President

wdtaylor@wildblue.net

Dale Leitzke, Michigan Audubon Liaison

906-863-3163



Chaptee Rapids members participating in the 2012 Big Sit Day on the newly constructed deck. © 2012 Chaptee Rapids Audubon Society.

Feathered Lens

Audubon's Woodpeckers

EDITED BY BRIAN "FOX" ELLIS

Knowing that "John James Audubon" will be a guest speaker at the Thornapple Woodpecker Festival, we thought we would share a few excerpts from his biographies of woodpeckers. Though we have focused on romantic delight in these short passages, our hope is that you will visit <http://johnjaudubon.com/birds> to read the full essay so you can fully appreciate Audubon's depth of scientific understanding. As you will read in the following excerpts, he had a great love for woodpeckers. Of the Northern Flicker he wrote: "It is generally agreeable to be in the company of individuals who are naturally animated and pleasant. For this reason, nothing can be more gratifying than the society of Woodpeckers in the forests."

THE RED-HEADED WOODPECKER

"With the exception of the Mocking-bird, I know no species so gay and frolicsome. Indeed, their whole life is one of pleasure. They find a superabundance of food everywhere, as well as the best facilities for raising their broods. The little labour which they perform is itself a source of enjoyment, for it is undertaken either with an assurance of procuring the nicest dainties, or for the purpose of excavating a hole for the reception of themselves, their eggs, or their families. He alights on the roof of the house, hops along it, beats the shingles, utters a cry, and dives into your garden to pick the finest strawberries which he can discover."

THE PILEATED WOODPECKER

"It would be difficult for me to say in what part of our extensive country I have not met with this hardy inhabitant of the forest. Even now, when several species of our birds are becoming rare, the Pileated Woodpecker is everywhere to be found in the wild woods.

The flight of this well-known bird is powerful, and, on occasion, greatly protracted. Its notes are loud and clear, and the rolling sound produced by its hammerings, may be heard at the distance of a quarter of a mile. It almost always breeds in the interior of the forests, and frequently on trees placed in deep swamps over



The oldest Red-headed Woodpecker on record was banded in 1926 in Michigan and lived to be 9 years, 11 months old.
© 2011 Charles Brutlag.

The Pileated Woodpecker is one of the largest, most striking forest birds on the continent.
© 2011 Marie Daloia.



the water, appearing to give a preference to the southern side of the tree. It rears only one brood in a season. The young follow their parents for a long time after coming abroad, receive food from them, and remain with them until the return of spring. The old birds, as well as the young, are fond of retiring at night to their holes, to which they return more especially in winter."

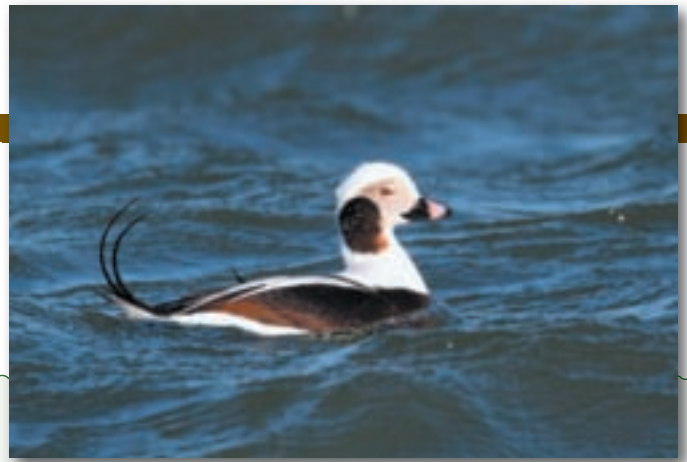
THE IVORY BILLED WOODPECKER

"The Ivory-billed Woodpecker confines its rambles to a comparatively very small portion of the United States. I wish, kind reader, it were in my power to present to your mind's eye the favorite resort of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker ... those deep morasses, overshadowed by millions of gigantic dark cypresses, spreading their sturdy moss-covered branches, as if to admonish intruding man to pause and reflect on the many difficulties he must encounter in venturing farther into their inaccessible recesses... the dangerous nature of the ground, its oozing, spongy, and miry disposition, although covered with a beautiful but treacherous carpeting, composed of the richest mosses, flags, and water-lilies, no sooner receiving the pressure of the foot than it yields and endangers the very life of the adventurer, as he approaches an opening, that proves merely a lake of black muddy water, his ear is assailed by the dismal croaking of innumerable frogs, the hissing of serpents, or the bellowing of alligators!"





Young Birders



Keller enjoyed observing the Long-tailed Duck because of its unique plumage.
© Steve Byland.

My Big Year Completed

BY WILL KELLER

When I set my 100 species goal at the beginning of 2012 (one that I quickly learned I would need to revise), I never thought I would reach 220 by year's end. But that's just what I did! Along the way I learned how to identify sandpipers and ducks and spent valuable time with important adults in my life.

One of the rarest birds I saw this Big Year was a Buff-breasted Sandpiper. I spotted it with Russ Schipper, my friend and birding mentor, at South Haven. Looking at the bird through the scope, I thought it was a Sanderling. Upon further review by Russ, we determined that it was much rarer. I was delighted to add such a cool bird to my list.

Some of my favorite birds to identify this year were ducks. I especially enjoyed seeing my first Long-tailed Duck (also known as Oldsquaw). It was the prettiest duck I saw, and I was able to get particularly close which made it very exciting. When I started the year, I didn't know a Bufflehead from a Gadwall, but as a result of my Big Year I can now identify more than 20 species of ducks!

I took many great trips this year with some of my favorite people. In addition to the trip to Magee Marsh with my grandma and her birding buddies that I mentioned in the previous article (JPW Vol. 89, No. 5), I also traveled to Texas and the Upper Peninsula with my grandmother. My dad even caught the birding bug on the UP trip. There I picked

up Rough-legged Hawk, Northern Harrier, Bohemian Waxwing, Northern Shrike, Common Redpoll, Evening Grosbeak, Sharp-tailed Grouse and Pine Grosbeak. In Texas, I added White Pelican. In Colorado, I was lucky enough to meet a birder from Missouri, Mike Davis, who was vacationing at the YMCA of the Rockies. On his advice, my mom and I awoke early one morning and headed to a beautiful mountain stream that runs through that property in search of an American Dipper. Mike told us to watch for a bird behaving like a fighter jet buzzing the tower. After an hour of waiting, we saw just that! It was a real thrill to then be able to watch that cool bird walking on the rocks in the fast flowing stream.

The Snowy Owl remained elusive until almost the very end of 2012. It wasn't until Dec. 27 that Russ took me on our second trip of the year to the Muskegon Wastewater Plant. Driving along a side road near the plant, searching and stopping for anything distant and white, finally I saw a white crescent shape sitting on the tire of an irrigation system. After almost an entire year of waiting, I could add Snowy Owl to my Big Year list!

I feel so lucky to have so many adults in my life who are willing to encourage my love of birds. My Big Year is one that I will cherish forever.



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Bald eagles on the Mississippi River Burlington, IA. Jan. 20-24, 2014

Snow geese & sandhill cranes, Platte River, Hastings, NE. Mar. 20-24, 2014

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and registration forms**

Announcements

CraneFest Date

In our January/February issue of the *Jack Pine Warbler*, the wrong date was listed for CraneFest and the Fennville Goose Festival. The correct date for these events is October 12 & 13, 2013. We regret the error.

Spring Birding Trips

Three separate birding tours are being offered by Michigan Audubon to get you out and birding this spring, led by either Michigan's Important Bird Area Coordinator Caleb Putnam, or Skye Haas, Upper Peninsula birder extraordinaire.

Lake Erie – A Taste of Early Spring is offered April 20–21. Join Putnam for an adventurous exploration of the marshes, forests, and waters of Lake Erie's Michigan shore. Depending upon weather, participants will hike the dikes at Pointe Mouillee State Game Area, arguably the state's best birding destination. The tour will then caravan up and down the lakeshore from the Detroit River to just north of the Ohio border. The tour's itinerary will be flexible to allow for rarity chasing and work around the weather.

Also on April 20–21, Haas will offer the **Late Departures, Early Arrivals in the Eastern Upper Peninsula tour**. This tour will focus on the winter species that have not yet made their migration north and those spring migrants that have arrived on territory early. You'll caravan to points as far west as Paradise and as far east as Sault Ste. Marie to view winter finches, Sharp-tailed and Spruce Grouse, Black-backed Woodpeckers, and Fox Sparrow. Hawk and owl migrations should be in full swing at this time, so expect to spend time at the Whitefish Point Bird Observatory.

May 4–5 we offer **Thumbs Up! The Wonder of Spring on Michigan's Thumb and Saginaw Bay**. Join Putnam and co-leader Aaron Boone (former coordinator of the Ohio Breeding Bird Atlas) as we spend time in the vastly under-birded Thumb for its migratory birds right as the neotrops arrive! Putnam will adjust the itinerary to take advantage of prevailing winds (and any nocturnal migration events shown by NEXRAD radar), but will focus primarily on Huron County's numerous waterfront parks and marshes, and a variety of forested trails and roads. Sign up early!

Detailed information and registration for all three trips, and others, can be found at the Michigan Audubon website, http://www.michiganaudubon.org/education/field_trips_travel.html.

Trail Association Holds Woodpecker Festival

Along the Thornapple River in Middleville runs the paved Paul Henry-Thornapple Trail. The trail traverses through a nesting area of the uncommon Red-headed Woodpecker and is also home to six other species of woodpeckers. To celebrate this diverse area and help raise funds for further trail development, the third annual Thornapple Woodpecker Festival will be held April 26–27. Festival headquarters are at the Village Hall in Middleville. The festival will feature guided birding walks and golf cart tours of the woodpecker nesting area.

Featured presenters at the event will be Brian "Fox" Ellis, internationally renowned storyteller, author, and naturalist, and Pamela Rasmussen, assistant professor of zoology at Michigan State University and assistant curator of mammalogy and ornithology at the MSU Museum. Other festival events include the Woodpecker Soiree with keynote speaker, John James Audubon (as portrayed by Ellis), a silent auction, and the Woodpecker Ball.

The Thornapple Trail Association sponsors the Woodpecker Festival. The non-profit organization is committed to turning the old railroad corridor between Grand Rapids and Vermontville into a recreational trail.

Detroit Audubon Honors General Motors

Each year millions of migratory birds die when they strike tall buildings in their migratory flight paths. Lights from tall buildings confuse migrating birds and may cause them to run into windows or fly in circles around buildings until they fall to the ground from exhaustion.

Safe Passage Great Lakes (SPGL) was established seven years ago as a joint project between Detroit Audubon Society and Michigan Audubon and its local chapters. The statewide project that was spearheaded by Detroit Audubon helps protect birds when participating building owners and managers turn lights off above the fifth floor between 11 PM and 5 AM during critical migration periods. The dates designated for spring and fall migrations are from March 15 through May 31 and from August 16 through October 31.

In March, Detroit Audubon honored General Motors for their participation in SPGL since its inception. GM's world headquarters is in the Renaissance Center in downtown Detroit, which contains the tallest building in the state. According to a report in The Detroit News, GM officials encourage their workforce to keep their lights off as much as possible during spring and fall migration times.

The newspaper said that GM is attempting to make all of its properties more feather friendly. GM manages about 2,500 acres of wildlife habitat at 25 global sites, including its Michigan locations. Detroit, Mt. Clemens, Southfield, Ann Arbor, and Jackson all participate in SPGL. This year, Gov. Rick Snyder has again signed a proclamation establishing Safe Passage Great Lakes Days. The Capitol Building in Lansing participates in the program and turns off lights on the capitol dome during migration.

More information about the Safe Passage project can be found at Detroit Audubon's website, http://detroitaudubon.org/safe_passage.html.

Michigan Audubon Sanctuaries Holding Monthly Nature Walks

We continue to offer monthly guided nature walks at three of our sanctuaries. The first Saturday of the month the walk will be held at the Bernard Baker Sanctuary located near Bellevue. The Lake Bluff Bird Sanctuary on the shores of Lake Michigan just north of Manistee will host the nature walk on the second Saturday of the month. Then on the third Saturday the walk will be held at the Otis Farm Bird Sanctuary near Hastings. The walks start at 9:00 AM and do not require registration. If you have any questions regarding the nature walks, please contact Wendy Tatar at wendyt@michiganaudubon.org or 517-641-4277.

Spring Fling

Whitefish Point Bird Observatory (WPBO) marks its 25th annual Spring Fling on April 26–28. If you've not been to this festival at the observatory just north of Paradise, you can expect excellent birding along with opportunities to learn more about avian migration and conservation in the Great Lakes.

This year's event will have a special dedication as WPBO joins with the Seney National Wildlife Refuge in the dedication of a land addition to the Whitefish Point Unit. With this 19-acre addition, more than 50 acres of land at Whitefish Point will now be managed and protected by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Other activities at Spring Fling include birding walks around Whitefish Point, workshops, owl viewing at dusk and dawn, a Saturday morning Piping Plover monitoring presentation, and a Sunday morning falconry program with flight demonstration. On April 26, there will be a pre-event birding trip around Paradise and on April 28 a post-event field trip will go in search of Spruce Grouse.

To register or to see the detailed schedule for Spring Fling, go to the WPBO website at <http://wpbo.org/node/26632>.

Dated Material

Michigan Audubon Bookstore

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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. Member discount does not apply to items on sale.



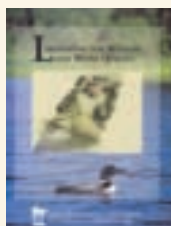
North American Owls: Journey Through a Shadowed World

by Jim Burns

~~\$39.95~~ SALE: \$31.96 (hardcover plus CD)

No longer in print, this stunning coffee table book covers all 19 owl species of North America. A chapter is devoted to the natural history of each species, with the CD containing the calls of all 19 owls. Many incredible photos

make this a great owl book for your collection. Additional postage is required.



Lakescaping for Wildlife and Water Quality

by Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Nongame Wildlife Division

~~\$19.95~~ SALE: \$15.96

If you own lakefront property, this is the book for you. Learn how to plan and plant a diverse natural lakeshore that will restore wildlife habitat and clean the water. Techniques in the book can be applied to landscaping rivers, streams, and wetlands.



Sharing the Wonder of Birds with Kids

by Laura Erickson

~~\$16.95~~ SALE: \$13.49

For any adult who would like to introduce a child to the wonder of birds, this book provides ideas and activities to help children discover birding. The book goes beyond bird identification to teach about bird behavior and how a bird's body works. Chapters will help

adults learn what bird watching equipment is best for children and provides guidance on leading a birding outing for children.



Feeder Watcher's Guide to Backyard Birds: Version 3

by Cornell Lab of Ornithology

~~\$19.95~~ SALE: \$15.96 (CD)

Learn to identify birds on your computer with photos, sound recordings, and videos of 135 species of feeder birds. Quizzes will help you sharpen your skills. This CD also lets you keep track of your sightings. System requirements:

Windows 2000, ME or XP, Pentium 4 Processor or equivalent; 256 MB RAM; CD-ROM drive; 50 MB on hard drive. Some features require an Internet connection.



Majestic Eagles

By Stan Tekiela

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By e-mail. Wendy@MichiganAudubon.org.