

Jack Pine *Warbler*

FALL: Wind Energy: Education and Advocacy • Michigan Audubon Donates Lake Bluff Manor to Local Nonprofit
Whitefish Point Bird Observatory Summer Reports: Owl Banding & Piping Plover Monitoring
Golf Meets Bird Conservation in SW Michigan • Community Spotlight: April Campbell • DEI Resources for MA Chapters



Jack Pine Warbler

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Cover Photo ■ Northern Shovelers
Photographer: Sherman Garnett

Sherman Garnett captured this mob of Northern Shovelers during fall migration at the Muskegon wastewater treatment plant. Sherman was born and raised in Michigan. He worked for nearly 15 years both in Washington D.C. and overseas on national security issues before returning to Michigan in 1999 to be dean at James Madison College at Michigan State University. He is now a faculty member there. He became a birder while at graduate school in Ann Arbor in the 1980s. He has been photographing birds for less than a decade.

Thank you to Sherman Garnett for submitting this image to the 2021 Michigan Audubon Photography Awards for which he won the *Jack Pine Warbler* Cover Photo category. If you have photographs you would like considered for inclusion in future issues of the *Jack Pine Warbler*, please contact Communications & Marketing Coordinator Molly Keenan at mkeenan@michiganaudubon.org or (517) 580-7364.

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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 18 sanctuaries as habitat for birds and other wildlife. More than 30 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 Michigan Audubon on social media.



From the Executive Director

Dear Michigan Audubon members and community,

At around this time last year — during the fall migration of the ever-memorable year 2020 — many people were remarking about picking up birdwatching as a formal hobby for the first time. From beginning birders in the pandemic who launched themselves first into fantasy birding to a surge in backyard bird feeding, the art and fun of birdwatching certainly got a lot of attention throughout the pandemic. I read recently that the popular *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America* has been flying off the (virtual) shelves, almost doubling in sales over the past two years. This is great news for people and birds, and as members of Michigan Audubon, we invite you to give the gift of membership to someone in your circle who is new to birds or a lifelong birder.

I want to take a moment and thank **Rosann Kovalcik**, owner of Wild Birds Unlimited in Grosse Pointe and Michigan Audubon board member, for steadily supplying donated birdseed to keep our feeding station going at Whitefish Point!

From an organizational perspective, we've seen other facets of birding grow: advocacy, social justice, and the more invisible, community-relevant connections that exist between people and birds. A few examples of this are **Black Birders Week** and increased efforts to better represent and be effectively inclusive to people of color in the natural resources field as well as in outdoor recreation, birding, and ecology.

Michigan Audubon's **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Advisory Council** is rooted and growing! From collaborating with the Michigan Indigenous Peoples Council to helping protect and conserve the Eastern Sandhill Crane to planning our first birding tour of the Eastern U.P. for the BIPOC community this coming winter, we couldn't be more excited to see our mission at work in new, expansive ways for people and birds.

The council was formed/inspired by the call to action of the inaugural #BlackBirdersWeek in 2020. I want to give many thanks to our volunteers, **Dr. April Campbell**, featured in this issue's **Community Spotlight**, and to newly elected board secretary and DEI Advisory Council member, **Sam Burckhardt**, for their service and support of this growing work.

Michigan Audubon chapter leaders, we highly recommend checking out the **resources and reading list** on page 13. Compiled by Campbell of the DEI Advisory Council, this list offers several great, carefully selected titles. (If you aren't a chapter leader or member, these titles are solid, suggested reading!). Take, for example, J. Drew Lanham's *The Home Place: Memoirs of a Colored Man's Love Affair with Nature*, which received the Reed Award from the Southern Environmental Law Center and the Southern Book Prize and was a finalist for the John Burroughs Medal.

You'll notice that our executive committee of the Michigan Audubon board has recently changed, which is updated on the inside cover. Congratulations to longtime board member **Natasha Koss for her election to the board chair** position! "I am thrilled to be in this leadership role of Michigan's oldest conservation organization and one that is at the forefront of bird protection. It only feels natural to step into this position as I follow in the footsteps of my father, former board president Jack Lapinski."



In this final issue of the calendar year, we end our feature focus on **wind energy developments** in Michigan as they relate to our organization's mission and chapter network. It's no question that the need for clean, alternative energy is greater than ever and that the developments we make must take migratory pathways, the connectedness of habitats, and on-the-ground conservation efforts into account.

As we plan for 2022, we continue to adapt our program and in-person offerings based on CDC public health recommendations. Our annual Spring Fling event again will not take place in 2022 because of the lack of available local accommodations for guests of the event. Our smaller weekend tours, Cerulean Warbler tours in southwest Michigan, Kirtland's Warbler tours in Grayling, and our hawk and waterbird counts will continue throughout 2022.

Lastly, we want to share with you all a big thank you for signing the petition to keep the **Sandhill Crane** off the game species list in Michigan. I spoke to the Natural Resources Commission on behalf of Michigan Audubon at their Oct. 14 meeting. I urge you to visit michiganaudubon.org/blog if you want to read the full story and learn more about our advocacy work and how to exercise your voice for birds. As always, our staff posts updates to social media and through our eNews to keep you connected to bird-related news in Michigan.

Thank you for being a member and for sustaining your membership. It backs our advocacy work for birds and keeps our organization growing and able to achieve its mission, reach more people, and do more for building bird-friendly communities in Michigan.

Sincerely,

Heather Good
Executive Director



Sandhill Cranes roosting together during fall migration. Photo by Jan Lewis

Wind Energy: Education and Advocacy

BY HEATHER GOOD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Over the course of this year, our member magazine has explored wind energy developments over the last decade in Michigan. From lessons of projects past to new technologies to the politics of alternative energy and the impact on birds and people, these articles still but skim the surface of this broad, ever-expanding topic. We invite you to stay tuned to michiganaudubon.org/blog for follow-up posts on this topic and its many angles as we continue to advocate for best siting and mandate practices for developers.

Local Advocacy

Michigan Audubon's focus on facets of wind energy developments has been largely about raising awareness in building more bird-friendly communities and for our chapters and individual residents of Michigan who want to be more informed and proactive.

If you are a chapter of Michigan Audubon and there is a proposed wind or other alternative energy project in your community, we can consult with you on how best to represent and protect birds with legislators and with developers themselves. Write to us at birds@michiganaudubon.org.

In striving for better standards and mandates at the state level, we hope to ensure that birds, bats, bees, and other wildlife and pollinators are a part of the siting and regulatory process. We also want to keep you — people who are invested in the well-being of birds and our greenspaces throughout the lower and upper peninsulas — updated and informed on how you can help.

It's no secret that wind power is surging right now, and we're also seeing data and research related to its sustainability expand. Some data suggests, for example, that birds may not be very good at seeing



Painting turbine blades can lower risks to wildlife. Image by CleanTechnica

obstructions while they're flying, and adding visual cues like differently colored fan blades can increase birds' chances of spotting a rapidly rotating fan.

With increased knowledge, inclusivity, public input, and collaboration, we are hopeful that these new technologies can adapt with agencies and developers to better minimize threats to wildlife and habitats.

"To greater or lesser degrees, all wind developers in Michigan want to reduce wildlife risks, no question," said Scott Hicks of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The challenge is that they are balancing so many other things, like wind resources, proximity to transmission, willing landowners, property line setbacks, and so on. With so many factors to consider, the unfortunate reality is that wildlife concerns fall to the wayside or into a category of "we'll try our best" in terms of siting efforts. "Some states have siting regulations that reflect wildlife considerations," said Hicks. "We don't in Michigan, so when push comes to shove, a wind developer might prioritize other considerations (reduce impacts to tillable land) over, say siting to reduce wildlife risk."

Michigan Audubon's vision is to play a key role in advancing wind energy planning in Michigan (e.g., working directly with utilities or others to try to move the needle on what is done for wildlife in wind energy planning/operation for both birds and bats).

Wind Energy Advocacy: What We'd Like To See

- Adoption of bird-smart principles for developers that are incorporated into the permitting process in our state.
- Movement by the wind industry toward bird- and bat-friendly bladeless, enclosed-blade, or painted-blade technologies to replace the current bladed turbines.
- Collaborative, regional studies conducted that identify areas where wind energy should not be developed in Michigan due to its potential impacts on protected birds, wildlife, and habitats.
- Pre-construction risk assessments and post-construction monitoring of bird and bat fatalities conducted by independent, third-party experts using standardized methods, followed by the sharing of these results in a manner that is transparent, open to the public, and transmitted directly to regulatory agencies.
- Testing the efficacy of various mitigation techniques

and collaborative work with Gov. Whitmer's task force to develop best practices and exemplary state mandates.

- Greater efforts for collaborative, on-the-ground conservation efforts for areas of particular interest (high winds) to developers (i.e., the Upper Peninsula, central-northern Lower Peninsula, and the Thumb of Michigan).
- On-the-ground conservation. Developing open areas where there are high winds puts migratory birds at direct risk.
- Continued, focused research studies.

Evaluating Individual Wind Projects in Michigan

- Proximity to areas that are important to birds — Is the project within or near an Important Bird Area or critical foraging habitat?
- Habitat loss — Will the project result in direct loss of habitat (or indirect loss through bird avoidance), either for breeding, migration, or wintering? Is there a plan in place to mitigate those losses?
- Migratory pathways — Is the project within a known migratory pathway or area commonly used by birds to enter or exit critical habitat?
- Rigor of data collection and analysis — Does the project make thorough use of existing data? Does the project have a plan for pre- and post-construction study and monitoring? Does it conform to widely used methods and best practices, including the USFWS land-based wind energy guidelines?

- Cumulative impacts — What are the suspected cumulative impacts of this project on bird populations, habitat availability, connectivity, etc., when other nearby projects are also considered?

Wind Development Suggested Guidelines

- Guidelines should provide developers, permitting agencies, and conservation groups with the legal, technical, and practical steps needed to minimize impacts on birds and other wildlife. Additionally, we recommend the following guidelines for developers in Michigan:
- Minimum pre-permitting study requirements and guidance on study methods, frequency, and acceptable data sources to ensure that wind power is sited in appropriate locations.
- Clearly delineated siting criteria that designate areas where wind power should not be allowed, such as Important Bird Areas, major migratory corridors, wilderness areas, national parks, wildlife refuges, and other sensitive habitats such as wetlands and riparian corridors.
- Clearly defined monitoring and mitigation requirements in permits, with periodic reviews and requirements for adaptive management if impacts significantly exceed levels allowed by permit.
- Guidance on cumulative population impacts assessment and mitigation.
- Consultations with wildlife experts, including Michigan Audubon staff and local chapters, to help inform study and siting decisions.

continued on page 4



A Michigan wind farm near Sebewaing, Mich. Photo by George Thomas | Flickr CC

Take It From the Meadowlark: Don't Fragment Habitats!

Michigan's grasslands support a variety of native birds. These rich, disappearing habitats used to be our state's wet meadows and prairies. Today, we have fewer than just a few thousand acres of grasslands to support grassland bird populations.

Grassland birds in North America have declined more than any other group of birds. This decline is due to fragmentation and loss of habitat. Habitat fragmentation occurs when large blocks of habitat are broken up by human development, such as roads, trails, powerlines, homes, farms, and other disturbances. In Michigan, two species that have been extirpated due to these impacts are the Greater Prairie-Chicken and Lark Sparrow.



Heather Good has been the executive director of Michigan Audubon since 2016 and focused on environmental policy in her Environmental Studies education at Western Michigan University. She works with Michigan Audubon's chapters, local groups, legislators, and individual volunteers to advocate for the conservation and best practices and policies for birds and their habitats in the state of Michigan.

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Michigan Audubon Donates Lake Bluff Manor to Local Nonprofit

Michigan Audubon recently successfully transferred ownership and stewardship of the manor and grounds adjacent to Lake Bluff Bird Sanctuary. "We are excited to announce that the historic and much-loved Lake Bluff manor home is now owned by Lake Bluff Farms, a local nonprofit established to preserve this structure and the immediate grounds around it," said Anne Brasie, vice chair of the Michigan Audubon board.

"We would like to thank the volunteer leaders of Lake Bluff Farms and the members of the Gray family who spent their time to help us execute this labor of love," added Brasie, a former Manistee resident who served for four years on the Lake Bluff ad hoc committee. "The home is now in the hands of folks who can ensure that the home once again will be one of the jewels of Manistee County."

The 75-acre bird sanctuary portion of the property will continue to be owned, managed, and maintained by Michigan Audubon with a conservation easement in place. This easement ensures the protection of this property in perpetuity, and Michigan Audubon will continue to steward the bird sanctuary as one of its 18 sanctuaries.

"This sanctuary is a rich, valuable place for birds and people alike, and we are looking forward to a mutually rewarding relationship with the Lake Bluff Farms nonprofit," said Michigan Audubon Executive Director Heather Good.

In June of 2017, Michigan Audubon circulated a request for proposals throughout northwest Michigan with the hopes of identifying a local qualifying organization better positioned to utilize the manor and adjacent grounds of just under five acres. Lake Bluff Farms will provide the historic preservation of the Lake Bluff manor. In their vision statement, they write, "Because the hallmark of Lake Bluff is protecting the flora, fauna, and inherent history not just for today, but for all future generations, Lake Bluff Farms will place a concentration upon preservation, education, protection, and upkeep of the homestead and immediate surrounding areas." To learn more about their timeline and work with the manor home, Lake Bluff Farms invites you to like them on Facebook at facebook.com/lakeblufffarms.

Michigan Audubon's Lake Bluff Bird Sanctuary remains open to the public for gentle use from dawn to dusk. It is located at 2890 Lakeshore Rd., Manistee, MI 49660. Please visit michiganaudubon.org for more information.



"We are so grateful for Michigan Audubon's stewardship of the sanctuary lands and for the vision, devotion, and hard work of the amazing team of qualified people who have created Lake Bluff Farms in order to save and restore the historic buildings on the property. We know now that the conservation values and dreams for Lake Bluff's future that we had envisioned will be preserved in perpetuity. We look forward to hearing more about the community of Manistee once again taking advantage of and supporting both nonprofits and, most of all, creating their own memories to share with their families as we did with ours."

-Barbara Wood Gray



Lark Sparrow. Photo by Camilla Cerea | APA

Golf Meets Bird Conservation in Southwest Michigan:

A Variety of Birdies and Sometimes Eagles

BY STEPHEN W. ALLEN AND ANDREA M. TRAUTMAN

Golfing throughout Michigan is big business. With an average property footprint of 175 acres, a golf course combines highly manicured turfgrass with areas of more natural habitat, providing cover and support for various avian species across our state and an aesthetic unique to each property. Among the leaders in maintaining a balance between the demands of the golfing consumer and the natural features that assist our wildlife neighbors has been the Scott family, with their Gull Lake View Golf & Resort (GLV) group in Southwest Michigan, near Augusta.

The initial construction of GLV started with the back nine of the West Course in 1963, with the front portion completed in 1965. From that modest beginning, the Scott family has been a leader in resort golfing, creating six golfing properties so far. Each course has a distinct design and provides a challenging golfing opportunity consistent with the preservation and protection of wildlife habitat that has been incorporated into all aspects of the operation.

In support of cavity-nesting birds, nest boxes have been erected on many golfing venues across the country. The placement of artificial structures that provide nesting locations for numerous small cavity-dependent birds has been an active and complimentary addition to the open habitat that golf courses feature for over 60 years. Boxes have been included as part of the earliest GLV courses. Systematic monitoring and data collection of the productivity of those boxes began in 1996. All GLV nesting structures are visited, and box contents are recorded over the duration of the nesting season — April into August. Eastern Bluebirds and Tree Swallows have taken to the 188 boxes spread across the six golf course properties over the past 25 years. The most recent summary of the nest box results reveals a surprisingly close outcome between the two species.

For Eastern Bluebirds, 11,574 eggs were laid over the years; 8,880 young were hatched; and 8,104 young were fledged. Those were spread over five properties, with Stonehedge North having the highest (1,784 fledged).

For Tree Swallows, 10,800 eggs were laid; 8,914 young were hatched; and 8,112 young were fledged. Successful nesting ranged from 83% at Bedford Valley to 70% at Stonehedge South.

As can be seen, there is a difference of only eight more Tree Swallows fledging over 25 years of monitoring. Many of those fledged young have been banded as part of the long-term avian research program at the Kalamazoo Nature Center. Those banding records have documented many birds, especially successful females, returning to the same property and regularly the same nesting box the year after raising a brood.



Trumpeter Swans with four cygnets.

Boxes are located across the course properties, some spaced along golf holes in areas of lower play. Many are along no-mow edges to reduce disruption to the playing guest or the groundskeeping crew.

Nesting structures have been successful, but just as exciting is the wide variety of birds found associating with the properties. Examples include:

- Trumpeter Swans, a threatened species in Michigan, that have nested for over six consecutive years.
- Nesting Dickcissels, Field Sparrows, Eastern Meadowlarks, and other grassland birds in native grassy areas of Stoatin Brae and Stonehedge North.
- Sandhill Cranes and their young, which forage across no-mow and golf course holes after successful nesting in adjacent wetlands on Bedford Valley and GLV East and West.
- Red-tailed Hawks and Great-horned Owls that occasionally nest in larger oaks of the wooded areas. Bald Eagles soar over the grounds, likely in search of food.

A highlight of the strange year that was 2020 was the discovery of an albino Tree Swallow chick. Discovered in the middle of the nesting season, this was a wonderful surprise. It was monitored until fledging and was banded at the age of 12 days, as are almost all of the young birds produced from GLV boxes. Although in looking back, of all the Tree Swallows banded or monitored across the

A Tree Swallow approaches a nest box.



An albino Tree Swallow chick is banded along with others in its clutch in 2020.



A white-footed mouse resides in the nest box when it isn't breeding season for cavity-nesting birds.



A gray tree frog also enjoys using the nest box.



A patch of wildflowers was planted as part of the "Monarchs in the Rough" program, which aims to convert areas of turfgrass into plots that support butterflies.

north half of the continental United States, this would be that one bird so unique that it did not need a band. For a short video documenting the banding and a closer look at this one-in-a-million bird, visit <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/431602207>.

We are watching for and are hopeful that it returns to its natal box, as we have over 50 documented cases of both second-year and breeding adults returning to the same property and many times to the same nesting box as had been used in consecutive years.

Other species that utilize nest boxes:

- Flying squirrels frequently use boxes along wooded edges that have become enclosed by shrubby growth over the years, and have successfully raised young.
- White-footed mice climb up posts and create nests. Before and during the breeding season, those nests are removed. Following breeding season and over the winter, the mice are welcomed to occupy boxes of choice.
- Tree frogs occasionally are found in shaded nest boxes. It's always a surprise to find an amphibian away from water. They have been found in both empty boxes and boxes occupied by nesting birds.

In recent years, interested golf properties have initiated a focused project to support monarch butterflies and other pollinators. "Monarchs in the Rough" began in 2019 and provided grant-funded wildflower seed to courses that were willing to convert select areas of mowed turfgrass into an area with flowering plants. The plants support feeding opportunities for both adult and larval forms of monarchs, but other species are expected to partake as well.

"Our family has always wanted to provide a balanced golfing experience that was challenging and provided an interaction with natural features of Southwest Michigan," said Charlie Scott. "Starting with my father, Darl, who was involved with the golf industry all his life, to my grandson Alex, the fourth generation, who built the replacement boxes being used this season to replace some of the aging boxes (up for more than 30 years), the birds, the environment, and a positive outdoor experience are key to what we have to offer."



Stephen W. Allen has been a bird and natural habitat advocate for his working life. As field ornithologist and bird bander for the Kalamazoo Nature Center from 1993 to 2005, he supported Michigan birds during Christmas Bird Counts and was a board member of the Audubon Society of Kalamazoo and Michigan Audubon. Andrea M. Trautman has been a Southwest Michigan resident all her life. Coming to Kalamazoo in 1966, she received a teaching degree from Western Michigan University in 1969 and has volunteered for numerous nonprofits for the past 45 years. Steve and Andrea were married in 1978. They have been doing breeding bird and other avian surveys together since 1985, co-authored the owl accounts for the Michigan Breeding Bird Atlas I, and more.

The Owls of Summer Continue to Confound

BY CHRIS NERI, WPBO SUMMER LEAD OWL BANDER

The summer of 2021 represented the fifteenth full season of summer owl research at WPBO. As was the case in 2020, the owls again demonstrated that we don't always know what we think we know. Last summer, we unexpectedly had our most productive summer owl season at the Point. Over the first 14 years of summer owl banding, we experienced peak numbers of juvenile Northern Saw-whet Owls (NSWO) in 2007, 2012, and 2017. This 5-year cycle in peak NSWO reproductive success had us expecting the next peak to occur in 2022. Therefore, we were surprised to band 624 juvenile NSWO in 2020, our best summer ever for juvenile NSWO. The peaks in 2007, 2012, and 2017 were followed immediately by crashes in apparent NSWO reproductive success in 2008, 2013, and 2018, with counts never exceeding 71 juveniles. As we headed into the 2021 summer banding season, we had no idea whether last summer's unexpected success meant we would experience a crash this summer or if the numbers would be more similar to what we generally see in the year before an expected peak.

Not only did we not experience a crash this summer, but it was a particularly productive season relative to where we expected to be in the NSWO reproductive cycle. A total of 494 owls were banded this summer (481 NSWO, 12 Long-eared Owls [LEOW], and one Great Horned Owl). The 481 NSWO comprised 388 juveniles and 93 adults. Combined with last summer's unexpected record number of juvenile NSWO, we have banded 1,012 juvenile NSWO during the previous two summers alone. This brings the number of juvenile NSWO banded during all summer seasons combined to 4,076. This season's total of 12 LEOW was disappointing, particularly following a record spring season for LEOW. The last time we experienced a peak spring for LEOW, we banded over 100 LEOW in that year's summer. We had hoped to once again band around 100 LEOW this summer. Not only did that not come to fruition, but it proved to be a particularly poor season for LEOW. However, the Great Horned Owl was not only the first one to be banded during a summer season, but also represents the first summer record at WPBO.

One of my favorite aspects of the summer research, which I typically don't get to include in the seasonal reports, is the information we get back on some of the owls later in the year. In particular, I find it fascinating to see where some of the juvenile NSWO that we band at WPBO in the summer show up during their first fall migration. In the past, the juvenile NSWO we banded here during the summer have been recaptured during their first fall migration at sites ranging from Tofte, Minn., to our northwest, to the southern tip of the Delmarva Peninsula on the Atlantic Coast in Virginia. Last fall, we received information back on quite a few of last summer's juveniles, including some from new locations. Two ended up near Louisville, Ky. These are the first two juveniles that we know ended up in Kentucky during their first fall migration. It was exciting in and of itself to get our first report of a juvenile ending up in Cape May, N.J., a few months after we banded it here, but it was also of personal interest to me. It was in Cape May that I was introduced to owl banding by Katy Duffy in the '90s. After 20 years of waiting for us to do a banding exchange with Cape May, it was amazing to finally have our first exchange with them be a juvenile NSWO during its first fall migration.

A juvenile Northern Saw-whet Owl banded during the 2021 summer season at WPBO.



The Great Horned Owl banded during the 2021 summer season at WPBO.

We're thrilled with the success we have experienced the last two summers. We're left wondering if next summer will produce a peak on the 5-year schedule we experienced in the past or if this schedule has now been reset. What we experienced during the last two summers really has us at a loss as to whether we are still on that 5-year schedule. We also look forward to seeing some of this summer's juveniles this fall. The unique look into this aspect of NSWO biology continues to excite us, throw us curves, and teach us new things. I thank my banding partners this summer, Kate Maley and Laura Porter, for their hard work this season. As always, we thank you for your generous support that makes this long-term research possible. It indeed would not be possible without you.



Chris Neri arrived at WPBO in 1999. Chris has been fortunate to spend seasons at some of the premier raptor sites around the country, working on some great research projects, but as he reports, "nothing has captured me the way the owl migration at Whitefish Point has."

Spring Fling Canceled for 2022

In light of concerns about the potential impact of the continued spread of COVID-19 variants and their effects on local businesses in Paradise, Mich., Whitefish Point Bird Observatory leadership has decided to again not hold our traditional Spring Fling event in April of 2022.

Normally, we'd use this event as a way to connect, share in the delight of birds spotted at the Point, and give our annual volunteer awards. This Spring Fling event at WPBO is a kickoff of spring migration, initially born of the former 501(c)(3)'s steadfast volunteers and board of directors.

Folks who regularly attend this event, now in its fourth decade, look forward to presentations and programs as well as birding tours at and around the Point. They have the opportunity to interact with field and administrative staff as well as enjoy Paradise prior to peak tourist season in the Upper Peninsula.

With changes to businesses in the tourism industry during this time of year, we simply can't hold Spring Fling the way we have in the past, even if we wanted to. In place of Spring Fling, our board and staff are adapting our education offerings as well as guided trips and tours to offer higher-quality programs in more locations throughout the state for both new and experienced birders.

"While Spring Fling will be paused for 2022, look for some new and exciting opportunities to birdwatch around the state like never before," said Board Chair Natasha Koss.

Learn more about Whitefish Point and how you can make the most of your visit there at our website, wpbo.org. Whitefish Point Bird Observatory is a migration monitoring program located in Paradise, Mich., and is owned and managed by Michigan Audubon. The entire Whitefish Point property is owned and managed jointly with partners and neighboring landowners at the Point.



Whitefish Point Hosts Three Piping Plover Nests

BY ALEC OLIVIER, PIPING PLOVER INTERN

The summer of 2021 was another successful year for Piping Plovers at Whitefish Point. For only the third time, there were multiple Piping Plover nests at the Point, with three present this season. Plover breeding activity began in mid-May with a male observed scraping and displaying for two different females, one being his eventual mate. The male was hatched at Vermillion Point in 2019, and the female was unbanded. This pair began copulating in late May, and their nest was discovered on May 28 with two eggs. Egg-laying ended on June 2 with four eggs being laid. This pair split incubation duties very evenly, switching every hour or two. A total of three eggs hatched on June 28, and within 24 hours, all three chicks left the enclosure. After 23 days, Piping Plover chicks are considered to be fledged. All three chicks made it to their first 23 days and shortly after were seen flying around the beach.

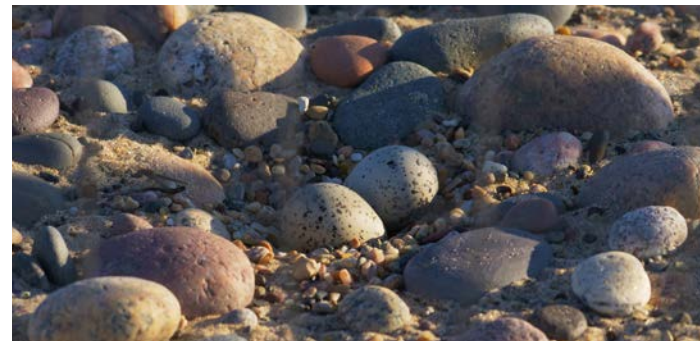
The second pair consisted of a captive-reared male who was released at the Point last summer, and the female was one of the chicks from last year's nest at Whitefish Point! Their nest was discovered on May 30 with one egg. Egg-laying ended on June 12 with a total of four eggs. Three eggs hatched on July 4. Shortly after hatching, the three chicks moved into the dune grass near the pond edge, where they remained for the majority of their time at the Point. One chick, unfortunately, disappeared on July 20, assumed to have been predated. The last two remaining chicks fledged on July 27.

The third pair consisted of a male hatched at Whitefish Point last summer and a captive-reared female released in the Lower Peninsula last summer. Their nest was discovered with one egg on June 1. Egg-laying ended with four eggs on June 10. All four eggs hatched on July 4 around the same time as the second nest. Unfortunately, on the morning of July 10, it was discovered that the female and all four chicks had disappeared. Although no predator tracks were found on the beach and there were no other signs of any predators, it was likely that all five birds were predated. The male continued to be seen on their territory for another few days, seemingly unbothered by the disappearance of his mate and chicks. Although a significant effort was put into locating them, there were no more sightings of this brood.

Even though I was at Whitefish Point to monitor Piping Plovers, I was still able to gain some other neat bird sightings. The season's highlight was undoubtedly the Ruff that I found in late May. This record represents the first Point record and the third Upper Peninsula record. Other highlights of the season include the Point's third Cerulean Warbler and fourth Wilson's Phalarope, a Mute Swan, a Swainson's Hawk, a Brewer's Blackbird, over 1,600 White-winged Crossbills in mid-July, and two Great Egrets in late July. It was also very cool to watch the overlap between spring and fall migrant shorebirds – in late June, there was considerable overlap between late spring and early fall migrants.



Piping Plover Intern Alec Olivier sets up an enclosure for a Piping Plover nest. Piping Plover eggs are very well camouflaged (see below) and the enclosure can help keep the nest protected from predators and more. Photos by Blake Carlile



This summer field season was a success, thanks to a number of dedicated individuals. These include the Michigan Audubon headquarters staff, Outreach Intern Blake Carlile, Chris Neri, Nova Mackentley, volunteer Jim Leitch, Greg McClellan, Tony Block, and the Seney Youth Conservation Corps crew (Stephanie Schubel, Cindy Mom, Morgan Waller, and Beth Olson). I very much enjoyed my second season working at Whitefish Point and am often reminded about why this place is my favorite place to bird!

Lastly, I want to remind all visitors who are lucky enough to visit the Point to please obey all signs and closures within Whitefish Point and the Seney National Wildlife Refuge. While the vast majority of visitors respected the rules and regulations of Whitefish Point, it was disappointing to see several photographers and fairly well-known birders enter the closed area. As tempting as it may be to cross over to photograph shorebirds or get a better view of the pond, both can be accomplished while staying along the shoreline. By not entering the closed area, you are helping to protect Piping Plovers and avoiding the potential to receive a trespassing ticket. Entering the closed area is considered trespassing and is treated as such.



Alec Olivier grew up in Marquette, Mich., but currently lives in Big Rapids while attending Ferris State University where he plays on the men's tennis team. He attended his first Spring Fling in 2005 at the age of four and since then he has spent countless hours birding in the Upper Peninsula and at Whitefish Point. He was excited to be back at the Point to monitor this important species.

Winter Birding Tours Announced

Winter Birding in the Eastern U.P.
January 22–23 & February 12–13

Are you anxious to see a Canada Jay? Hoping to check the Northern Hawk Owl off your list? Then join Michigan Audubon and our birding guide, Darrell Lawson, on a birding tour of the eastern Upper Peninsula. These caravan adventures will start in Sault Ste. Marie and progress through Chippewa and Mackinac counties.

BIPOC Community Birding in the Eastern U.P.
January 29–30

Michigan Audubon's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Council is excited to announce the first winter birding tour in the Eastern U.P. for the BIPOC community. This birding tour is for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) birdwatchers who want to learn more about the unique joys of birding and outdoor recreation in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

"I think it's important for BIPOC birders to be able to participate in birding trips where we can engage in the hobby of birdwatching joyfully and uninhibitedly without feeling somehow inadequate or intimidated due to a lack of experience," said April Campbell, DEI Advisory Council member. "It's also an opportunity to explore our shared cultural experiences without the need for explication and code-switching, both of which African Americans, in particular, must engage in on a regular basis in order to successfully navigate the America's white power structure. In short, such trips would be a respite, of sorts, from a world where we remain the 'other.'"

Michigan Audubon encourages its chapters, members, and friends to help us spread the word about this opportunity for our BIPOC communities! Questions about the tour? We encourage you to email your inquiries to events@michiganaudubon.org.

Similar to our standard U.P. birding trip, this weekend will be a caravan-guided birding adventure for a maximum of 12 participants. The group will begin in the Sault Ste. Marie area and will explore birding hotspots and habitats through Chippewa and Mackinac counties.

The fees for all U.P. birding tours are \$100 for Michigan Audubon members and \$125 for non-members. Please note that the trip fee does not include meals or lodging. More trip details will be provided to participants upon registration, and spots are limited.

These trips are rated EASY. Most travel is by car caravan, and foot travel is generally on gravel or paved roadways. Roads may be snow-covered and/or slippery. Duration of foot travel is less than a mile at a time, and participants need to be able to withstand cold temperatures for periods of 30 minutes.

Special COVID-19 protocols will be followed for the safety and protection of all involved parties. Vaccination is required for participation in these tours. Masks will be required as necessary and appropriate. More details on COVID-19 protocols will be provided to participants as the tour date approaches.



One of the Piping Plover chicks that fledged at the Point. Photo by Blake Carlile

Community Spotlight: April Campbell

What first inspired your involvement in birding?

I grew up on a former dairy farm in rural Connecticut. Our home backed up to a state park, so, essentially, we had no neighbors. My siblings and I spent our days playing outside, surrounded by nature. Early on, I was captivated by the birds that frequented our yard, especially the acrobatic Barn Swallows that nested in our barn. I spent hours watching them construct their mud nests and raise their young. I was hooked.

Do you like to bird with others? Why or why not? What do you consider when going birding, either with people or individually?

I do like to bird with others, but I prefer to bird alone or in small groups. I find large groups intimidating and less helpful for learning and discovery. Unless you are at the very front of a large group, you are likely to miss the bird entirely. It's also much harder to "slow bird" in a large group, as the goal is, more often than not, to see as many species as possible in a short amount of time.

Birding with a small group affords me the opportunity to get to know other birders better as people. Not everyone is interested in doing that, of course, so I try to gravitate to people who are open to birding with someone quite different from themselves. It's not just about the birds; it's also about building relationships. Safety is another issue I consider when birding. I will not bird alone in a remote park. I have been accosted in public spaces by people wanting to know what I was "doing." Once, while birding alone in a suburban neighborhood, an elderly woman followed me for several blocks because she thought I was using my binoculars to choose homes to rob! This can be a difficult concept for many white

birders to understand.

What has been difficult about this hobby and groups, events, and the overall community of birding or bird conservation for you?

I've been a member of Audubon in five different states and, until recently, I've been the only African American member. To be sure, I'm quite accustomed to being the lone raisin in the pudding, so to speak, but I had hoped by now the hobby would have grown far more diverse in both form and outlook. Change has occurred, but it's been painfully slow. Over the years, I've met some fascinating and kind birders, but very rarely did any of them reach out to me as a person or suggest ways to involve more BIPOC birders. Often the focus is on "listing." Listing has its place, but accumulating species numbers just for the sake of bragging rights smacks of yet another form of consumerism. I also think it teaches new birders to focus on numbers and the technology to obtain those numbers rather than the birds themselves. I think many new BIPOC birders would find this intimidating. I'm also cognizant of birding language. Denoting a bird as a "good" bird implies there are "bad" birds. Black birds often get a bad rap, too. I once listened to an Audubon lecture where the presenter announced, "We usually don't think of black as beautiful." These kinds of tone-deaf events sadden me.

Why, in your experience and opinion, do birders and birding circles and groups need to consider race in their work?

Our lives and attitudes are informed by our experiences, both negative and positive. One of my first memories as a child was of a brick being thrown through our front window by white boys yelling the n-word. My pet ducks and geese were slaughtered by two white men who disliked my father. Most African Americans have experienced similar or far worse atrocities in their lives. On top of these macroaggressions are the constant microaggressions experienced in our day-to-day lives. With this backdrop in mind and remembering this nation's centuries-long history of chattel slavery and Jim Crow, white birders must understand that African Americans are not just white people with a permanent tan.



How do you see people effecting change for more racial inclusivity, belonging, and support in the outdoor recreation and birding spheres?

Building relationships of trust with traditionally marginalized groups is key. This takes time, courage, and a willingness to be vulnerable. Misunderstandings will occur, and that's okay! It's important for leaders in the birding community to seek out marginalized groups and not expect them to come to them no matter how welcoming they are. Forming a mentor list for BIPOC birders is an important goal. Mentors can make a dramatic difference in a BIPOC person's life. Supporting independent BIPOC birding groups that interact with local Audubon chapters is another option. This allows BIPOC birders to operate within a safe space and still experience the world of birds with more seasoned birders. Urban birding should be a part of every Audubon chapter. Local chapters could dedicate several days a month for birding in Detroit, Flint, Benton Harbor, or Saginaw. Birds live in cities, too!

Any advice for chapters of Michigan Audubon in how they can approach this work, this mindfulness, in their communities?

As I mentioned, building relationships of trust is paramount. But you can't build those relationships without performing some inner work. "Outreach requires inreach." By "inreach" I mean first recognizing that racism permeates all aspects of American society, including birding, and no one is "color blind." White people as the dominant racial group are traditionally afforded certain privileges and power regardless of their social standing. Chapter leaders must first educate themselves and their white peers through reading and discussion groups in order to better understand the role that membership in the dominant groups plays in how they view the world and the "other." There are several notable books that can aid in this journey: I highly recommend Deborah Irving's book, *Waking Up White*, and Ruth King's *Mindful of Race: Transforming Racism from the Inside Out*.

African Americans, on the other hand, must temper our wariness and mistrust and remain open to the possibility of change in both people and institutions. We must all set aside ego as we have much to learn from each other if we are willing to listen and make mistakes along the way. Forgiveness is one of the cornerstones of

mindfulness. Forgiving oneself and others is also the gateway to freedom. I remain confident that if we strive hard enough, we will all one day be free...as a bird.



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Resources and Recommended Reading For Addressing Diversity and Race in Michigan Audubon Chapters

By April Campbell, M.D.

Finney, C. 2014. *Black Faces, White Spaces: Reimagining the Relationship of African Americans to the Great Outdoors*. University of North Carolina Press. Chapel Hill.

Giltner, S. E. 2008. *Hunting and Fishing in the New South: Black Labor and White Leisure after the Civil War*. The Johns Hopkins University Press. Baltimore, Maryland.

Irving, D. 2014. *Waking Up White, and Finding Myself in the Story of Race*. Elephant Room Press.

King, R. 2018. *Mindful of Race: Transforming Racism from the Inside Out*. Sounds True. Louisville, Colorado.

Lanham, J. D. 2016. *The Home Place: Memoirs of a Colored Man's Love Affair with Nature*. Milkweed Editions. Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Robinson, J. C. 2008. *Birding for Everyone: Encouraging People of Color to Become Birdwatchers*. Wings-on-Disk.

Savoy, L. 2015. *Trace: Memory, History, Race, and the American Landscape*. Counterpoint Press. Berkeley, California.

Taylor, D. 2014. *Toxic Communities: Environmental Racism, Industrial Pollution, and Residential Mobility*. NYU Press. New York.

Taylor, D. 2016. *The Rise of the American Conservation Movement: Power, Privilege, and Environmental Protection*. Duke University Press. Durham, North Carolina.

April Campbell is a retired M.D., experienced birder and photographer, member, and volunteer for Michigan Audubon's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Council.



Photos clockwise from top left:
A Prairie Warbler perches atop a branch.
A Cooper's Hawk scans the surroundings.
April captured this hummingbird while birding in Ecuador.
April Campbell enjoying birds and the other bounties of nature.
Bird photos by April Campbell.
April's portrait by Alexandra Sciaky.



Dated Material

Connecting birds and people for the benefit of both through conservation, education, and research efforts in the state of Michigan.

We Welcome Our Newest Michigan Audubon Members

We would like to thank 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.

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Andrews
Karen Brown
Norene Cashen
Charles Chandler &
Ella Taylor
Kathleen Crane
Dennis Dougherty
Jenny Geuder
Kristina Hindert
Stacy & David
Hofmeister
Elspeth Inglis
Cynthia Klekar
Zachary Klukkert &
Sarah Saffa
Patricia Komjathy

David Koster
John LaForest
Marilyn McGee
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Julia Miller
Matthew Shirrell
Jessica Slusarski
Rebecca Stimson
Jeanne Stoddard &
Tim Lovrencevic
Debbie Underhill

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American Crow.
Photo by Danielle Cooper | APA