



www.detroitaudubon.org

Flyway

Spring 2010

Volume 2010, Issue 2

Detroit Audubon's Annual Conference Conservation: Getting to the 'Art' of It - March 27th

It's time again for Detroit Audubon's Annual Conservation Conference. This year it will be held at Lawrence Technological University in the University Technology and Learning Center on Ten Mile Road in Southfield. Park in Lot A.

The day will begin with a free bird/nature walk at Southfield's Carpenter Lake Nature Preserve on Ten Mile Road just east of Inkster Road. We will arrive back at Lawrence Tech in time to register and get a cup of coffee before the first presentation. Our theme is "Conservation: Getting to the 'Art' of It." The first artistic approach we hope to explore is architecture, specifically the environmentally sustainable design of Lawrence Tech's campus.

Next we will hear the fascinating story of the life and work of John James Audubon. Audubon was both an artist and naturalist. We will hear about both of these aspects of his work in a multimedia presentation by Gerry Wykes, Supervisory Naturalist at Lake Erie Metropark. Gerry is trained as both a naturalist and an artist so he has a unique perspective on his historic subject.

Then we will take a break for lunch and the Detroit Audubon Annual Members Meeting, Annual Report, Awards and Silent Auction. If you have any items you would like to donate to the Silent Auction, please contact our office at: 248-990-1316.

We will begin the afternoon with a concert by Joe Reilly, a Native American singer-songwriter, who teaches about nature and tells stories through music. His music appeals to all ages covering folk, blues, rock and even rap. He does programs for kids from pre-school and up. Adults will love his catchy, beautiful tunes. You will be able to take his music home because he will have his three CDs available for purchase.

The day will wind up with a visit from animals that work the night shift - nocturnal animals. We expect visits from a live Barred Owl (our second biggest owl), two kinds of bats, a flying squirrel and a sugar glider.

While you can pay at the door, space is limited so it's better to register ahead of time. If you want lunch, YOU MUST register and pay for your lunch ahead of time. We look forward to seeing you March 27th. You won't want to miss it.

Program Schedule

- 8-9 Bird and Nature Walk at Carpenter Lake Nature Preserve - Ten Mile near Inkster Road.
- 9-9:30 Registration, Lawrence Technological University.
- 9:30 Green and Sustainable Architecture on the LTU Campus.
Speaker: Art Smith with the firm Harley Ellis Devereaux. Mr. Smith will demonstrate the features incorporated in the LTU Student Services building for which he had a major role in the design. In addition, Mr. Smith will present the concepts and process being used to design a new science building for LTU. They hope to attain LEED certification by incorporating the latest technology for energy, water conservation as well as making the building bird friendly. Mr. Smith is leading the design of the new Nature Center to be built at the Carpenter Lake Nature Preserve.
- 10:30 Audubon: Artist and Naturalist with Gerry Wykes.
- 11:30 Lunch, Detroit Audubon Annual Members Meeting and Annual Report, and Silent Auction.
- 12:30 Joe Reilly, Songs of the Environment.
- 1:30 Nocturnal Animals with a naturalist from the Bat Zone (Organization for Bat Conservation).
- 2:30 Conference concludes.

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Flyway

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Advertising rates are available by contacting the
DAS office.

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President's Message

by Jack Smiley

As 2009 came to an end, I was pleased that Detroit Audubon was able to execute a conservation easement which protects a nice 26-acre forest in western Wayne County. This was a relatively small accomplishment, but we need to do as much as possible to preserve and restore habitat. Many bird species continue to experience population declines and loss of habitat is one of the primary causes.

In December, Detroit Audubon also started an Endowment Fund for DAS. I greatly appreciate the many people who responded to our 70th Anniversary appeal and contributed to this new fund. If you haven't yet sent in your donation to the Endowment Fund, please consider doing so today. This fund will help assure that Detroit Audubon will be around for years to come, protecting habitat for wildlife and for people. Thank you for your support...and best wishes for a healthy and happy 2010.

The Cottage & Lakefront Living Show

The Detroit Audubon Society is going to have a booth for the third year in a row at the Rock Financial Showplace in Novi. This will take place from Thursday, February 25 through Sunday, February 28.

If anyone is interested in helping to work at our booth for about a three hour shift, please contact the office at 248-990-1316. We're welcoming our members to both sides of the table. Hope to see you there.

For the Latest News and Views from Detroit Audubon

be sure to frequently visit our website:
<http://www.detroitaudubon.org/>

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The Flyway Online?

Are you one of our members looking to reduce the amount of mail you receive and the amount of paper you have to recycle? Are you also interested in saving DAS postage costs - over \$1.40/year currently? If so, send us an email message and we will add you to a FLYWAY notice list and stop mailing the FLYWAY to you. We will be posting it as both text and as a pdf on our DAS website, www.detroitaudubon.org for those who like reading on their computer. We will send a message the day the FLYWAY is ready to print.

Send email to: detas@bignet.net; put "FLYWAY Online" as the subject. We will confirm receiving it.



Detroit Audubon Society presents its

Annual Conservation Conference

“Conservation: Getting to the “Art” of It!”

Saturday March 27, 2010, 8:00 a.m.* to 2:30 p.m.

at the Lawrence Technological University, 21000 West Ten Mile Rd, Southfield

Green and Sustainable Architecture on the LTU Campus

Art Smith with the firm Harley Ellis Devereaux will demonstrate the features incorporated in the LTU Student Services Building and discuss the concepts and process being used to design the new LTU Science Building.

Audubon’s Eye: A Look Behind the art of J.J. Audubon

Gerry Wykes, Supervisory Naturalist at Lake Erie Metropark will give this Multi-media presentation of John James Audubon

Joe Riley

Native American, Irish and Italian singer-songwriter brings messages of hope, peace and harmony with the earth in his songs for all ages. Diverse styles.

Nocturnal Animals

A naturalist from the Bat Zone at Cranbrook will bring a live owl, bats, flying squirrel and a sugar glider for you to see and learn about.

***8:00 a.m. Special Free Pre-Conference Birding Tour of the Carpenter Lake Nature Preserve in Southfield.**

10 mile Road just east of Inkster Road.

9:00 a.m. Registration, Conference Program 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 a.m.

Admission: \$6 for adults, under age 12 free and no for than \$18 for a family.

Lunch is extra and must be ordered in advance.

DAS Awards & Annual Meeting of Members during lunch and a Silent Auction - bring cash or a checkbook

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL DETROIT AUDUBON OFFICE AT (248)-990-1316, T, W, Th 8-4 or call Jim Bull at (313)-928-2950 or email him at jbull51264@aol.com

DAS ANNUAL CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

YOUR NAME: _____ ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____ PHONE #: _____ EMAIL: _____

PROGRAM FEES:

\$6.00 PER PERSON OVER AGE 12 - # OF TICKETS: _____ TOTAL SINGLE(S) FEE \$: _____

CHILD AGE 12 AND UNDER FREE - # OF TICKETS: _____

FAMILY OF 3 OR MORE - \$18.00 - # OF TICKETS: _____ TOTAL FAMILY FEE \$: _____

LUNCH FEE - We will have a variety of sub-style sandwiches, drinks and chips all for \$9.00:

NUMBER OF LUNCHES: _____ TOTAL LUNCH FEE \$: _____

TOTAL REGISTRATION FEE (PROGRAM & LUNCH) \$: _____

PAYMENT TYPE:

CHECK ___ CASH ___ CREDIT CARD ___ VISA/MASTERCARD #: _____

Mail this completed form together with payment to: DAS, 26080 Berg Rd, Southfield, MI 48033

Detroit Audubon Society Field Trip Schedule

Owl Prowl, Indian Springs Metropark

March 6, 2010 (Saturday) 7:30 p.m.

Leaders: Justin Smith, Metropark naturalist, and Jim Bull

Great Horned Owls will have been nesting since early February and Barred Owls will just be beginning to nest. Screech owls will be getting ready to nest. Since they are defending territories, playing an owl tape or imitating their calls will likely bring a response from them and there is a good chance that they will come in to where we can see them in the beam of light from a lantern. We have changed parks this year because Justin has had such good success in bringing in all three of these owls at Indian Springs.

From M-59 go north on Ormond Road. Coming from the west you will have to make a "Michigan" left (right, then left around the median). Turn right (east) on White Lake Road. The park entrance is about 2 miles from Ormond Road. Meet at the Environmental Discovery Center which is 2.5 miles into the park. You will need an annual Metropark sticker or day a pass.

Woodcock Watch, Oakwoods Metropark

April 9, 2010 (Friday) 7:45 p.m.

Leaders: Kevin Arnold and Jim Bull

Right at dusk this sandpiper, with a long beak and huge comical eyes, comes to open areas to do its spectacular aerial courtship display. This program is especially good for families with children.

From I-75 exit at West Road, go west, from there go south on Telegraph (M-24), west on Van Horn, then east (left) on Huron River Drive to the entrance to Oakwoods Metropark. You will need an annual Metroparks sticker or a daily pass. Meet at the nature center.

Magee Marsh, Ohio

April 17, 2010 (Saturday) 8:00 a.m.

Leader: Karl Overman

Think spring thoughts and venture to this famous birding locale.

Take I-75 to Toledo; turn off on I-280 to Highway 2. Follow Hwy 2 east about 18 miles and turn north at the Crane Creek entrance. Drive to west end of beach parking lot at beginning of Bird Trail.

Frog Symphony, West Bloomfield Nature Preserve

April 23, 2010 (Friday) 8:00 p.m.

Leaders: Sally Petrella and Jim Bull

Join us for an evening of listening to and searching for frogs. This field trip is co-sponsored by Detroit Audubon Society and Friends of the Rouge. This program is especially good for children.

From Telegraph Road, go west on Long Lake Road to where it dead-ends at Orchard Lake. Turn left and go to the next traffic light. Turn right on to Pontiac Trail. Take Pontiac Trail and look for the sign "West Bloomfield Nature Preserve" at Arrowhead Road. Follow signs to the preserve parking lot.

Point Pelee, Ontario

May 1, 2010 (Saturday) 8:00 a.m.

Leader: Karl Overman

Pelee in the spring, it does not get better for a birder. The first of May will likely be before the main rush of warblers, there will still be plenty to see including shorebirds in the Hillman Marsh area north of the park.

Cross the Ambassador Bridge and follow Rt. 3 to Leamington. Follow signs to Pt. Pelee National Park (entrance fee required.) Meet in the Visitor Center parking area. Remember to bring your passport for entry into Canada and back into the U.S.

Humbug Marsh

May 2, 2010 (Sunday) 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Leader: Jim Bull

See this natural gem of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge in spring.

Take I-75 to Gibraltar Road. Go east toward Gibraltar, turn left on Jefferson and drive north to Vreeland Road. Angle park on Jefferson.

Metropolitan Beach

May 9, 2010 (Sunday) 8:00 a.m.

Leader: Joanna Pease

A justly famous migrant trap.

Take I-94 east and exit on Metropolitan Parkway. Drive east into the park (entrance fee) and park on the west side of the main parking lot near the nature center. Meet at the center.

Suburban Park Hop

May 12, 2010 (Wednesday) 8:00 a.m.

Leader: Karl Overman

A chance to explore close to home with the prospects of interesting birds in unlikely locations. We will visit a series of parks in Southfield, Farmington Hills and Commerce Township on this venture.

Meet at the parking lot for the Carpenter Lake park in Southfield. Carpenter Lake is on 10 Mile Road about a quarter mile east of Inkster Road.

Detroit Audubon Memorial Day Weekend Nature Get-Away

May 28-31, 2010 (Friday - Monday)

Don't miss this weekend with wonderful people and fine birds. Besides an array of notable breeding birds in the area, including Kirtland's Warbler, nearby Tawas Point should be hopping with migrants. One year we even found a new bird for the Michigan list - Couch's Kingbird. There will be great food, music, educational programs and children's activities including a challenge course. In addition to the camp, there will be trips to the scenic Rifle River area, Tawas Point and Tuttle Marsh.

Watch the Flyway and the website for more details.

Port Huron State Game Area

June 6, 2010 (Sunday) 7:30 a.m.

Leader: Joanna Pease

An exceptional diversity of breeding birds, especially warblers, may be found in this area: Hooded, Louisiana Waterthrush, Mourning Warbler, Golden-winged Warbler etc. Insect repellent is advisable if not mandatory. This field trip is six or seven hours long.

Take I-94 to the last exit in Port Huron (on left) before crossing into Canada. Proceed north on M-25 to M-136. Drive west on M-136 five or six miles to Wildcat Road. Park near the baseball diamond at the park at the northeast corner of Wildcat and M-136.

Sunrise Serenade at LeFurge Woods Nature Preserve

Co-sponsored with the Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy

June 18, 2010 (Friday) 7:00 p.m. gate opens for camping

June 19, 2010 (Saturday) 4:30 a.m. for Sunrise Serenade

In the tradition of Aldo Leopold, take some time to listen to the beautiful songs of a summer morning. Birding experts will be on hand to help us document the progression of bird songs, keeping track of when each species first begins to sing. Join friends for a camp-out on Friday night or arrive by 4:30 a.m. on Saturday if you don't wish to camp. By 7:00 a.m. we will provide a hearty breakfast for everyone. Bring friends, family, blankets, chairs and a tent if you'd like to camp. Please, no pets. You will need to bring plates, cups and utensils for breakfast. Attendance is limited and a \$5 donation is suggested to cover the cost of breakfast.

Location: LeFurge Woods Nature Preserve, 2252 N Prospect Road, Superior Township, MI 48198. Entrance is on Prospect Road half way between Geddes and Vreeland Roads. Contact the DAS office for reservations, phone (248) 990-1316.

DETROIT AUDUBON SOCIETY

I'm enclosing or charging my tax deductible contribution of: ___ \$1000 ___ \$500 ___ \$100 ___ \$50 ___ \$20 ___ OTHER

Name _____ e-mail _____ Phone _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

To Charge, indicate: ___ Visa ___ MasterCard Card Number: _____ Exp. Date _____

Name as Shown on Card _____ Signature _____

This gift is (circle one: 'in memory of' 'in honor of'): _____

Please send acknowledgement to: _____

Mail this completed form (your check payable to Detroit Audubon Society) to:
Detroit Audubon Society, 26080 Berg Road, Southfield, MI 48033
Thank You for your support!

DAS Protects 26 acres in Wayne County

In December 2009, the Detroit Audubon Society protected a 26-acre property in Van Buren Township, near the intersection of Belleville Road and I-94 in western Wayne County. Detroit Audubon received a conservation easement which permanently restricts subdivision or development of the property. The title to the property was given to the Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy, which has partnered with DAS on three other land preservation projects.

The property was important to protect since it is largely forested wetlands and provides a needed stopover site for the many songbirds that migrate through the area. The good quality native forest consists of a variety of trees including Silver Maple, Swamp White Oak, Northern Red Oak, Sycamore, Basswood and American Elm. These trees support a host of insect species which, in turn, provide critical "fuel" to many Neotropical migrants such as warblers, tanagers, thrushes, grosbeaks, vireos, cuckoos and orioles. The forest also seems to have good potential habitat for nesting Eastern Screech Owls, Great-horned Owls, Red-tailed Hawks, and Cooper's Hawks.

A small tributary of the Huron River flows through the site and the Huron River Watershed Council identified the property as a key site to protect through their Bioreserve Project, which identifies and ranks the remaining natural areas within the watershed. The Detroit Audubon Society is pleased to have played a key role in protecting this small forest in western Wayne County. We hope that you will be able to visit the site in the years to come.

Close Encounters with a Ruffed Grouse

By Leonard Weber

While I was working in Spokane, Washington from 2002 to 2004, my favorite weekend birding area was Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge. It was at Turnbull, in April 2003, that I had one of my most memorable spring birding experiences.

In the early afternoon of April 12, I was walking alone on the Columbia Plateau Trail - an old railway that has been converted into a bicycle and hiking trail and passes through a section of Turnbull. About a mile and half into the refuge, I saw a Ruffed Grouse emerging from the shrubs on the right side. I stood perfectly still, afraid that it would take off with its usual loud burst, when it saw or heard me.

At first, the Grouse paid me no attention. It came up onto the raised trail, pecking in the gravel for a while, and then went back off to the side. I watched, surprised, as it began to eat petals of spring flowers. I had not known that flowers were a part of its diet.

When the grouse returned to the trail, it was much closer to me and clearly aware that I was there. Slowly, it walked right up to me clucking softly. As I stood still, it walked around me three times. Curious about how it would react, I started moving. It did not move away at all. I squatted down to get a close-up look. We were now close enough to touch and I put out my hand. It would not let me touch it, but it did nothing more than pull its head back a little.

Now that I knew that the grouse would not be frightened off by my movements, I wondered how it would react to sound. So I started talking. Again the grouse showed no fear. I asked if it wanted to walk with me and started down the trail slowly. It followed. It would run to catch up with me, then stop. Whenever I spoke saying, "Come walk with me," it would run to catch up again.

We went up the trail about 100 yards in this manner before I told my grouse companion that I was turning back, returning to the spot where it had joined me. It accompanied me back and continued to stay with me when I stopped. This first close encounter with the Ruffed Grouse had now lasted about 40 minutes.

I said that I was going to continue walking, take a side trail a little distance ahead and that it was welcome to come along if it wanted. It started to follow me again, but I was now giving it less attention. While I was watching a small flock of Mountain Chickadees, Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Red-breasted Nuthatches, I noticed that it had fallen back. This time I did not say, "Come walk with me," and it went off the side of the trail and disappeared in the brush.

The second encounter took place on April 27, fifteen days later. I was back on the same trail. While I was not really expecting to see the grouse again, I had timed my walk to be in the same location at about the same time of day.

(-continued on Page 12)



Feathered Tales

By Bev Stevenson

Val Stone was ten feet away from a magnificent Bald Eagle perched on a branch overlooking the Huron River in Ann Arbor around the first of November.

PLEASE E-MAIL US!

If you would like to receive notices about membership meetings, field trips, and other time sensitive material, please send your e-mail address to detas@bignet.net. Simply type the word "subscribe" in the subject line. Please include at least your name in the message area of your e-mail. We will only send out a few e-mails a month and you can ask to be removed at any time. E-mail will help save postage and paper costs -- and will allow us to give you speedy notification of events.

Memorial Day Weekend Nature Get-Away

Snow is snarling traffic at airports today and it's a mess on the roads, but believe it or not, it's time to think spring. Think about what you will be doing Memorial Day weekend.

You could be: serenaded to sleep by the plaintive call of the Common Loon on a picturesque northern Michigan lake, viewing the endangered Kirtland's Warbler, watching eagles feed fish to their young, hooting for owls, looking for frogs and salamanders, singing nature songs around a campfire, making s'mores, going for a canoe or kayak excursion in the early morning to greet the sunrise, meeting wonderful folks,

eating delicious food and more if you sign up to go to Detroit Audubon's Memorial Day Nature Get-Away at the Loon Lake Lutheran Retreat Center just north of Hale, MI. Once you come, you'll want to make it a tradition that you repeat every year. Complete the registration form below and send it in before you forget it. You'll be glad you did.

Call Jim Bull at 313-928-2950 or email him at jbull51264@aol.com if you can come up early on Friday to help set up registration or help with any of these activities: evening programs, setting up the campfire, leading a field trip, setting up snacks, maintaining the bird list, cleaning up at the end of the weekend or volunteering to serve on the Memorial Day Weekend Nature Get-Away Planning Committee.

Memorial Weekend Nature Get-Away At Loon Lake Lutheran Retreat Center, Hale, MI Friday, May 28 - Monday, May 31, 2010

Registration Deadline: May 17, 2010 (No refunds will be given after this date)

Rates: Children < 4 years = Free, K - 8th grade = Child, 9th grade and Up = Adult

Plan A (Lodging, Meals, Snacks, & Programs)

- Seaholm Lodge (Dorm style bunk beds for men & women)
- Mini Lodge (Priority given to families with young children)
- Rustic Cabin (Unheated w/ bunk beds, minimum of two people needed to reserve a cabin)

____ Child(ren) X \$140 + ____ Adult(s) X \$170 = \$ _____

Plan B Day Rate Entire Weekend (Meals, Snacks, Programs, & Day Use Fee)

____ Child(ren) X \$100 + ____ Adult(s) X \$125 = \$ _____

GRAND TOTAL = \$ _____

Please make checks payable to: Detroit Audubon Society

- Vegetarian / Dietary Restrictions: (please explain) _____
- I will assist with field trips / activities
- DAS Member

Declaration: (Each participant must sign; if under 18, legal guardian must sign)
I/We agree that I/we have read the preceding information and agree not to hold DAS liable for injury, accident, loss or theft, or any other problems on the 2010 Memorial Weekend Nature Get-Away.

Signature(s): _____

Adult Name(s) & Gender: _____

Name(s), Age(s) & Grade Level(s) of Children under 18: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Any questions can be directed to Jim Bull at 313-928-2950 or email him at jbull51264@aol.com

Mail this completed form and check(s) to:

DAS Memorial Weekend Nature Get-Away, 26080 Berg Rd., Southfield, MI 48033

Detroit Audubon Ontario, Canada Field Trip November 27-29, 2009

Leaders: Alan Wormington, Karl Overman

Participants: Gary L. Burns, Cathy Carol, Walter Everett, Phylis Hamrick, Jack Lutz and Barbara O'Hair

Detroit Audubon has taken this trip for at least a dozen years and it is a great trip, if I do say so myself. The Niagara area is well known for its scenery and the city of Niagara Falls, Ontario is typically alive with people from all over, even in early winter when this trip takes place. As far as eating goes, sometimes it seems like a string of Tim Horton's, but the favored place on the last two trips is known as the Flying Saucer. It is open almost 24 hours (closed from 4 am to 6 am) where the food is bountiful and cheap and set in a 1950ish, other worldly, decor.

BIRDS SEEN IN PAST YEARS AS WELL AS ON THE CURRENT TRIP 2006 to 2008

Tundra Swan - Three hundred in a field west of Port Rowan.

Mute Swan - Not many seen including a couple at the water treatment plant at Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Canada Goose - Widespread.

Brant - One seen at point blank range feeding on lawn at Port Burwell on Lake Erie.

Green-winged Teal - Fifteen at Turkey Point on Lake Erie. Also, one at water treatment plant at Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Black Duck - First seen at Port Rowan, say 8 birds.

Mallard.

Common Pintail - Five at Turkey Point on Lake Erie.

Shoveler - A few at sewage lagoon in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Gadwall - Forty at Port Rowan.

American Wigeon - 2000 at Port Rowan.

Canvasback - Surprisingly scarce. Single digits seen at Stoney Creek on Lake Ontario.

One of the fun aspects of the trip, which warrants return visits, is that each trip has a very different itinerary for the two days that are mostly away from the Niagara area. That's because where to go for birds in southern Ontario, in early winter, changes from year to year. This year, for the first time, we started at Port Stanley on Lake Erie because, on the day before, a Black-tailed Gull had been reported from there (alas, not seen afterwards), plus a Brant was staked out at nearby Port Burwell. On this trip we added one of the best birds we have had on a Niagara trip, Phainopepla, which just boosted the impressive total of rarities we have had over the years on the Niagara trip which include the following: Ross's Goose, Eurasian Wigeon, Gannet, Great Cormorant, Black-necked Stilt, Mew Gull, Slaty-backed Gull, Black-headed Gull, Sabine's Gull, Razorbill, Hawk Owl, Rufous Hummingbird, Bohemian Waxwing, Golden-crowned Sparrow.

Who knows what it will be next year, but the odds are there will be good birds.

Redhead - Huge rafts seen at Port Rowan and off Turkey Creek. Probably 15,000 at Port Rowan.

Ring-necked Duck - At least twenty above the control gates on the Niagara River above the falls.

Greater Scaup - Common on western Lake Ontario. Smaller numbers seen around Niagara area.

Lesser Scaup - I am not sure we picked any out.

Long-tailed Duck - Far fewer than normal at Niagara-on-the-Lake. The numbers on western Lake Ontario have to be seen to be believed – tens of thousands in sight at some locations such as Stoney Creek.

Black Scoter - Ten or so on western Lake Ontario at the end of Gray Road. No adult males this year.

Surf Scoter - Numerous in western Lake Ontario off Stoney Creek.

White-winged Scoter - Fewer seen than normal. Just one sighting (Wormington only) at Niagara-on-the-Lake. Probably under 10 at Stoney Creek on Lake Ontario.

Common Golden eye - Widespread in the Niagara area and on western Lake Ontario.

Bufflehead - Common on Niagara River. Especially large concentration at Fort Erie.

Hooded Merganser - Just a few seen.

Common Merganser - Widespread, western Lake Ontario and Niagara area.

Red-breasted Merganser - Widespread Niagara area but seemingly in small numbers this year.

Wild Turkey - One large flock in a wooded yard west of Fort Erie. Small flock seen by the water treatment plant in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Red-throated Loon - We saw around five at Niagara-on-the-Lake out on Lake Ontario, plus a single flying bird in the Stoney Creek/Hamilton area on Lake Ontario.

Common Loon - Two at Point Abino on Lake Erie.

Horned Grebe - Two seen at Crystal Beach on Lake Erie.

Double-crested Cormorant - Very few. One on Lake Erie at Crystal Beach. Around four on the Niagara River at Adam Beck power plant.

Cooper's Hawk - Maybe five for the trip at widely scattered locations.

Sharp-shinned Hawk - One male perched over the road by Adam Beck power plant.

Red-tailed Hawk - Fairly common.

Kestrel - First seen in the wine country south of Niagara-on-the-Lake. Small numbers seen.

Sandhill Crane - A total of approximately 270, all in four fields in the Port Rowan area inland from Lake Erie.

Coot - 3000 in one flock at Port Rowan by Long Point on Lake Erie.

Little Gull - Always in Bonaparte's Gull flocks when found. None at Niagara. We had two in a Bonaparte's flock at Port Stanley on Lake Erie.

Bonaparte's Gull - Thousands for miles along the Niagara River from Niagara-on-the-Lake to Queenstown.

Ring-billed Gull - Widespread.

California Gull - One adult above the falls at Niagara.

Herring Gull - Abundant

Thayer's Gull - A couple of adults at Adam Beck

Iceland Gull - At least eight birds combined from Adam Beck and above Niagara Falls.

Lesser Black-backed Gull - First seen at Port Stanley on Lake Erie. Also seen at Adam Beck and above Niagara Falls.

Great Black-backed Gull - Good numbers resting on rocks above the falls. A few elsewhere including a few at Adam Beck.

Rock Pigeon - Around.

Mourning Dove - On the first day we had none in birding the central Lake Erie shoreline. Uncommonly seen around Niagara and Hamilton.

Snowy Owl - One very white bird in farm country up on the Niagara escarpment east of Hamilton.

Red-bellied Woodpecker - A few seen in Niagara area including at Queenstown.

Downy Woodpecker - Very few seen and heard.

Blue Jay - Widespread

Crow - Fairly common.

Carolina Wren - One at Niagara-on-the-Lake

Black-capped Chickadee - Since we were concentrating on waterbirds, we only occasionally came across these guys.

Red-breasted Nuthatch - One in pines at entrance to water treatment plant in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

White-breasted Nuthatch - First seen at Queenstown.

Brown Creeper - One seen at a lakeside park near Fort Erie, Ontario

Mockingbird - Seen a number of times on this trip, first at a Tim Horton's in Chippewa. Also seen in the Hamilton area and one chasing the Phainopepla away from a food source in Brampton.

Robin - Small numbers seen such as at Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Eastern Bluebird - Three in residential area west of Fort Erie.

Starling - Around

Phainopepla - A class bird to see in the Great Lakes area. This young male seems to have taken up winter residence in Brampton, Ontario, which is on the west side of Toronto in an urban neighborhood.

Tree Sparrow - Seen at a few places along Lake Erie, including Turkey Point.

Song Sparrow - A couple seen at Turkey Point on Lake Erie.

Swamp Sparrow - One at Turkey Point.

Junco - Fairly widespread in suburban settings.

Cardinal - No more than 5 for the trip.

Red-winged Blackbird - One flock of 30 seen in Port Rowan area.

House Finch - Uncommonly seen in Niagara area.

American Goldfinch - Very few seen.

House Sparrow - Around.

Announcing Detroit Audubon Society BIRDATHON 2010

We invite you to join us for the Detroit Audubon Society's BIRDATHON 2010 as:

- **Team leaders**
- **Birding participants**

Birdathon teams will be heading out in May to document the birds in southeast Michigan and to raise money in support of Detroit Audubon Society's efforts to promote nature education and to protect wild birds and their habitats.

Categories of Participation

Teams will select one of two categories of participation:

- **Category A** - Teams will compete to see as many bird species as possible in one 24-hour period and are limited to no more than four (4) persons each.
- **Category B** - Teams will count bird species at a specific location (e.g., a park, a municipality, a "big sit" location) during one 24-hour period. Category B teams may be of any size.

Team Composition

While teams should have at least one member who is an experienced birder to assure the accuracy of the report of species identified, they are encouraged to welcome individuals with little previous birding experience. They may also want to include someone with a camera. Individuals, who would like to participate and who do not know of others who are forming teams, may contact DAS to get linked up.

Sponsors

Team members ask their friends and acquaintances to pledge a donation to the Detroit Audubon Society. Sponsors may contribute a specific amount for each bird species the team tallies or a lump sum for the day. Teams are encouraged to set fundraising goals. DAS will provide pledge forms.

Dates and Location

Teams may select any date between May 8 and May 23 for their birding day and agree to confine their birding that day to Southeast Michigan. Team leaders are asked to register their teams by April 25, 2010.

Awards and Recognition

Recognition will be given to:

1. the team that raised the most money
2. the team that recorded the most species in Category A
3. the team that recorded the most species in Category B
4. the teams/individuals who found rare or unusual birds
5. the best bird photographs
6. the teams with the youngest and oldest participants
7. the best "stories" from the day

For More Information

For more information, request registration forms or to become a BIRDATHON sponsor, please contact:

- Birdathon Coordinator Leonard Weber: Leonard.Weber9@gmail.com or phone 313-671-8127
- Detroit Audubon Office: detas@bignet.net or phone 248-990-1316

DAS Spring Point Pelee Campout



The annual DAS Spring Pt. Pelee Spring Campout is set for the weekend of May 14 – 17, 2010. This weekend should coincide with the peak of bird migration at this world-renowned birding site and we were able to secure reservations for 3 nights (May 14, 15 and 16). Camping at Pt. Pelee's group campground is a rare privilege, and is limited to only 20 campers per night. The fee is \$17 per night, per camper and includes entry to the park and wood for campfires. There is a 2 night minimum.

Please make your check out to Michael Fitzpatrick, and indicate camper's name(s) and nights wanted, and mail to: 56 Hubbard St., Mt. Clemens, MI 48043. A confirmation will be returned.

Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act Gets Respect!

Audubon Advisory December 10, 2009 Vol 2009 Issue 12

This little bill packs a big wallop for migratory songbird conservation by tripling funding for projects in South America, the Caribbean, and Canada. Responding to the call of thousands of Audubon activists, the Senate has acted on this \$20 million package for bird conservation and the House Natural Resources Committee passed a similar bill with a \$15 million funding level. We expect to get it to the President's desk in the next session of Congress. Final passage will be good news for the more than 125 neotropical species in decline from habitat loss and other threats.

UN Report Finds Protecting Biodiversity Worth Trillions, Including Boreal Forests

Protecting natural ecosystems and biodiversity is worth trillions of dollars in annual economic benefits around the planet, according to a new report by the United Nations. From improving food and water security to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the report – *The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity* – says **money invested in protecting the planet's forests and natural systems is the best long-term solution** for both the economy and the environment.

To read the report, go to: <http://www.borealbirds.org/resources/report-unep-teeb.pdf>

Source: **Boreal Songbird Initiative's "Boreal Birds Update"**
www.borealbirds.org

Sandhill Crane Migration Focus of 40th Annual Rivers and Wildlife Celebration

by Kevin Poague, Audubon Nebraska

The 40th annual Rivers and Wildlife Celebration will be held March 18-21, 2010, in Kearney, Nebraska. Organized by Audubon Nebraska and the Nebraska Bird Partnership, the conference gathers together nature enthusiasts from across the county to witness the migration of over half a million sandhill cranes and millions of waterfowl and other birds through central Nebraska. Events include guided field trips, workshops, a family fun room, and daily visits to river blinds operated by Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary for up-close views of cranes roosting on the Platte River.

Local and national speakers will present information on a variety of wildlife and conservation topics. Main speakers are Scott Weidensaul, author of more than two dozen natural history books, including *Living on the Wind: Across the Hemisphere with Migratory Birds*, a Pulitzer Prize finalist; Mike Forsberg, nature photographer and author of *Great Plains: America's Lingering Wild*; Ron Klataske, executive director of Audubon of Kansas; and Chris Wood, eBird Project Leader, Cornell Lab of Ornithology. More than twenty local environmental organizations will have information booths and hands-on activities on Saturday.

The celebration is open to the general public. Registration materials can be found beginning in mid-December at www.nebraska.audubon.org. Or contact Audubon Nebraska to be put on the mailing list: Nebraska@audubon.org; 402/797-2301. Rowe Sanctuary has information about viewing the sandhill crane migration, 308/468-5282, www.rowsanctuary.org.

(Close Encounters with a Ruffed Grouse - continued from Page 6)

When I got near the spot where I had first seen the grouse a couple weeks before, I heard a sound behind me. Turning around, I saw it there on the trail about 15 feet away. I hadn't seen it when I went by, but it had seen or heard me and had come right out. This day it wasn't looking for food. It came right up to me and its business was with me.

I was surprised that it came straight at me appearing to be more agitated. It even pecked at me, something that it had not done the previous time. After it pecked me in the back of the leg, I got the point that it wanted me to move. So I started walking. This time when it ran after me, it wasn't like it was catching up, rather it appeared to be chasing me away.

I walked one direction on the trail and then the other to see if the bird was trying to move me in a particular direction or prevent me from going in a particular direction. It ran after me both ways. Apparently, it was just trying to get me out of there. So when I started walking faster, it stopped running after me. When I looked back, it was leaving the trail on the same side as last time.

Because the bird appeared in the same location each time, I think that it was probably the same Ruffed Grouse both times. Since those two encounters, I have reflected from time to time on how best to understand the behavior that I witnessed.

I suspect that the grouse's behavior during the second encounter was related to the protection of nesting territory. That behavior did not surprise me much, except that it appeared to be so different from the earlier meeting. I have heard that grouse are sometimes quite "tame" in areas where they do not encounter many humans, so perhaps it was as curious and unthreatened the first time as it appeared. Then, two weeks later, nesting season had arrived and its behavior was different.

On the other hand, maybe I misread the behavior the first time. Perhaps it wasn't walking with me, but trying to chase me away - just in a less intense and less aggressive manner than it exhibited the second time.

Regardless of how the behavior is best understood, I am not likely to soon forget my two April encounters with a Washington Ruffed Grouse.



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