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Flyway

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GEORGIA REID RETIRES

By Rosemarie Attilio

Georgia Reid has decided to retire from the Board of Directors for the Detroit Audubon Society. The Society would like to thank Georgia for over 20 years of service, commitment, and extreme dedication.

Many people have been taught, guided, or befriended by Georgia. Georgia has been an exemplary guide on many Audubon field trips. For many years, she co-directed the Memorial Weekend Campout at Hale, Michigan. She worked numerous booths at the Home and Garden Shows, where she would invite people to join Audubon, field questions about backyard birds or share a location for viewing a Bald Eagle. She attended many Hawk festivals at one of her favorite fall birding sites, Holiday Beach, in Canada. She assisted on many annual programs and environmental causes for the Audubon Society throughout these past 20 years, but the birding and field trips were and remain her true passion.

So how did Georgia find birding and Audubon? Georgia came to Michigan in 1971 as a modern dance instructor for Wayne State University. She decided to take an adult education class as a way to meet people here in the Detroit area.

One of the classes she enrolled in was Birds, and that began her journey on a path that has always fascinated her. Bird watching became a lifelong passion for Georgia. It was over 30 years ago that she became a member of the National Audubon Society, then Detroit Audubon, then a Board member. She stayed the course with Detroit Audubon, to which we are forever grateful.

For those of you who have not had the pleasure of meeting Georgia, she has both a great sense of humor and a wealth of knowledge. She once planted plastic flowers in someone's flowerbed as they kept lamenting that their flowers had not bloomed. Another time, while being stuck at a railroad track for a lengthy period, Georgia talked to the passengers in her vehicle about where the train had probably originated, what type of cargo it likely contained, and its probable destination.

GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY SLUMPS 27% IN 35 YEARS

By Michael Marshall

New Scientist, May 16, 2008

The latest data on the global biodiversity of vertebrates shows that it has fallen by almost one-third in the last 35 years. But experts say it may still underestimate the effect humans have had on global species counts.

The Living Planet Index (LPI) follows trends in nearly 4,000 populations of 1,477 vertebrate species and is said to reflect the impact humans have on the planet. It is based on a wide range of population datasets, such as commercial data on fish stocks and projects such as the Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring scheme.

New figures show that between 1970 and 2005, the global LPI has fallen by 27%. This suggests that the world will fail to meet the target of reducing the rate of biodiversity loss set by the 2002 Convention on Biological Diversity.

The results were released as part of a WWF report entitled 2010 and Beyond: Rising to the biodiversity challenge.

"Governments have... failed to deliver on their biodiversity commitments, and biodiversity declines are continuing," Jonathan Loh, a researcher at the Institute of Zoology and the editor of the report, told New Scientist.

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Flyway

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Boreal forest degradation! Mountaintop removal! Migrating birds and bats colliding with buildings and wind turbines! Biodiversity decreasing! Habitat loss! Threatened and endangered species! The list seems endless and sometimes it is hard to maintain a positive point of view.

But the members of Detroit Audubon have a job to do and throwing up our hands doesn't get it done. We must keep our focus on doing everything we can to preserve birds. We must protect their habitat, eliminate and stop those forces that threaten breeding habitat, migration and winter feeding. We have to educate our children, our families and our co-workers on the value of birds and how to enjoy them. These are difficult challenges and it will take a lot of us to meet them.

What can you do? DAS has an extensive list of field trips throughout the year. The Fall FLYWAY had the 2008-2009 fieldtrip insert. I hope you saved it. You can also find the list on our website. Bring the family to our trips and learn the wonder of birds. Get involved as a host or a leader for a trip.

Volunteer to help the environment. Go to a local nature center and volunteer or help remove invasive species at local State Game and Recreation Areas. We will post dates and times to help on the website.

Help DAS go out to the public by manning a table or booth at festivals and shows. We always need people to work our bookstore and meet the public. Lend your skills to help with the FLYWAY editing, proofreading and mailing. Attend an environmental meeting or conference and send a summary to the FLYWAY. Join the Board of Directors. Fill out the form at the back of the FLYWAY to indicate your interest. And don't forget to vote for this year's class of directors.

You can also give one or more gift memberships to DAS and National Audubon. Use the form at the back to introduce DAS to a friend or family member. They will appreciate it.

Give money to a good environmental cause. There are many. I hope you will contribute to our Annual Appeal. See the form on the inside back to send your contribution now. Detroit Audubon has to have increased income if we are going to be able to meet the challenges we face and we need your participation in this process.

Thanks for listening. I look forward to hearing from you.

Richard Quick

President, Detroit Audubon Society

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To find out about workplace giving, e-mail John Makris at detas@bignet.net

IN THE CHICKADEE'S WAKE: MID-NOVEMBER BIRD WALK

On a typical dark, windy, and cool day in mid-November, my local birding spot, Eliza Howell Park, has the beginning-of-winter feel. Seeing no avian activity immediately upon arrival, I am reminded that the peak of fall migration is past and that we are inevitably headed toward that February day when I may well be able to count on one hand all the species seen on the entire bird walk.

My experience tells me, though, that the exciting days of fall birding are not yet past. I just need to find that first Black-capped Chickadee. One of the exciting things about birding is that there is almost always something new to be found in the midst of the patterns that regularly repeat themselves. I am looking for the pattern of birds congregating around the chickadees. The chances are good that the congregation will include something unexpected.

I may have to walk fifteen minutes, seeing only a few robins, before I see that first chickadee. When I do see it, I think: "Okay, it is time to concentrate." I stop walking and let the other birds show themselves. The first chickadee is usually followed by a second chickadee, and perhaps a third. Then what follows is both predictable and unpredictable.

Chickadees forage with other species in the winter – and their best buddies include Tufted Titmice, Downy Woodpeckers, and White-breasted Nuthatches. The season is far enough advanced in mid-November that I expect to see these species whenever I see chickadees and I almost always do. This is the pattern, the predictable part. Goldfinches and cardinals, also permanent residents, may not have quite the same tight relationship, but it is no surprise when they show themselves.

Since mid-November is not yet real winter, birds that will not be found with chickadees next month are here now. The unpredictable part is what I will see in the vicinity of the chickadees on any given day. The list of possibilities is extensive, especially since chickadees are found in areas attractive to ground-feeding birds at this time of year. As I slowly explore in the direction from which the chickadee first appeared, I know I will find other birds, but don't know which ones.

Near the top of the list in 2007 is the Fox Sparrow. Even though I see it regularly in mid-November 2007, it strikes me as unexpected each time, probably because it has not been common in recent years. Other late migrants found congregating with chickadees are both the Golden-crown and the Ruby-crowned Kinglets. This is at the very end of their fall visit to SE Michigan, at least in this spot, and the numbers are few – usually just one at a time. As the last of the season, these singles deserve the lingering looks I give them.

Before I have gone 100 feet beyond the first chickadee, I may see Dark-eyed Juncos and White-throated Sparrows and Brown Creepers, even Pine Siskins and Field Sparrows. Carolina Wrens sometimes make themselves heard (more often than seen) and it is always exciting to get a glance of a scurrying Winter Wren – no lingering looks there. At least 75% of the time the hotspots are introduced the same way – by that first chickadee – but the makeup of the entire group is different each time.

I doubt that the sparrows and the wrens are part of the mixed flock in the same way that titmice and nuthatches are; they may just be visiting the same feeding areas. I doubt that all these birds are following the chickadees around. But I do know that when I see that little black-capped creature, I prepare for some very good birding. The first couple of times I may have wanted to call the connection a coincidence. It has happened enough times now that I call it a pattern.

In addition to chickadee-introduced hotspots, Eliza Howell Park in mid-November offers other birding specials. This is the time of the year when, if my timing is just right, I can see a flock of 40 Tundra Swans fly high overhead, moving southeast in a V formation with one side of the V much longer than the other, calling as they fly. Or I can have a daytime look at a Great Horned Owl, whose presence now gives me reason to think that it may nest in the park before spring. The Cedar Waxwings are picking berries, competing with robins. A Great Blue Heron may still be found at the river's edge and the reliable Red-tailed Hawk usually puts in an appearance.

It is the Black-capped Chickadee I think of, however, when I enter the park, wondering what birds I will see in its wake this day.

Leonard Weber - November, 2007

THREAT OF INVASIVE PLANTS

Join the DNR, Parks and Recreation Division, Stewardship Unit for year-round volunteer opportunities. Join us for invasive shrub removal throughout the winter and early spring and garlic mustard pulling and native planting in the spring and early summer. These activities will help restore high quality natural areas within these state parks and recreation areas:

- Algonac State Park (St. Clair County)
- Bald Mountain Recreation Area (Oakland County)
- Brighton Recreation Area (Livingston County)
- Highland Recreation Area (Oakland County)
- Island Lake Rec. Area (Livingston County)

- Pinckney Rec. Area (Washtenaw County)
- Sterling State Park (Monroe County)
- Waterloo Rec. Area (Washtenaw/Jackson County)

To view a calendar of upcoming events at these parks, please visit www.michigan.gov/dnrvolunteers and click on "Calendar of Volunteer Stewardship Workdays" under "Current Volunteer Opportunities". Hope you can join us!

Contact Laurel Malvitz at 248-359-9057 or malvitzl@michigan.gov with questions or for additional information."

Laurel Malvitz-Draper
Natural Resource Steward
Stewardship Unit, Parks and Recreation Division
Michigan Department of Natural Resources

Georgia Reid Retires - continued from page 1

Sometimes while birding with Georgia, you could wander off course, and end up discovering Michigan's grindstones at Grindstone City or discovering the petroglyphs in the Thumb. Birding might be interrupted in order to read historical markers or to visit an early trading post.

Georgia has birded nearly all of Michigan in the past 30 years and often reflects on the birds that were once easily found in various places that are now gone. Georgia would reflect on Cattle Egrets once found consistently at Pointe Mouillee, Upland Sandpipers on past trips found reliably at an airport or Henslow Sparrows long ago a familiar sight in a suburban tract. Georgia knew all the great sites and always had a fresh story to tell of Audubon friends, both here and gone. Ask her about the field trip to see the Barn Owl. Everyone waiting and waiting for the bird to appear, then someone started talking about hiking boots and shoes, and you guessed it, while everyone is looking down at their shoes, the great bird silently comes out and disappears into the twilight and only a few got a quick look. Or the lodge in Ohio that once stood near Crane Creek and the great birding trips Audubon held there.

Georgia is a dedicated teacher, always striving to enlighten future bird watchers. She is both persistent and resilient. She has endured freezing cold and snow to show someone a Bohemian Waxwing in a frozen field. She has been soaked to the bone waiting for a Clay Colored Sparrow in a heavy rainstorm. Georgia is a master birder, who does not always feel a need to correct a misidentified bird. When a stranger calls out a mistake, Georgia will just utter, "Hmmm." When you hear a hmmm, you know you may need to look that bird up in your field guide again.

She has traveled widely both with Detroit Audubon and other nature groups. She has birded Texas, Mexico, Florida, and the Upper Peninsula, but one of her very favorite trips has been to Alaska. She dreamt of retiring, and buying a VW camper and birding to her heart's content, and that is exactly what she is doing. You may see her one weekend at Point Pelee, and the next down in Ottawa, Ohio. Wherever she goes, she always runs into friends who know her.

She is one of the most highly regarded and respected members of Detroit Audubon Society, and we have been blessed to enjoy the benefits of her hard work and dedication all these years. Thank you, Georgia Reid.

MORE COMMENTS FROM OUR OLDEST MEMBERS

We have heard from other members who joined before 1972

Richard and Joy Marks joined in 1969

Members since 1969, Richard and Joy Marks of Detroit write that they were introduced to Audubon during a U of M summer camp program they had been regularly attending. In the summer of 1968, the program had speakers on the Vietnam War and the environment where the "lively discussions" among the campers led to agreement on the perils facing the environment and, "noting our interest in birding, a fellow camper recommended the Audubon Society". Richard and Joy conclude with "...we have had much pleasure as well as satisfaction in being part of this environmentally oriented organization."

Jim and Juanita Hewins joined in 1962

They joined by contacting Ann Boyes, a founding member of DAS. They also attended Ed Boyes' WWW (the radio station) studio programs on wildlife as well as the Rackham wildlife film series. They write of the birdlife in their Fraser area and speak fondly of the "multiflora rose thicket along the Clinton Canal" which hosted a colony of Mockingbirds that is "now a K Mart parking lot." Ah, the good ol' days!

FEATHERED TALES

By Bev Stevenson



A Partridge in a Pear Tree!

Kelly Voelker spotted a Chukar in her Plymouth backyard around the end of September. It seemed to like her pear tree which was bearing fruit at this time. A Chukar is a stocky partridge which was introduced from the deserts of India and Turkey. It now makes its home in the western U.S. It favors dry rocky hillsides. This bird that Kelly saw was likely a pet or an escapee.

Kevin Welch was pretty excited when he spotted a Bald Eagle on Eureka Road, just E of 275, looking like it was going to land right on an airstrip. This was the first of October.

DATE FOR ANNUAL MEMBERS CONFERENCE SET

The Annual Conference Committee has set March 28, 2009 as the date for the Annual Members Conference. The event will take place at the Southfield Parks and Recreation Building in the Southfield Complex on Evergreen Rd.

The program is still being set, but the whole family will enjoy the birds of prey and live snakes of Michigan. Mark your calendars now and look for details in the next FLYWAY.

34TH ROCKFORD CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT RESULTS

Thank you for helping with the 34th Rockwood Christmas Bird Count. An incredible 99 species were counted, which set a new high for the count. An additional 4 species somehow managed to evade us on the day of the count, being seen within 3 days before or after the 22nd.

There were two species new to the count: Black Scoter and Merlin. Had it survived to the day of the count, the Scarlet Tanager in Lake Erie Metropark would also have been new. The bird was last seen on December 20 two days before the count. It likely perished, as it was apparently not in good shape when last seen.

There were 12 unusual species this year, which I defined as being seen on fewer than 10 previous counts. They include Green-winged Teal (7 previous counts), Lesser Black-backed Gull (3 previous counts), Long-eared Owl (6 previous counts), Northern Saw-whet Owl (4 previous counts), Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (7 previous counts), Gray Catbird (8 past counts), Northern Mockingbird (7 past counts), Common Yellowthroat (4 past counts), Savannah Sparrow (2 past counts) and Brewer's Blackbird (once previously).

Thirteen species were counted in record numbers: Gadwall, American Black Duck, Ring-necked Duck, Hooded Merganser, Northern Harrier, Cooper's Hawk (same number as in 2006), Eastern Screech Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Northern Shrike, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, Eastern Bluebird, and Brewer's Blackbird. The increase over previous high counts was especially noteworthy for Ring-necked Duck, Hooded Merganser and Red-bellied Woodpecker. An additional seven species were more numerous than usual, although not records.

Special thanks must also go to Gerry Wykes and Paul Cypher for hosting the tally at the Lake Erie Metropark Marshlands Museum, and for compiling the reports from feeder watchers. Two organizations sponsored the count this year: The Detroit Audubon Society and the Grosse Ile Nature Land Conservancy. They were responsible for the chili that was at the tally.

In 2006, the Rockwood Count recorded the highest number of individuals in the entire state of Michigan for 14 species. As expected given its location, most of these species were water birds. However, the list also included Cooper's Hawk and Golden-crowned Kinglet. These high numbers attest to how important the area encompassed by the count is for wintering birds.

This year Christmas falls on a Thursday, which means that the 2nd Saturday of the count period the traditional day for the Rockwood count will be after Christmas. Therefore, this year's count will be on Saturday, December 27, 2008. Hope to see you all again this year.

Tom Carpenter, compiler

Results of the 34 th Rockwood Christmas bird count, held 22 December 2007				
Canada Goose 4281	Black Scoter 1	Glaucous Gull 2	White-breasted Nuthatch 69	White-throated Sparrow 178
Mute Swan 1160	duck species 955	Great Black-backed Gull 54	Brown Creeper 18	Dark-eyed Junco 332
Tundra Swan 1829	Ring-necked Pheasant 1	gull species 12	<i>Carolina Wren</i> 51* (38)	Snow Bunting 47
swan species 23	Common Loon CW	Rock Pigeon 525	Winter Wren 3	Northern Cardinal 329
Gadwall 907* (804)	Pied-billed Grebe 2	Mourning Dove 2142	Golden-crowned Kinglet 37	Rusty Blackbird 18
American Wigeon 38	Great Blue Heron 179	Eastern Screech Owl 49	Eastern Bluebird 80* (63)	Brewer's Blackbird 2* (1)
Am. Black Duck 678* (653)	Black-crowned Night Heron 15	Great Horned Owl 3	Hermit Thrush 8	Red-winged Blackbird 2
Mallard 2402	Bald Eagle 32	Short-eared Owl 1	American Robin 252	Common Grackle 5
Northern Pintail 15	Northern Harrier 17* (16)	Long-eared Owl 1	Gray Catbird 1	Brown-headed Cowbird 339
Green-winged Teal 3	Sharp-shinned Hawk 9	Northern Saw-whet Owl 1	Northern Mockingbird 1	Purple Finch 8
Canvasback 27,869	Cooper's Hawk 25* (25)	Belted Kingfisher 9	European Starling 2661	House Finch 134
Redhead 121	<i>Accipiter</i> species 1	Red-bellied Woodpecker 62* (37)	Cedar Waxwing 195	Common Redpoll 68
Ring-necked Duck 466* (85)	Red-shouldered Hawk 4	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker 1	Yellow-rumped Warbler 38	Pine Siskin 99
Greater Scaup 1042	Red-tailed Hawk 87	Downy Woodpecker 154	Common Yellowthroat 1	American Goldfinch 289
Lesser Scaup 44	Rough-legged Hawk 3	Hairy Woodpecker 17	Eastern Towhee 2	House Sparrow 1253
scaup sp. 285	American Kestrel 19	Northern Flicker 56	American Tree Sparrow 465	Scarlet Tanager CW
Long-tailed Duck 1	Merlin 1	Northern Shrike 7* (4)	Chipping Sparrow CW	
Bufflehead 270	Peregrine Falcon CW	Blue Jay 159	Savannah Sparrow 1	
Common Goldeneye 497	American Coot 1287	American Crow 121	Field Sparrow 1	
Hooded Merganser 68* (25)	Bonaparte's Gull 353	Horned Lark 63	Fox Sparrow 5	
Common Merganser 438	Ring-billed Gull 1595	Black-capped Chickadee 222	Song Sparrow 58	
Red-breasted Merganser 4	Herring Gull 1037	Tufted Titmouse 24	Swamp Sparrow 25	Total Species: 99
Ruddy Duck 398	Lesser Black-backed Gull 1	Red-breasted Nuthatch 18* (17)	White-crowned Sparrow 1	Total Individuals: 59,296

Bold Type indicates unusual species or an unusually high total for the species

* = record number of individuals counted; the previous record is indicated in ()

CW = Count Week – species was seen in the count circle 3 days before or after the date of the count but was not seen during the count

Global Picture

Ground-living vertebrates have declined by 25%, with most of the slump occurring since 1980. Marine species held fairly steady until the late 1990s before falling sharply to give an overall drop of 28%. Freshwater species have decreased by 25%, primarily since the late 1980s.

Loh says the most dramatic declines have been observed in the tropics. Tropical ground-living species have seen an average population drop of 46%, while their temperate cousins have shown no overall change.

Freshwater vertebrates show different trends in different regions, leading to “no obvious signal”, says Loh. European and North American populations show no overall change, but Asian-Pacific populations have declined steeply since the late 1980s.

In the world’s oceans, northern vertebrate populations have held fairly steady over the entire period, but may have entered a downward trend since 1990. By contrast, southern populations have fallen precipitously, although because less data is collected there the trend is less certain.

Rose-tinted View

The LPI focuses exclusively on vertebrates, which are relatively well-monitored. Loh says, “We started collecting data on invertebrates, but it’s very patchy and not good enough as yet.”

The survey may be “bird-biased”, he adds, because their populations are well-monitored. The LPI tracks 811 bird species but just 241 fish and 302 mammals.

Fish should actually comprise the bulk of the Index. The world’s 30,000 species of fish compare to just 10,000 bird species and 5,400 mammals.

Loh says this suggests that the situation is worse than the data shows. “Birds are doing better than fish,” he says, “so if anything, by biasing the survey towards them we’re underestimating the global decline.”

Incomplete Picture

There is also a lack of good data for Latin America and Africa. Loh says that, frustratingly, “...the more species there are in an area, often the less data there are on how they’re doing. For instance the UK is well-monitored, but has relatively few species. It’s a priority for us to find out what’s happening in areas like the Amazon Basin.”

The WWF report was published ahead of a worldwide conference on biodiversity, the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties on 19-30 May. The conference will assess what has been achieved by the Convention on Biological Diversity.

WIND AND WILDLIFE WORKSHOP

By Doris Applebaum

On September 23, at the Environmental Interpretive Center of the University of Michigan – Dearborn, DTE Energy hosted a workshop to consider the effects of wind energy on our wildlife, mainly birds and bats. With this form of energy gaining momentum, and with reports pouring in of many birds and bats dying in their encounters with wind turbines, the workshop aimed at exploring what, if anything, can be done to reduce the deadly toll. Because of Detroit Audubon’s obvious interest in birds, members of the DAS Safe Passage Committee were invited to attend.

Matt Wagner, Wind-Site-Development Manager for DTE, opened the workshop by providing some insight into DTE’s proposed wind farm in Michigan’s Thumb area. He advised that the Thumb, with “some of the best wind in the state,” is a natural site for a wind farm. Knowing of the dangers to wildlife, DTE has commissioned a 2-year study by a consulting company. Michigan has site guidelines for wind-energy systems, and there are interim guidelines from the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service. According to Mr. Wagner, “You have to know where the concerns are and come up with something that makes sense.” And that is what DTE is striving for. Mr. Wagner acknowledged the possibility of water fowl mortality to species such as Tundra Swan, Merganser and Scaup will have to be a part of the calculations in designing the wind farm in the Thumb.

Dr. Allen Kurta of Eastern Michigan University, an expert on bats and author of the recently published *Bats of Michigan*, spoke of the dangers that bats face from wind turbines. Bats are long lived and reproduce slowly, which makes high mortality levels extremely dangerous for the continued survival of these species.

Of Michigan’s nine bat species, three are long-distance migrants, and these seem to face the most risk. They travel several hundred kilometers each year between their summer and winter roosts. Highest mortality is in late summer, when many juveniles are on the wing. Interestingly, of the birds that crash into buildings during fall migration, juveniles also form a large percentage.

Dr. Kurta stated that proper siting of wind farms is extremely important, and deterrents to the attractiveness of these structures to bats need to be developed. Of utmost importance, he recommends keeping wind farms away from known bat hibernacula, and he also recommends avoiding placement of wind farms near rivers or streams that have floodplain forest along them, since bats are known to favor such places.

The other major speaker at the workshop was Dr. L. Caitlin Koberly of Applied Ecological Services, the DTE consulting company. Dr. Koberly spoke of the dangers to birds from wind turbines. For instance, about 70 Golden Eagles are killed each year at the huge Altamont, California, wind farm. This is a big impact on the population of that species.

Ongoing studies indicate that night-migrating songbirds—vireos and warblers, e.g.—are especially prone to being killed by wind turbines. Upland game birds also have a high mortality because they are fast flyers that don’t seem to be able to avoid crashing into these structures.

However, Dr. Koberly emphasized that not only do birds die from direct contact with the turbines; she considers an even more important impact to be the loss of available habitat when large numbers of turbines are built. For example, prairie chickens are known to avoid tall structures, so even if these birds don’t crash into turbines, there is still a large area of habitat being denied to them.

Wind energy will undoubtedly increase in importance. Because of the dangers to wildlife, one can only hope that careful consideration of the needs of wildlife, both in turbine design and siting will be recognized as an important component of every such project.



Landscaping for Migratory Birds

Southeast Michigan: A critical stopover site for migrant birds

Southeast Michigan, especially areas near Lake Erie, the Detroit River, and Lake St. Clair, is one of the most important areas in North America for migrating birds. Billions of birds of many dozens of species, including nearly 40 species of warblers and over 20 sparrow species, migrate through this region each spring and fall.

Yet the landscape of southeast Michigan has changed dramatically since European settlement. These changes have reduced the number of quality sites left for migrating songbirds to stop, rest, and refuel. Loss of migratory stopover site habitat has contributed to declines in many species of birds. You can help these migrants by providing food and sanctuary on your property!

Points to remember when landscaping for birds

A key goal in landscaping for migratory birds is to mimic natural, native habitats as closely as possible.

- **Use native plants.** The birds and plants in this region co-evolved. This relationship includes precisely choreographed timing of bird migration with leaf emergence, flowering, and fruiting; insect dependence on plants and birds that specialize on feeding on them; and food webs that span entire ecosystems. Use of non-native plants, even if they provide food or shelter for birds, disrupt this interconnectedness in both dramatic and subtle ways.
- **Add habitat structure.** Natural habitats consist of multiple layers of vegetation. In forested habitats, this includes leaf litter and herbaceous plants at ground level, shrubs and vines in the understory, and trees of various heights in the canopy. Old fields and even

meadows also display this layering, just on a smaller scale.

The more complex this vegetative “structure,” the more valuable it is to birds. It provides them with shelter and protection and plenty of variable surfaces on which to forage.

- **Reduce chemicals.** Some lawn chemicals harm birds and wildlife directly, while others may have sub-lethal effects (impeding successful reproduction, for example). But the most direct effect pesticides have on birds is the reduction of their food supply. The purpose of pesticides is to kill insects. Birds rely on these insects for food. Get rid of pesticides and welcome back natural pest control: birds!
- **Minimize lawn.** A lawn provides little in the way of habitat for birds or insects,

and generally requires lots of water, chemicals, and maintenance. Replacing grass with native wildflowers and shrubs helps restore native food webs, reduces time and energy spent mowing, conserves water, and reduces run-off from fertilizers and chemicals that end up in our waterways.

- **Additional features.** A source of water, brush piles, standing dead trees, and native evergreens (especially Eastern Red Cedar, *Juniperus virginiana*) are all valuable additions to your landscape.



Native plants that are especially important in spring

Spring migrants feed heavily on insects. In fact, their northbound journey often coincides with the leaf-out or bloom of trees and the simultaneous emergence of insects which rely on tender new leaves and blossoms. This special relationship co-evolved over millennia, which is why it is so important to plant native species – to preserve and foster this interconnectedness. Here are some species that are important to insects and hence to the birds that depend on them.

- **Oaks** (*Quercus* sp., especially White Oak, *Q. alba*, and Northern

Red Oak, *Q. borealis*). Many species of migratory songbirds favor feeding on oaks in spring. Acorns are also important fall and winter food for some birds and animals.

- **Willows** (*Salix* sp.)
- **Hackberry** (*Celtis occidentalis*). Fruit also important in fall.
- **Serviceberry** (*Amelanchier arborea* and *A. laevis*). Flowers and summer fruits also beneficial.
- **Native wildflowers**. Native pollinators and hummingbirds, and

seed-eating birds in fall, will appreciate a variety of flowering plants such as Wild Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*), coneflowers (*Echinacea*), Rudbeckias, asters, milkweeds, and goldenrods. Be sure that the variety you plant is native to Michigan.



Native plants that are especially important in fall

Fruit is a big part of the diet of migrating birds in fall, even for species that usually eat primarily insects. Trees

and shrubs with fruit that is about one-third of an inch across (about 8 mm) is ideally sized for songbirds! If possible, plant fruiting shrubs in groups to maximize cross-pollination and fruit display.

- **Dogwoods**, especially **Gray Dogwood** (*Cornus racemosa*) and

Red-osier Dogwood (*C. stolonifera*). Dogwood fruits have some of the highest fat contents of any native fruits, which helps birds gain weight to fuel their migration.

- **Virginia Creeper** (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*). Also very high in fat.
- **Spicebush** (*Lindera benzoin*).
- **Wild grapes** (*Vitis* sp.) High in sugars, for quick energy.
- **Arrowwood** (*Viburnum recognitum* or *V. dentatum*).
- **Poison Ivy** (*Toxicodendron radicans*). Although most people are

not likely to plant this toxic vine, if you have a wild area where you can let it grow, do so. The white berries are eagerly sought after by birds, and are very nutritious!

Avoid these non-native plants!

While some non-native species do provide food for birds, they may not be as nutritious and, most importantly, they may profoundly alter plant communities, soil chemistry and hydrology, and food webs. Because they do not have native invertebrate predators, they rarely provide insect food to birds, and without bugs to keep them in check, these plants may spread aggressively. Here are some of the worst offenders.

- Buckthorns (*Rhamnus* sp.)
- Bush honeysuckles (*Lonicera maackii*, *L. morrowii*, and *L. tatarica*) and the vining *L. japonica*.
- Autumn Olive and Russian Olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata* and *E. angustifolia*).
- Privet (*Ligustrum* sp.).

Recommended Resources

Books

- *Bringing Nature Home: How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in Our Gardens* by Douglas Tallamy <http://tinyurl.com/yohbbf>
- *Birdscaping in the Midwest* by Mariette Nowak <http://tinyurl.com/2aly76>
- *The Audubon Society Guide to Attracting Birds: Creating Natural Habitats for Properties Large and Small* by Stephen Kress <http://tinyurl.com/yrplzj>

Web sites

- Audubon at Home – www.audubon.org/bird/at_home/
- Wild Ones, native landscaping organization – <http://www.for-wild.org/>

Plant material

- Wildtype Design, Native Plants and Seeds, Mason, MI. 517-244-1140. www.wildtypeplants.com
- Native Plant Nursery, Ann Arbor, MI. 734-677-3260. www.nativeplant.com

Produced by the Rouge River Bird Observatory, University of Michigan-Dearborn. www.rrbo.org

HABITAT- A REFLECTION

by Fred Charbonneau

Habitat: the native environment of an animal or plant; the kind of place that is natural for the life and growth of an animal or plant (*Random House College Dictionary*).

Although collisions with windows are responsible for up to a billion avian deaths annually, most of us don't think of a dark sky as habitat when we think about the loss of so much wildlife. But when we consider the numbers of neo-tropical migrants that leave their winter habitat in spring, their breeding grounds in fall and take to the skies on journeys that may take them thousands of miles over water, desert, forest and urban areas, the sky is their habitat for long periods of time. Just as they need green places to feed and rest during the daytime hours, so do they need clear pathways to reach them, especially on those nights when the stars that guide them cannot be found and the storms confound their navigation systems. At these times our marvelous skyscrapers and wondrous communication systems become deadly obstacles when illuminated. By planting trees in an urban area, we provide habitat for birds and squirrels and other wild creatures. By turning off the lights at night, we provide an avenue for the safe passage of our night migrants, the birds and the bats that need the darkness to find their way home.

For more information on Safe Passage Great Lakes, please visit the Detroit Audubon web site at www.detroitaudubon.org and click on MORE INFORMATION beside the Safe Passage logo. Or enter: http://www.detroitaudubon.org/safe_passage.html

CALLING ALL WETLAND ENTHUSIASTS!

Amphibian and Marsh Bird Monitoring
in the Detroit River Area

You can smell it on the breeze, see it in the new shoots of vegetation and the return of migrating birds, and you can certainly hear it as the familiar heraldic calls announce its presence. Spring. We all get the itch this time of year, and what better way to scratch it than to get involved in wetland monitoring and conservation efforts in your area?

The Marsh Monitoring Program (MMP) is a long-term, bi-national (Canada-United States) program of Bird Studies Canada that relies on the skills and dedication of hundreds of volunteer Citizen Scientists to monitor population trends of marsh bird and anuran (frog and toad) species. Since 1995, the MMP has operated throughout the Great Lakes basin collecting population trend data and is well established as a leader in marsh monitoring both as a citizen science program and as a scientifically rigorous method for monitoring marsh-dependent bird and anuran species. Currently the MMP is seeking volunteers to monitor marshes in the Detroit River area.

All you need to participate is a penchant for conservation and a desire to get out there. No previous monitoring experience is necessary. Amphibian surveys are excellent for everyone, from novice to expert naturalist, while marsh bird surveys require intermediate bird identification skills. All volunteers receive training materials including detailed instruction booklets, audio CD, and survey forms.

For more information about the MMP, or to register, please visit www.birdscanada.org/mmpmain.html or if you'd like to monitor a marsh near you, contact Shannon Moore at moresha@umd.umich.edu, 313.570.7160.

2 NEW BIRD BOOKS REVIEWED

Reviewed by Richard Quick

The first by Bill Thompson, III, editor of *Bird Watcher's Digest*, will be of interest to those of you with youngsters you want to introduce to bird watching. It is *The Young Birder's Guide to Birds of Eastern North America* (Houghton Mifflin 2008). This is a book that youngsters can use on their own, without assistance from adults. It is part of the popular "Peterson Field Guide Series." Each of the 200 species included in the book provides a color photograph on a page filled with added information written in a style appropriate for young people. Field marks are clear; range maps are easy to read, and there is even a space for young birders to check off birds they have identified along with the date the species was originally seen. Accompanying black-and-white line drawings by Julie Zickefoose illustrate additional interesting bird behaviors or characteristics. If you deal with budding birders who live in the East, definitely think about getting this book into their hands.

A second book is the *Smithsonian Field Guide to the Birds of North America*. It is edited by Ted Floyd, editor of *Birding* magazine. This book comes in a sturdy soft cover and covers 730 species including rare birds and escaped exotics. Included are over 2500 color photos with 2 for most species, range maps and range descriptions, song and flight details. Size data are also included along with a glossary, index, Quick index and checklist.

This is probably the first field guide that includes a DVD with photos and songs of 587 downloadable songs of over 230 birds. Each species has 5 or more examples of songs and calls. An index in the book helps you find a desired track while the DVD includes an alphabetical listing. With a suggested price of \$25.00, this book gives a lot of value.

Detroit Audubon will be glad to get these books for you. Remember, DAS members get 10% off the price of books, feeders, etc. Give us a call at 248 354-4960.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION: **CLASS OF 2011 CANDIDATES**

The Board of Directors of the Detroit Audubon Society is made up of three classes of up to eight directors each. Each year, an election for the current year class must be held. A Director serves a term of three years. Any paid up member of the Society is eligible to submit their name to be elected, or be appointed (if an empty space occurs). This year the class of 2008 is up for election and will become the new class of 2011. There are currently only four members of the class. Please go to the DAS website to view the entire list of the current members of the Board.

Members seeking election are:

-**Rochelle Breitenbach:** current Board member and past president of the Board (2005-2006); member of Safe Passage and Finance committees; Rochelle is finishing her degree in water hydrology and is concerned with water quality issues.

-**Jim Bull:** current Board member and past president of the Board (2003-2004); member of Field Trip, Annual Conference committees; Jim is an instructor of Biology at both Macomb and Wayne County Community Colleges. Jim has been very active as a field trip leader, organizer of the Spring Campout and leader of many fights to protect the environment including the Dove and Humbug Marsh victories.

-**John Makris:** current Board member and past president of the Board (two terms); legal representative for the Board and member of Finance committee; John is a lawyer in private practice and has advised and assisted DAS in many legal issues. John was very active in the Detroit incinerator lawsuit back in the 80's and has been very active as a member of The Paint Creek Trail and Earthshare Boards

-**Jack Smiley:** current Board member; member of Sanctuary and Finance committees; Jack has been very active in The Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy and is currently their Director of Land Protection.

-**Leonard Weber:** a member of DAS since 1997; Leonard is a retired professor at University of Detroit/Mercy. Leonard has been a leader in establishing and running a successful recycling center in Detroit for over 10 years. He is a happy birder and contributes to the *FLYWAY* (see article in this issue)

*****Please mark your 2008 Board of Directors Election Form on the opposite page and mail it in by the end of the year. And while you are at it, consider becoming a member of the Board.**

SAVE THESE DATES

MAY 22-25 2009 (Friday through Monday) is Detroit Audubon's Annual Memorial Day Weekend Nature Get-Away. You won't want to miss this weekend with wonderful people and lots of birds including the Kirtland's Warbler. Nearby Tawas Point should be hopping with birds--we even found a new bird for the Michigan list, the Couch's Kingbird. There will be a campfire with music and s'mores, trips to the scenic Rifle River area and Lumberman's Monument and Largo Springs. The camp itself is a nature preserve and well worth exploring. Look for a registration form in the next *Flyway* and on our website in January.

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.

GEORGE O'ROURKE ESTATE

The Detroit Audubon Society expresses its deepest appreciation to the Georgia O'Rourke estate, who so thoughtfully listed our Society as one of her beneficiaries. What a wonderful way to acknowledge her feelings for the accomplishments of the Detroit Audubon.

If you would like to make Detroit Audubon a beneficiary, please contact our office. We would be pleased to help you make arrangements.

2008 Board of Directors Election Form

Please place an 'X' next to the name(s) of the candidate(s) of your choice.

Class of 2011 Candidates

- Rochelle Breitenbach
- John Makris
- Leonard Weber
- Jim Bull
- Jack Smiley

Please contact me about becoming a member of the Board of Directors. Please complete the form at the bottom of the page. We will contact you to arrange a follow up.

2008 Annual Appeal Form

I am enclosing or charging my tax deductible contribution for 2008 to be used for the purposes of the Detroit Audubon Society in the amount of:

- \$1000
- \$500
- \$100
- \$50
- OTHER (Amt \$ _____)

This gift is (in memory of) (in honor of): _____

Please send acknowledgement to:

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Holiday Gift Membership Form

I would like to send a gift membership for:

- Detroit Audubon Society only - \$15.00;
- Joint DAS/ National Audubon - \$20.00

Send membership to: (Please add additional memberships on separate sheet)

Name: _____
 Street: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone #: _____ Email: _____

Your gift membership will be acknowledged.

Payment Form

Your Name: _____
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 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone #: _____ Email: _____

Check: I have enclosed a check for (total appeal and gift membership amount): \$ _____

Charge: VISA MC Card Number _____ Exp. Date: _____

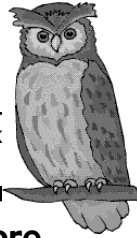
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PLEASE E-MAIL US!

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.

DAS WISHLIST - Desktop copier needed

DAS is always grateful for gifts to the Society. Our current need is for a copier we can use to produce copies for office and Board needs. We cannot use an ink-jet printer. It should use toner and have a flatbed design so we can copy pages from books and periodicals as well as single sheet documents. Speed is not very important but it should be small enough for a desktop.

Call the office at 248 354-4960 to arrange delivery or pickup.



Detroit Audubon Society
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