

Jack Pine *Warbler*

SUMMER: Reflecting on Inaugural Black Birders Week • Bird Sanctuaries Home to Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnakes
Whitefish Point Bird Observatory Spring Reports: Hawk Count, Waterbird Count, & Owl Banding
Engaging in DIY Projects at Sanctuaries



Jack Pine Warbler

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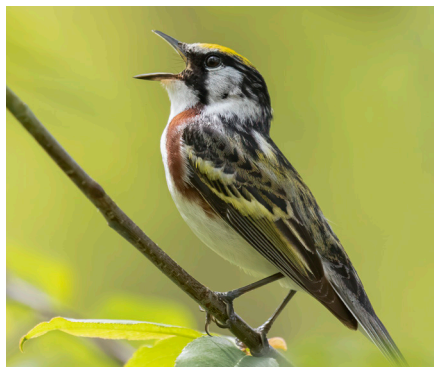
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Cover Photo ■ Chestnut-sided Warbler
Photographer: J. A. Mikulich

J. A. Mikulich is a designer, musician, entrepreneur, and aspiring wildlife photographer from Michigan. He's an award-winning creative professional and has work featured in the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History. He is also a respected consultant and thought leader for multicultural marketing. He lives in Grand Rapids with his wife Evelyn. They often travel to Puerto Rico. He captured this photo while enjoying the outdoors in northern Osceola County.

Thank you to J. A. Mikulich for submitting this image to the 2020 Michigan Audubon Photography Awards for which he was awarded an honorable mention. 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 mkeen@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,

I imagine we all have been enjoying birds throughout spring and early summer this year in different, nimble, more creative ways than we've approached birdwatching before. Maybe we made new discoveries or insights; maybe we returned to an old ornithological passion, found a new favorite birding spot, or especially relished in our time with our favorite field guides. Whatever it looks like for you to connect with birds this summer, I hope that more time at home has meant more time for walks, for nature, and for birds.

About a month ago, I came across a meme that showed a few people glued to their bay window, slack-jawed in awe and amazement by the activity at their bird feeders outside. It was a small, bright spot for me, endearing because it implies many people may just be discovering the world of birdwatching.

As we integrate, day by day, into a new and hopefully more conscientious normal, I want to practice more of what reinforces and shares not only our work, but the people behind the work. This time has given us pause to reflect and, for me, pause to feel gratitude for the generosity and dedication to birds. In that spirit of gratitude, I want to say thank you...

To all of our bird sanctuary workday volunteers, data collectors, and nest box monitors around the state. Thank you for putting your time and energy into keeping these places protected, maintained, and accessible for all.

Thank you to Doug Klein for volunteering regularly at Warner Sanctuary this spring especially — for tending to the trails, and for rebuilding and maintaining the footbridge and boardwalk across Glass Creek. Your help has helped more people get out and enjoy that hidden gem of a bird sanctuary in Barry County!

To Sarah Nelson, resident manager of the Otis Farm Bird Sanctuary, for tending to and leading the continued, long-term restoration work at Otis and for making this sanctuary in Barry County more accessible, educational, and ecologically sound.

To the Otis and Erway families who continue to support this beautiful sanctuary and its unique history. We are so happy to see this place grow and become richer habitat each year.

To our Capital City Bird Sanctuary Resident Managers Linnea Rowse and Alana Chriest for coordinating our community food bank garden at CCBS. With this vegetable garden, we are able to provide food to five local families while also sharing the sanctuary with them and all it offers (i.e., native plant gardens, a Chimney Swift tower, riverside and nest box trails, etc.).

To Paul Bielawski, a long-time regular volunteer and supporter of Capital City Bird Sanctuary. Paul has been a CCBS staple as a nest box monitor and at our regular workdays.

Thank you to everyone who supported us in transitioning the Lake Bluff manor to Lake Bluff Farms (more on this in our fall issue!).

Thank you to the Piping Plover monitors throughout the state!

Thank you to our guides and field staff who share birds with people for the joy and advocacy and importance of it. Rich Couse, Alison Vilag, Chris Neri, Nova Mackentley, Elliott Nelson, and Darrell Lawson.

Thank you to our first WPBO intern, Alec Olivier, of Marquette, Mich., who is also our youngest waterbird and hawk counter in our history!

Thank you to the hardworking Haehnle committee for maintaining with such care and dedication the Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary in Jackson.

Thank you to our office volunteer, Elizabeth Heys, who has offered such rich support to our organization and has inspired us all in the process! (Read more about this inspiring volunteer on page 13.)

Thank you to long-time member, supporter, and friend, Diana Little, for embodying why birds matter and how we can be and do better — and that we must, no excuses.

Thank you to our printer, RiverRun Press and owner Al Higdon, who have supported conservation organizations in Michigan with sustainable business and printing practices, for keeping our outreach and education materials produced during the pandemic, and for your long-standing, valuable support.

Thank you to Jonathan Mikulich, a Michigan resident, avid birder, and photographer, who reached out to me about birders coming together to “expand diversity in our state among bird enthusiasts.” Thank you for being proactive, for being an ally for birds and for people.

Thank you for supporting #BlackBirdersWeek, for seeing the interconnectedness and intersectionality of race and outdoor exploration and activities like birding, and for helping us create much-needed, long-overdue change.

Thank you for staying connected to Michigan Audubon, for talking to us, and for the commitment to bird conservation that your membership represents. At a time when we are inundated with potential causes to support, news to respond to, and ways to give, volunteer, and help all around us, I want to thank you for not forgetting how and why birds matter.

With gratitude,



Heather Good
Executive Director



Reflecting on Inaugural Black Birders Week

This article has been adapted from a post on our website that was originally published on June 15, 2020. We share the message again here for all of our members who do not regularly follow our posts online.

It has been over a month since the inaugural Black Birders Week initiative was brought to life by a group of committed Black nature enthusiasts and Michigan Audubon wants to say thank you to those who put this important movement together so swiftly!

Black Birders Week was inspired by an incident in late May, when Christian Cooper documented a racist encounter while birding in New York City's Central Park. Historically, birdwatching is often seen as a hobby of predominantly white individuals. Unfortunately, our fellow birders, conservationists, and outdoor enthusiasts who aren't white will bear the weight of prejudices like those experienced by Mr. Cooper when practicing this interest we all love.

If you are just learning about Black Birders Week or you didn't get a chance to follow the events in real-time, we encourage you to watch *Birding While Black: A Candid Conversation Session 1* and *Session 2* on the National Audubon Society Facebook page. The two panels featured several Black birders and conservationists of varying ages and experience answering questions such as "Have you ever experienced racial profiling while birding or conducting fieldwork?" and "What changes can be made to better facilitate inclusivity in the birding community?". The answers are illuminating, unique, important, and reflective for — and of — us all. Ultimately, Black Birders Week established the beginning of an empowering movement.

What were the founders' goals for Black Birders Week?

- To counter the narrative that the outdoors is not the place Black people should be.
- To educate the birding and broader outdoor-loving community about the challenges Black birders specifically face.
- To encourage increased diversity in birding and conservation.

Formed in 1904, Michigan Audubon is a grassroots member organization and we are advocates for birds, for people, and for the environment. It is our mission to connect birds and people for the benefit of both. As

such, acknowledging social issues and taking action in ways that relate to our mission is absolutely our work, especially when it benefits birds and humans in ways that translate to greater appreciation and stewardship of the natural world. For Michigan Audubon to ignore the issue and not support the core messaging and call to action of Black Birders Week would be wrong. After all, in this movement of awakening to being better stewards of the earth, we cannot leave out our fellow humans.

#BlackBirdersWeek



The Black Birders Week movement featured daily themes, supported by hashtags and social media events to help spread the word.

This graphic was designed by Sheridan Alford and Danielle Bellany.

What We Heard During Black Birders Week

After listening to the discussions, reading the articles, and following the initiative on social media, one thing has become abundantly clear to us — we all need to be more proactive about the barriers that Black and other non-white people face in nature. It's more than a moment: we have to face this issue because it does affect birds, the environment, our efforts to conserve and protect them, and ultimately, our success in doing so to the fullest extent humanly possible. We've got work to do and we needed to hear the feedback, the feelings, the insights, and the issues of racism, the environment, and the enjoyment and protection of the natural world.

As an organization, we recently shared our message denouncing systemic racism and supporting the Black Birders Week initiative. While we resoundingly had more positive than negative feedback on this, it is clear there were some that were uncomfortable with the topic. Some individuals feel a sense of ownership to birding and prefer to maintain a distance between

their beloved hobby and social issues. Others simply saw Black Birders Week as a political issue that has no place in the birding world.

While we hear people's frustrations, we feel it is of utmost importance to understand the perspectives of individuals like Corina Newsome, a graduate student in biology with a focus on avian conservation and her feelings during the Birding While Black panel discussion. "In (these) online birding groups and naturalist groups, there's always someone trying to silence Black people sharing their experience and brushing it off as being political."

Panellist Kassandra Ford, a Ph.D. candidate in evolutionary biology, echoed Newsome's view, adding, "We're not trying to be political here; we are literally trying to talk about our lives, talk about our experiences, and try[ing] to get other people to understand what we're going through."

At times, non-white birders feel the need to justify their participation within spaces where their presence might be misunderstood. During the Birding While Black panels, participants shared practices they feel they need to do to make sure they appear to "belong" when they are birding. Some answers included wearing hats, t-shirts, and pins that advertise nature organizations, always carrying a field guide, running down their credentials when talking to people, and appearing to look through binoculars — even when there aren't any birds around — just so people can see what they are doing.

Dr. J. Drew Lanham, professor of wildlife ecology at Clemson University, shared, "There's a psychological shell game that you're constantly playing of trying to figure out how people are sizing you up and that takes energy...it's sort of a constant thing almost. You just get used to doing it. It's like another pair of rubber boots that you've got to pull on every single time that you go birding. That weight, that energy that we expend as Black people in trying to mollify other people and satisfy them with who we are...I'd like for that not to be the case someday."

Key Takeaways From Black Birders Week

Listen. Think. Take Action.

Just as birds can serve as ecological indicators, it's clear they are social indicators, too. The sensitivity and ecological role of birds makes them increasingly

valuable reflections of the state of the world. As we saw during the impressive, powerful, eye-opening Black Birders Week, birds provide opportunities for us.

Simply put, the protection, health, and appreciation of birds really does have a lot to do with the state of the world. When we listen to birds, we glean insights about how we can remediate or minimize the negative effects of the plethora of human impacts, for example.

Black Birders Week may be over but we will continue to listen and learn from one another and to develop and share actionable items that you can utilize within your birding communities to help make them more inclusive.

Where Do We Go From Here?

As an organization, we see our role in this as an important one. As we work to respond thoughtfully and proactively, we realize how vital it is that we get to a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment both inside and outside the doors of businesses, organizations, schools, and homes.

As Michigan's oldest conservation organization, we pledge:

- To continue our work to recruit and retain multi-culturally sophisticated employees, board members, and supporters to build a stronger culture of inclusion within our organization.
- To create additional birding and bird conservation outreach programs that reach new audiences throughout the state.
- To make birds and bird conservation more accessible, inclusive, and reflective of a diverse, multicultural world through our mission of connecting birds and people for the benefit of both through conservation, education, and research efforts.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work is ongoing, cross-functional work that is imbued throughout the organization. It is includable, accountable, ongoing work. We know an Action Plan is not a one-and-done solution, a token initiative, a checkbox, or simply one organization's responsibility. We are acknowledging that it takes everyone's participation, focus, and follow-through.

For links to further reading about Black Birders Week, please visit our original post at michiganaudubon.org/reflecting-on-blackbirdersweek/.

Bird Sanctuaries Home to Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnakes

BY LINNEA ROWSE, CONSERVATION PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Did you know that there are 18 species of snakes in Michigan? I imagine many of you have come across an eastern garter snake, commonly seen in sunny places along trails in the summer, and perhaps some of our other more common species. But did you know that there are rattlesnakes in Michigan? Personally, I am thrilled that we have habitat of high enough quality to support a diversity of snakes, including a very special rattlesnake species, the eastern massasauga rattlesnake (*Sistrurus catenatus*). Snakes are an important part of a healthy ecosystem, playing the role of predator on small mammals, and also are prey for Sandhill Crane (*Antigone canadensis*), hawks, owls, and some mammals. Snakes — rattlesnakes in particular — often cause feelings of fear in people who worry that these creatures will attack them, their pets, or their children. The sound of a rattle is quite distinct in nature, and truly can act to get the blood pumping. Eastern massasauga rattlesnakes used to be found in greater numbers and in more widespread areas in Michigan; however, the loss of suitable wetland habitat and persecution by humans have driven down the numbers of this shy rattlesnake in Michigan and in other Great Lakes states.

Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnakes: Basic ecology, habitat, and conservation status

The eastern massasauga rattlesnake is a small, secretive, and rather docile snake, usually only reaching about 15 to 32 inches long. They are grayish to dark brown in color, with darker blotches forming a pattern along its body. Of all the rattlesnake species in North America, eastern massasaugas have the least toxic venom and are

not very aggressive, only striking if they feel cornered or threatened. That said, like with any wild animal, if you see an eastern massasauga rattlesnake, do not approach it — it may feel at risk and be defensive. Any rattlesnake bite should be promptly treated by a medical professional.

Eastern massasaugas are associated with wetlands and with adjacent upland habitats. The name “massasauga” originated from the Ojibwe Native American term for “great river mouth”, an excellent fit for the preferred habitat type of grasslands surrounding river deltas. During the summer months, eastern massasaugas may be found in drier upland sites, such as grasslands or old fields, where the females bear 5 to 20 live young in late summer. In winter, they hibernate in wetlands often by using crayfish chimneys, but are also sometimes found in small mammal burrows or under logs or tree roots.

The diet of eastern massasauga rattlesnakes includes small mammals, frogs, lizards, other small snakes, and invertebrates. They hunt passively by waiting until a suitable prey item comes near enough. Eastern massasaugas sense their prey through vibrations, body heat, or odors.

The eastern massasauga rattlesnake is a federally threatened species, listed under the Endangered Species Act. Threatened species are defined as those that are likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future. Michigan appears to be a stronghold for this sensitive species compared to other states in its historic range, but its occurrence and numbers across Michigan have been declining for many years. In Michigan, this species is primarily found in the southern Lower Peninsula.



Eastern massasauga rattlesnakes have heart-shaped heads, vertical pupils, and are 2 feet in length on average. Adults are gray or light brown with large dark brown spots on their backs and sides. © Laura Wolf

Research at Michigan Audubon Sanctuaries

Michigan Audubon participates as a partner in the Michigan DNR's efforts toward conservation and recovery of the eastern massasauga rattlesnake in Michigan by managing, restoring, and enhancing habitat at select Michigan Audubon sanctuaries. In addition, we support researchers at our sanctuaries who conduct studies to monitor their populations and learn more about their behavior and ecology to improve and guide conservation efforts.

Researchers from Michigan State University are currently collaborating with the Michigan Department of Transportation and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to investigate the potential effects of road maintenance activities on the eastern massasauga rattlesnake. One of their study sites overlaps with Michigan Audubon's Bernard W. Baker Sanctuary, where movement and behavior of eastern massasaugas in response to various road maintenance activities (such as mowing, modifying culverts, or roadside vegetation burning) will be tracked and monitored.

Another study by researchers from Grand Valley State University aims to gather more information about the genetic diversity and connectivity of eastern massasauga populations in southwest Michigan. They conducted surveys at Otis Farm Bird Sanctuary in 2019, but were not able to find or sample any massasaugas during their five visits that year.

However, casual sightings do occasionally turn up at Michigan Audubon sanctuaries. In 2018, Education Coordinator Lindsay Cain found one individual at our Otis sanctuary, viewable from the boardwalk out into the wetland habitat. A visitor then spotted another individual at Otis at least once in the late summer of 2019. This species can be very cryptic and difficult to find due to the habitat they use and their secretive habits. Most sightings by casual observers are by chance — perhaps you will be lucky enough to see one of these beautiful reptiles at Otis or another sanctuary!

Supporting Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnakes at Our Bird Sanctuaries Through Habitat Management

Several recent habitat restoration projects at Michigan Audubon sanctuaries have targeted areas that benefit birds as well as the threatened eastern massasauga rattlesnake. We continue to protect and manage for high-quality wetlands at our bird sanctuaries, and have been restoring native prairie and oak savanna, which are both important upland habitats for eastern massasaugas.

Eastern massasauga rattlesnakes and birds alike depend on high-quality habitat for nesting, rearing young, and finding food and shelter. Management activities that support a diversity of birds and other wildlife in open grasslands include prescribed fires or other brush control methods (like mowing) to maintain open habitat and prevent woody shrub or tree invasion. To reduce risk of harm to sensitive species like eastern massasaugas and also to grassland nesting birds, habitat management must be planned carefully. Eastern massasaugas can be harmed by mowing activities or prescribed fire; we take care to plan habitat management during their hibernation periods (i.e., the winter months).



An eastern massasauga rattlesnake suns itself in the fen at Otis Farm Bird Sanctuary in 2018.

Otis Farm Bird Sanctuary in Barry County has recently undergone significant upland grassland restoration, promoting native warm-season grasses and a diverse mix of wildflowers. We have also focused on restoring the wetland on the property, which is part of a fen-prairie complex. Besides benefiting eastern massasauga rattlesnakes, the restoration of this habitat complex may benefit rare and declining bird species such as Henslow's Sparrow (*Centronyx henslowii*) and Grasshopper Sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*). At Otis, the initial stages of the upland restoration included targeted removal of old windrows and plantations of non-native evergreens. These trees provided little wildlife habitat value and shaded out any potential regenerating oaks. Removal of trees in target areas opened up the total acreage of grassland, where the fragmentation had lowered the quality of the habitat for area-sensitive species such as the Henslow's Sparrow. Prescribed fire was reintroduced to Otis Farm Bird Sanctuary as part of the habitat restoration process. Prairie and fen wetlands greatly benefit from regular fire, and the use of prescribed fire is an essential tool to enhance native plant species growth and promote wildflower diversity, to complement invasive species control efforts, and to set back woody shrub growth and restore ecosystem processes.

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At Bernard W. Baker Sanctuary in Calhoun County, recent habitat restoration efforts have targeted native warm-season grassland restoration and wetland restoration, which will benefit eastern massasauga rattlesnakes and grassland and marsh birds that use those habitats. Major removal and control of woody invasive species, such as autumn olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*), was conducted in 2016 through 2019, with more targeted control work on the horizon. On the north end of Big Marsh Lake at Baker, invasive narrow-leaved cattail (*Typha angustifolia*) control has been a part of the wetland restoration, as well as targeted control of invasive Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*). On the southwest side of Baker, oak savanna restoration began in 2014. There, we have removed encroaching woody vegetation, removed concentrated areas of invasive woody species, and have enhanced the grasslands for birds and pollinators through seeding diverse wildflowers into native grasslands. The response by the flora and fauna observed at Baker has demonstrated the success of this restoration project. In the fall of 2015, a gravid (pregnant) female eastern massasauga rattlesnake was tracked to her birthing den, where six young rattlers entered the world. Reports of juvenile Red-headed Woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) at Baker — a species typical of oak savanna that had not been reported at Baker for many years — and observations of other grassland bird species are strong signs of the restoration's success.

At Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary in Jackson County, Michigan Audubon strives to establish natural and healthy wildlife populations with opportunities for research, public education, and enjoyment. This sanctuary is of particular importance as a refuge for wildlife given the continued urban expansion and agricultural intensification in southern Michigan. Eastern massasauga rattlesnakes have been detected at the sanctuary in the recent past, and much of the current fen wetland restoration and upland oak savanna restoration will benefit this species as well as many birds, waterfowl, and other reptiles and amphibians. At Haehnle, the fen restoration has been ongoing for many years — with a major focus on removal and control of invasive glossy buckthorn (*Frangula alnus*). Fens are a rare shrub and herbaceous wetland community, with plants such as shrubby cinquefoil, bog birch, larch, and meadow sedges and rushes.

Oak savanna habitat in Michigan supports rare species such as Grasshopper Sparrow, Prairie Warbler, eastern massasauga rattlesnakes, and eastern box turtles. This habitat type needs regular disturbance to prevent encroachment by woody species or invasion by non-native species. Managing both fen wetland habitat and upland grasslands and oak savanna will benefit eastern massasaugas and birds alike. Michigan Audubon will continue to manage these habitats at our sanctuaries for years to come.

“We know that threats to eastern massasauga populations will continue to cause declines into the future,” said Executive Director Heather Good, “and those declines depend on factors like habitat, temperature, and human presence. We know how vulnerable this species is and the likelihood of it facing extinction in the future, which is why we are so compelled to manage habitat for them at our sanctuaries.”

“I think we are extremely fortunate that some of Michigan Audubon’s bird sanctuaries also contain viable, valuable potential EMR habitat. We use our access to and partnerships with researchers and biologists to contribute to conservation-driven research, recovery, and protection of Michigan’s only rattlesnake species.”

Where Do We Go From Here and What Can You Do?

Michigan Audubon is committed to promoting high quality and diverse habitat for birds and wildlife, and will continue to incorporate beneficial habitat management to support threatened and endangered species on the Michigan Audubon sanctuaries.

If you are lucky, perhaps one day you will happen across the shy and beautiful eastern massasauga rattlesnake. If you do, observe it from a distance, and do not try to pick it up. All wildlife deserve safety and respect from us. Please also report your sighting to Michigan DNR, so that conservation partners (including Michigan Audubon) can continue to do our best to support this rare and declining species.

For more information on the eastern massasauga rattlesnake:

- Eastern massasauga rattlesnake fact sheet: fws.gov/midwest/Endangered/reptiles/eama/eama-fct-sht.html
- Michigan’s Snakes: michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-350--61219-,00.html
- Michigan Natural Features Inventory: About the eastern massasauga rattlesnake: mnfi.anr.msu.edu/species/eastern-massasauga-rattlesnake
- Report a sighting to Michigan DNR: www2.dnr.state.mi.us/ORS/Survey/5



Linnea Rowse is Michigan Audubon's conservation program coordinator. An avid birder who grew up in Minnesota, Linnea enjoys being a part of the conservation community in Michigan. You can contact her at lrowse@michiganaudubon.org.

Wings, Whitecaps, Wind, and Waiting

BY RICHARD COUSE, WPBO SPRING HAWK COUNTER

When I look back on the spring of 2020 I will forever look upon it as one of the most oddly unique seasons of my lifetime. Forced into confinement, we each experienced the global pandemic in our own way. For some, quarantine was a mere inconvenience; others faced financial ruin; and for the unluckiest amongst us, it became a matter of life and death. 2020 has left us all with a singular and very personal story to tell.

I first walked out to the Hawk Deck at Whitefish Point on March 15. The snowpack was frozen solid and in the places that it wasn't, where it could not bear the weight of passage, I sank knee-deep into the pack and trudged through with grim determination. I was oblivious to what the governor's orders were but suffice to say, just as the human world was about to shut down, migration was about to start up. That day, in my first eight hours on the job, I counted a single Bald Eagle. It was the first of 318 that would pass the Point throughout the season. I had absolutely no idea what to expect from a spring season at Whitefish Point. Of course, I knew its reputation as an exceptional spot to view migrating raptors and if I wanted to look I had the historic data right at my fingertips, but that is not how I wanted my experience to be. I wanted it to be a blank slate with no expectations. I wanted the Point to etch its own unique story of spring 2020 into my narrative. In many ways, I considered myself lucky. I was escaping volatile times. I had arrived in a sparsely populated area and I was as distant and protected from the world as almost anyone could be. I urged the Point to bring it on — to show me what it had — only to learn that I had traded volatile times for a volatile place.

A great hawk day at Whitefish Point starts with a blue sky and a few puffy cumulus clouds thrown in for character. The more the sun shines, the quicker the temperature rises, creating thermals for raptors to ride. However, sun is not the most important factor. The key ingredient to a mega-hawk day is a southwest wind; it's that wind that pushes the kettles to the tip of the Point and gives the raptors the confidence they need to cross the lake. Unfortunately, the prevailing weather pattern over the entire season was characterized by frigid winds blowing off Lake Superior from the north/northeast. With wind speeds regularly gusting into the 30-50 mph range, season totals were far below average across the board. As I counted, each day became a test of bone-numbing endurance highlighted by raptors who I imagined shared my ordeal with equal stoicism. It was exhausting and exhilarating at the same time. I watched the skies and waited, white caps broke against ice flows along the shore, and every few days a new, different raptor species would spread its wings and head north. Goshawk and Golden Eagle gave way to Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawk, which in turn gave way to Turkey Vulture, Northern Harrier, and Sharp-shinned Hawk. Eventually, Broad-winged Hawk dominated the sky, and throughout it all, on the rare day when the sun shone and the wind blew from the south, migration was glorious.



A Sharp-shinned Hawk flies over the Hawk Deck. © Richard Couse

It seems the human mind is built to remember the good times and forget the bad times, and honestly, would anyone really want it any other way? I know for a fact the days where I counted hawks in the double digits or less outnumbered the big days, but in my mind when I think back on spring 2020 at Whitefish Point, I will remember the two days when I had Sharp-shinned Hawk zipping past me all day long. While 709 and 651 sharpies in a single day pales in comparison to the mega days the Point is known to have, for me those days were magical beyond words. In truth, every bird that winged its way over the deck was a magical moment. I will remember that my last days there were warm, sun-soaked, and accented by flights of thousands of Blue Jay. As I am writing this now, I surprisingly find myself longing to do it all again, and believe me I can't even begin to count how many times on those freezing cold days I thought to myself, "Never again!"

What is the take away from all of this? I for one took comfort in the fact that while the world stood still, migration went on, completely indifferent to our human problems. Each passing raptor was a reassurance that every living thing does all it can to survive in a world where challenges are commonplace. If you ever want to feel like things are EXACTLY the way they are supposed to be, spend time alone in nature separated from the noise of the world and you will come to understand that we are all part of a singular system that is the planet earth. We are fortunate to have gone through such an amazing and unique time, to be granted an acute awareness of how fragile our lives are, and to be shown that one path to reaching peace with it all lies outside your door. Next spring, make it a point to visit the Hawk Deck at Whitefish Point. Feel the wind and watch the skies, listen to the ceaseless roar of white caps in the distance, and wait for messages of hope born on the wings of raptors.



Rich is a Conservation Biologist from Massachusetts. He is a firm believer in the fact that everything is connected through the ecological web of life, and his path reflects his fascination with all creatures great and small. His field research has taken him from Massachusetts, Michigan, Maine, and beyond.

Spring Migration Conjures Sense of Urgency

BY ALISON VILAG, WPBO SPRING WATERBIRD COUNTER

There's this word, *zugunruhe*. It means migratory restlessness, and at Whitefish Point, it looks like a pack of northbound Bonaparte's Gull pushing north into the gloaming. It sounds like a sky full of Sandhill Crane bugling over the imminent lake crossing. It feels, I imagine, about the way I felt back in early April: relegated to the driveway, but hungry for the road; envious of the migrating birds that, on their own volition, entered — and then departed — my Lower Peninsula neighborhood.

Spring migration conjures this sense of urgency that sets it apart from other periods of movement. Many of our focal species at WPBO's waterbird count are racing toward the brevity of boreal (or even arctic!) summer, where much must happen in a very short time. This urgency is manifest especially in the Bonaparte's Gull push: May 14, I recorded our first-of-season (3). Two days later, during just a couple hours at the evening flight, WPBO Spring Intern Alec Olivier tallied more than 1,400 (and two Little Gull, too!). And by May 21, the surge had slowed already back to single digits. If you blink, you really will miss spring migration. And if you're a migrant and you don't go in that narrow, allotted window, you've got so much to lose.

I contemplated these sorts of things on April 10, driving north toward the Point. The day prior, I'd been asked to cover WPBO's waterbird count, which begins on April 15. It, like everything else this spring, was experiencing ripple effects of COVID-19. Once you've experienced the span of a migration at Whitefish Point, you really don't want to experience one anywhere else. But yet, there was this element of uncertainty in, amidst a pandemic, swapping stability for an isolated, distal extremity of the Upper Peninsula. But I felt that I needed the waterbird count and perhaps, the waterbird count also needed me, and about 24 hours after the opportunity was proposed, I was on the road, embarking on my own migration of sorts. I hadn't had much time to prepare but did manage to throw together

six weeks' worth of rice and beans, lumber for building saw-whet nest boxes, and a strong sense of conviction that would see me through the season.

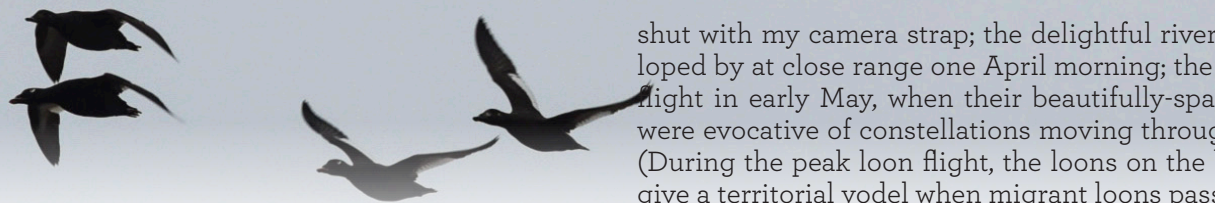
The spring 2020 count commenced much the way the fall 2019 one had left off: snow squalls made it difficult to see the lake, and Snow Bunting scurried around the beach. The first few days of the spring count are quiet, a warm-up for what's to come. This space is a gift — a chance to regain lost competency in the art of placing flying birds in a spotting scope before you're up against the days where you'll tally thousands of birds on multiple flight lines. But this space, more importantly, affords an opportunity to appreciate migration's essence. Being out at the Point during the quiet early season is a sort of meditation — to make sweeping scans of the horizon; to follow the loon laboring north into the headwind, progressing, but fighting for it; to stand in the powerful natural rhythm of migration and find needed reassurance that — even with things as they are right now — beauty and normalcy can still be found.

To exist for six weeks with the purpose of observing these natural rhythms felt especially restorative this spring. Though the wind — usually from directions I wished it wasn't — chapped my face, migration balmed my soul. Throughout the count's span, I tallied 46,328 individuals of 198 species; 28,394 of these were the focus species of the waterbird count (geese, ducks, loons, grebes, wading birds, shorebirds, gulls, and terns). This was about 15% less volume than the spring 2019 count, but three more species. The bulk of the waterbird numbers came from Sandhill Crane (6,250, with peak flight of 1,000 on April 18), Common Loon (3,815 with peak flight of 376 on May 5), Red-breasted Merganser (2,381 with peak flight of 302 on May 14), Canada Goose (2,304 with peak flight of 336 on April 18, and a second peak, from the nonbreeders' molt flight, of 310 on May 28), Long-tailed Duck (1,862,



A Sanderling strolls the beach at WPBO.

© Alison Vilag



with peak flight of 759 on May 17), White-winged Scoter (1,543 with peak flight of 421 on May 21), Bonaparte's Gull (1,072, with peak flight of 418 on May 17), Red-necked Grebe (682, with peak flight of 117 on May 3), Greater Scaup (639, with peak of 148 on May 6), and Whimbrel (605, with peak of 497 on May 27).

Cumulative season records were set for Green-winged Teal (83, previously 63 in 1995), Ring-necked Duck (35, previously 33 in 2002), and Lesser Yellowlegs (71, previously 35 in 1989). Other noteworthy tallies extend to Red-throated Loon (this season's 462 was the highest spring count since 2013's 1,623), Common Loon (3,815 was the highest count since 2013's 5,978, and the second-highest number for this species in the last decade), Greater Yellowlegs (75, which came close to 2019's record 83), and Sandhill Crane (6,250 was the third-highest count for this species here; this is one of the few focal species of the waterbird count that is blatantly increasing: 2004 was the first year that more than a thousand were recorded, and today's numbers are exponentially higher than 1988's low of 48 — this year, I saw flocks quadruple that!).

Prominent non-waterbird species this season included Blue Jay (5,784), Broad-winged Hawk (1,880), Sharp-shinned Hawk (1,036), American Pipit (802), Common Grackle (640), Turkey Vulture (570), and American Robin (530). While it was a quiet migration in respect to vagrants, standouts in this department include a Western Kingbird that buzzed the waterbird shack on May 26 (less than 15 WPBO records, with the last being in 2016) and a Long-tailed Jaeger on May 24 (the second ever for the spring count — the other record comes from 1986). Jaegers are an enduring favorite of mine: their long tail streamers, jaunty cap, and kleptoparasitic approach to foraging make them quite rakish, and I love, too, that they breed on the tundra's coastal plain and winter out at sea. I had a Parasitic Jaeger on May 23, and Alec had a distant jaeger the night flight of May 23. Other highlights in this vein include Willet (May 1), Long-billed Dowitcher (2 on May 14), American White Pelican (5 on May 15), Upland Sandpiper (May 17), single Black Tern (May 18 and May 21), Hudsonian Godwit and Red Knot (both on May 19), and Great Egret and Marbled Godwit (both on May 29).

The end-of-season data compilation inspires many snapshots from the season: the relentless stretch of north winds during the first half of the count — where, one day, I sequestered myself inside the shack and lashed the door

shut with my camera strap; the delightful river otter that loped by at close range one April morning; the peak loon flight in early May, when their beautifully-spaced flocks were evocative of constellations moving through the sky. (During the peak loon flight, the loons on the bay would give a territorial yodel when migrant loons passed over — this definitely gave my numbers an assist...) There were the many days in late May where I doggedly trekked back out for the evening flight, fueled by a belief that if I stayed in, the big Whimbrel flight would certainly happen, and I would miss it. The big Whimbrel flight did not happen on my watch — but the pursuit of it brought about significant, additional Greater Scaup (221), White-winged Scoter (959), Long-tailed Duck (568), and Bonaparte's Gull (1,428 — in one night, we saw more than we did during the entire standardized count). The evening count is conducted on our own volition, and the numbers kept separate from the daily count, but standing out at land's end while birds race by and day becomes night is one of my favorite events of the spring.

One of the other benefits reaped from chasing the elusive Whimbrel flight was an unbelievable Common Nighthawk flight on the evenings of May 26 (94) and 27 (138). At one point on the 27th, I counted 52 nighthawks crossing the lake in a single, determined burst, scanned back over the jack pines, and picked out 57 more. I've never seen anything like that at WPBO and I don't know that anyone else has, either: this appears to be a high count.

Fog and troubled waters characterized the season, both inside and out. I was so grateful to have the privilege of, once again, conducting the WPBO waterbird count — to, for six weeks — exist to observe one of nature's great wonders. But it didn't sit right that, because of travel restrictions and general uncertainties, many of our regulars were unable to observe it with me this season. In fact, it felt a little wrong to be savoring something that most could not. But I do want to thank all of you for so seriously adhering to these guidelines, and also for respecting social distancing when you *did* visit toward the end of the season. Through this, you helped to put the minds of field staff in a vulnerable region at ease. I also want to thank our intern, Alec Olivier, and volunteer Matt Winkler for relief counting.

But, back to the fog — the last week of the count had plenty of it. When it settles in, setting off into it can be uncomfortable. One of those pea-soup days, I watched a first-year Broad-winged Hawk atop one of Michigan's northeasternmost jack pines: it was out on the edge, hesitating, recalibrating. It wasn't about to cross the lake. Not here. Not in those conditions. But the waterbirds do, and that is why I love the waterbird count the way I do. They fly, they cross — through the rain, into the wind, enter the fog. In late May, though their bodies may not...

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be visible, the melancholy whistles of Black-bellied Plover pierce the fog, pierce my being, stirs my own *zugunruhe*. Shorebirds spend so many of their days migrating, and for this I love them: the adults leave the southern extremities of one continent for the northern extremities of another, then depart the tundra once they've accomplished what they set out to do. Perpetual movement: it has its allure. There is satisfaction in the hunger and the eating — but for me, not so much in the satiation.

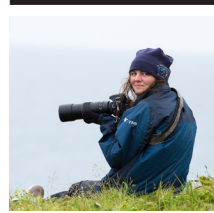
The spring 2020 waterbird count was characterized by the hunger and the eating. It began with a drive to the Upper Peninsula on Good Friday, as I raced a wintry storm and impending stay-at-home orders. It was inspired by a powerful conviction to, in a very unusual season of life, pour my soul into the Point and, by proxy, the people who love it. The eating came in savoring a migration, and it was seasoned with tears — tears from wind, from frustration, from the wonder and beauty of Northern Harrier resolutely crossing Lake Superior where most raptors won't and Whimbrel shrilling overhead as they sped to the tundra.

The *zugunruhe* lingers on still. As I write this, my inner waters are troubled by, amongst other things, a devastating diesel spill on Russian tundra — nursery for so many of the congeners of the waterbird species that pass by Whitefish Point — and a new pinioning attempt of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which has proven vital in the preservation and



A Palm Warbler alights on a log at the Point. © Alison Vilag

defense of North American birds. I remember — and strive to live by — this quote from Derrick Jensen: “What I want more than anything is to live in a world not being killed...I want to live in a world where nonhumans aren't perceived as resources, backdrops, impediments, or pests, but rather as other beings, ones whose lives are as valuable to them as yours is to you and mine is to me.” Perhaps, I'm not hungry for movement, but hungry for change.



The pursuit of birds has taken Alison to exotic places and gigs closer afield her Great Lakes upbringing including Michigan Audubon's Kirtland's Warbler tours. She has a strong affinity for Michigan's Upper Peninsula and, in particular, Whitefish Point.

Spring WPBO Owl Banding Summary

BY CHRIS NERI AND NOVA MACKENTLEY, WPBO SPRING OWL BANDERS

We were able to band on 62 of 79 possible nights from March 14 to May 31 this spring. A total of 777 owls of six species were banded; 460 Northern Saw-whet Owl, 19 Boreal Owl, 289 Long-eared Owl, six Barred Owl, one Great Gray Owl, and two Great Horned Owl. In addition to the 777 new owls, 35 previously banded owls were captured; 33 saw-whets, one boreal, and one long-eared. The 33 previously banded saw-whets represent nearly 7% of the season's total saw-whets. Aside from the owls, one Eastern Whip-poor-will and one American Woodcock were banded. Overall, it was a productive season. We were very pleased by some results, disappointed by others, and, as per usual, somewhat surprised by some things.

Relatively speaking, the Long-eared Owl (LEOW) numbers this spring provided the best results. Since making changes in 2015 to improve our efficiency in documenting the LEOW migration at Whitefish Point, our efforts have produced the three highest North American totals for the number of LEOW banded in a migration season, the 289 banded this spring being the third-highest total. In addition to the data we always gather on the owls we band, we were very excited to be collecting additional data on LEOW for Northern Michigan University graduate student Emily Griffith this spring. One of the things Emily will be doing as part of her master's project...

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A Barred Owl (left) and Great Gray Owl (right).

is running DNA analyses on feather samples we collected to determine the sex of the LEOW we banded this spring and in the spring of 2016. We can't wait to see the results she and her advisor Dr. Alec Lindsay produce; we know that we will learn a lot from this collaboration.



Northern Saw-whet Owl.

The 460 Northern Saw-whet Owl (NSWO) banded is a little below average, but not too far below what we have seen in the past at this point in their cycle. Something that was odd about their migration this spring was that their numbers in March were decent, then they dropped off during what is their typical peak migration period before picking up again in mid-May. It is not unusual for us to see a spike in NSWO numbers in mid to late May, but it doesn't happen every year. However, it is unusual that 252 (55%) of the season's 460 NSWO were banded during the late-season push. We don't know why we often see good numbers of NSWO later in May. Regionally, they should be nesting at that time of year. Are they birds that nested at the southern limits of NSWO range, where the nesting season is earlier, and are heading north after breeding? Are they birds headed to breed at the northern limits of their range where breeding may start later? Are they failed nesters, or birds that didn't find mates? We simply don't know, and it is a regular subject of our conversation and speculation as we walk the woods while on net checks in May.

Another regular source of conversation and speculation has been more depressing in recent years. The northern forest owl numbers have been declining at WPBO in recent years. Even during our time here, we have been seeing fewer and fewer Great Gray Owl, Northern Hawk Owl, and Boreal Owl. In 2007, we added audio lure in hopes of increasing NSWO and Boreal Owl (BOOW) captures. The spring average for NSWO has gone from 66 to 557 since we made the changes in 2007. Unfortunately, we have not experienced the same results with BOOW; their numbers actually dropped significantly the last time they went through their irruptive cycle. In the late '80s

and early '90s, over 100 BOOW were banded in irruption years. From the mid '90s through the early 2000s, peak springs saw 64 to 73 BOOW banded. After making the changes in 2007 that so dramatically increased NSWO numbers, BOOW numbers initially remained the same during irruption years. As disappointing as it was not to see an increase in BOOW numbers, things got worse. The most BOOW banded in a season since 2014 is 20, representing the worst peak total ever at WPBO.

Although Great Gray Owl (GGOW) and Northern Hawk Owl (NHOW) have never been very numerous at WPBO, they could always be expected during irruption years, particularly GGOW. During my first nine springs at WPBO, we banded a total of 30 GGOW, but we have banded just four in the last ten springs. We can't even remember what year it was the last time we saw a NHOW here in spring. We have no particular insight as to why the northern forest owl numbers have declined here in recent years. Habitat loss could contribute to a lack of suitable nesting trees, resulting in population decline. Climate change could have them remaining further north than they have in the past. It could just be a fluke that they haven't appeared at the Point during the most recent irruptive cycles. This is another question that we simply do not know the answer to, but we hope it is the latter.

Somehow, it seems that writing a seasonal summary gets harder every year. Not because of having a lack of things to talk about, but because it seems to get harder to condense all the answers and questions we have in our own minds into an interesting article. There's also the personal experiences we have during the course of a season, and the interactions with our fellow field staff. As much as we love doing the owl banding every spring, there was another level of appreciation for spending our nights working with the owls in the woods at the Point this spring. With all the stress and uncertainty that the pandemic caused, and still is causing, heading out into the woods at night offered us a feeling of normalcy that was incredibly comforting. We typically take this opportunity to thank all the visitors for their interest, encouragement, and support, but obviously that is not the case this year. We would like to take this opportunity to ask for your continued financial support. The field research at WPBO is only possible through your generous support. If you are in the position to do so and would like to help support WPBO's field research, please visit wpbo.org and click the support tab to view the options to help us continue the field research.



Boreal Owl



Nova Mackentley and Chris Neri are a legendary pair of raptor banders living at Whitefish Point. In addition to regularly leading the owl banding program every spring at Whitefish Point Bird Observatory, they are accomplished nature photographers.

Engaging in DIY Projects at Bird Sanctuaries

BY LINNEA ROWSE, CONSERVATION PROGRAM COORDINATOR

During the uncertainty this spring with the pandemic, and now continuing forward into the summer and fall, we are all seeking ways to replenish our inner selves. I often find solace in nature, with the refreshing breeze, the warmth of the sun, and the sounds of birds singing and calling to each other in communications we can only scratch the surface at understanding. It has certainly been a challenge to remain close to home, but in doing so I have been able to explore my local nature patches at a deeper level than ever before. Have you?

This spring, we were unable to hold volunteer days at our sanctuaries, which is a weekly tradition at Capital City Bird Sanctuary in the Lansing area and a monthly occurrence at sanctuaries farther afield from our home office. While health and safety are our primary concern for our visitors, you may choose to visit a Michigan Audubon sanctuary for outdoor exercise and fresh air, especially if it is close to home for you. If you do visit a sanctuary, would you consider giving some of your time to volunteer by yourself? Garlic mustard and dame's rocket are two invasive, very aggressively spreading noxious weeds that are taking hold in some of our sanctuaries (and in many places across the landscape!). Both of these invasives are quick to overtake natural areas where they become established, out-competing native wildflowers and sensitive forest understory plants like spring ephemerals. Pulling garlic mustard or dame's rocket is a task that anyone can do on their own, making a big impact and helping us to continue achieving our conservation ends even during difficult times. More information about these two invasive plants, including how to identify them and what to do when you pull them, can be found on our website and blog. Pulling dame's rocket and garlic mustard is best done in the late spring and early summer, in May and June. Keep this in mind for when you visit sanctuaries next spring!

There are many other ways to engage with and experience nature and the wonder of birds. If helping out with invasive plant control on your own schedule isn't for you, have you considered participating in a community science project? Many birders participate in using eBird, a real-time, online bird checklist program. eBird functions both as a fun way to keep your bird lists and a way to explore many facets of bird migration, habitat, and patch use; it is also the largest biodiversity-related community science project globally, with more than 100 million bird sightings recorded each year. The data (bird lists) that you and others in our communities contribute to eBird make it an invaluable dataset for scientists to learn about important conservation issues, such as climate change impacts on birds. Check out eBird (ebird.org) next time you're out birding at Michigan Audubon sanctuaries!

Volunteering for Michigan Audubon can be fun, rewarding, and is your way of connecting with birds and nature! We are now able to hold volunteer days at our sanctuaries, though with a limited number of attendees. For now, we have reinstated our weekly Wednesday morning volunteer days at Capital City Bird Sanctuary in Lansing. Follow our social media pages or check back on our website for additional volunteer days at other locations.

To learn more about these projects or to volunteer, visit our Get Involved page: michiganaudubon.org/get-involved/.

Another community science project for which Michigan Audubon seeks volunteers is help with monitoring nest box trails at a few of our sanctuaries. Nest box monitors visit their set of boxes usually twice per week to record the progress and success of Eastern Bluebird, Tree Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, House Wren, American Kestrel, Wood Duck, and Purple Martin. This summer, we could still use some help at Bernard W. Baker Sanctuary (near Bellevue), Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary (near Jackson), and Otis Farm Bird Sanctuary (near Hastings). The benefits to you are regular excursions into nature, observing nestling birds grow over time, and contributing valuable data to NestWatch (nestwatch.org), where Michigan Audubon volunteers upload all of the nest monitoring data from our sanctuaries.

What will drive you to become involved at Michigan Audubon sanctuaries this year? Will it be walking the trails and soaking in the birdsong, listening to the sounds of wind or chorus of frogs, enjoying the views of a pond, river, forest, or meadow, or smelling the scent of wildflowers? Will you pull some dame's rocket or garlic mustard on your own, or come to a scheduled volunteer workday? Or perhaps you will decide you want to engage in community science by uploading your bird lists to eBird or connecting with us to find out more about nest box monitoring or bird surveys at the sanctuaries. If Michigan Audubon sanctuaries are far from home, perhaps consider finding a patch closer to you and doing some deeper explorations this summer. For me, the bottom line is to help you find a space in nature, connect to birds, and enjoy the benefits to your health and well-being by being outdoors.



Linnea Rowse is Michigan Audubon's conservation program coordinator. An avid birder who grew up in Minnesota, Linnea enjoys being a part of the conservation community in Michigan. You can contact her at lrowse@michiganaudubon.org.

Why I Volunteer for Michigan Audubon

BY ELIZABETH AMANTE HEYS

When asked why I devote resources to Michigan Audubon rather than to more urgent human needs, I respond by saying birds are both mysterious and necessary to provide what I think of as a window to the divine. I've also come to realize all birds are like canaries in the coal mine — early responders to crises we humans cannot yet fully comprehend.

Several of our acquaintances live in mansions. I use that word with its full intent to convey a luxury home situated on an expanse of lawn with well-manicured shrubbery and access to hired help.

Yet, on more than one occasion, I have had one of these acquaintances ask if I would mind a quick visit to what we now call our Zen Deck, a small painted inlet on the south side of my house overlooking thinning woods, rotted snags, and overgrown viburnum.

Since we are unapologetic birdwatchers, the perimeter of the Zen Deck is lined with feeding stations that in a single hour may attract orioles, robins, titmice, flycatchers, jays, crows, towhees, bluebirds, buntings, wrens, hummingbirds, woodpeckers, grosbeak, nuthatch, blackbirds, creepers, warblers, and finches. The air breathes dragonflies.

Our friends sit for 20 minutes commenting on the silence, although the space is a cacophony of unruly birdsong as though Beethoven was thrumming loudspeakers. After a while, they leave, declaring themselves refreshed, never realizing that what they sought in our yard — and could cultivate in their own — is life.

Birds inhabit our world but experience it in ways alien to us, which makes them mysterious. They see infrared. For them, every leaf on a shrub throbs an individual shade of green.

Birds are necessary because they already know things we need to learn. Veeries can anticipate hurricanes months in advance but no one has figured out how. Imagine the lives veeries might save — lives taken by Katrina, Andrew, and Camille — if we respected them and what they could teach us.

As with people, some birds are better parents than others. I've witnessed a male Red-breasted Grosbeak furiously administering to his nestling who was clearly disabled, bringing beaks full of seed as it struggled to stand.

Some birds share and some bully. Others are shy, preferring to dine alone while the more gregarious feed in flocks. Some are relentless hermits while others get used to you like the chickadee who, to my disbelief, clung to the feeder as I refilled it, almost directing me with his beady-eyed confidence to get on with it because he was hungry. This is not anthropomorphizing. More research is telling us birds act on a combination of instinct and choice — as do we. They are distinctly individual and probably grieve.

Prodded to explain why I volunteer for Michigan Audubon, I had to face one odd fact: wherever I went, unconsciously and below the surface of travels to China, work in India, years of living in Eastern Europe, I listened for birds.

What I learned from this listening is that places devoid of birds are devoid of life. Like the canary in the coal mine, birds shut down when something is amiss.

When any environment — from a neighborhood to a continent — loses its bird diversity, something else has already been surrendered.

I believe that living harmoniously with birds is an indicator of how well we are doing living harmoniously with each other. And that, where birds are present, peace is possible.



Elizabeth Heys recently retired from a career in journalism, public relations, and development that has taken her from India to Mexico to the Czech Republic. She resides in Ada, Mich., with her husband, Robert, and their nine-year-old rescue poodle, Fiona. Calling themselves amateur backyard birdwatchers with a lot to learn, the Heys's have included Michigan Audubon in their estate planning.



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.



Short-eared Owl © J. A. Mikulich

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Nancy Allen	Marianne Dorais	Matthew & Victoria	Sally & Stanley	Wiedmeyer
Cecelia Askegard	John DuBois	Igleski	Niemi	Kim Scherschligt
William Baldwin	Nancy Duemling	Amanda Ingraham	Kimberly & Donald	Mary Lou Schilling
Nan Barone	Candace Dugan	Karen & Brian	Noble	Katelan Schoen-
Cherri Barrett	Robin Duthie	Jennings	Gregory Nobles	Burnett
Lonna Bear	Kevin A. Edgar	Walter Jousma	Bruce O'Brien	Anita Scussel
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