

Jack Pine *Warbler*

THE SUMMER ISSUE: River Restoration: Is it Good for Birds? ■ How to Identify Shorebirds ■ Piping Plover Monitoring at WPBO ■
■ Michigan Audubon's Bird Sanctuaries ■ Chimney Swifts—Urban birds in steep decline ■ Whitefish Point Spring is Over ■



Jack Pine Warbler

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Cover Photo ■ **Chimney Swift**
Photographer: Zak Pohlen

This Chimney Swift photo was taken at Millennium Park in Kent County on May 3, 2014 when a small flock of swifts came surprisingly low to forage over a small pond on the southern border of the park.

Photo Details:
Camera: Canon EOS 7D 400 mm lens.
Aperature: f/5.6.
Shutterspeed: 1/1600. ISO: 200.

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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.

*Visit MichiganAudubon.org for more updates, and follow
MichiganAudubon on social media*



Executive Director's Letter

THOUGHTS ON EDUCATION AND CONSERVATION

BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HEATHER GOOD



In serving on the board of directors for a year, I grew familiar with the work of Michigan Audubon and some of the ways we are positioned as an organization to deepen our impact for birds and conservation. Even given the threats birds and their habitat face today with climate change, habitat loss, and other very serious considerations and changes, I feel hopeful and optimistic about the impact of our work. We are poised, for example, to make a deeper impact in expanding conservation work by honing in on specific avian species that are of high concern in the state of Michigan. By developing, sustaining, promoting, and fundraising for these species-specific programs, we will create a model that serves as a foundation for addressing threatened bird species in the long-term.

Education is a focus that's very close to my heart, and we are working to expand our reach and educate more children, more adults, and more "non-birders" through community engagement. We are prioritizing connecting children to the natural world, and nurturing that connection with meaningful programs. In everything we do, I'm taking a good look at opportunities we have to not only include, but really focus in on education and how we can connect more children and communities to the natural world.

I met a 9 year-old girl at one of our sanctuary open houses a few weeks ago. She had the latest copy of the Sibley Guide to Birds of North America: East clutched to her chest, nicer binoculars than I'll ever own bouncing about as she ran toward the event tent, and an earnest, joyful, almost electric focus about her. She walked up to the membership table where I was standing and announced

to me that she'd like to be an ornithologist. We excitedly swapped bird sighting stories from the Spring: the Pileated Woodpecker nesting in her backyard, the Rose-breasted Grosbeaks visiting mine with their refined, Robinesque sounds, the glorious Turkey Vultures gliding through seemingly every corner of Michigan sky, and how wonderful that flash of orange and black of a Baltimore Oriole is to see. While I felt satisfied that she left after her bird walk with a completed checklist of bird species seen, fuel for her excitement about birds, affirmation, and materials to keep her busy for an afternoon or two, I couldn't help thinking of how we can do so much more to reach and support children in their learning and engaging with birds and nature.

Of the 50-some folks I met that day, I was most intrigued and inspired by this girl. It wasn't only because she exuded a distilled, pure enjoyment of birds -- which is a wonderful thing to witness -- but because she served as a reminder of the real need for organizations like Michigan Audubon to have a place for them, a way to receive and celebrate their sense of wonder with programs that invigorate them with the knowledge and awareness of a conservationist for life.

We're here for birds and we're here for conservation. And while there is nothing I enjoy more in this world than being in nature and witnessing native birds thriving in their habitat, our work is about so much more than this. We are stewards of habitat in Michigan, we are stewards of our sanctuaries, but we are stewards of our communities as well. This is a responsibility we take very

seriously, and one that we envision getting stronger, especially as we consciously expand our education efforts.

As Spring comes to a close and we prepare for a season of strategic planning, I am very much looking forward to developing rigorous, focused conservation projects to extend the reach of our work, thoughtful, engaging education programs throughout the state, and research that makes meaningful scientific contributions on a larger scale. The data we collect, the questions we seek to answer about birds and the challenges they face are not only well-documented, but shared widely so that others (and, most of all, the birds) can benefit from what our researchers glean in the field. I am excited about the impacts of our ever-growing advocacy work around protecting birds, and our research efforts that seek to answer important questions about birds, their habitat, and what real, sustained conservation looks like in the state of Michigan.

I encourage you to find your own way to be active and contribute to conservation that fits your life and values. As the writer Alice Walker said, "Activism is my rent for living on the planet." I hope you stay connected to Michigan Audubon, share with us your feedback, do what you can to be a part of these hopeful solutions, and follow our progress as we move into this next exciting stage of growth. We couldn't do it without you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heather Good".

Heather Good

River Restoration: Is it Good for Birds?

BY HOWARD MEYERSON



When Doug Klein goes birdwatching along the Thornapple River near Nashville, he often is pleased about what he finds. Birds are numerous, particularly at the nearby Nashville Dam site where a 155-year-old dam stood until 2009 when it was removed. Wet meadows now grow upstream, an area formerly underwater. Wetland birds visit marshy areas and waterfowl are plentiful in the river. For Klein, an avid birder and eBird lister, Nashville is a very productive spot.

“It’s a pretty nice place to go,” notes Klein, a mechanical engineer and Hastings resident. “Fifty nine species have been reported there on eBird. I’ve seen 57 of them. We see Trumpeter Swans, Rusty Blackbirds, various songbirds and

Sandhill Cranes. One good find last May was a Philadelphia Vireo. Those are getting hard to find. On some mud flats you might see Killdeer or Lesser Yellowlegs. It’s an interesting place to find a variety of birds.”

Aging dams around Michigan are being removed with regularity. Some are torn down to improve fish passage - or reduce water temperatures for species like trout. The Nashville Dam was removed to improve water quality for warm water fish. Others are demolished because they outlive their purpose and may be expensive to repair and maintain.

No matter what the reason, proponents of dam removal maintain that river restoration is good ecologically. Allowing

a river to resume its natural flow, depth and width yields benefits for fish and stream organisms, for animals in the area, and for regional biodiversity. Yet, some birdwatchers say they worry when dams come down, when impoundments are drained, and when the landscape is radically altered. Flooded areas provide homes for important or favored bird species.

“There are several dams that maintain lake levels in the north,” explains John Mesch, a Grand Traverse Audubon Club member. “Lake Dubonnet in Grand Traverse County only exists because of a dam on the upper Platte River. This lake is almost entirely in the Pere Marquette State Forest, and supports multiple loons, ospreys, eagles, red-tailed hawks, warblers, and many other bird species. Removal of this dam would be tragic.”

Natural resource managers, ecologists and river restoration professionals acknowledge the change can be dramatic, but most say few if any ill-effects follow. Most water-oriented birds simply fly away and relocate elsewhere while new species move into the area.

“We see birders and other nature enthusiasts sometimes struggling to understand or appreciate dam removals,” notes Brad Jensen, executive director for Huron Pines, a conservation and resource development non-profit in Gaylord, which coordinated removal of the Song of the Morning Yoga Retreat dam in the Pigeon River Country State Forest. “They watch nature so closely that when they first see the changes (after a dam removal), they have a hard time with not seeing species that they always have. The change isn’t bad. It’s just different. And I’d argue that it’s better in the long run.”

Little research has been done in Michigan examining how birds fare when dams come down. It’s a topic that “screams master’s thesis,” according to Patrick Ertel, an avid birder and resource analyst with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Ertel administers state natural rivers and stream restoration projects like that on the Boardman River, where the Brown Bridge Dam was removed in 2013.

“The Boardman is a perfect example,” Ertel notes. “People envision mud, but that mud is there only for one season. It may look desolate today, but it greens up quickly and new species will use it. I cannot dispute that there will be less open water for waterfowl. People who oppose dam removal say ‘It will be dead. Where will the herons and osprey go?’ I say it’s not dead. It’s just different. I was astonished at how quickly aspen moved into Brown Bridge (after the pond was drained). Now I think of all the little shorebirds that will bounce around the edge of the river.

River restorations create diverse bird habitat, according to Ertel. The 190-acre Brown Bridge Pond was a habitat monoculture. The public, he notes, is often unaware of the benefits that follow. They look upon the change as a ‘loss.’

“It’s easy to look out on a pond and see hundreds of birds. It’s hard to look into cattails, tag alders and other vegetation and see that the birds are still there,” Ertel explains. “It pulls at the heartstrings to see where the duck used to sit. It’s not that a heron won’t wade where a dam comes out, it just will be harder to see.”



Brett Fessel, a river ecologist and restoration section leader for the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, suggests that concerns that surface are often more social than biological; they are expressions of an individual’s values, aesthetics and preferences. On the Boardman River where he works, and where pond conditions were changed to riverine with flood plains, he has already noticed change. The exposed area was heavily planted with trees and vegetation. It will mature over the years and go through predictable stages of forest succession.

“We see more wood ducks now than in the past, more mergansers too and tons of mallards,” Fessel said. “We see the same eagle occupancy and some shorebirds like Killdeer and plovers. If anything I expect the number of herons to increase, and kingfishers. I am also seeing more raptors. Warblers will use it once it matures. Right now it’s highly productive for woodcock that wouldn’t have been there when it was covered with water.

“For people who live on these ponds, it’s a beautiful thing to hear loons calling.” It’s a special feeling, and when it goes away it’s not good. The same is to be said for Trumpeter Swans that nested and produced young. They flew out of the valley and I haven’t seen any back in the river, but I am certain that they found somewhere else to nest and reproduce.”

Howard Meyerson (howardmeyerson@gmail.com) has been writing about birds, nature, the environment, and outdoor recreation for 30 years. He lives in Grand Rapids. His work appears in a variety of publications.

How to Identify Shorebirds

BY KIRBY ADAMS



Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore and Sleeping Bear In late summer, birders head to beaches, mudflats, marshes, and flooded fields to test their skills with migrating shorebirds. After only a few weeks on the arctic breeding grounds, many of the sandpipers and plovers are headed south already by mid-July. Fall shorebird migration is a languid affair that stretches into the first freezing days in October, giving birders plenty of time to tackle the challenges of identifying these variable birds dressed in fifty shades of brown.

Expert birders practice birding by impression, often referred to as “GISS” (pronounced jizz) after the old military acronym for General Impression, Size, Shape. For shorebirds, this is the experienced birder’s weapon of choice for rapid identification of a mixed group. Plumage details can be important, but that falls after size, body shape, bill shape, leg length, and behavior on the priority list. Colors and pattern change throughout the year and at different rates on individuals of the same species, but the size and shape of a bird don’t change. Behavior and habitat are also useful guides that are more reliable, or at least easier, than plumage.

SIZE

For gauging size, you need a yardstick. Killdeer make great measuring devices. Shorebird gatherings often have roaming gangs of Killdeer and they’re easy to identify at a glance. Robins, grackles, and crows can work too, but the Killdeer tend to walk past and stand beside other shorebirds, making them perfect for comparison.

If your bird is significantly smaller than a Killdeer (or American Robin – they’re about the same size), you know you have a small plover or one of the “peep” sandpipers. Closer to the size of the Killdeer are

the mid-sized sandpipers like the Ruddy Turnstone, Stilt Sandpipers, and dowitchers. Taller than the Killdeer are the yellowlegs, godwits, and Whimbrel.

GISS

Now that the field is narrowed, move on to body, leg, and bill shape. This can be harder to qualify than size, but becomes easy with practice. In a hypothetical group of shorebirds smaller than an adjacent Killdeer we can see three different types. We’ll use bill length to quickly rule out plovers, as these birds all have long sandpiper bills. Several of the birds stand out as rounder than the rest. They’re plump and look like they have no neck and a relatively large head. These are Sanderlings. If your football team is drafting an offensive lineman, you want him to be built like a Sanderling.

Ruddy Turnstone. © Dan Behm



© Daniel Behm 2012



We welcome our newest
Michigan Audubon members:

Add new members here

BEHAVIOR

The most numerous group seem smaller than the Sanderlings and they don't run around as much. (We're letting behavior enter the ID process here.) They are compact and have short tails. Looking closely through the scope, we see they have a thin bill that has a slight but perceptible downward droop. Here we have Least Sandpipers. Among the peeps, Least are the only ones likely to have a rusty-red color on the body in August, so we'll use that plumage detail lastly to confirm the ID.

DETAILS AND EXPERIENCE

There's one other bird in the group that looks a bit different. It's shaped like the Least, although a little bit taller. What's most notable is what looks like a long tail, but are actually very long wingtips projecting back beyond the tail tip. The long wing projection means we likely have either a White-rumped Sandpiper or a Baird's Sandpiper. This is where experience comes into play, as the differences are subtle. Different birders tend to key in on different noticeable traits that they find most easy to differentiate. It could be that the Baird's has a taller head with a forehead that doesn't slope as much as the White-rumped. It could be that the White-rumped is sleeker looking, with a horizontal posture unlike the Baird's more upright stance. On a lucky day, the bird will fly, revealing the lack of a striking white rump, confirming that this is a Baird's Sandpiper.

HABITAT

An often overlooked aspect of shorebird identification is habitat. Astute birders will by now have noticed something very wrong with the hypothetical identification exercise above. You will rarely find Sanderlings and Least Sandpipers in the same place! Least Sandpipers like mudflats and marsh edges where they walk casually and probe for invertebrates. Sanderlings like sand,

so they're tied to beaches where they play tag with the waves and sprint in frantic bursts to avoid getting their feet wet. That's not to say Sanderlings are never found in fields. It's not common, but it happens. Least Sandpipers on a beach would be even less likely, but anything's possible. If you've identified a Sanderling cavorting with Least Sandpipers in a farm field, double check your ID. Might it be a Semipalmated Sandpiper?

LEG COLOR

We've established that using color to identify shorebirds is hazardous, but one aspect is such a common pitfall it deserves special mention; and that's leg color. Least and Semi-palmated Sandpipers are very similar, but your field guide will tell you the Least has yellowish legs and the Semipalmated has black legs. That's easy, right? Not at all. Lighting angles can do funny things to colors of small objects. Mud can make yellow legs appear solid black, and the same mud, once dried, can make black legs appear much lighter. Lesser Yellowlegs have much more vibrant orange-yellow legs than a Solitary Sandpiper, but walking in algae-filled water all day can make them look greenish like the Solitary. If you're using leg color as your primary identification tool, you will make errors. Resort to leg color as confirmation after you've gone through the GISS process.

Grab an impression birding guide like *The Shorebird Guide* by O'Brien, Crossley, and Karlson and find some mudflats this summer. Just remember that shorebird identification is challenging, and it's OK to leave some birds unnamed. The biggest secret the experts have is that they sometimes walk away without knowing for certain if the bird was a Short-billed or Long-billed Dowitcher. And that's just birding.

Kirby Adams (kirby.adams@gmail.com) writes the birding column for the online travel blog, *National Parks Traveler*. Kirby lives in Eaton Rapids.

Michigan Audubon's Bird Sanctuaries

Bernard W. Baker Sanctuary (1)

The Bernard W. Baker Sanctuary is North America's first bird sanctuary dedicated to the conservation of Sandhill Cranes. Baker Sanctuary spans approximately 980 acres in Calhoun County. Baker's centerpiece habitat is the 200-acre Big Marsh Lake. Other habitats include ponds, streams, cattail marsh, tamarack swamp, oak opening, floodplain forest, wet meadow, and ongoing prairie and wetland restoration areas.

What to see: Sandhill Crane, Bald Eagle, Trumpeter Swan, Northern Harrier, migrating waterfowl, and diverse warblers.

42.379748, -85.005278

Address: 21145 15 Mile Road, Bellevue, MI 49021

Directions:

From I-94: I-69 N to N Drive North (Exit 42)

To Meadow & Marshland Trail: From Exit 42; W 0.8 mile to 15-½ Mile Rd.; N 2.4 miles, merging with 15 Mile Rd.



Brockway Mountain Drive Sanctuary (2)

Located in a major migratory flyway, this 394-acre sanctuary in Keweenaw County is entirely wooded with a mixture of northern conifers and hardwoods. Its highest point is along Brockway Ridge, which is easily accessible by Brockway Drive. Views are spectacular.

What to see: Broad-winged and Sharp-shinned Hawks, Golden Eagle.

Twinflower, orchids, plants of rock outcroppings and wet forest

47.465367, -88.013410

Approximately 797 Brockway Mountain Drive, Mohawk MI 49950

Directions: Its highest point is along Brockway Ridge which is easily accessible by Brockway Drive.

From M-26; 2.5 miles E on Brockway Dr.



Capital City Bird Sanctuary (3)

Located on the banks of the Grand River in Delta Township near Lansing, this 63-acre property is an oasis of habitat in an expanding suburban area that attracts spring and fall migrating warblers. Walking paths lead through grasslands, shrub habitats, and river floodplain forest along the Grand River. The sanctuary is adjacent to Hawk Meadow, a Delta Township park, whose land was also donated by Michigan Audubon benefactor, Carl Haussman. The property features several demonstration native plant gardens and a nest box trail.

What to see: Wood Duck, Eastern Bluebird, Wild Turkey, Baltimore Oriole, Brown Creeper, Warbling Vireo, Eastern Screech Owl, swallows, hawks, woodpeckers, and migrating warblers.

Trailhead across the street from Hawk Meadow Park (6061 Delta River Drive, Lansing, MI)



Davis Bog (4)

Davis Bog Sanctuary is an 80-acre bird sanctuary that is mostly composed of Duck Lake and its surrounding swamp lands. No trails are available at this protected wetland sanctuary. The habitat is cedar swamp with bog plants like Pitcher Plant and Sundew.

45.218977, -83.637815



Kate Palmer Wildlife Sanctuary (5)

Although bisected by a busy country road, this 53-acre sanctuary in Jackson County is home to a mature hardwood forest that nestles Sandstone Creek. Biotic communities include upland and lowland deciduous woods, a grove of large Eastern White Pines, and a marsh with natural springs that flow into Sandstone Creek. This is one of the richest woodlands in Jackson County for spring wildflowers. A woodland hiking trail and boardwalk lead visitors safely through blankets of trillium in the spring.

What to see: Red-bellied, Downy, Hairy, and Pileated Woodpeckers; Eastern Wood-Pewee, Yellow-throated Vireo, Gray Catbird, Cedar Waxwing, migrating warblers.

42.234645, -84.490400

Directions: From I-94; M-60 (exit 136) S to Michigan Ave.; W 1 mile to O'Brien Rd. S 1.5 miles to parking lot.



Lake Bailey Sanctuary (6)

This is an entirely wooded 405-acre sanctuary in Keweenaw County. The low area immediately adjacent to the parking area is cedar swamp but it is usually dry and passable using the hiking trail. The trail traverses a steep incline through a hardwood forest to a precipice overlooking the area. Migrating birds of prey are especially abundant in the spring.

What to see: Broad-winged Hawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, and the occasional Peregrine Falcon or Bald Eagle.

47.462279, -88.07666, Eagle Harbor Township, Keweenaw Co., 4.1 miles E of East Harbor.

Directions: From Eagle River; M-26 E 4.1 miles past the Little Silver River to E end of Lake Bailey. Large sign and parking area on M-26.



Lake Bluff Bird Sanctuary (7)

Atop an 100-foot-high bluff overlooking beautiful Lake Michigan, Lake Bluff Bird Sanctuary boasts over 1,700 feet of Lake Michigan frontage on its 75 acres located just north of Manistee, MI. Originally landscaped as an arboretum, many notable specimens have been preserved on the grounds such as California Redwood, Ginkgo, two Michigan Champion Trees, a Giant Sequoia, and a Sycamore Maple.

What to see: Red-breasted Merganser, Common Loon, Common Goldeneye, Bald Eagle, Least Flycatcher, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Golden- and Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Veery, and Purple Finch.

2890 Lakeshore Rd Manistee MI 49660-9226.

Directions: From US-31; Lake Shore Rd. N 2 miles to entrance.



Little Lake Sanctuary (8)

This 40-acre sanctuary is within the Whitefish Point Global Important Bird Area. An upland ridge forested with Balsam fir, birch, Red Maple and White Pine, traverses the southwest corner. The transition of the shrub/bog habitat supports the richest diversity of migrating birds on the Whitefish Peninsula.

46.763875, -85.013247



Margaret Shroyer (9)

The 40-acre sanctuary is in the Whitefish Point Important Bird Area, a globally significant site designated as a migration stop over for Red-necked Grebes. Most of the area is Jack Pine dominated forest interspersed with seasonally flooded wetlands.

46.758978, -84.992832



Martha Mott Sanctuary (10)

A former farmstead and woodlot, this 80-acre sanctuary has a fine stand of oaks, hickory, and walnut. There are open and shrubby fields along with some low swamplands. Unmowed trails traverse the sanctuary.

What to see: Eastern Bluebirds, Field Sparrows, Red-eyed Vireos, woodpeckers.

42.259064, -85.783092, Almena Township, Van Buren Co., 5 miles NE of Paw Paw.

Directions: From US-131; I-94 W to 24th Street; N 2.5 miles to 44th Ave.



Mildred Harris Sanctuary (11)

This 40-acre sanctuary northwest of Kalamazoo has a mature Beech-Maple forest that in all likelihood has not been logged. The understory and groundcover are diverse with spring ephemerals and shrubs. Trout Lily, Toothwort, Spring Beauty, Dutchman's Breeches, Squirrel Corn, Blue Cohosh, violets, Wild Leek, Trillium, Mayapple and more. The sanctuary also contains 20-acres of fallow field.

What to see: Chipping Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Pileated Woodpecker, Eastern Towhee.

7015 F Avenue W Kalamazoo Township MI 49008

Directions: From I-94; US-131 N to M-43 (Exit 38); W 1 block to 10th Street; N 2.5 miles to G Ave.; W 1 miles to corner of 8th St. and F Ave.



Otis Farm Bird Sanctuary (12)

Otis Sanctuary is adjacent to the Globally Important Bird Area, Barry State Game Area, which is recognized for providing critical breeding habitat for Cerulean Warblers. The 128-acre bird sanctuary hosts rolling fields, mature forest, expansive marshland, a stream, kettle hole marshes, and several springs.

What to see: Pileated Woodpecker, Red-headed Woodpecker, Sandhill Crane, Grasshopper Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrows, Warblers, and Bald Eagle

3560 Havens Road, Hastings, Michigan.

Directions: From Hastings; 5 miles S on M-43 to Goodwill Rd.; W 2 miles to Havens Rd.; S to entrance.



Owashtanong Island Sanctuary (13)

The Owashtanong Islands Sanctuary is one island and part of another which is part of a complement of islands and shoreline wetlands in the lower Grand River.

43.064819, -86.197892

Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary (14)

Michigan Audubon's largest bird sanctuary is located in Jackson County bordering the Waterloo Recreation Area. At 1,008 acres, the diversity of animal and plant life includes over 270 plant species and 200 species of birds. Benches on a hill overlooking Mud Lake Marsh provide an ideal location for viewing large numbers of Sandhill Cranes in the fall. A restored wetland and grassland demonstration area at the west side of the sanctuary is accessed from Wooster Rd. Public access to the marsh is restricted.

What to see: Sandhill Cranes, Trumpeter Swan, Eastern Bluebird, Wood Thrush, Northern Flicker, Marsh Wren, Tree Swallow, Fox Sparrow, migrating warblers and waterfowl.

42.321301, -84.289076

Directions: From I-94; Race Rd. (Exit 147) N 2 miles to Seymour Rd.; W 1.5 miles to entrance, approximately 9066 Seymour Rd.



Riverbank Sanctuary (15)

Riverbank Sanctuary is a 23-acre sanctuary on the shore of the Indian River just outside of Manistique. It is mostly pine forest but there are areas of black spruce swamp, wetlands along the river, and shrub swamp. Although in a residential community, there is plenty of wilderness nearby and some wild species have been sighted.

What to see: Pileated Woodpecker, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Common Loon, Eastern Wood-Pewee, and Common Yellowthroat.

45.983432, -86.281312, Hiawatha Township, Schoolcraft Co., 2 miles NW of Manistique.

Directions: From m-94 W of Manistique to P440; left (W) for 1 mile to entrance on N side of P440.



Ronald H. Warner Sanctuary (16)

Located in an area of glacial moraines, this sanctuary contains rounded ridges, seasonally flooded ponds, a stream, and lake. Most of the 108 acres is wooded and contains old-growth beech, oak and tulip trees. Large evergreens provide additional woodland habitat. The sanctuary is botanically quite diverse and includes a number of threatened and endangered plants. The sanctuary is adjacent to the Barry State Game Area Global Important Bird Area and is home to breeding forest birds.

What to see: Acadian Flycatchers, Ovenbirds, Scarlet Tanagers, Indigo Bunting, Blue-winged Warbler, Yellow-billed Cuckoos.

42.620669, -85.396601, Rutland Township, Barry Co.

Directions: From M-179; left (S) on Gun Lake Rd.; left (S) on Erway Rd. Cross Hart Rd., to parking lot left (E) of road. Alternate parking E end of Hart Rd. Take hunter trail 0.1 miles to marker entrances.

Amenities: Maintained Trails. No Restrooms. Parking available on east side of Erway Rd., Hastings MI and at the east end of Hart Rd.



Voorhees Sanctuary (17)

This 35-acre sanctuary is a fine example of a Beech-Maple woodlot with a delightful profusion of spring wildflowers. Small forested wetlands are present. Surrounding agriculture creates open pockets that attract edge and field species.

What to see: Red-eyed Vireos, various woodpeckers, and Acadian Flycatcher.

19500 24 Mile Road, Albion, MI. Lee Township, Calhoun Co.

Directions: From I-94; 26-Mile Rd. N 3 miles to L Drive North; W 2 miles to 24-Mile Rd; N 1.5 miles to sanctuary entrance at intersection of O Dr. North and 24 Mile Rd.



William Gillette Sleeper Lake Sanctuary (18)

Description: This is a 240-acre prime sphagnum bog on the edge of a large glacial outwash containing a marsh. White Cedar, Osiers, Viburnums, Willow and Northern Bush Honeysuckle form dense growth. Labrador Tea, Bog Laurel, Sweet Gale and various bog orchids are abundant. No public access.

46.49494660072021, -85.58878507465124.

KEY



Parking



No Parking



No Public Access



Habitat Restoration



Trails



No Trails



Restroom



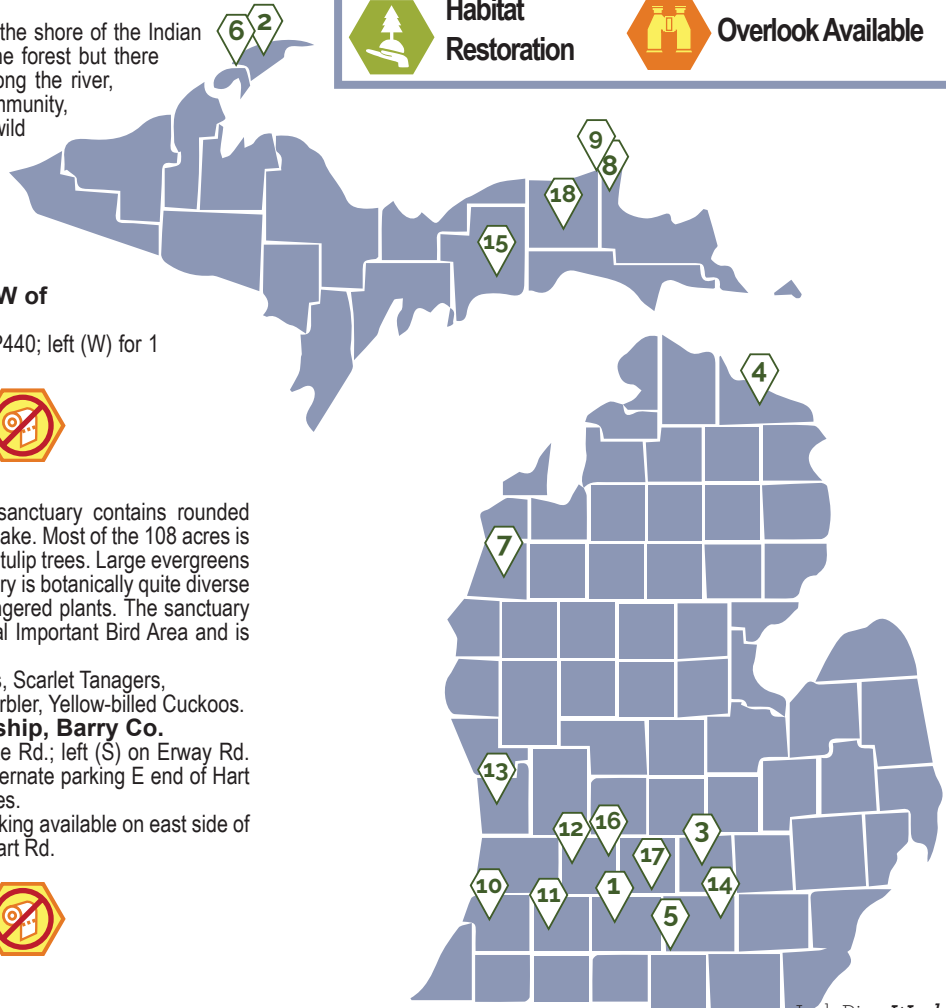
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Piping Plover Monitoring at WPBO

BY SARA HARRINGTON



Top: Piping Plover © Chris Neri.
Bottom: Sara Harrington.

My name is Sara Harrington and I am the Avian Habitat Technician at Whitefish Point for the summer of 2016. As an Upper Peninsula native, I have always loved and felt a connection to the outdoors. In May 2015 I received my B.S. in Biology from Northern Michigan University. I have worked as a field technician in Michigan and North Dakota on deer and carnivore projects, and most recently as a laboratory assistant at the Michigan DNR Wildlife Disease Lab.

My work this summer will primarily involve monitoring Piping Plovers and I am very excited to aid in the conservation of this special Great Lakes species. So far I've spent most of my time searching for Piping Plovers out on the Point, and I am learning they are impressively difficult to find when hiding among the stony shoreline. However, the cobble beaches and abundant driftwood here at Whitefish Point provide excellent camouflage and shelter for adults and chicks. Soon the plovers will pair up and nest, and by observing them daily, I will be able to find and help protect the nests.

Piping Plover Nest. © Joel Trick/USFWS

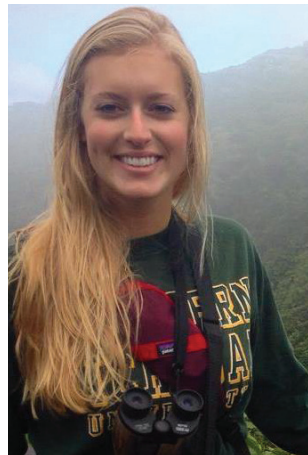


In my short time at Whitefish Point, I have already encountered numerous visitors inquiring about the Piping Plovers. It is wonderful to hear that people who have visited Whitefish Point in the past remember the plovers. The interest and investment I have seen from people

makes me extremely hopeful for the future of this federally endangered species. I hope to educate Whitefish Point visitors this summer about the Great Lakes Piping Plover and spark interest in this species, birds, and conservation.

Aside from the Piping Plover work, I plan to find ways to educate people about the other birds of this area, the incredible spring and fall migrations that occur here, and the research that is being done at the Whitefish Point Bird Observatory. Habitat restoration is another of my tasks for the summer, including the planting of dune grass and Jack Pine. I am looking forward to spending the rest of my time here at Whitefish Point participating in conservation efforts, educating the public about birds, and enjoying a beautiful Upper Peninsula summer on the shores of Lake Superior!

As Michigan's oldest conservation organization, we've accomplished a great deal in over 110 years of education, research, and conservation on behalf of birds. We host numerous bird-oriented events every year; with volunteer assistance, we conduct monitoring activities at our sanctuaries; at Whitefish Point we have one of the premier migration observation sites in North America, designated as an Important Bird Area; and our sanctuaries throughout the state are significant habitat conservation sites. We are also fortunate to have so many hard-working partners in bird conservation.



WPBO—Spring is Over

BY SKYE HAAS, WPBO FIELD ORNITHOLOGIST



Sandhill Cranes © Ted Keyel

It seems odd to write that, here on the evening of May 17th. I've not even seen an Oriole yet, but the spring field season at Whitefish Point will have ended by the time of publication. It's been a great season here—some fantastic numbers of several species and a good showing of rarities, all of which continue to support the idea that Whitefish Point is one of the premier migration hotspots in the country.

Even though we still have a couple weeks to go, here is a snapshot of how the seasons stand currently. March started out relatively mild and we had surprisingly good hawk diversity in our first two weeks. Common Redpolls were also particularly abundant, with over 5,000 tallied in for the season. Hoary Redpolls also made for a show, with often several individuals allowing for a careful study between these two species. The big excitement for the start of the season was the Gyrfalcon observed on the March 23. April started strong as well with a Black Vulture making its third Point appearance. The weather then turned around and both the hawk count and owl banding programs were shut out for about two weeks when a glorious burst of warm air brought a flood of hawks, owls, and cranes to Whitefish. Some great day totals like 118 Rough-legged Hawks and over 200 Northern Harriers were recorded then. But the real scene stealers were the flocks of bellowing Sandhill Cranes trying to head to Canada. Thousands of these birds moved in a few days time and currently the season is over 16,000 cranes, about 15,000 more than the seasonal average!

Long-eared Owls also had a fantastic flight year. Their best actually, with the banding program capturing 332 Long-eareds! Northern Saw-whet Owls have been captured in lower numbers with 262 birds. One notable recapture of a Saw-whet was of a bird six years old. Always a nice treat in the spring were two different Snowy Owls sitting watch out

on the beach in April and May. The month of May has been a little challenging with north or east winds for a vast majority of the count days this month. It's been noticeable on the waterbird count, as numbers of many ducks and loons are low. The peak Common Loon day is at 734 and the next highest was only around 200 birds—a far cry from the 1000+ bird days that Whitefish Point used to enjoy in the 90s. Still, there have been some good days out there and on May 1, a male Eurasian Wigeon flew by, the first ever for Whitefish Point! A few other notable rarities include a Pacific Loon and Eurasian Tree Sparrow. Broad-winged Hawk numbers are low due to unfavorable winds. Still, the overall season total has recently passed the 16,000 mark with over 10,000 Sharp-shinned Hawks contributing to this number. Exciting was a beautiful dark morph Swainson's Hawk on the 7th of May, making this the most diverse season of raptors ever for Whitefish Point at 18 species!

We are now getting into the furious to burn to the end of the season. Any day now, warm southerlies will bring the flood of neotropical migrants that we have been waiting for back to the northern forests. Warblers have been trickling in, but soon there should be a substantial wave, along with grosbeaks, buntings, tanagers, and flycatchers. Often several rarities show up in the last couple of weeks and recent encounters with Lark Sparrow and Chuck Will's Widow follow that pattern. One never knows what is going to show up. As I like to say, tomorrow is the day! Please visit wpbo.org to see how our season finished up and thank you for your continued support of the research programs here at Whitefish Point.

Skye Haas worked as the Field Ornithologist up at Whitefish Point Bird Observatory for the 2016 Spring Season.

Left: Common Loon. Middle: Broad-winged Hawk. Right: Rough-legged Hawk. All © Ted Keyel



Chimney Swifts — Urban birds in steep decline

BY RACHELLE ROAKE



Is it a bat? Is it a flying cigar? No – It's a Chimney Swift!

Many consider urban environments to be poor quality bird habitat, but Chimney Swifts have developed a close relationship with man-made structures. Unfortunately, we humans are not holding up our end of the bargain and this urban species is now suffering steep population declines.

A species that once depended on old-growth forests, chimney swifts have traded century-old, hollow trees and caves for brick and mortar. Chimney swifts were aptly named following their successful adaptation to a human-made structure that resembled the mature trees historically used for nesting and roosting – the chimney. It's hypothesized that this shift to using plentiful brick chimneys instead of natural cavities actually increased the Chimney Swift population size and distribution following civilization's spread westward.

Chimney swifts aren't flashy birds. They don't serenade us with musical song or catch our eye with dazzling colors, but they do provide a service that most of us can appreciate – insect control. These 5-inch long birds can each consume over 1,000 mosquito-sized insects per day. If you have a family of 5 nesting in your neighborhood, put away your pocket book and cancel your pest control appointment. In fact, if you don't cancel that pest control appointment, that family likely won't be able to find enough insects to feed their young. Swifts and other insectivores do us a great service. If you could invite your local pest control specialist to stay in your chimney all summer long, wouldn't you?

Sadly, Chimney Swifts are in steep decline across North America. Modernization of chimneys and destruction of old, historic buildings have decreased nesting and roosting site availability, but this is likely just one of many threats to Chimney Swifts. On the wintering grounds in the Amazon basin, massive logging operations are decimating habitat. Insectivorous birds including Chimney Swifts may also be suffering from decreased food availability possibly linked to use of insecticides, such as neonicotinoids, and lingering effects of DDT.

A healthy population of Chimney Swifts is what every city needs. These voracious insectivores devour aerial pests by the thousands and their chitter-chatter never ceases to delight us. It is clear that Chimney Swifts face daunting threats across the Americas, but fortunately there are things we can do to help bring their numbers up. Artificial nesting structures, when placed wisely, can provide nesting and roosting habitat. Alternatively, homeowners with brick-interior chimneys can remove the caps from May through September to allow a pair to nest and roost inside. Avoiding insecticide use and incorporating native plants in your yard can keep the insect population healthy so adult birds have enough food to raise their young. Monitor your local nesting and roosting structures and keep an ear to the ground for proposed demolition of old buildings. These small actions can have a big impact on a species that has lost 65% of their population since the late 1960's.



CCBS_Volunteer Mike Dombroski building a Chimney Swift Tower at Michigan Audubon's Capital City Bird Sanctuary

It is not too late for the Chimney Swifts. This is a perfect example of a declining, common species that we can still keep common. Let's keep the swifts soaring.

Rachelle Roake is the Conservation Science Coordinator and can be reached at rroake@michiganaudubon.org.

Book Review: *The Book of Eggs*

REVIEWED BY ALEC LINSDAY

Better Birding

by George L. Armistead

Available for sale

in the Michigan Audubon

Nature Bookstore: \$29.95

No shared feature more beautifully captures the diversity of birds than the avian egg (save, perhaps, the feather). Mark E. Hauber brings the remarkable adaptations of the bird egg to the bird-enthusiast's bookshelf or coffee table in his 2014 book, *The Book of Eggs: A Life-Size Guide to the Eggs of Six Hundred of the World's Bird Species*. While the book covers only a small fraction of the 10,000-plus species of birds on the planet, avian (and ovian) diversity is well-represented and attractively portrayed here in over 650 pages.

The book is organized into two main sections. The first 30 pages comprise an easy-reading, visually-appealing (lots of pictures and illustrations) introduction to the avian egg. There are descriptions of the general structure, function, coloration, and physiology of eggs, and there are also succinct and informative discussions of the diverse breeding and nesting behaviors used by many bird species and a short consideration of the important history and future for oology (the science of eggs).

The second section of the book contains brief descriptions for over 600 individual species. Each account includes information on the clutch size, egg shape, coloration, incubation period, and nest type for each species. Each also has an illustration of the bird species, and a close-up and actual-sized color photo of the species' eggs (or portions of an egg in the case of the ostrich). The layout of each page makes it interesting to thumb through, but on each page, readers find meaningful information about the natural history, evolution, ecology, behavior, conservation status, breeding range, and life history of the species. Perhaps the most surprising part is that although readers might anticipate these accounts being dry as a laundry list, it turns out that the diverse breeding behaviors, nesting preferences, geographic ranges, and other life history characteristics directly relate to the dramatic diversity of clutch sizes, coloration, egg sizes, and more.

For instance, the conically shaped eggs of the Common Murre (*Uria aalge*) are greenish blue with extensive brownish-black markings. The beautiful photos show this elegantly, but the text further informs the reader that as a colony-nesting bird, individual murre parents use the markings to discern their eggs from the eggs of their neighbors—after all, no bird wants to incubate an egg that isn't its own. And the text further explains that the dramatic conical shape of the murre egg keeps the egg from accidentally rolling off the rocky cliff faces where these birds nest: conical eggs that get bumped or jostled roll around in a tight circle rather than rolling off the ledge. Readers will undoubtedly find

themselves coming up with more and more insights about birds and more questions of their own. Many questions are answered in the text, but perhaps equally exciting is that many questions have not yet been answered by scientists. What pigments are used to create the striking and unadulterated brick-red color of a Cetti's Warbler (*Cettia cetti*) egg, and why does this species use this unique coloration? Why is it arguably easier to identify the egg of a Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*) from the egg of a Hermit Thrush (*C. guttatus*) than it is to visually identify the females of the two species that laid the eggs? Science has yet to unravel answers to these and many more oological questions.

Regular exposure to the white (or perhaps brown) eggs of our domestic chickens may lead us to under-appreciate the remarkable amount we still don't know about the avian egg. The lack of an egg account for the domestic chicken or its wild counterpart the Red Junglefowl (*Gallus gallus*) was perhaps the only disappointment, as it seemed this most familiar of eggs would have provided an interesting point of reference for readers. That said, the thoughtful coverage of the unusual egg-laying species—like the non-brooding Tabon Scrubfowl (*Megapodius cumingi*), which uses heat from composting material or geothermal sources for incubation over months, or the lattice-enamelled eggs of the Guira Cuckoo (*Guira guira*), which are laid by multiple females in a single communal nest, or the immaculate white eggs of the Eastern Paradise Whydah (*Vidua paradisaea*), which are laid in the nests of other species—more than makes up for a lack of coverage of chicken eggs in the book.

Bird eggs are remarkable. They are fragile, beautiful, varied in appearance but highly functional in their structure and anatomy. This book brings to the table many of those amazing qualities in an accessible, enjoyable format. More importantly, the book is about much more than just eggs. Even if readers think they're only mildly interested in bird eggs, this book will further inspire curiosity about birds in general.

Current chair of the Michigan Audubon Board, Alec Lindsay, Ph.D., is a professor of biology at Northern Michigan University, where he teaches Ornithology among many other subjects. He has published peer-reviewed research on taxa as diverse as loons, chickadees, whales, humans, and harpy eagles.

Calendar

July

9 & 23 **Stewardship Workdays**
Capital City Bird Sanctuary, Lansing

August

13 **Birds, Blooms, and Butterflies**
Dahlem Environmental Center, Jackson
13 & 27 **Stewardship Workdays**
Capital City Bird Sanctuary, Lansing

September

17-18 **Hawkfest**
Lake Erie Metropark, Brownstown Twp.
24-25 **Swift Night Out**
Swift Sanctuary, Farmington

October

7 **Birders' Soiree**
Convis Township Hall, Marshall
8-9 **CraneFest**
Kiwanis Youth Conservation Area, Bellevue

Thank You's

Frank Apsey
Dea Armstrong
Terry and Mary Baker
Greg Berner
Vee Bjornson
Greg Bodker
Carol Bohmier
Jeff Buecking
Sam Burckhardt
Iain Campbell
Vince Cavaliere
Ed Cole
Carole Cooper
Ed and Susan Davis
Susan Duncan
Tom EauClaire
Roger Eriksson
David and Ruth Golm
Josh Haas
Matt Hegwood
Stu and Dawn Hooper
Scott Jennex
Bob and Emily Kemnitz
Rosann Kovalcik
Judy LaPorte
Arnie Leriche
George Lin

Alec Lindsay
Chris Mensing
Ed and Madeline Merz
Jim and Patsy Mortimer
Greg Nelson
Phil Odum
Curt Pfeiffer
Ed Pike
Arno Poerner
Caleb Putnam
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Jane Ruster
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Wayne Shawl
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Announcements

Help Us Improve Habitat for Birds

On the second and fourth Saturdays throughout the summer, Michigan Audubon staff and volunteers gather to remove invasive plants that threaten habitat health at our Lansing sanctuary, Capital City Bird Sanctuary, 6001 Delta River Drive. Saturday workdays are led by veteran woody invasive remover Sam Febba.

Think of these workdays as “extreme gardening”—this is mildly strenuous work that involves hiking around the sanctuary and manually removing invasive weeds, often in challenging locations. A good workout is guaranteed. We do take many snack and water breaks throughout the day.

Wild raspberries, poison ivy, and biting insects are common, so please dress appropriately, with close-toed boots, long sleeves, pants, and a hat. Insect repellent and sunscreen are recommended, and we will have extras available.

If you are allergic to stinging insects, please bring an EpiPen and inform the event leader. Please bring garden or leather gloves if you have them; extras are available on site to borrow. As always, we will provide water and snacks. You can visit the Michigan Audubon event calendar to sign up for a workday at michiganaudubon.org/calendar or drop a note to Rachelle Roake at rroake@michiganaudubon.org. Rachelle can answer any question you may have regarding the workdays.

Piping Plover Populations

According to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), 2015 was a banner year for the Great Lakes Piping Plovers. There were 75 pairs of plovers nesting in the Great Lakes region last year, and 128 chicks were fledged, which was a record number. A USFWS press release states that the species was placed on the endangered species list in 1986 when its population dropped to just 17 breeding pairs. With habitat restoration and preservation, the population has slowly increased over the last 30 years. Let's hope that the record high levels of water in both Lake Michigan and Lake Huron this year won't hinder continued population growth for the birds. For the last five years there have been plovers nesting at Tawas Point State Park. High water there this year eliminated the beach needed for the birds to nest and they had to move elsewhere.

Earlier Date for Birds, Blooms, and Butterflies

Normally held on the third Saturday of August, Birds, Blooms, and Butterflies at the Dahlem Environmental Center in Jackson will be held this year on Saturday August 13. If you've not been to this great family event, we encourage you to take it in this year. The event runs from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. and provides many things for both kids and adults to do. Arrive early to see the hummingbird banding demonstrations: children may get the opportunity to release a banded hummer. Depending on the weather, these demonstrations are usually over before 11:00 a.m. There are guided hikes of the center's trails, live raptor presentations, artists and nature vendors, native plants for purchase, Michigan Audubon's bookstore, Monarch tagging and release, and educational presentations for adults, too. Food will be available at the site. The Center has one of the most unique natural playgrounds for kids to enjoy. New this year, the Stewardship Network will be in attendance, providing educational sessions. They will also lead a hike to point out non-native and invasive plants.

For more information on Birds, Blooms, and Butterflies visit the website of the Dahlem Environmental Center at dahlemcenter.org or call them at 517-782-3453.

Swift Night Out

The Old Winery/Powerhouse building in Farmington was established as a sanctuary by its owner, David White, in May of 2015. According to an article in the Farmington Voice, White claims that the site is the largest Chimney Swift roosting spot in all of North America, providing habitat for more than 50,000 birds.

In 2015, Detroit Audubon partnered with the sanctuary to provide a live-action camera, which was installed in the smokestack on the building. The camera continues to provide a glimpse into the world of the Chimney Swift at wildearth.tv/cam/Detroit-chimney-swifts.

On Saturday and Sunday September 24–25, Detroit Audubon will again partner with the sanctuary to present A Swift Night Out, an event that highlights the spectacular show as the birds come in to roost for the night. This free family event and fundraiser coincides with a continent-wide effort to count Chimney Swifts, a bird that has declined in population.

The sanctuary is located at 31505 Grand River Avenue in Farmington. For more information about the sanctuary, visit swiftsanctuary.org or call 248-477-8833.

Dated Material

Michigan Audubon Bookstore

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

Call 517-580-7364 to order books by phone or email Wendy Tatar at wendy@michiganaudubon.org

The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Eastern North America, Second Ed.

by David Allen Sibley
\$19.95

It's finally here! Birders have long been awaiting the second edition of Sibley's fine guide to Eastern birds. This guide is fully revised and features 650 species. Each entry has been updated to include the most current information concerning frequency, nesting, behavior, food and feeding, voice description, and key identification features. Range maps have been updated, too, using information contributed by regional experts throughout the United States and Canada. We also have the second printing of the second edition of The Sibley Guide to Birds now in stock.

Baby Birds

by Julie Zickefoose
\$28.00 (hardcover)

The beautiful artwork of wildlife rehabber Julie Zickefoose takes you into the nest this time. Over 400 watercolor paintings reveal the rapid development seventeen species of baby birds. Some nest in boxes on Zickefoose's property; others were orphaned babies that she took in to rehabilitate. In all of these cases, Julie provides an insider's glimpse of life in the nest as only she can do.

One Wild Bird at a Time

by Bernd Heinrich
\$28.00 (hardcover)

In his latest work, Heinrich—a prolific author—provides day-to-day observations of individual wild birds. He combines scientific knowledge with personal observations to paint a portrait of the birds and of amazing behaviors that many casual observers may not notice.

Bird Droppings

by Pete Dunne
\$16.95

This compilation of 33 short stories about birds and birders is the first collection of essays that Dunne has published in more than ten years. These essays are both informative and poignant, and many will provide you a chuckle or two. The paperback book also includes the fine illustrations of David Gothard.

Little Owl's Day

by Divya Srinivasan
\$7.99 (board book)

Created for little ones up to the age of three, the wonderful artwork of the Little Owl books will make them a favorite of the little people in your life. Little Owl's adventures in the woods and his interaction with the animals with which he crosses paths are the perfect introduction to the joy and wonder of the natural world for toddlers. This is a companion book to Little Owl's Night.

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By mail. Send name, address, phone number, and payment to Michigan Audubon Bookstore, 2310 Science Parkway, Suite 200, Okemos, MI 48864. Prepayment includes list price + 6% sales tax + \$4.25 postage and handling for the first item + \$.85 for each additional item.

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