

Jack Pine *Warbler*

THE FALL MIGRATION ISSUE: Invasive Plants and Birds ▪ Bird Treaty Centennial ▪ Conservation Spotlight: Creating Refueling Stations for Fall Migrants with Berry-producing Shrubs ▪ Fall Migration Hotspots in Michigan ▪ Kirtland's Warbler Season Wrap-Up ▪



Jack Pine Warbler

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Cover Photo ■ **Sandhill Crane**
Photographer: Aura Glaser

Looking for Cranes in the corn fields near Haehnle Sanctuary, I came upon a small group at Portage Lake. As I walked towards the shore to get a closer look, a single crane moved away from the group and began to dance on the water. It was wonderful to watch, and to photograph. Later, I wrote a haiku to honor the moment:

wings and water dance,
on blue sky autumn morning—
beauty in motion!

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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 4,000 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

CONNECTING TO BIRDS & THE GIFT OF FALL MIGRATION

Take a moment and try to recall your own ah-ha moment or meaningful experience that really connected you to birds. Maybe it was a simple discovery in childhood, an inherent inclination to observe the winged world, a particular person, book, or college course, or a fascination that found you and took root later in life. Each of us has a story that ties us in words, values, and feeling to an appreciation of birds.

I often think about one of my first jobs at a Wild Bird Center in Kalamazoo—my interactions with customers, what I learned about birds behaviorally, how to responsibly provide food and housing for birds, and why. The list is as long as the lifelong love of birds. I also learned a great deal in terms of how this niche of people perceives, interacts with, and really cares for native birds, their well-being, and the health of their habitat. Like watching birds, watching the people who are devoted to protecting birds can be an exercise in reverence and its own kind of education entirely.

One customer explained to me how his fascination with birds began when he was in his late 50s, riding his bike along the Kal-Haven Trail in late September. He witnessed a wave of fall migrants—which species they were, he couldn't say—but they moved him to halt his bike and watch. He told me how he realized for the first time that there was this complete, interdependent world above and around us, the avian world, that is so complex, so broad. He spoke about what a gift it was to watch them move through the sky. He hadn't made that connection before. He hadn't stopped and noticed in precisely that way before. He suddenly felt compelled to pay close attention, to include the knowledge and awareness of the avian world in his own world—because it felt pleasing, right, transcendent, even dutiful as a citizen of the planet. In



short, the look in his eyes said, "I'm hooked." From that moment, he was compelled to care and see the world of birds in a new light. All this from a simple swathe of migration activity through the sky that lasted only a few seconds.

The awe for birds can stop us in our tracks. It can move us to vote, speak, garden, give, teach, learn, and live in ways we otherwise might not be moved to. As groups within the avian world prepare for fall migration, there is a real gift for us all to connect back to that source of intrigue and awe that keeps us connected to birds. We get to witness them. We get to be observers. We get to practice citizen science efforts to make our own contributions to the big picture of research and conservation efforts to continue widespread efforts to understand and protect native birds.

It was a pleasure and privilege to my then-19-year-old self to be the receiver of the public's bird-centric stories during a time when I was studying environmental science and learning about the state of the world. This real-time interaction with people who were ignited and lifted by the world of birds balanced the gravity of what I was learning, as it

taught me to appreciate the power of the individual and what our values systems combined could do if directed properly. It all starts with seeing. And my, do birds have a lot to show us. As Dr. Thomas Lovejoy, professor of environmental science and policy at George Mason University said, "If you take care of the birds, you take care of most of the big problems in the world." I wholeheartedly believe it. And I thank you for doing what you do individually and what you are helping us do collectively to take care of the birds.

In this issue of the *Jack Pine Warbler*, we highlight birding trails and migration viewing hotspots in Michigan for you to seek out this fall—and the rest of the year, for that matter!

This fall, on October 8 & 9, we hope you join us for CraneFest to stop in your tracks, observe, and appreciate the magnificent Sandhill Crane and its migration through our state. Learn more at cranefest.org.

Heather Good, executive director

Invasive Plants and Birds: Research Shows Native Plants Are Better for Nutrition

BY HOWARD MEYERSON



Swainson's Thrush. © Josh Haas

Kay Charter isn't shy about letting people know that native plants are preferred when it comes to providing nutrition for birds. She and her husband, Jim, restored 30 acres of prairie on their 44-acre Omena bird preserve, Charter Sanctuary. The couple created it to provide a landscape where bird conservation was a top priority.

"The most important thing is removing non-native plants," notes Charter, executive director for Saving Birds Thru Habitat, a conservation and education nonprofit that promotes protecting, enhancing and restoring habitat for birds. "You don't have to buy a bunch of plants. We did that here, though, spent thousands of [grant] dollars on native plants—and converted 30 acres to prairie by planting native grass and forbs [flowering plants] . . . and planted shrubs like elderberry and serviceberry around a wetland, and other trees and shrubs."

Native plant species have larger insect populations, Charter said. Insects are crucial because they provide the protein young birds need to grow. Charter recognized that fact some years ago, and she ardently promotes Dr. Doug Tallamy's work.

Tallamy is a strong proponent of biodiversity. He is professor and chair of entomology and wildlife ecology at the University of Delaware, and author of *Bringing Nature Home*. He is known for his research into bug life and abundance in native and non-native plant habitats. Insects and native plants evolve together, Tallamy says. They adapt to the chemicals in plants that plants use to protect themselves. The result is caterpillars and other insects can consume those plants and thrive without harm, while invasive plants remain inedible and have fewer insects and less food for birds. Tallamy writes:

We used to think this was good. Kill all insects before they eat our plants! But an insect that cannot eat part of a leaf cannot fulfill its role in the food web. We have planted Kousa dogwood, a species from China that supports no insect herbivores, instead of our native flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*) that supports 117 species of moths and butterflies alone. In hundreds of thousands of acres we have planted goldenrain tree from China instead of one of our beautiful oaks and lost the

chance to grow 532 species of caterpillars, all of them nutritious bird food.

My research has shown that alien ornamentals support 29 times less biodiversity than do native ornamentals. Our studies have shown that even modest increases in the native plant cover on suburban properties significantly increase the number and species of breeding birds, including birds of conservation concern.

Though not a panacea, Charter's restoration work at the sanctuary has resulted in some success. Nesting birds are more abundant, but species like the Bobolink and Eastern Meadowlark continue to decline.

"Last year we made a list (of nesting birds) and found more than 150 pairs comprised of 44 different species," Charter said. "When I first came here we didn't have a whole lot of nesting birds. The prairie has not affected the upland species as we hoped. The grassland species are still declining. We're working on a management plan for the sanctuary and have decided to force more rapid succession by planting shrubs and trees. Early succession forests are used by so many birds. Mostly we focus on songbirds here and they don't eat plants. They eat insects. A few will eat seeds and berries at certain times, but the big food source is insects."

Dr. Jen Owen, associate professor at Michigan State University's Department of Fisheries and Wildlife and Large Animal Clinical Sciences, says birds prefer native plant species when they have a choice. Those were the findings of a 2012 study that examined the food preferences of migrating birds.

The two-year research project, conducted by Yushi Ouchi, a graduate student in her program, examined what birds ate and how healthy they were. They were netted on two adjacent tracts of land in Rose Lake Wildlife Research Area. One was dominated by native plants such as spicebush, common winterberry, American highbush cranberry, and common elderberry. The other was dominated by exotic plants such as autumn olive, Japanese honeysuckle, European buckthorn, and multiflora rose. Besides tallying where the birds were

netted and conducting fecal studies to learn just what they ate, a number of Swainson's Thrushes and Gray Catbirds were fitted with radio-tags and tracked to see where they spent time.

"Fruit is incredibly abundant in fall so a lot of birds may switch to eating primarily fruit for energetic benefits," Owen said. "They don't have to expend a lot of energy to [find] it. Studies have found that invasive plant fruits are high in sugar but not high in lipids [fat], and [migrating] birds are trying to fatten up. Some will double their body mass for migration. What we found is overwhelmingly, no matter which habitat they were caught in, they spend most of their time in native habitat. By collecting fecal samples we could identify what they were eating. The most common fruit consumed was the common spicebush."

Why they prefer spicebush is a question yet unanswered. What is known is that spicebush is high in lipid content, "a very efficient fruit to be eating," Owen said. Exotic plants have lower lipid content but can have more antioxidants.

Other study findings include that Gray Catbirds foraging in native plant terrain had better immune functions. They were also less stressed. Owen said that wasn't so with Swainson's Thrushes. Their results trended in the same direction but were not statistically significant.

Study birds also ate disproportionately low amounts of autumn olive. The exotic plant was only 5 percent of their diet though it was available on 65 percent of the habitat. Buckthorn was 30 percent of the diet and made up 20 percent of the non-native habitat. Where there was choice, the birds ate buckthorn.

In native plant terrain where spicebush was 25 percent of the habitat, it was 65 percent of the diet for Gray Catbirds and Swainson's Thrushes. "It is the quality of the fruit that drives the selection," Owen said.

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.

Elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*)



Bird Treaty Centennial

BY KIRBY ADAMS



Cerulean Warbler Ohio. © Dan Behm

Expert birders practice birding by impression, often birds are better navigators than humans can ever hope to be. They can see, smell, and hear their way to a spot 5,000 miles away with more acuity than you or I can with a map, GPS, and vehicle of our choice. What birds don't understand are those lines on the map that mark the borders of states and nations. That's where these feathered Magellans need our help.

Conservation of nesting habitat in Michigan is essential, but might be for naught if the wintering grounds of the Kirtland's Warbler are developed for human use in the Bahamas or if the Cerulean Warblers find nothing but sun-baked coffee plantations in Columbia. Rusty Blackbirds can be protected in Georgia in January and Michigan in April, but what about June when their fate rests with lawmakers working under a maple leaf rather than the stars and stripes?

Pick up a field guide to North America and see how many birds that migrate also have summer and winter ranges restricted to the United States. Henslow's Sparrow comes close, but with Ontario nuzzling between Michigan and New York in the heart of the Great Lakes region, a migratory bird in the east is inevitably going to have part of its population cross an international border.

One hundred years ago this past August, the United States signed the first of four treaties focused on the protection of migratory birds. In the cumbersome official language, it's called The Convention between the United States and Great Britain (for Canada) for the Protection of Migratory Birds. More simply, it's the Migratory Bird Treaty, the precursor to similar treaties with Mexico, Japan, and Russia (then, in 1976, the Soviet Union.) Ultimately, the United States implemented its participation in the 1916 treaty with the domestic Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, codifying conservation laws for birds we share with other countries.

There's nowhere that the importance of partnership with Canada is as striking as here in the Great Lakes. The United States and Canada share the world's largest basin of fresh-water, splitting four of the five lakes down the middle. There's nothing profoundly different between Michigan's thumb and Ontario's Bruce Peninsula. It's the same Lake Huron water lapping at the beaches with the same shoreline plant communities and all the same threats to the precarious habitat. To a Piping Plover, a sand-and-pebble beach is a good spot to build a nest regardless of what color the shoreline is on the map. The Great Lakes population of Piping Plovers migrates entirely through the United States, but as their numbers grow, more and more are likely to select breeding grounds on the Canadian side of the lakes,

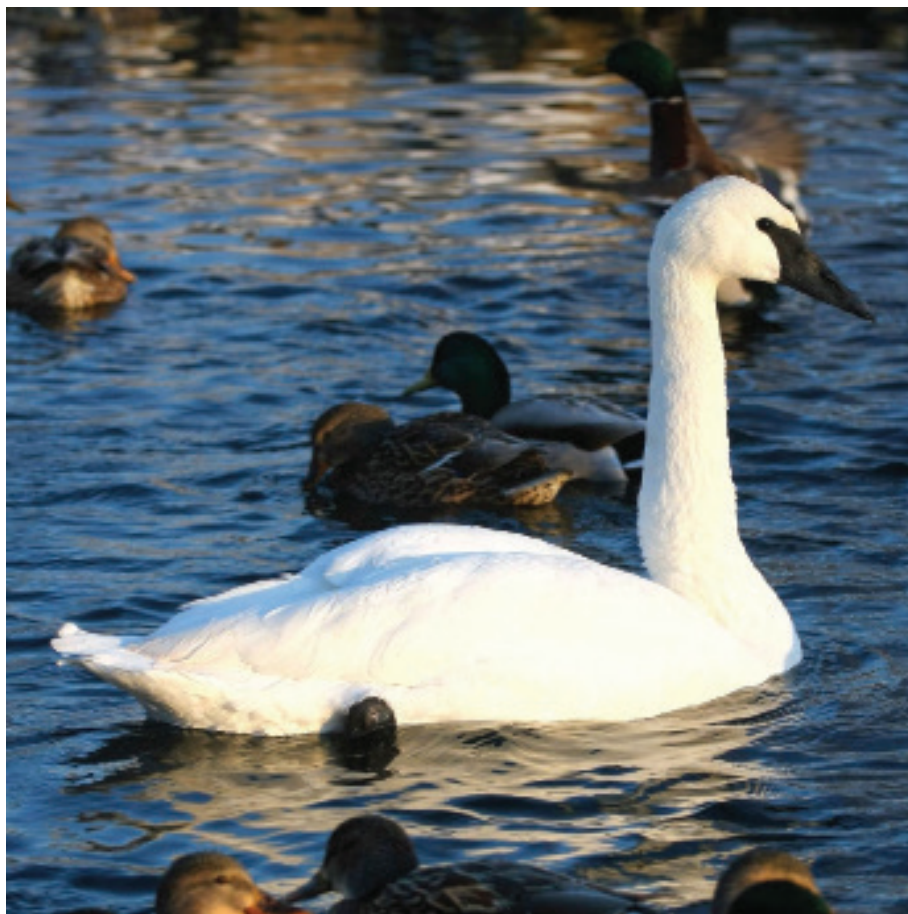
making their conservation an international issue. Thanks to the Migratory Bird Treaty, USFWS biologists can work easily with government agencies and NGOs on both sides of Lakes Huron, Erie, and Ontario to find and follow the best path forward for the plovers.

Michigan's signature bird takes a route similar to the Piping Plovers. Kirtland's Warblers are not shared by just Michigan and the Bahamas. Wisconsin and Ontario provide jack pine forest suitable to the Kirtland's specialized needs, making year-round Kirtland's conservation a concern of three nations. With funding for research dwindling and the potential for Kirtland's Warbler to be delisted as an endangered species, it's more important than ever that agencies work together across borders to ensure success of the conservation phase to follow the successful recovery efforts.

The USFWS set four broad goals for this centennial celebration of the Migratory Bird Treaty: creation of awareness about importance of migratory bird conservation; promotion of key actions to help birds; increasing support for conservation programs and initiatives; and expanding opportunities for engagement in birding, hunting, and conservation.

There are myriad ways every citizen can help migratory birds, but two come up routinely in conversations with wildlife biologists from the USFWS. The first is to purchase a Federal Duck Stamp. Most of the revenue, about 98 percent, from Duck Stamp sales goes to acquisition of wetland habitat for the National Wildlife Refuge system. If you're watching Trumpeter Swans at Seney or Black-crowned Night-herons at Shiawassee, you're enjoying those birds thanks to the Federal Duck Stamp program. Even if you've never hunted a duck and never intend to hunt a duck, your stamp purchase dollars protect Least Bitterns and Virginia Rails as much as hunters' purchases provide habitat for huntable Redheads and scaup.

The other essential part we can all play in migratory bird conservation is engaging in citizen science. Biologists cannot monitor every important habitat on the continent every day of the year, but an army of citizens can. From Christmas Bird Counts to eBird, birders from all walks of life can contribute to the store of knowledge we hold about our birds. The Rusty Blackbird Spring Migration Blitz was a citizen science effort over the past three springs that identified critical stopover habitat for a migratory bird slipping toward endangerment almost unnoticed. Is the swamp in South Carolina, the bog in northern Manitoba, or the flooded woods at Maple River State Game Area in Gratiot County more important to the future of the Rusty Blackbird? The answer is obviously that each habitat is critical. But biologists are often learning where to go after citizen science points to areas of concern. Conservation biologists are like the fire department: professionally skilled in remedying emergent disasters, but limited in number. Christmas



Trumpeter Swan 2011. © Ron Rowan

counts, breeding surveys, and eBird are like the citizens who pick up the phone and dial 911.

It's always been a big, dangerous world out there for birds. Thanks to the Migratory Bird Treaty—and you—it's been at least a little bit safer for a hundred years now.

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

We welcome our newest Michigan Audubon members:

Paul & Sally Barrett
Kimberly Bowen
Lora Bruder
Patricia Carl
Barbara & Don Coons
Marie Elzinga
James & Dorothy English
Alexx Flowers-Washington
Aura Glaser
Lynn Gordon
Chris Modrack & Lad Guest

Richard Karow
Jon Kazsuk
Amanda Klain
Loren Bach & David Martus
Clara & Davey Muret
Sarah Nelson
Amurthur Ramamurthy
Grant Smith
Ann & Duanne Swift
Donald & Orla Turvey

We would like to thank you, our newest members as well as our renewing members, for your support of Michigan Audubon's efforts to protect birds and their habitat through conservation, education and research. Please remember to check your magazine's expiration date and renew early. If you are moving or changing to a seasonal address, please contact our office by email, post, or phone so that we may stay in touch with you throughout the year.

Fall Migration Hotspots

Finding the perfect birding spot can make your birding adventure. Michigan Audubon is putting together a list of some of the best birding hotspots in the state based on feedback we receive from our members. Continuing into the future, we will work to compile more hotspots in the state and include these on our website for use by new and experienced birders alike. The list in this issue of the Jack Pine Warbler is a small list we've crafted that highlights hotspots for birding during fall migration. Along with these great spots, don't forget to check out the birds migrating through your backyard (especially if you are providing food for these avian travelers!

Upper Peninsula

1 • Calumet Area

The Calumet Area is 11 miles north of Houghton. Migrating waterfowl and shorebirds and nesting American Bittern, Virginia Rail, and Sora can be seen here.

2 • L'Anse and Baraga

The L'Anse and Baraga areas are near the Keweenaw Peninsula. This area is a prime location for migrating birds in the fall, including rarities like Harlequin Duck, Willet, Hudsonian and Marbled Godwits, Western and Eared Grebes, Snowy Egret, American Avocet, Red Phalarope, Franklin's and Sabine's Gulls, and Forster's Tern.

3 • Whitefish Point

16914 N. Whitefish Point Rd., Paradise, MI 49768

Because of its unique geographic location, Whitefish Point is a well-known migratory hotspot in the Midwest. By fall, waterbird and shorebird numbers start to increase as migration picks up. Passerine migration is in full swing by late August. The biggest diversity of passerines in the fall happens between late August and mid-September, with rarities also showing up at this time.

WPBO, a program of Michigan Audubon, is the premier migration hot spot in Michigan. Michigan Audubon conducts research at the point with migration counts of raptors and waterbirds, as well as owl banding and Piping Plover monitoring. Viewing opportunities generally pick up after Labor Day at WPBO for fall migration. Read about birding the Point and plan your visit at wpbo.org/visit.

4 • Seney National Wildlife Refuge

1674 Refuge Entrance Rd., Seney, MI 49883

Seney National Wildlife Refuge has thousands of acres of bogs, swamps, marshes, grasslands, pine savannah, and forest to provide ample habitat for many species of birds. Fall migration is a big time to see birds, including Trumpeter Swan, Yellow Rail, Le Conte's Sparrow, and Sharp-tailed Grouse.



NW Michigan

5 • Arcadia Marsh

Long Lake Road, Arcadia, MI 49684

Located in the northwestern lower Peninsula, Arcadia Marsh attracts migrating shorebirds from late July through mid-September, with some species straggling through in November. Among these stragglers are the Black-bellied Plovers and yellowlegs.

SW Michigan

6 • Muskegon Wastewater System 698 N. Maple Island Rd., Muskegon, MI 49442

Fall migration in the Muskegon Wastewater System includes areas of diverse waterfowl, Snowy Owls, and Short-eared Owls. The 11,000 acres of aeration, settling, and spraying areas constitute a prime birding spot. Fall counts of Ruddy Ducks occurring in rafts have exceeded 3,000.

7 • Muskegon State Park

3560 Memorial Dr., North Muskegon, MI 49445

Muskegon State Park is located on the western side of the state near the shores of Lake Michigan. Migrant passerines are visible in the fall. Similarly, shorebirds including Purple Sandpiper and other migrant ducks, scoters, loons, and grebes are visible during fall migration.

8 • Allegan State Game Area

6013 118th Ave., Fennville, MI 49408

The largest block of land in the southern lower Peninsula, Allegan State Game Area houses significant habitat for birds. In the fall, use the Farm Unit route to view migrating waterfowl and raptors, but be careful of hunters.

9 • Tiscornia Park

St. Joseph, MI 49085

Tiscornia Park is a part of the St. Joseph Waterfront. This is a great area in which to view migrating waterfowl, shorebirds, and gulls and find some rarities.

10 • The New Buffalo Area

The New Buffalo Area is excellent for geese, ducks, loons, grebes, gulls, and terns, with impressive concentrations of waterbird migrants during fall migration. Purple Sandpipers, Harlequin Ducks, Peregrine Falcons, Merlins, and Snowy Owls also turn up in the late fall.

NE Michigan

11 • Tawas Point State Park

686 Tawas Beach Rd., East Tawas, MI 48730

With almost 300 species recorded, Tawas Point State Park is definitely a birding hotspot in Michigan. Fall migrants, including Black-bellied and Semipalmated Plovers and several species of sandpipers, begin arriving in July and continue through November. Fall migration also includes warblers to which they look different with in the spring, and are less vocal.

12 • Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary

9066 Seymour Rd., Jackson, MI 49201

The Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary is located in Jackson County. Thousands of Sandhill Cranes migrate through the area in the fall and congregate to roost in the evenings at Mud Lake Marsh.

13 • Lake Erie Metropark

32481 W. Jefferson Ave., Brownstown Charter Twp., MI 48173

Situated near the Lake Erie and Detroit River shoreline, Lake Erie Metropark is one of the premier sites in North America for hawks. In addition to thousands of migrating hawks moving through in the fall, there are also numerous warbler and waterfowl sightings.

14 • Sterling State Park

2800 State Park Rd., Monroe, MI 48162



A mix of marshes and woodlands, Sterling State Park is a fine spot to see a variety of migrating birds in the fall months. Up to 20 species of warblers and a good number of other birds can be seen migrating through followed by Horned Larks, Lapland Longspurs, and Snow Buntings in November.

15 • Kensington Metropark

4570 Huron River Pkwy., Milford Charter Twp., MI 48380

Kensington Metropark boasts a bird list of over 250 species and it's no surprise—this park contains a diverse mix of rolling forests, emergent wetlands, and the 1,000 acre Kent Lake.

16 • Lake St. Clair Metropark (Metro Beach Metropark)

31300 Metro Pkwy., Harrison Charter Township, MI 48045

Metro Beach Metropark is prime birding spot in Macomb County and is said to be one of the best migrant traps in Michigan. Expect to see a variety of shorebirds, waterfowl, and songbirds.

17 • Port Huron, St. Clair River Mouth

Being at the southern end of Lake Huron uniquely positions Port Huron at the end of a funnel of migrating waterbirds. September and November are peak birding dates in this area, with scooters, loons, grebes, gulls, and jaegers included among the species that pass through.

18 • Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge

6975 Mower Rd., Saginaw, MI 48601

The Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge contains acres of river wetlands, grassland, bottom-land hardwood forests, and cropland. Since four rivers converge within the boundaries of the refuge, expect to see migrating waterfowl and shorebirds as well as other nesting species in the area. Note that portions of the refuge are open for goose and deer hunting.

19 • Bay City State Recreation Area

3582 State Park Dr., Bay City, MI 48706

Bay City State Recreation Area is a good place to find migrating waterfowl and warblers. Also present are Lesser and Great Black-backed Gulls and breeding Sora and Yellow-headed Blackbird.

The ABA Birdfinding Guide: A Birder's Guide to Michigan (2004) was used as a reference in writing this piece. You can find more information about each of these sites in the ABA publication.

What are your favorite birding hotspots throughout the year?

As birders, you know what places work well at different times of the year. Share them with us by sending a short description to lcain@michiganaudubon.org.

Chapter Spotlight: Kirtland's Warbler

Audubon Society

BY LINSEY ALLEN

The Kirtland's Warbler Audubon Society (KWAS) is a chapter of Michigan Audubon. Located in Comins, in northern Oscoda County, KWAS was founded in 1995 in response to local interest in birding. It currently has 25 members and is actively involved in the community by promoting education; its overall mission statement is

to promote the practices of sound conservation of our natural resources—particularly our native birds, wildlife, and their respective habitats—and to the protection and improvement of environmental quality through personal involvement and promotion of educational programs.

Currently the major on-going project is working to maintain and improve “the Bush,” a nature preserve that is 38 acres of isolated property available to the public year-round. It was purchased in 2003 after a generous donation from Bill Bush, a local naturalist and KWAS member. The preserve features a large variety of flora and fauna in an assortment of natural habitats, such as cedars, oak groves, pines and maple clusters, logged areas, open fields and prairies, swamps, streams, marsh, and ponds. A trail wanders through the Bush scattered with benches built by members, which allows for observation of a variety of wildlife. The Bush contains a pond that attracts ducks, herons, muskrats, beavers, osprey, turtles, fish, and an occasional bald eagle. KWAS encourages people to take a walk through the preserve to see nature at its best and to bring sunflower seeds for the chickadees.

Bill Houston, vice president, hopes to continue improvements of the Bush by installing new picnic tables, reinforcing and refurbishing the observation deck and benches, and arranging for the addition of a Porta-John over the next two years. In the past, they have released screech owls in the Bush and planted hundreds of fruit-bearing trees in the community. Efforts are not limited to the Bush, however. KWAS also has made camper scholarships available for at-risk students, donated \$1,000 to the development of the Comins Streetscape, and collected holiday gifts for children in local communities for the past five years. Its presence within the community is strong and provides exciting opportunities to engage with students and nature alike.

KWAS maintains a unique relationship with the USDA Forest Service Ranger District in Mio, Michigan, and with Fairview schools, and works to supply a variety of activities and projects for students. These include annually working with the third-grade class to build birdhouses and to provide each child with a copy of *Birds of Michigan* by Black and Kennedy; sponsoring Joe Rogers, a raptor rehabilitation specialist, to bring owls and hawks for a unique educational opportunity for grades 3 to 5;



Barred Owl. © Dave Hill

and assisting in coordination of the USDA Children's Wildlife calendar contest. In the future, KWAS would like to increase its membership so that it can begin to work on more projects with adjacent communities and school districts.

The newsletter and Bush and Oscoda bird lists are distributed to local libraries and Chamber of Commerce, and contain updates and information for members and contacts, such as the DNR and USDA Forest Service. KWAS participates in the Oscoda County Grow Show and Tractor Show where it displays and sells chapter-made feeders, bird, and bat houses. Kirtland's Warbler Audubon Society is a valuable asset to its community and to Michigan Audubon.

Linsey Allen (lallen610@gmail.com) is the marketing and communications intern for Michigan Audubon.

Chapter Information

Leaders

President: Dave Hill
Vice president: William Houston
Secretary: Joan Beauregard
Treasurer: Warren Keith
Membership: Connie Conn

Meetings

Meetings are held the 4th Tuesday of each month except July, located at the Clinton Township hall in Comins at 7 pm. They are open to the public.

Website

www.kirtlandswarbleraudubon.org

Contact

Bill Houston, 734-787-9786

Creating Refueling Stations for Fall Migrants with Berry-producing Shrubs

BY RACHELLE ROAKE

Fall in Michigan means many things to Michiganders: color tours, apple cider, hayrides, pumpkin patches, and a mass movement of millions of birds on an oftentimes transcontinental journey south. Fall migration is an energetically expensive task even for those birds traveling within the United States. Just as we humans require refueling stations for our cars (and stomachs) during trips to the cider mill, birds require their own refueling stations to replenish energetic reserves. A fate much worse than a stalled car or a rumbling tummy, birds that fail to find enough food during migration may never reach their destination.

Providing refueling stations for songbirds is something each one of us can do in our own yards, schools, workplaces, or local greenspace. But what does a refueling station look like? Creating a refueling station means creating healthy habitat that includes native plants, particularly those that produce fall (and spring) berries that are high in nutrients. Berries contain fats, carbohydrates, and proteins, which are all necessary nutrients for migrating birds. However, fat provides the best source of fuel as it releases twice the amount of energy per gram as other nutrients. Michigan native plants that produce berries high in fat include spicebush, downy arrowwood, silky dogwood, and Virginia creeper. By including a variety of berry-producing shrubs and vines in your refueling station, you can provide a

range of nutrients at different periods of time to support many migrant songbirds.

One issue that often arises when identifying important sources of fall berries is the value of invasive shrubs to birds. While we often see birds consuming the plentiful berries of invasive shrubs (such as autumn olive, non-native honeysuckles, oriental bittersweet, privet, and buckthorns), studies suggest that invasive fruits have less fat and energy than native fruits. This means that birds would need to spend more time and energy consuming a greater number of invasive berries to gain the same nutrients as they would from fewer native berries. Time and energy are valuable resources to a migrating bird looking to pack on the ounces as quickly as possible, so it's important to avoid planting invasive shrubs and replace established plants with native counterparts.

As you revel in the rush of fall migrants, remember that you can help them have a successful journey. Spend the morning out birding and stop at your local native plant nursery on the drive home. Fall is a fantastic time to plant and you can do it on a budget—most nurseries are slashing prices to clear out inventory. Create a refueling station wherever you can and don't forget the native fruit snacks—ahem, berries.

Rachelle Roake is the conservation science coordinator and can be reached at rroake@michiganaudubon.org.

Four native berry-producing plants for fall migrants:



Downy arrowwood (*Viburnum dentatum*). © Dow Gardens, Bugwood.org.

Viburnums (*Viburnum* spp.)—Downy arrowwood (*V. dentatum*) in particular provides berries with high fat and carbohydrate content.



Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*). © Vern Wilkins, Indiana University, Bugwood.org.

Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*)—A species that prefers shade and medium-to-wet conditions, spicebush produces berries high in fat and carbohydrates.



Dogwoods (*Cornus* spp.)—Dogwood berries have a high fat content; there is a species well-suited for nearly any site condition.



Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*)—Often an overlooked native, Virginia creeper is a vine that happily grows just about anywhere and appears to burst into flame with fall color. It produces clusters of carbohydrate-rich berries.

Kirtland's Warbler Tour Guide Report 2016

BY KARA HODGES

The Kirtland's Warbler tours ran from May 15 to July 4 this year. A total of 68 tours were conducted for a total of 765 people. Represented during the tour season were 39 different states as well as Australia, Canada, Germany, Honduras, Netherlands, New Zealand, Scotland, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. The five states with the most visitors were Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, and North Carolina.

When polled, 70% of tour guests said they had never seen a Kirtland's Warbler before the tour. The tours had an overall success rate of 94%. Of the 68 tours conducted, only one was unsuccessful in spotting a Kirtland's Warbler. Three tours had difficult views and not all participants saw the birds, likely due to inclement weather. Additionally a total of 48 different bird species were seen and/or heard during the tour season.

Tours started at the Hartwick Pines Visitor Center with an introduction and a 15-minute video about the management of the Kirtland's Warbler.

Once at the site, guests were gathered at the start of the

two-track to go over rules and to outline the highlights of the tour. The first stop was where most of the tour was spent, as it was near the nest location of a reliable pair of Kirtland's Warblers. When the Kirtland's Warblers were distant or not singing, guests were educated on the breeding cycle, migration, habitat requirements, jack pine management, jack pine pests, and other relevant topics.

The second stop was where a male and female could be observed going into and out of the nest approximately fifteen feet away. Stops three through five correlated with other Kirtland's Warbler territories or natural features, where participants received more education about various types of flora and behavioral patterns of individual Kirtland's Warblers. Other educational topics covered on tours included costs, the politics surrounding Kirtland's Warbler management, predation risks to Kirtland's Warblers, and the differences between younger and older Kirtland's Warblers.

Kara Hodges has been the Kirtland's Warbler tour guide for the past two seasons. She has a degree in biology from Central Michigan University and is beginning her graduate program at Illinois State University this fall.

Kirtland's Warbler. © Josh Haas



Piping Plovers at WPBO

BY SARA HARRINGTON



Chick Handling. © Sara Harrington

It has been a great Piping Plover season here at Whitefish Point.

The male which nested at the point last year returned, and a female which had nested at Vermillion Point the previous year joined him. There was also another male here for the month of May fighting for the attention of the female. Throughout May, the two males showed off for the female with elaborate flight displays, but by the end of the month, she had chosen the more established male. The courtship continued, however, with the male making scrapes, performing tilt displays, goose-stepping, and finally copulating. A scrape was chosen for the nest, and the first egg was laid on May 31.

By June 6, all four eggs had been laid, and incubation had begun. At this point, a predator enclosure was erected over the nest to protect the eggs and incubating adults from gulls, crows, raccoons, and other predators. The parents took turns incubating the eggs, switching off every couple of hours or so. The pair incubated the eggs continuously for twenty-seven days.

Upon my arrival on the morning of July 3, a chick had hatched. The little fuzzball wobbled around the nest on unsteady legs already searching for insects to eat. By the end of that day, two more chicks had hatched. The final egg hatched on July 4, and shortly thereafter, the plover family left the nest. The chicks were quite self-sufficient from the start, able to walk, run, and feed themselves within a couple hours of hatching. However, the parents continued to care for the chicks by brooding them and keeping a look-out for danger.

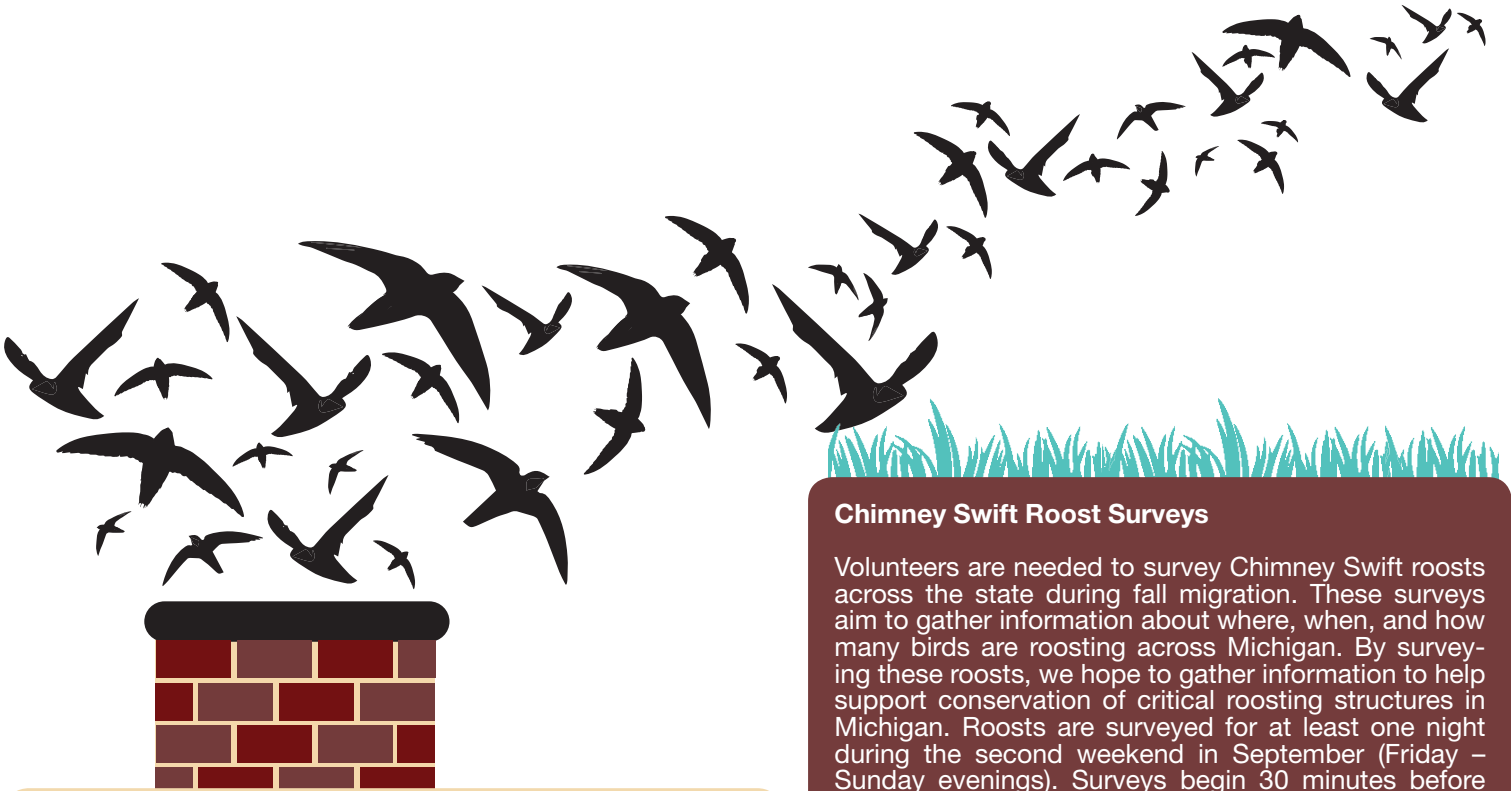
The chicks were banded on July 14 by the University of Minnesota Piping Plover banding crew. They've been growing incredibly fast and now are nearing fledging. Soon they will be able to fly, and they will leave us for the beaches of their southern wintering grounds. With any luck, they will return to the Great Lakes next year to nest and begin the cycle again.

Sara Harrington was the avian habitat technician at Whitefish Point Bird Observatory for the 2016 summer season.

All. © Sara Harrington



Announcements



Calendar

September

- 3 **Vulture Awareness Day**
Leslie Science and Nature Center, Ann Arbor
- 17-18 **Hawkfest**
Lake Erie Metropark, Brownstown Twp.
- 24-25 **Swift Night Out**
Swift Sanctuary, Farmington

October

- 8-9 **CraneFest**
Kiwanis Youth Conservation Area, Bellevue
- 15 **Cranes, Colors, and Cabernet**
Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary, Jackson
- 15-16, 22-23, & 29-30 **Crane Viewing**
Kiwanis Youth Conservation Area, Bellevue and
Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary, Jackson

November

- 5-6, & 12-13 **Crane Viewing**
Kiwanis Youth Conservation Area, Bellevue and
Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary, Jackson

Chimney Swift Roost Surveys

Volunteers are needed to survey Chimney Swift roosts across the state during fall migration. These surveys aim to gather information about where, when, and how many birds are roosting across Michigan. By surveying these roosts, we hope to gather information to help support conservation of critical roosting structures in Michigan. Roosts are surveyed for at least one night during the second weekend in September (Friday – Sunday evenings). Surveys begin 30 minutes before sunset and end when the last swift enters the chimney. Learn more about the surveys, find data sheets, and enter survey data on the Michigan Audubon website.

American Birding Expo, September 16-18, 2016

Join us September 16-18 for the 2016 American Birding Expo at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center in Columbus, Ohio. Here you will find vendors from around the world in this retail-sales-oriented showcase of products for birders and nature enthusiasts. Visit www.americanbirdingexpo.com for more information. The Expo is free and open to the public, though a \$5 suggested donation at the door helps fund the Expo's conservation fund.

Save the Date! 2017 Midwest Birding Symposium

The 2017 Midwest Birding Symposium will be held September 7-10 in Bay City, Michigan. For the most up-to-date information, visit www.midwestbirding.org.

Vulture Day

September 3, 2016 10:00 a.m. – noon, Michigan Audubon will be hosting Vulture Day at the Leslie Science and Nature Center, 1831 Traver Road, Ann Arbor, MI. This event coincides with International Vulture Awareness Day. Vulture Day will include vulture crafts and activities geared toward children ages 4 to 12. The Leslie Science Center will also present on vultures using their education birds.



Check Your Expiration Date

We ask that you please check the expiration date listed above your address on the back of this issue of your *Jack Pine Warbler*. Renew by December 31, 2016 to insure that you will receive an uninterrupted subscription to our magazine. For your convenience, a renewal envelope is included with this mailing. Renew online at www.michiganaudubon.org. By renewing early, you can help us decrease the amount we spend on reminder mailings so that more can be directed to support Michigan bird conservation!



CraneFest 2016: October 8 & 9

Nothing beats the cry of the cranes as they glide through the autumn colors at Baker Sanctuary. Experience the phenomenon at CraneFest 2016.

The Sandhill Crane and Art Festival or CraneFest began twenty-two years ago as a way to raise awareness and appreciation for educational and conservation efforts of Michigan Audubon and Baker Sanctuary. It is also a great chance to celebrate the magnificent spectacle of crane migration. Typically there are thousands of cranes present in the evening. Migrating flocks slowly begin their fly-in during the afternoon with the largest number of cranes appearing near dusk.

The festival runs from noon to dusk on October 8 and 9 at the Kiwanis Youth Area, overlooking Big Marsh Lake.

In addition to the cranes there will also be:

- artists
- food vendors
- conservation and education activities for children
- nature walks
- Michigan Audubon merchandise and bookstore

There is no fee to attend, but there is a small parking fee to benefit the Kiwanis Club of Battle Creek, Michigan Audubon's co-sponsor for the event. Visit cranfest.org for more information about the event and other crane viewing options.

Cranes, Colors, Cabernet, & Cider Festival

Jackson Audubon, in partnership with Sandhill Crane Vineyards and The Big 400, is holding the 8th Annual Cranes, Colors, Cabernet, and Cider Festival on October 15th at Haehnle Sanctuary. It starts at noon and ends at dusk when the last cranes fly in to Mud Lake Marsh to roost. This is peak migration time for Sandhill Cranes and a great opportunity to see them more up close and personal. The starting and ending point is at the kiosk.

They will offer guided bird walks at the sanctuary, a talk on the natural history of Sandhill Cranes with emphasis on migration and the Michigan connection at Haehnle and Baker sanctuaries, and a car tour to nearby fields to show cranes up close and personal. They will have scopes so visitors can see the birds well. It is also a great photo opportunity.



Seeking Qualified Volunteers

Seeking local, weekly office volunteers in the Lansing area to assist with clerical tasks at the Michigan Audubon headquarters. If you are interested, email us at kpeterson@michiganaudubon.org.

Local Chapter Meetings

Just a friendly reminder that most local chapter meetings pick up in September. Contact your local chapter for more information. Looking for a local chapter? Find a list at www.michiganaudubon.org.

Cerulean Warbler Weekend

Thanks to everyone who joined us for Cerulean Warbler Weekend. A special thank you to those who volunteered for the weekend. Without your generous support the festival would not be possible. Additionally, thank you to the guides:

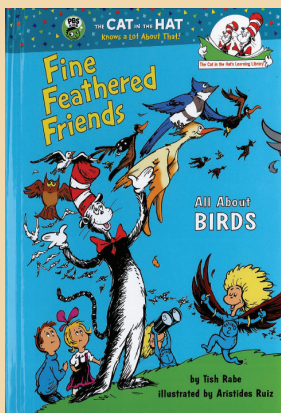
Kirby Adams
John Chenault
Josh Haas
Agnes Karas
Bob Kingsbury
Anne Klein
Doug Klein
Derrick Kooistra
Greg Nelson
Ron Shavalier
Gwen Shavalier
Richard Yarsevich
Jim Zervos

Dated Material

Michigan Audubon Bookstore: Our Current Top Picks for Kids

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

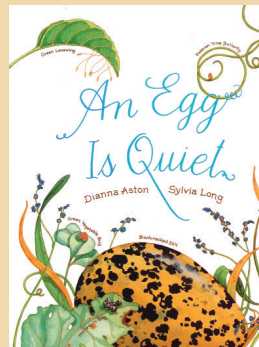
Call 517-580-7364 to order books by phone.



Fine Feathered Friends: All About Birds

by Tish Rabe, Illustrated by Aristides Ruiz
\$8.99 (hardcover)

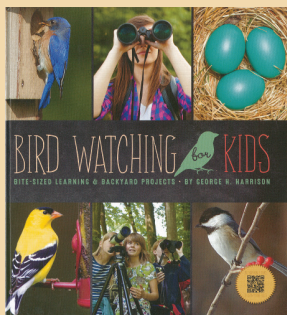
Part of The Cat in the Hat's Learning Library®, this book offers a quick introduction to birds for beginning readers. It explains characteristics of birds and gives examples of the variety of species around. It's a great introduction to nonfiction reading.



An Egg is Quiet

by Dianna Aston and Sylvia Long
\$16.99 (hardcover)

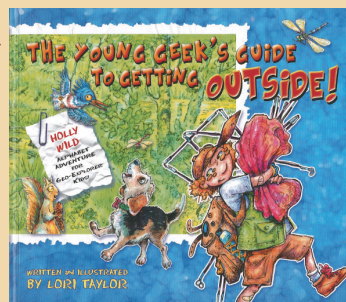
This beautifully illustrated book gives readers an informative introduction to eggs. From small eggs to large eggs of all different shapes, this book captures the variety of eggs on the planet. Included in the egg descriptions and examples are hummingbirds, ostriches, ladybugs, dogfish, and dinosaurs.



Bird Watching for Kids

by George H. Harrison
\$14.95 (hardcover)

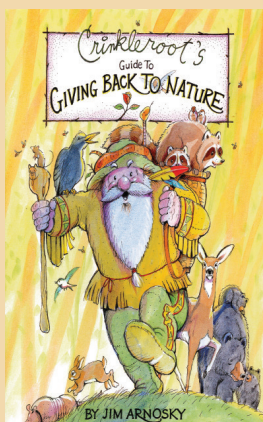
Full of projects that encourage children to interact with nature and learn about birds, this book provides captivating photos and informative text alike. Focusing on the needs and behaviors of wild birds, it is sure to create a young birder. This book is informative and entertaining for kids ages 8 to 14.



The Young Geeks Guide to Getting Outside!

by Lori Taylor
\$18.00 (signed hardcover)

This rhyming alphabet adventure provides interactive prompts and a Backyard BINGO scavenger hunt for ages 2-6. A great way to introduce your child or grandchild to nature and keep their busy bodies occupied.



Crinkleroot's Guide to Giving Back to Nature

by Jim Arnosky
\$17.99 (hardcover)

Vivid pictures and fun activities are sure to capture any child's attention, while introducing them to ways they can make a difference in their own backyard. This book encourages readers of all ages to go outside and take a closer look at the natural world. Both entertaining and informative, it gives readers an idea of how even the smallest human interactions can affect the creatures that share the planet with us.

10% off for all Michigan Audubon members!

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