



MYSTERY BIRD

Can you figure out what kind of bird this is, just from this enlargement of the area around its eye? (See answer on page 18.)

SUPPORT GROWS FOR BLACK TERN PROJECT

by Erin Rowan

We are pleased to announce that our Black Tern Monitoring project at St. Clair Flats is entering its 5th year in 2017! As a staff member of Detroit Audubon, I can now be in the field two days per week, searching for and monitoring nests, and capturing and banding Black Tern adults and chicks. We hope to band more adults this year than ever before!

In addition to having more time to devote to the project this year, we have also received incredible support from our partners and volunteers! We have so many volunteers this year that we have backup volunteers! I'm never without a helping hand!

Our partners at Audubon Great Lakes and National Audubon have provided us with ArcGIS and ArcGIS technicians, so we can collect our data from smart devices in the field! This has helped streamline data collection and provides us with instant satellite maps of nest locations, which allows us to easily re-visit nests throughout the breeding season and update their status. We also receive staff support from Audubon Great Lakes/Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Bird Conservation Coordinator Caleb Putnam,

Continued on page 3



Signers (L-R) Joel Howrani Heeres, Detroit Director of Sustainability; Michigan DNR Director Keith Creagh; USFWS Region 3 Director Tom Melius; Detroit Zoo Chief Life Sciences Officer Scott Carter; and Detroit Audubon President Jim Bull.

URBAN BIRD TREATY CITY DESIGNATION FOR DETROIT

by Erin Rowan

Detroit Audubon is thrilled to announce that Detroit has become the 29th Urban Bird Treaty City in the USA! The Urban Bird Treaty Program is a partnership between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and cities across the country to create bird-friendly cities and connect citizens, especially youth, to nature and the outdoors through birding and conservation. Other notable Urban Bird Treaty Cities include New York City, San Francisco, and Chicago.

The Urban Bird Treaty program has four focal areas: habitat conservation (through invasive species control, native plant restoration and research), hazard reductions (through bird-safe building design and Safe Passage or Lights Out programs), citizen science activities (such as Safe Passage, Christmas Bird Count, and Project Feeder Watch) and education and outreach (through birding, field trips with the public, and in-class visits).

The Metro Detroit Nature Network (MDNN), of which Detroit Audubon is a proud member, submitted the application and agenda for the Urban Bird Treaty City Designation for Detroit in March of this year. Detroit Audubon's Research Coordinator, Erin Rowan, and former Program Coordinator, Terra Weiland, were among the four main authors of the agenda, along with Tom Schneider from the Detroit Zoological Society and John Hartig from the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge. This document outlines dozens of conservation, education and outreach efforts being done by MDNN partners and others (non-profits, state and federal agencies, municipal agencies and academic institutions) in the 7-county region surrounding Detroit. It's inspiring to see how much wonderful work is being done in the Metro Detroit area!

Detroit Audubon was honored to be a part of this process, and thanks the Metro Detroit Nature Network, John Hartig and Tom Schneider for all their hard work on this great achievement!

The Urban Bird Treaty Agenda will be up on our [website soon](#) for you to review.

Learn more about the Urban Bird Treaty Program here: <https://www.fws.gov/birds/grants/urban-bird-treaty.php>

To learn more about the Metro Detroit Nature Network and how your organization can become a member, go [HERE](#).

Read Detroit Audubon President Jim Bull's remarks at the signing event on page 2.



SWIFT NIGHT OUT SEPT. 23-24

Be amazed! Witness the spectacle of up to 50,000 Chimney Swifts swirl around like a tornado at Swift Night Out September 23 and 24, 6 PM to sunset.

Join us at the Swift Sanctuary and Historic Winery Building, 31505 Grand River Ave., Farmington, MI, just west of Orchard Lake Road. This is likely THE largest roost of Chimney Swifts in North America!

Bring a lawn chair to watch this incredible show! There will be a band, refreshments, a raffle, games, books on swifts for adults and children, and exhibit tables to add to the festive atmosphere. For those into the spookiness of the season, after the swifts have gone into rest for the night, tickle your spine if you dare by walking through the winery's haunted house, acclaimed as one of SE Michigan's best. Proceeds from the haunted house go for chimney repairs and maintenance.

This event will help raise funds for the expensive upkeep of this historic chimney and to help support the Live Cam and research/educational efforts of Detroit Audubon.

In 2017 over 250 people gathered each night at the historic Winery.

Last year, after the band finished playing, Detroit Audubon President Jim Bull welcomed

Continued on page 4

Flyway

A publication of
Detroit Audubon

4605 Cass Avenue
Detroit, MI 48201-1256

313-960-3399 staff@DetroitAudubon.org
www.detroitaudubon.org

Program Coordinator:

Jac Kyle

Research Coordinator:

Erin Rowan

Both of our staff members work part-time and are often out of the office conducting programs or research. They will return calls/emails as soon as possible, but there may be delays.

Flyway Editors:

Jim Bull, Jac Kyle, and Erin Rowan

Layout: Tana Moore

Flyway is published four times a year (one print issue, three digital issues) for 5,000+ National Audubon Society members in Southeastern Michigan.

Opinions expressed by the authors and editors do not necessarily reflect the policy of the Detroit Audubon Society.

Articles that appear in the Flyway may be reproduced freely as long as Detroit Audubon is credited.

Original articles, photos and artwork are welcome. Email to jac@detroitaudubon.org

Deadline for Fall Issue:

Sept. 1st, 2017



DETROIT
AUDUBON



Taken from remarks by Detroit Audubon President, Dr. James N. (Jim) Bull on the signing of Detroit's Urban Bird Treaty, May 22, 2017.

Detroit is known as the Auto Capital of the World, and for the Motown Sound; but today with the signing of this treaty, we hope that Detroit also becomes known

also as a "Bird" City—A Mecca for birds and other wildlife. You don't have to go Alaska, or even to northern Michigan to see a Bald Eagle anymore—it isn't unusual to see Bald Eagle flying up or down river, or even over downtown Detroit. Once driven to the brink of extinction by the pesticide DDT, today Bald Eagles have 28 nests in SE Michigan, several near or on islands in the Detroit River. Peregrine Falcons, also almost driven to extinction by DDT, now nest on buildings, the Ambassador Bridge, and the Detroit Zoo water tower. And on Sunday, May 21, Detroit recorded its first migrating Kirtland's Warbler, Michigan's endangered comeback bird, on Central Avenue on Belle Isle.

We just celebrated Endangered Species Day on May 19, and we now know of three endangered bird species that have come back spectacularly, due to the Endangered Species Act. All three spend some or all of their time in or near Detroit!

There is good reason for birds to stop or live here year 'round. We are at the intersection of two major flyways—the Atlantic and Mississippi—and the Detroit River is a natural north-south flight corridor for migratory birds. Natural areas along the river provide important stopover habitat where birds can refuel. Over 350 species of birds live some portion of their lives here—at least 150 of which breed here; of that number 30 species are waterfowl.

Over 300,000 Canvasbacks, scaups, and other ducks use the Detroit River and Lake St. Clair as important stopover and even winter habitat as long as the water stays open, feeding on the abundant water celery beds (this is the sunny south for them, believe it or not!). Several thousand Tundra Swans also congregate here on their way to and from their Arctic nesting grounds, also attracted by the wild celery beds.

Farmington has what we believe to be the largest Chimney Swift roost in North America—with as many as 50,000 roosting in the chimney of the historic Winery during just one night. Detroit Audubon is now a partner with the Swift Sanctuary to help people enjoy this spectacle and to help raise funds to maintain and repair this historic chimney so it remains a swift habitat.

BULLY PULPIT SUMMER 2017

By James N. (Jim) Bull, Ph.D., President



Lake Erie Metropark and Point Mouillee constitute one of the three best places in North America for watching hawk migration—with a spectacular record of over 555,000 broad-winged hawks coming through this area in just one day back in September 1999. We even have western Golden Eagles flying over this area!

Detroit Audubon has been promoting the enjoyment and protection of birds in this area since 1939.

Our Program Coordinator Terra Weiland and our Research Coordinator, Erin Rowan did much of the writing and editing of the application and the Detroit Area Bird Conservation Plan that is culminating in this designation of Detroit as an Urban Bird Treaty City. I thank them for their efforts, along with Tom Schneider, Curator of Birds at the Detroit Zoo, and John Hartig, manager of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, who was the catalyst for this whole project.

Detroit Audubon moved back to Detroit in 2015, with our office now in Midtown. We have been honored to take our place in helping to shape the renaissance of Detroit as a green city since our return to the city. We have been playing our part through our education, conservation and research programs and projects.

Through our EDUCATION programs we are helping to open the eyes of city dwellers to the birds that they share this city with, to encourage them to become citizen scientists, and to nurture the

next generation of conservationists. To that end, we sponsor 25-30 birding field trips per year, including many in the city of Detroit including Elmwood Cemetery, Rouge Park, Belle Isle, Milliken State Park right next door; pheasant walks in various places, and school programs for students in the city and suburbs. With more support that will flow out of this treaty, we hope to reach many more students of all ages, from toddlers through college and beyond. Outside of school, we nurture interest in birds through our Young Birder's Clubs, with a toddlers' group now forming (Nestlings), elementary and middle school groups (Fledglings) and a teen group yet to be named. We invite more participation from these youth here today, and any others you may know about—help us connect with them! We also partner with Belle Isle Nature Center (run by the Detroit Zoo) on an 8-week summer nature day camp for low-income youth. This summer will be our third summer



Continued on page 3

BLACK TERN PROJECT

Continued from page 1

remotely and in the field when it is needed most (peak season, right before most of our eggs hatch, when most of our adults get captured and banded!).

The Detroit Zoo has also provided us with staff support by sending one of their Zookeepers out with me weekly to assist with all aspects of the project, but who has also been candling eggs at the nests to determine how old they are (i.e. this egg was just laid, or this egg is seven days old). Even though Black Tern eggs are small and sometimes hard to see through, this has helped us better determine the hatch date of some of our nests this year. The Detroit Zoo also provided us with camera traps, which we hope to set up at two nests this year to capture some footage of potential predators at St. Clair Flats.

The DNR has provided us with staff support and gear every year! It's their boat, gas and chest-high waders that get me around St. Clair Flats, and their staff that help me whenever we need more hands on deck!

Dave Shealer from Loras College is our Black Tern guru and offers his expertise on adult capture, bands, and banding permits to the project. Dave also joins us out on the flats during peak season when most adults are captured and banded.

Dave Moore, a new partner from Environment Canada's Canadian Wildlife Service, has just provided the project with a Motus tower this summer (<https://motus.org/>) and nanotags for the Black Terns, which will help us gain tremendous insight into their movements both on and off the breeding grounds. Dave also joined us for our big week of adult capture this year, and provided me with training on how to attach the nanotags to the adult terns.

Thank you to all our dedicated volunteers and partners for making this field season incredible! We are excited to see what the future holds for the Black Tern Project!

BULLY PULPIT *continued from page 2*

partnering on that program. We help fund and provide programming at the Gabriel Richard Park Birding Station across from Belle Isle with four permanently mounted spotting scopes and a wayside exhibit about Birds of the Detroit River.



Blue Grosbeak.
Sharon Korte photo

Through CONSERVATION AND RESEARCH: Our Detroit Area Native Grasslands Initiative is working to bring back native grasslands in Detroit and beyond. Before European settlement of the area, we use to have large enough grasslands to support American Bison! Grassland birds and other species are disappearing. Unlike wetlands and forests, there are no laws protecting native grasslands. They have an image problem—looking like just unkempt areas to many. So, we have a lot of education to do to help the people of Detroit to appreciate the treasure they have in their remaining grasslands. Our Conservation Committee is taking the lead, as we agreed to begin

on-the-ground efforts by adopting five parks in Detroit to turn back into native grasslands. Windsor has its 600-acre Ojibway Prairie—maybe one day Detroit will have a comparable size prairie that its citizens can enjoy on this side of the river too! We also conduct grassland monitoring in Huron Clinton Metroparks with volunteer citizen scientists to help document changes in bird populations, as areas are managed to become higher quality native grasslands. We also will conduct education and outreach to help folks better appreciate native grasslands (to deal with that image problem). To that end, one of our board members, Diane Cheklich, a professional filmmaker, is starting work on a documentary on Detroit's pheasants that will help folks appreciate grasslands and the native birds that need them in addition to this attractive naturalized exotic species.

We are monitoring the Black Tern population in the St. Clair Flats area, one of the last strongholds of this declining species. Through the efforts of our research coordinator and partnership with the Detroit Zoo, which has provided much logistical help and volunteers, we are conducting research to find out why it is in decline so we can help implement strategies to save this species.

With increased support we hope will follow from this treaty, we hope to restart our monitoring of chimneys in Detroit to document other important Chimney Swift roosts and to take action to protect and maintain them.



Black Tern chick.
Diane Cheklich photo

**For the Latest News from Detroit Audubon
be sure to frequently visit our website:
www.detroitaudubon.org**



Our Safe Passage Great Lakes project encourages building owners to turn off their lights at night during spring and fall migration to help stem the tide of millions of birds killed each year, confused by these unnatural lights. We also are promoting bird-safe building design to minimize other causes of bird-building casualties. We monitor dead and injured birds that hit buildings to document the need and to help demonstrate the effect of protective measures. We need more staff and volunteers to do this project justice, and

are hopeful this treaty will help spur that needed support.

This Urban Bird Treaty designation will raise the profile and recognition of the important part birds play in our urban landscape.

The Regional Bird Conservation Plan we helped devise will help us and our partners in the Metro Detroit Nature Network, of which we are a founding member, to secure funding, volunteers, and other support necessary to take the next important steps on bird-related education, research, and conservation projects.

And, it will help Detroit Audubon secure funding, volunteers, and other support, to more effectively play its pivotal role in helping people in the Detroit area enjoy birds, become citizen scientists to help us study birds, and to involve more people in the effort to protect and expand quality habitat for our feathered friends. We are already a "bird city;" but with this treaty, we will be able to make this city and the whole metro area even more hospitable for birds and birders. For instance, with more native plants along the Detroit River, we may attract and support more songbirds stopping over during migration, helping them refuel for the next leg of their journey and giving urban dwellers a new way to enjoy the city—to get to know its wild side!

We are honored and privileged to be part of this effort and one of the signers of this Urban Bird City Treaty. Today we can say with pride, "This city is FOR the birds!"

The next generation of conservationists in Detroit.



CREATING ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDS THIS SUMMER AT BELLE ISLE NATURE CENTER

by Jac Kyle

Detroit Audubon is grateful to continue our partnership with Belle Isle Nature Center's Summer Nature Camp for another exciting summer!

This camp engages Detroit youth, ages 5 - 12 in a week of fun and informative hands-on placed-based activities that connect campers to their local environment.

Detroit Audubon will introduce campers to bird watching by taking hikes near and through bird habitat, such as the trails behind the Nature Center, and out to the Common Tern colony.

Youth will learn how to use binoculars, identify birds and learn specific actions they can take to promote a healthy environment for birds and people.

This camp is offered free of charge, with priority given to those with demonstrated need. Currently the camp is full, but more information about Belle Isle Nature Center and the camp can be found [HERE](#).

FLYWAY HAS GONE GREEN!

Only the spring issue of the Flyway is printed and mailed annually. For the other three online issues, we need your email address.

If you, or a member you know, has missed an issue of the Flyway, please contact the office at (313) 960-3399 or Staff@DetroitAudubon.org to provide us with the correct email address.

Rest assured that DAS will not share or sell your email address to any other person or organization.

SWIFT NIGHT OUT SEPTEMBER 23 AND 24 *continued from page 1*

everybody and give a short talk about Chimney Swift natural history; then we all sat back, waiting for the swifts to return to the chimney for the night. At first there were only two or three, then after a long while just a few more—this might be a slow night. After all, these are migrants roosting for a night or two, so there could be lulls between flocks. But as we watched, a few more came, then a few more, then the numbers started growing exponentially into a giant swirling tornado of birds. To our amazement, even after we had confidently counted at least 6,000, they kept coming. They'd swirl around the chimney, apparently sampling the air for the right temperature to enter. Some would dip in and swirl back out. The whole tornado would then stream widely out to one side, but then appear again in few minutes coming back from the other direction. It was heart in-your-throat impressive! You could hear the loud "oohs and ahs" from the amazed audience as they beheld this swarm acting as one huge living organism. And, via the Stephen Stackpole Memorial Chimney Swift LiveCam, we could watch them fly inside the 40-foot chimney and cling to the bricks with their tiny feet. Larry Schwitters, who installed the camera, gets a more accurate count in the morning via video as they leave. His verdict—18,000 each night. Just incredible, but some nights there have been as many as 50,000 roosting in this chimney in one night—who knows how many we'll have this year?

Detroit Audubon signed a partnership agreement with the Swift Sanctuary last summer, including a check for about \$3,500 to underwrite the purchase of the camera installed in May 2014, and the Internet cost to livestream the video from April to November for at least the next five years. Detroit Audubon also agreed to provide educational programs at the Sanctuary, and will be exploring ways to do research with the swifts as well. We hope to use citizen scientists to learn more about swifts in general and those that roost here. Detroit Audubon has also agreed to help with fundraising to underwrite the tremendous cost of repairing and maintaining the old chimney that shelters these migrating swifts. Pieces of brick and mortar are missing, making it look pockmarked when examined closely. Of course, without the chimney, the swifts will go away.

If we can document the incredible number of Chimney Swifts using this chimney, it could be declared one of Michigan's Important Bird Areas (IBAs).

Fall is THE big time for the swifts. We welcome everybody to join us at 6 PM on September 23 and 24. Detroit Audubon is honored to be part of saving this chimney, underwriting the LiveCam, and promoting awareness of and research about this incredible migratory stopover site.



An incredible sight: We can see the enormous flock of Chimney Swifts circle into the chimney, and view them inside the stack via LiveCam. Come out on Sept. 23 and 24 to see North America's largest roosting site for Chimney Swifts at peak season.

RING-BILLED GULL RESCUE AND MITIGATION

Although Ring-billed Gulls typically nest on rocky islands and gravel beaches, and feed almost exclusively on fish, many years ago they discovered garbage as not only a supplement but a primary food source, which has caused their population to explode. More recently, they have begun to use vacant parking lots and other inland areas for nesting as well. One such location is the plethora of open spaces in and around the Detroit Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) near the Jefferson Avenue Bridge over the Rouge River.

Per WWTP staff, the colony grew exponentially this year—from about 2-3,000 to perhaps well over 10,000 birds. The Jefferson Avenue Bridge had been closed for two years, causing a steep decline in traffic. That may have allowed the gulls to have higher fledging success. This year the bridge is open and I-75 South is closed, rerouting traffic to Fort St. and Jefferson Avenue instead. So, traffic in and around the WWTP and bridge has increased dramatically.

Lethal combination: The Ring-billed Gull population at this site has exploded, and so has traffic.



WWTP and other City of Detroit staff also put up a road sign reading “Wildlife Area Ahead” and set barrels to restrict traffic. Construction crews seem to move the barrels and sign to the roadside, limiting their effectiveness. We have asked permission to put up tarps to provide shade, which we hope will discourage chicks from wandering into the street. Michigan DNR necropsies of some of the carcasses showed major dehydration as cause of death. Several rains provided puddles from which some of the chicks are drinking. (They usually get the water they need from the food brought by their parents.)

Detroit Audubon President Jim Bull brought a shovel one afternoon to clean the dead birds off the street so that chicks wouldn’t be attracted to the carcasses. The Department of Public Works is now periodically cleaning up the dead birds in the road as well.

There are fewer dead birds in the road as of July. Weather helped, and as the breeding season wanes there will be fewer chicks. However, some adults whose first nests failed will try again, creating additional problems.

Volunteers helped us rescue some of the birds with broken wings, broken legs, and head injuries; and those suffering from dehydration and starvation. We could only help a very few. Not many wildlife rehabbers accept gulls (birds in general can be a challenge to rehabilitate and larger birds require more space). Thus far, three gulls have been euthanized, four passed away during rehabilitation (they were too far gone), and another six (four small babies and two juveniles) have just been rescued and taken to Howell Nature Center. We hope they are able to successfully recover!

We want to thank the WWTP for cooperating and doing what they can. The sign they put was helpful. A “SLOW DOWN, WILDLIFE” sign would be better, but getting approval for a sign from the state or county is a long process, and the gulls’ needs were immediate. We are still working on permission to put up shade tarps. Ultimately, the long-term solution is to discourage the gulls from nesting in this area—it is just not a safe place for them. Various strategies are being explored with the US Fish and Wildlife Service in Lansing. We’d also like to thank the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Division, Detroit Department of Sustainability,

Detroit Department of Public Works, State Rep. Stephanie Chang’s office, The Wild Bird Center in Ann Arbor, Howell Nature Center, and Friends of the Rouge for all their help. The latter three provided not only advice but actual volunteer help on the ground. A huge thank you to our volunteers for assisting, and leading, gull rescue efforts!

This also spurred board member Joe Rashid, who works for ioby crowdfunder’s Detroit office, to start a Detroit Audubon \$10,000 crowdfunding campaign for bird rescues and other unplanned emergencies. We need to take the lead on this issue, but it was not budgeted for in terms of staff time or equipment like tarps, poles, ropes and stakes. This fund will help provide the resources to respond to emergency situations when they arise.

Thanks for all your interest and support.



Puddles from rainfall helped some of the chicks survive.

At the same time, there were unusually hot, dry conditions just as most chicks were leaving their nests to find shade. There was little shade to be found. As chicks wandered around, many were hit by cars. Their carcasses left in the road attracted hungry and thirsty chicks, which put them in jeopardy as well. Frustrated drivers are going up to twice the posted speed limit in this area. Also, the most fatalities occur a partially fenced-in area that serves as a bus turn-around (the city limits are just on the other side of the bridge). This problem was originally brought to our attention by Sally Petrella at the Friends of the Rouge.

Research Coordinator Erin Rowan stepped into the fray, despite her Black Tern research and grasslands breeding bird monitoring right at their peak season. She worked with our contacts at the City of Detroit Sustainability Department and WWTP to put up snow fencing to keep the chicks from entering the road and being struck by cars. While this is helping along the bottom of larger gates, some chain-link fences that lack additional fencing (or with a soft plastic orange fencing along the bottom) are causing additional deaths, as birds’ heads and wings are getting caught in the gaps. Silt fencing with a very fine mesh would be better.



OFF TO A NEW ADVENTURE!

By Terra Weiland

As you can read at right, this fall I'll be pursuing a Masters in Landscape Architecture at the University of Michigan, and Jac Kyle will be taking over as Program Coordinator for Detroit Audubon.

While I will obviously miss Detroit Audubon and partaking in all the wonderful things the organization does for the environment, I am looking forward to using all that I have learned at this position to inform my work as a Landscape Architect.

Detroit Audubon has introduced me to a number of truly remarkable communities: its volunteers, the people that attend our events, and the students that I have visited. It is a abundantly clear to me that birders are a really special group to work with and be around.

I want to thank Sara, Jim, Erin, Jac, and our team of volunteers for being excellent champions of the environment and for all that we have achieved in the almost two years that I have been with the organization.

Finally, I want to thank everyone who made this position possible. It was, without a doubt, one of the most informative career experiences that I could have ever hoped for. I look forward to continuing as a volunteer for Detroit Audubon and going on field trips, especially the bird walks at Elmwood Cemetery. I know we are in good hands with Jac Kyle taking over as Program Coordinator.

If you would like to join me and volunteer with Detroit Audubon, you can check out our [website](#) for a complete list of volunteer opportunities!



FAREWELL TO TERRA WEILAND AND HELLO TO JAC KYLE

by Jim Bull

It has come time to say goodbye to yet another Detroit Audubon Program Coordinator—this time, Terra Weiland. Terra has left her position to begin graduate studies at the University of Michigan School for Environment and Sustainability (formerly the School of Natural Resources and Environment) to prepare to become a Landscape Architect. I had invited her major professor, Bob Greise, to be one of the speakers at our November 2016 Annual Conservation Conference. (Guess I'd better be careful of who I invite to speak at our conferences.) I know she'll excel in her new field—that is just what she does, but she could also have pursued a degree in environmental education, because she is such a gifted, creative, and effective educator—she just seemed to be in her element with kids.

We have been so lucky to have her on board. We couldn't have asked for a better, more enthusiastic, or qualified person to fill the shoes of our first (also extremely talented) Program Coordinator, Sara Cole. Terra took the networking Sara had started and turned it into major programs that reach large numbers of schoolchildren, youth groups, and

the general public, especially new birders. She has raised tabling to a high art. She was such a good networker as well, creating a number of lasting partnerships and relationships for Detroit Audubon. People just love her and gravitate to her. It is always so clear that she has a good time on her programs, and that she values and enjoys the people she leads. Her enthusiasm is quite contagious. Elmwood Cemetery Walks and pheasants became Terra's signature programs. She was interviewed by Chuck Gaidica on Channel 4's "Live in the D," and did a splendid job (link on our website). On the Black Tern educational and fundraising cruise last year, on the boat, she created Lake St. Clair Spritzer mocktails in our 75th anniversary mugs with sprigs of mint and lemon—real works of art. She also persuaded a talented baker friend of hers to make cupcakes topped with floating tern nests on the icing.

I wish Terra could have stayed with us longer, but she really moved us so far ahead that she left us in very good stead. She wants to stay involved with Detroit Audubon as a volunteer, and was elected unanimously as our newest board member. She will join her predecessor Sara Cole on that esteemed body.

We couldn't be in better hands than those of her successor, Jac Kyle, who became our third Program Coordinator on May 15. In fact, Terra strongly recommended we try to hire Jac for that position. Most recently, Jac was education director for The Greening of Detroit, having worked in environmental education in the Pacific Northwest, Madagascar, and Nicaragua (where she put together a program to train National Park rangers). Jac studied at the University of Wisconsin and University of Cape Town, South Africa; and just started work on a Master's Degree in Education. She is also super connected with the educational and environmental community in the Detroit area. Jac has lots of energy and a great sense of humor, and loves to dance (she even gets us dancing at our staff meetings!). You'll just have to meet her! (See her self-introduction at right.)



(L-R) Departing and incoming Program Coordinators Terra Weiland and Jac Kyle, connecting with new birders.



EXCITED TO TAKE FLIGHT WITH DETROIT AUDUBON!

by Jac Kyle

Luckily, I have had the pleasure of meeting many of you already; but for those I have not met yet, I am the new Program Coordinator!

Before Terra Weiland left, I worked alongside her during her last three weeks so she could pass the torch and hand off all the wonderful partnerships and programs she developed.

Prior to this role, I was the Environmental Education Manager at the Greening of Detroit. There, I connected both youth and adults to local green spaces and stewardship opportunities.

I look forward to continuing my environmental work in and around Detroit, now focusing more on fostering appreciation and conservation of birds and the environment that we all share.

In my first month at Detroit Audubon I jumped right in, engaging 172 students during field trips and education events!

I am a new birder who is trying to learn the birds of the area, thankfully with much help from the knowledgeable and dedicated members of Detroit Audubon. My perspective as a new birder will guide me as I build partnerships and expand programs aimed to welcome newcomers to the birding community.

I look forward to working with and learning from all of you, so please don't hesitate to reach out.

My email is jac@detroitaudubon.org and I hope to hear from you!

DETROIT AUDUBON ADOPTS NEW MISSION STATEMENT

The Detroit Audubon board is immersed in developing a strategic plan to establish priorities and set our direction for the next five years. As a first step in the process, the board of directors adopted a new mission statement. It captures much of what was in our previous mission statement, but much more succinctly. It is meant to be easily remembered so that it is easily repeated and, more importantly, internalized. It will help us communicate the purpose of our organization much more clearly.

We also adopted three pillars of our mission. They are not part of the mission statement itself, but are key areas through which we work to achieve our mission.

The work on this statement and the strategic plan began at a weekend board retreat the first weekend of March 2017. It was perfected by the new Detroit Audubon Futures Committee, which is also doing the hard work of putting the “meat” on the bones of the plan begun at the retreat.

Here it is:

Detroit Audubon Mission Statement

adopted June 2017

The mission of Detroit Audubon is to foster the appreciation and conservation of birds and the environment we share.

*Our three pillars or mission areas are:
Education, Research, and Action.*



AUDUBON GREAT LAKES CLIMATE WATCH UPDATE

by Brian Merlos

In just the first few months on staff with Audubon Great Lakes as the Field Organizer in Michigan, I am so proud of the work we have accomplished! It has been a spectacular treat working with this dedicated community and I wanted to provide a brief recap of some of our events as well as share some opportunities to get involved over the coming months.

We started in the early spring by discussing some of the ways we can bring birds to our backyards while combatting climate change by planting native species. This is a fantastic program that promises to help both the birds in our migratory flyway as well as those that winter here in Michigan. This is a great way to beautify your yard and help combat climate change. If you are interested in finding the plants that are right for you, check out the Native Plants Database here:

audubon.org/native-plants

June saw the inaugural run of Climate Watch here in Michigan! This is a nationwide citizen science program that takes your birding skills and compiles the results to better understand how birds are responding to climate change. We hope that with our participation, we can do more to conserve the birds we love, here at home. Thanks to all those that participated and the survey will return in January. Visit www.audubon.org/conservation/climate-watch-program to learn more!

Finally, I was honored to present at the June Nature program on Belle Isle to discuss Audubon's commitment to climate change and provide tools so you can help to conserve healthy bird populations. I offered some positive, hopeful, and active conservation topics that Audubon suggests using so that we can take our work further—building a consensus for action, even to those who may be skeptical. Audubon is proud to be America's most effective conservation network, and we couldn't do it without your support I'll be returning to the Belle Isle Nature Center in July to facilitate an in-depth conversation and help empower our members to be advocates for birds as we all face an uncertain future as our climate changes. I hope you will join me.

As always, if you have questions, feel free to reach out to me at bmerlos@audubon.org and I hope to see you soon!

PHEASANT WALKS!

By Diane Cheklich, Detroit Audubon Conservation Committee Chair

Did you know that the City of Detroit has a population of Ring-necked Pheasants that are frequently seen in the city's open spaces? We are not aware of any other major city that has pheasants walking around in it; this seems to be unique to Detroit. So Detroit Audubon decided to celebrate the city's pheasants by hosting two pheasant field trips this spring.

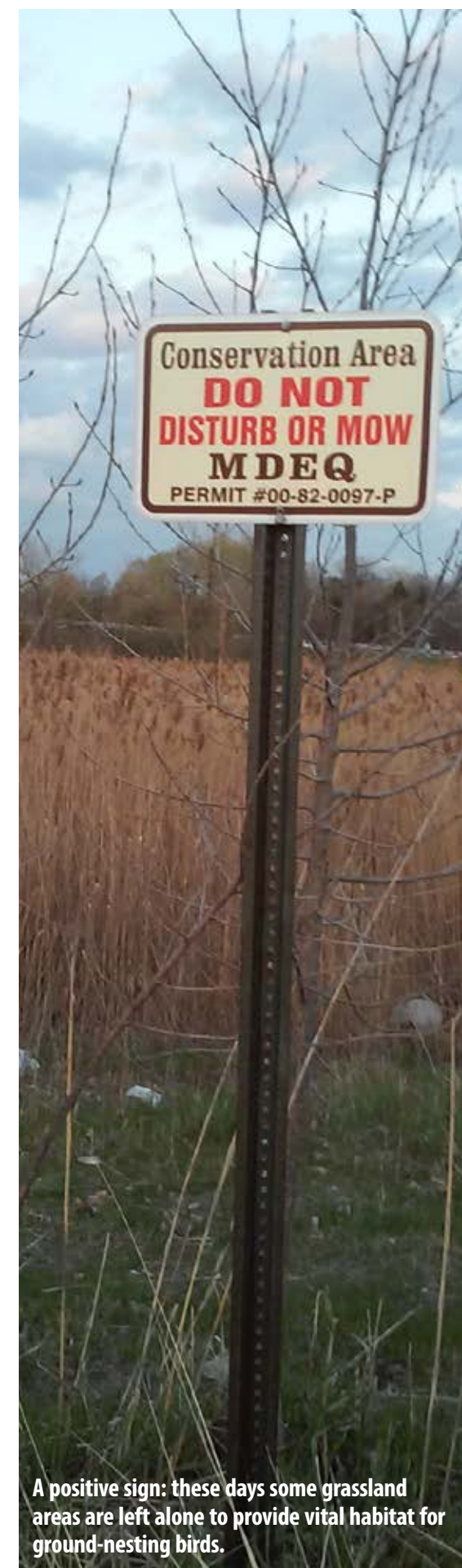
Our first pheasant walk was in early April and the second one was in mid-May, near some open spaces on the city's east side. And the pheasants did not disappoint! Pheasants are shy birds, so they're not always easy to see, but their loud squawks help birders locate them. People enjoyed the walks, and the local media even joined in on the fun—Channel 4 did a very nice TV story on our April walk!

Pheasants are grassland birds, and grassland habitat is in serious decline all over the country. So, one takeaway from the pheasant walks was: in order to help sustain populations of pheasants and other grassland birds, it's important to protect the spaces where they live. Sometimes our inclination is to mow areas with long grass, but this can destroy nests and babies of ground-nesting birds like pheasants. Nesting takes place from mid-April to the end of July, so if mowing is necessary it's best to mow later in the year.

Detroit Audubon hopes to host more pheasant walks in the future. Check our [website](#) or our [Facebook page](#) for field trip schedules.



Ring-necked Pheasant, posing for a Bird-a-Thon team.
Bruce Szczechowski photo



A positive sign: these days some grassland areas are left alone to provide vital habitat for ground-nesting birds.

BINOCULAR BUDDIES THANK YOU

by Terra Weiland

We want to express our deepest thanks to our members, especially those who gave anonymously, for your contributions to our Binocular Buddies Crowdfunding Campaign. We reached our funding goal before the start of spring migration and have already taken multiple classrooms out birding!

Your contributions help support our education efforts in Metro Detroit and our goal of expanding outreach to local children with quality environmental education programs, like our birding mentoring program for 4th-graders at Ronald Brown Academy.

Metro Detroit is a great place for wildlife. We want to inspire the next generation of conservationists to protect the natural world.

Before crowdfunding, we had just 12 pairs of binoculars—not enough for an entire class. We had to be “binocular buddies” and share. The large, heavy binoculars were also difficult for younger children to use.

Birdwatching with binoculars is a fun and exciting way for students to interact with nature and feel more connected to it. Detroit Audubon regularly visits classrooms; having binoculars for every student allows us to be more effective in our mission. We teach students how to use binoculars, how to look for and identify birds and help start that spark that leads to a lifetime of loving nature.

Since we purchased two classroom sets of binoculars and a spotting scope, we can now take a full schoolbus of children birding! The binoculars and spotting scope we purchased are also an appropriate size for adults to borrow on our field trips to nearby birding hotspots, like Elmwood Cemetery, so they too can experience birdwatching.

It is generous contributions like yours from our valued members and friends that make all of this possible. Thank you!



Mourning Doves nesting. Curt Hofer photo



Sandhill Crane. Bruce Szczexhowski photo

DOVES AND SANDHILL CRANES IN CROSS-HAIRS AGAIN

In a front-page [article](#) in the Detroit Free Press on Tuesday, June 27, Keith Matheny reported that the Michigan United Conservation Clubs passed two resolutions at its recent annual convention calling for Michigan to initiate hunting seasons on both Sandhill Cranes and Mourning Doves. Detroit Audubon President Jim Bull wrote the following letter to the editor of the Detroit Free Press:

“I am writing regarding the article, “Despite Pushback, Hunters Take Aim at Songbirds” in today’s paper. While Detroit Audubon is not anti-hunting and has supported measures to control Mute Swan populations, we are strongly opposed to hunting of Mourning Doves, Sandhill Cranes, and predator species like Gray Wolves. We were part of a coalition that fought Mourning Dove hunting with a successful petition drive and as the article noted, that the referendum not only passed 61-39%, but won in every Michigan county. At the time, we warned that if Mourning Dove hunting was approved, Sandhill Cranes would be next, which hunting groups denied. Now the truth comes out.

There are many reasons to not hunt Mourning Doves—they don’t provide much food, lead shot would poison other birds, they look too much like the declining American Kestrel, thus it would put that species in danger, to name a few. Nick Green asserts that if we do not allow hunting Sandhill Cranes would overpopulate. Does he propose hunting every species that has a large population? There are other ways to manage wildlife than hunting. American Robins could arguably be hunted as well—is he going to propose we hunt this common backyard bird as well to prevent them becoming overpopulated? We hope not.

Detroit Audubon supports hunting but believes there are more than enough species to hunt in Michigan right now without adding to the number. It is already hard to enjoy watching birds in the fall because so many good birding areas are closed during that season (and yes, we know that hunter dollars paid for many of those areas). Fall is THE best time to watch the gathering of Sandhill Cranes on their migration south. Non-hunters’ ability to enjoy this spectacular migration of what is a favorite of many birders could be severely impaired if this proposal is adopted. Don’t take this enjoyment away from us. Detroit Audubon’s position is that just because a species can be hunted (and we do not concede that is the case with these two species) does not mean that it should be hunted. Can’t some species simply be enjoyed without feeling the need for some to be able to kill them? We believe that Mourning Doves and Sandhill Cranes are in that group of birds that people should just enjoy by simply watching them. A huge majority of Michiganders agree and their wishes should be respected.”



Kirtland's Warbler on Belle Isle.
Stevie Kuroda photo

A FIRST! KIRTLAND’S WARBLER SIGHTED ON BELLE ISLE

Detroit Audubon has long supported efforts to recover the endangered Kirtland’s Warbler, which nests almost exclusively in Michigan; even co-leading an effort with Michigan Audubon about 10 years ago to make that species our state bird. Detroit Audubon president Jim Bull, the longest serving volunteer on the Kirtland’s Warbler Annual Census (he started on the census in 1978), represented Detroit Audubon to the Kirtland’s Warbler Recovery Team for years and now serves as Vice-Chairman of the Kirtland’s Warbler Alliance which has been established to increase awareness and to help assure continued support and funding for Kirtland’s Warbler management. The bird’s recovery is an amazing success story, with population increasing from 167 singing males (an estimated breeding population of 334, counting females) to over 2,500 (or a breeding population of over 5,000!) The recovery goal was 1,000 pair or 2,000 breeding birds on a sustained basis. The species will soon be downlisted from endangered to threatened.

While Detroit Audubon has partly justified its interest in the Kirtland’s Warbler on the belief that it very likely stops in the Detroit area on migration or could do so, there has been not positive documentation until this year. On Sunday, May 21, 2017 a singing male Kirtland’s was found on Central Avenue on Belle Isle by Joyce Peterson at 9:30 AM. Jim Bull’s Bird-A-

Thon team was on the island that morning but missed it due to torrential rains. Allen Chartier found the bird around 2 PM, watched it [sing](#) for about an hour, and was able to get video. Others took photos of the bird. This sighting came just in time for Detroit’s Urban Bird Treaty City signing ceremony the next morning.

ELMWOOD CEMETERY BIRD WALKS

By Terra Weiland

Co-Leading our Elmwood Cemetery Bird Walks with Joannie Capuano has been one of the greatest joys of my tenure as Detroit Audubon Program Coordinator. We have had incredible bird sightings, from a Kingfisher perched above the Fisher family mausoleum, to over half a dozen warblers on one walk. Elmwood Cemetery is a birding hotspot and a hidden gem in Detroit.

Our Elmwood Cemetery Birds Walks are a unique experience—a combined history and bird walk. Joannie Capuano is so well versed in the famous Cemetery's history that, even though I've co-led over a dozen walks with her, I hear at least one new fascinating piece of local history on every walk. Only at Elmwood Cemetery can you visit a supposedly haunted grave, while watching a Northern Flicker nearby.

I have been very pleased to see expert and beginning birders alike come together on this walk. Elmwood Cemetery has been a great way to reach new birders; it's conveniently located and beautiful, and Detroit Audubon can provide binoculars and expertise on how to begin birdwatching.

Elmwood is a wonderful place to bird, and to just enjoy one of the only places that still features Detroit's original topography. It is also the city's first and only certified arboretum.

Elmwood walks will continue throughout the year with Joannie Capuano.

Upcoming Elmwood Cemetery Bird Walks:

Friday, July 14, 2017 at 9 AM

Saturday, August 26th at 7:30 AM

Friday, October 13th at 9 AM

Saturday, November 4th at 9 AM

Saturday, December 2nd at 9 AM



CITIZEN SCIENCE UPDATE: DETROIT BIRD CITY

by Erin Rowan

Detroit Bird City is the Detroit Audubon Conservation Committee's green space program that works to create intentional meadows and grasslands in unused city parks throughout Detroit.

This summer, we set up point counts at each of our five pilot green spaces to survey birds before we made any changes to the habitat. We recruited volunteers, who will conduct point counts at each park weekly during the month of June. They will record the number of individual birds by species that they see and hear within a 5-minute period. These same points will be revisited each year, as more work goes into converting these spaces into native meadows. We hope to compare this year's baseline data to our following year's data to determine if more birds are using the area after restoration, and whether or not we are able to recruit grassland species into the area.

Some notable sightings at our pilot parks have included: Ring-necked Pheasants, Indigo Buntings, Baltimore Orioles, Cedar Waxwings, Eastern Wood-Pewees and Northern Flickers.

We are always looking for more volunteers, so if you're interested in helping with a park cleanup, plant removal, planting seedlings, or conducting bird surveys, please call or email our Research Coordinator, Erin Rowan at 313-800-1578 or email her at erowan@detroitaudubon.org.



**Indigo Bunting
in Detroit's Eliza
Howell Park.
Roger Becker
photo**

EARTH DAY CONFERENCE APRIL 22, 2017

by Terra Weiland

*Detroit Audubon's 2017 Earth Day Celebration/Teach-In "Soaring to New Heights!"
at the Downriver Campus of Wayne County Community College, Taylor, MI (Ray Mix Room)
in collaboration with the Continuing Education Department at Wayne County Community College District.*

Detroit Audubon's Annual Conference, our largest signature event, this year was held on the 47th anniversary of the first Earth Day. It was an Earth Celebration and Teach-In to help educate the community about the environment—particularly bird conservation—and celebrate our precious planet.

The range of interesting and informative events included our keynote speaker Ancilleno (Leno) Davis, who spoke about warblers in the Bahamas and how social media is advancing bird conservation and research in that island nation and the Caribbean in general.

Our next saker was Dr. Larissa Larsen, whose talk focused on the question: Can trees improve your health? Dr. Larsen's research focuses on identifying environmental inequities in the built environment and advancing issues of urban sustainability and social justice. Some of her past research has examined urban heat islands, water consumption, and neighborhood mobilization against environmental problems. Most of her current work involves climate adaptation planning and urban heat island studies.

Before we broke for lunch, Julie Beutel serenaded us with enchanting environmental folks songs celebrating Earth Day.

Then, Detroit Audubon Research Coordinator Erin Rowan and Detroit Audubon Program Coordinator Terra Weiland gave an update on Detroit Audubon Research and Outreach efforts. Detroit Audubon may be a small non-profit, but with professional staff and volunteers, we can accomplish a lot to protect birds!

Dr. John Hartig, Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge Manager, spoke about Detroit's Urban Bird Treaty City Designation and updated us on Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge.

The grand finale of our Annual Conference was a Live Hawks and Owls presentation with Joe and Barbara Rogers from the Wildlife Recovery Association, which included not only the expected Eastern Screech Owl (both red and grey phases), Barred Owl, Great Horned Owl, Turkey Vulture (with Joe even looking at us through the hole in its beak), Red-tailed Hawk, and American Kestrel, but also the shy tiny Sawwhet Owl (in a hole in a cloth tree costume worn by Barbara Rogers to help it be more comfortable). All of the raptors shown were native to Michigan.

Thank you, Joe and Barbara Rogers, for the entertaining and educational presentation and to Wayne County Community College District for underwriting this presentation.

Wildlife Recovery Association was incorporated in 1979 to provide services for and about wildlife and promote a better understanding of their needs. They provide quality educational outreach programs with live birds of prey, participate in research and management programs to support rare and endangered species, and provide care for orphaned and injured hawks, owls, eagles, and falcons. The presentation was packed with fascinating information about wild birds and up close looks at species like the American Kestrel, Turkey Vulture, and Barred Owl.

For more information: <http://www.wildliferecovery.org/>



Julie Beutel's lovely voice always inspires.



American Kestrel.



Ancilleno Davis.



Joe Rogers peeks through a Turkey Vulture's beak.



Barbara Rogers with Barred Owl.



Barbara Rogers dressed as a tree to help the shy Sawwhet Owl feel at home.

2017 BIRD-A-THON REPORTS

BIRD-A-THON 2017 by Jim Bull

The idea of Detroit Audubon's Bird-A-Thon is to get a group of birders together (usually 2-5), pick a day in May that you will go birding in spots around SE Michigan, then get friends and relatives to pledge to pay a certain amount per bird species your group sees within 24 hours on that appointed day in May. This year two groups did Bird-A-Thons: 1) Jared Zaporski and his mother and 2) Jim Bull, Bruce Szczechowski, and Larry Urbanski. There is usually a friendly competition for to see which team gets the most species. This year it was Jared Zaporski and his mother who won the competition, with an amazing 120 species (and, as you'll see below, they finished at about 5 PM!). My team came in with 111 species, but we started at 6 AM and were out until 6 or 7 PM.



Swainson's Thrush.
Bruce Szczechowski photo

My team's Bird-A-Thon day was Sunday, May 22. The three of us discussed beforehand whether we should postpone it because of the weather forecast—showers and thunderstorms throughout the day. With no good alternative day, we decided to try it anyway. I started on Grosse Ile calling for owls, but got a late start; it was already getting light by the time I tried to call in my first owl. This was my team's first Bird-A-Thon without even one Screech Owl or Great Horned Owl. After owling on Grosse Ile I met Bruce at his house, and we added a few city birds right there in his yard. We met Larry at Gabriel Richard Park across from Belle Isle. The highlight of our time there were the 400+ Cliff Swallow nesting on the MacArthur Bridge that links the city to the island. We also had one of our few warblers for the day—a Black-throated Green. On Belle Isle, highlights were a Rose-breasted Grosbeak on a nest, a

Green Heron, and a Tennessee Warbler. We left the island when a torrential rain began—we could hardly see our hands in front of our faces for the fog, let alone birds. After a quick breakfast we headed to Elmwood Cemetery, where we had an astounding 40 Swainson's Thrushes, nesting Phoebe's, and a male Scarlet Tanager, its red body and black wings gleaming in the sun which had come out by now.

In Wyandotte, we saw the Northern Mockingbird singing on a wire as it has done every year near the old McClouth Steel plant. At the Antenna fields near Pointe Mouillee we found lots of Bobolinks, Eastern Meadowlark, Horned Lark and several Savannah Sparrows. The rain had made that dirt road so muddy, we counted ourselves lucky not to get stuck. Point Mouillee, as always, allows us to add several good species including White Pelican, Virginia Rail, Common Moorhen (or is it Gallinule again?), and Northern Harrier; but the highlight was a Short-eared Owl! Oakwoods Metropark gave us a Ring-necked Pheasant that posed for a long time, perching on a downed log. We also added Willow Flycatcher and another Phoebe nest. On the way to Lower Huron Metropark, Bruce spotted a partial albino American Robin. At that park, we also added Eastern Bluebird, which had eluded us for the first time at Oakwoods. At Lower Huron, we also watched a Cedar Waxwing going to and from a nest. It seemed to adding material to it as well—surprisingly, the nest was pendulous. We learned later that Cedar Waxwings sometimes remodel an oriole nest from a previous year—that may have been the case here.

If you haven't tried a Bird-A-Thon, think about doing so next year. It is one of THE best birding days of the year for me, and a highlight of the year. What could be better in the prime birding time in May than spending the day with other good folks in one of our favorite pastimes. And, if you are a novice, hook up with a team of experienced birders and you'll learn lots of new birds.



White Pelican at Pointe Mouillee.
Bruce Szczechowski photo

OUR 6TH DETROIT AUDUBON BIRD-A-THON by Jared Zaporski

Cloudy skies greeted my mother and me as we began our 6th Detroit Audubon Society Bird-a-thon. We arrived at our first stop at 6 AM. It was still too dark to see, but the birds were beginning to sing, so we began the day's tally.

Lake St. Clair Metropark in May always has plentiful birdlife, so we were planning to spend a good while there, as it was location #1 on the route. However, the already dark skies began to drizzle, rendering visibility too poor for sight identifications. Soon the drizzle turned to heavy rain, and we could neither see nor hear birds! At this point, the peak time of day for songbird activity, we spent an hour without logging any new species, and considered calling it quits and trying the route another day. However, the skies began to brighten and the rain began to slow, tempting us to keep going and see what the day would bring. Persistence paid off—we left the park with 81 species.

Next stop was a large hayfield near 25 Mile Road and I-94, where we tallied Ring-necked Pheasant, Bobolink, and a heard-only Eastern Meadowlark, species that were all unreliable at other parts of our route.

At Wetzel State Recreation area, sunny skies greeted us. Although the birding was a little slow, we were able to find some of the specialty breeding birds of the park, such as Clay-colored Sparrow, Blue-winged Warbler, and Pied-billed Grebe. We left the park at 1pm, with a count of 97 species, to go to a nearby flooded field. After nearly an hour squinting through the scope, we managed to find a few shorebirds, but the clock was ticking, so it was off to Stoney Creek Metropark.

Besides the usual, but spectacular, nesting Bald Eagles, Osprey, and Sandhill Cranes, we ran into some surprising species at this park, including Greater Yellowlegs, American Widgeon, Orchard Oriole, and two singing Henslow's Sparrows! The record-breaking bird, however, seen at 5:07 pm, was the humble House Wren; species #115 for the day.

A short hike at Holland Ponds produced a Yellow-throated Vireo, species #118, and we decided to call it a day.

However, on the way home I realized we had not seen a Rock Pigeon yet! A quick stop at the gas station changed the total to 119.

Fully satisfied with the day, two tired but happy birders were unloading the van at 8:30 PM when I heard a familiar, nasal buzz from the skies. Could it be? A quick glance upward revealed species #120: two Common Nighthawks winging north high above.

What a day!

Common Nighthawk.
Sharon Korte photo





MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND NATURE GET-AWAY 2017

By Jac Kyle • Photos by Leslie Read, Michelle Cote and others

Detroit Audubon spent another memorable Nature Get-Away weekend at Loon Lake enjoying beautiful scenery, s'mores, camp songs and camaraderie.

For some campers, the excitement manifested in days packed with almost 17 hours of birding. Early risers immersed themselves in the peaceful camp mornings by spending the first light birdwatching. They were greeted by the songs and sights of Indigo Buntings, Red-eyed Vireos, Pine Warblers, and Ovenbirds, to name a few. As the sun lifted and more campers arose, everyone gathered to share breakfast and announcements. People caught up with each other and crafted plans for the day over delicious French toast and breakfast sandwiches. From there, smaller groups formed to embark on day trips to nearby birding spots such as Tawas Point State Park, Lumberman's Monument, Au Sable River overlooks, Rifle River State Recreation Area, and Tuttle Marsh. We all gathered together again for dinner, where we would share stories of the day and tell others where to go to see specific species of birds.

Many of us were on a quest to see a new "lifer", the Fork-tailed Flycatcher, which was sighted at Tawas Point the weekend before. Despite valiant efforts and many sharp eyes, the Fork-tailed Flycatcher eluded us. Baltimore Orioles, Black-bellied Plovers, Whimbrels, and Scarlet Tanagers still brought much enjoyment as we explored the scenic State Park. Luckily, another "lifer" was a little more cooperative on our field trip to the Kirtland's Warbler's Nesting Area. Numerous songs were heard coming from the young Jackpine forest; then someone finally caught a flash and spotted our first Kirtland's Warbler for the weekend. We focused our spotting scopes and each took turns watching this rare and resilient bird. This was the first time a few of us (including me!) ever saw this iconic species.

This weekend is special because of all the beautiful birds we see (as a group, we saw a total of 103 different species!) but also because of the people. Some joined us for the first time this year, while others have been coming on this trip for over 30 years. One family has been utilizing the Nature Get-Away for decades as a way to spend quality time connecting to each other and the natural world. Campers who came as kids now bring their own children. When reflecting on the weekend, comments included "awesome people, beautiful surroundings," and "Beautiful place to be with nature. Beautiful people to enjoy this place with."

For those of you who joined us, thank you for spending time with us and making the weekend a special event. For those who have never been, we hope to spend a future Memorial Day Weekend Nature Get-Away with you and your family!



DETROIT AUDUBON BOARD OPPOSES PULLING OUT OF PARIS CLIMATE ACCORDS

At its June 13th board meeting, the Detroit Audubon Board of Directors passed a resolution opposing the move to pull the U.S. out of the Paris Climate Accords. Abdicating our country's leadership role in dealing with arguably the biggest environmental challenge to the future of our planet is moving us backwards. This looming threat includes sea level rise that could make huge areas with large populations uninhabitable, impact our ability to grow the food we need, and negatively affect our national security. Also, the National Audubon's research staff has estimated that 48 species of Michigan birds are climate change vulnerable—meaning they would lose so much habitat that they could become threatened or endangered. Some of those species could be lost if we do nothing. The Bald Eagle, our national symbol, which has made a dramatic comeback after the scourge of pesticides brought it to the brink of extinction, could be lost.

We are now one of only two countries that are not signers of the accords: Syria and Nicaragua. Nicaragua failed to sign because they did not feel the accords went far enough—and they are right. These accords were a great first step, but they were only a down payment in terms of the actions that must be taken to ratchet down our greenhouse gas production to the point where we can at least mitigate the worst scenarios that climate change will bring. We can't stop climate change—it is already upon us—but there is still time to tamp it down to prevent the worst consequences. The other sad part of this pullout is that the leader of the free world will not be leading the charge. There are so many jobs that could be created to respond to climate change, including becoming the major supplier of solar and wind technology, but we may be ceding that market to China and other countries now.

Continued at right

MORE PEREGRINE FALCONS FIND HOMES IN SE MICHIGAN

*by John Hartig, Detroit International Wildlife Refuge Manager
and Holly Vaughn, Michigan DNR Wildlife Biologist*

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have compiled nearly 40 years of monitoring data on Peregrine Falcons in southeast Michigan. These data show that the southeast Michigan Peregrine Falcon population has expanded from when five young were re-introduced in 1987 to 15 nesting pairs that fledged 30 young in 2016.

This is a remarkable recovery for a species that once was federally listed as endangered. The complete report, including a history of Peregrine Falcons in Michigan, status and trends of nesting birds from 1987-2016, and management and research needs into the future, is available [HERE](#).

Peregrines are crow-sized birds, with a wingspan of 36-44 inches. Adults have slate-gray backs and barred breasts, while immature birds have brown backs and heavily streaked breasts. All peregrines have prominent cheek ("moustache") marks on either side of their head. As is true in most species of "birds of prey", the female is larger than the male: females average 32 ounces, while males average only 22 ounces in weight.

These falcons require large areas of open air for hunting, and are not found in heavily forested areas. The diet of the Peregrine Falcon includes a wide variety of small birds, including pigeons, seabirds, shorebirds and songbirds. Occasionally, they have been known to take small ducks, earning them the misleading name of "duck hawks." Peregrines hunt by diving at their prey from far above and catching them in mid-flight. During these incredible dives, called "stoops", the birds can reach speeds of 180 miles per hour.

Monitoring Peregrine Falcons is important as their population recovers from a major population decline in the 1960s. Shells of Peregrine Falcon eggs became extremely fragile because adult birds had accumulated DDT, a pesticide that interfered with calcium metabolism. By 1968, the entire U.S. Peregrine Falcon population east of the Mississippi was gone. Today, peregrines are considered endangered in the state of Michigan, though they are no longer federally-endangered.

Michigan began its peregrine recovery efforts in 1986, and by 1993, the state's peregrines began reproducing successfully. In 2016, there were 54 nest sites in the entire state of Michigan, and 29 of them produced young. Thirteen of the 29 sites that produced young were in southeast Michigan, where 29 sites are now being monitored for peregrine nesting.

"The Peregrine Falcon recovery in southeast Michigan is a true conservation success story," notes Christine Becher, Southeast Michigan Peregrine Falcon Nesting Coordinator for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. "One thing we must all remember is that we share the same ecosystem with Peregrine Falcons; and if southeast Michigan is cleaner for Peregrine Falcons, it is cleaner for all of us."

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources is committed to the conservation, protection, management, use and enjoyment of the state's natural and cultural resources for current and future generations. For more information, go to www.michigan.gov/dnr.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others, to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.



Peregrine Falcons nest on tall buildings, often in cities. Photo by Barb Baldinger.

PARIS CLIMATE ACCORDS *continued*

On the positive side, many cities, states, and corporations in the U.S. have indicated that they are still committed to doing their part to reach the goals set in the Paris Climate Accords.

We hope this misguided act is only a temporary setback to the effort to respond to the most serious environmental crisis we have ever faced. Detroit Audubon is committed to doing what it can to mitigate the effects of climate change locally. Meanwhile Detroit Audubon supports local and state governments, corporate and non-governmental organization actions to deal with climate change during this period when the federal government is pulling out of this most important battle.



LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!

Yes, Detroit Audubon has a Facebook page! [Like us](#) to get reminders of field trips as well as notifications of volunteer opportunities, upcoming programs, and workshops.

Share with your friends, and help spread the word about ways to support Detroit Audubon and its efforts to protect birds and the environment.



ENVIRONMENTAL AND CONSERVATION EFFORTS RESULTING IN MORE BALD EAGLES IN SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge

Monitoring shows that there are more Bald Eagles in southeast Michigan. Bald Eagles are not only our national symbol and bird, but they are a key indicator of ecosystem health.

Starting in the 1950s, Bald Eagle numbers throughout southeast Michigan and the United States began to decline because of widespread use of pesticides like DDT, and other factors. In fact, from 1961 to 1987 there were no Bald Eagles produced in Metropolitan Detroit due primarily to pesticide contamination. Recognizing that Bald Eagle populations were in peril, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service placed it on the endangered species list in 1967. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality coordinate a monitoring program aimed at assessing the health of Bald Eagles.

Since 1991, there has been a steady increase in the number of occupied Bald Eagle nests per year in metropolitan Detroit. From 2012-2015 at least 25 active nests have been documented each year, resulting in the fledgling of 28 or more young per year.

In 2007, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service removed the Bald Eagle from the endangered species list because their populations recovered sufficiently across the United States. The most recent survey data from 2015 show that there were 14 occupied nests in Monroe County, and six occupied nests in Wayne County, that produced a total of 21 eaglets. It is important to remember that we, as humans, share the same ecosystem with Bald Eagles; and if it is cleaner for them, it is cleaner for us.

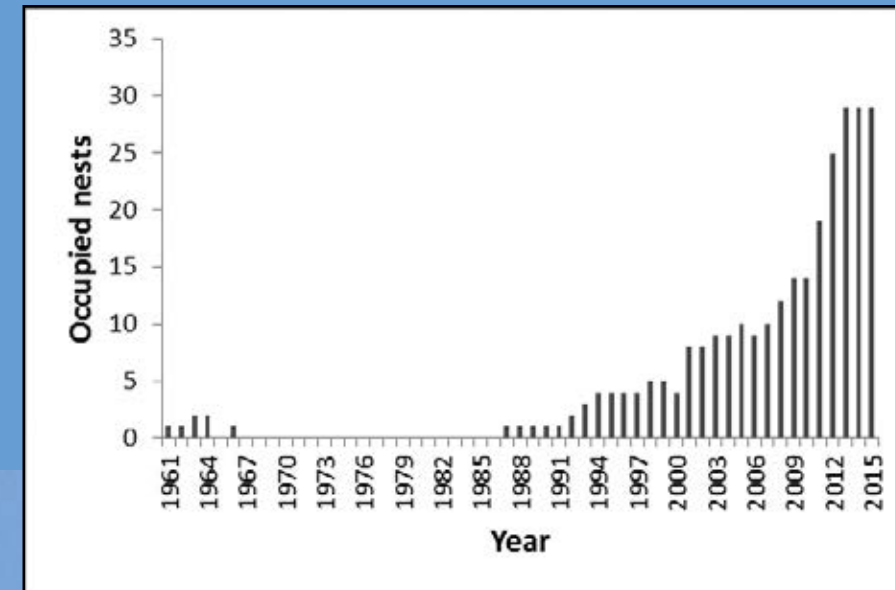
"The recovery of Bald Eagles is a true success story of the Endangered Species Act," noted Chris Mensing, Biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "The eagle's rebounding population in southeast Michigan can be attributed to protecting nesting habitat and reducing the presence of contaminants throughout the Great Lakes."

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service continues to monitor and research eagles, and is committed to maintaining stable or increasing eagle populations throughout their range. The Bald Eagle remains federally protected in the U.S. under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.

The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge is proud to be the only international refuge in North America and one of only 14 priority urban refuges in the nation charged with bringing conservation to cities. It covers 48 miles of shoreline along the lower Detroit River and western basin of Lake Erie—stretching from southwest Detroit to the Ohio-Michigan border.

The Refuge focuses on conserving, protecting and restoring habitat for 300 species of birds and 117 species of fish. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service currently owns or cooperatively manages 6,202 acres of unique habitats and partners with other organizations like the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and Essex Region Conservation Authority and the City of Windsor in Ontario to cooperatively manage other lands. In total, over 18,700 acres of land in southwest Ontario and southeast Michigan are now being cooperatively managed for conservation and outdoor recreation for nearly seven million people living within a 45-minute drive. More information can be found at: www.fws.gov/refuge/detroit_river/.

The number of occupied Bald Eagle nests in southeast Michigan, 1961-2015.



The eagle flies again in southeast Michigan! At left, a Bald Eagle in Magee Marsh. Roger Becker photo.

Below right, photo by Ron Holmes, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



BLACK TERN CRUISE JUNE 30, 2017: WEATHER “TERNED OUT” BEAUTIFUL DESPITE STORMY PREDICTIONS.

By Jim Bull • Photos by Sara Cole Srinivasan

The day before the Black Tern Cruise, dire predictions of thunderstorms had us forming contingency plans. Luckily, the weather “terned” out to be just perfect—partly sunny with a nice breeze.

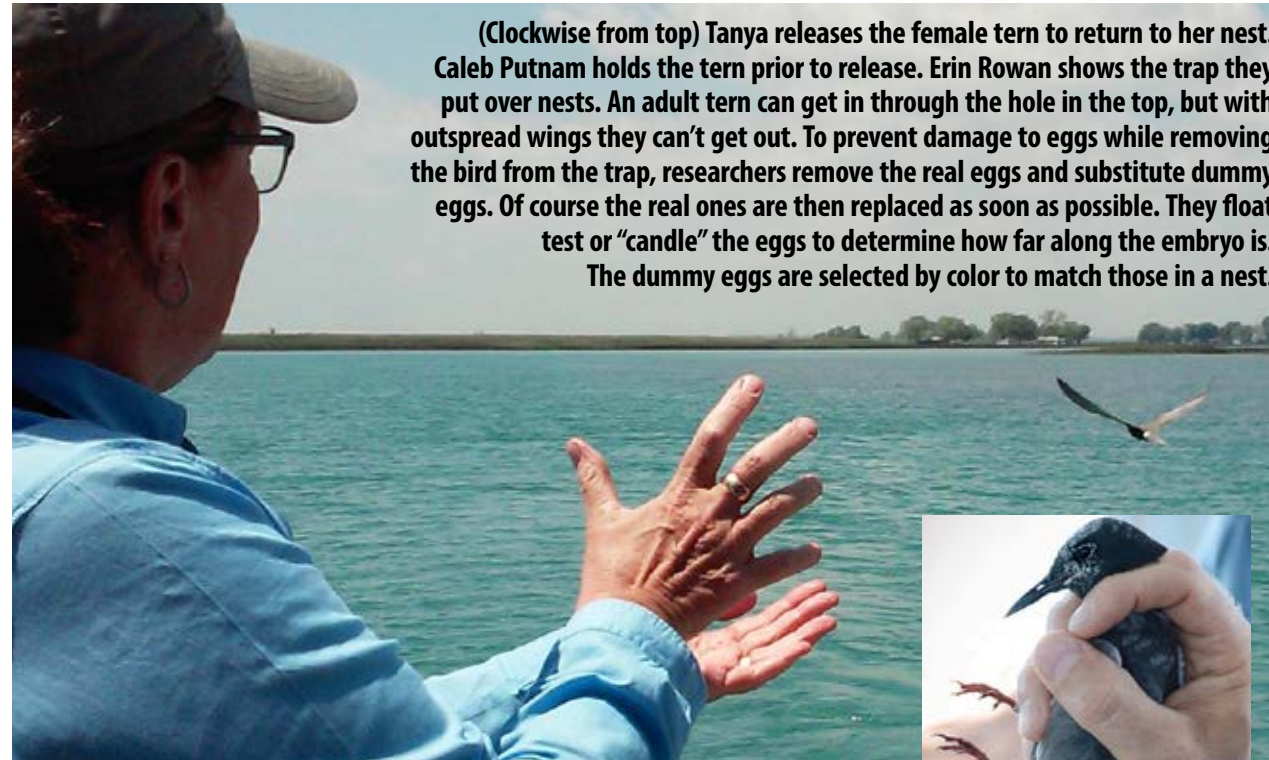
Cruisers came from as far away as Holland, Michigan to join this excursion to see, learn about, and support research on the declining Black Tern.

Lake St. Clair Metropark Naturalist Julie Champion started out the program by showing us charts of where we were and where we were heading, some history, and some basic natural history. She pointed out that before the original Metrobeach Metropark (now Lake St. Clair Metropark) was constructed, there was colony of Common Terns in what is now the beach area. There Dr. Walter P. Nickell, ornithologist at the Cranbrook Institute of Science and an early president of Detroit Audubon, banded about 2,000 nesting Common Terns each year. Having banded Common Terns on Belle Isle, Boblo and Mud Island with Nickell, whom I knew as Uncle Nick, I heard this as brand new information. These days Common Terns have declined dramatically, due to lack of habitat and competition for nesting sites from Ring-billed Gulls. Julie also told us that the marsh at the confluence of the St. Clair River and Lake St. Clair, the area where the terns nest, is THE largest delta marsh in all of North America—maybe in the world. We also learned about mayflies, some of which joined us for the ride. Huge flotillas of their skins drifted by our boat. Julie told us that the mayfly swarms, when they emerge to their adult flying stage, have sometimes been big enough to be detected on Doppler Radar! (Note: Metro Detroiters often call these insects fish flies.)

DNR Biologist John Darling, who grew up in the St. Clair Flats, gave us an overview of the ecology of the area. The shallow lake supports an abundance of submerged vegetation, especially wild celery, which attracts migrating ducks, especially Canvasbacks and scaup. In fact, 85% of the entire population of Canvasback in North America stop over in Lake St. Clair and the Detroit River each year. His job is to manage for ducks, but he has enjoyed learning about and working on the terns. The DNR donates their boat, the gas, and other marine equipment for the tern research. This marsh has the most nesting Black Terns in the whole Great Lakes area.

The terns nest on mats of bulrush and cattails, and spend the winter in the ocean off the coast of Peru. Detroit and National Audubon are jointly conducting research to help us determine why this species is in decline, and then to devise strategies to keep them from disappearing entirely. We do not yet know why they are declining. The young leave the nest and begin swimming soon after hatching, so it is difficult to figure out if there is adequate recruitment of young to the young adults that fly south to spend two years before coming back to the ocean. One known factor is that some researchers in Peru have found youth selling necklaces made of US Fish and Wildlife Service bands taken off the legs of terns they had apparently killed. We don't know if that is a major problem, but obviously some educational efforts on the wintering grounds would be helpful.

About halfway across Lake St. Clair, Detroit Audubon Vice-president Rochelle Breitenbach, caterer extraordinaire and Program Coordinator Jac Kyle started making Blackberry “Tern” Spritzer mocktails for everybody to enjoy—



(Clockwise from top) Tanya releases the female tern to return to her nest. Caleb Putnam holds the tern prior to release. Erin Rowan shows the trap they put over nests. An adult tern can get in through the hole in the top, but with outspread wings they can't get out. To prevent damage to eggs while removing the bird from the trap, researchers remove the real eggs and substitute dummy eggs. Of course the real ones are then replaced as soon as possible. They float test or “candle” the eggs to determine how far along the embryo is. The dummy eggs are selected by color to match those in a nest.



they tasted as good as they looked. Then came a smorgasbord of skewered barbecued shrimp, roasted vegetables, gazpacho with yogurt and chives, raspberry chicken, and delectable brownies and watermelon for dessert. All was donated by Rochelle, so that all Cruise proceeds, less the cost of the boat, go to fund our Black Tern research. Board Member, Education Chair, and former Detroit Audubon Program Coordinator, Sara Srinivasan (Cole) donated homemade Indian Tamarind Rice with Peanuts. It was truly a gourmet feast! Sara also served as official photographer.

Just as we finished lunch, we had some surprise visitors. The DNR Research vessel piloted by our Research Coordinator Erin Rowan pulled up alongside our cruise vessel, *The Clinton*. On board were National Audubon Biologist Caleb Putnam, two volunteers, and a mysterious blue cloth bag. Erin and Caleb boarded our boat with that blue bag. Erin talked about the research, showing a hardware cloth cage that is put over nests to catch adults to band. Because the terns may break their own eggs when the researchers come to get them out of the traps, the eggs are removed temporarily and replaced by dummy eggs expertly crafted by our partners at the Detroit Zoo. They are made in green, tan, and dark brown so that researchers can use eggs that closely match the color in that particular nest. Erin passed around some of the dummy eggs for

folks to examine. While she was talking, Caleb pulled an adult female Black Tern that they had just banded out the bag, and brought her around so everybody could see her up close. Then a trivia question was used to decide which passenger would get the privilege of releasing the tern so she could go back to her nest and feed her three chicks. Tanya from Holland, MI had the closest answer, so got to release the tern off the back of the boat. She flew straight for the marsh and her nest, not looking back once to thank us for her new jewelry.

On the way back, Caleb talked more about the research and the big picture of tern conservation. His position is now jointly funded by National Audubon and the Michigan DNR. He and John Darling talked about the impact of declining numbers of hunters on funding for marshland wildlife conservation (including the Black Tern) because most funding for this work comes from hunting license fees. There ensued a discussion among the passengers how about how to design a parallel system for birders to start paying their fair share toward wildlife conservation efforts. Ideas discussed included taxes on birding equipment and bird feeding supplies, licenses to bird on state and federal lands, and voluntarily buying hunting licenses and duck stamps even if you don't hunt. There needs to be more discussion, and solutions adopted, if the important work of refuge biologists is to continue.

We finished up with a group photo by the boat before all departed. One person handed me an extra contribution for our Black Tern research. You are welcome to contribute as well, even if you didn't come on the cruise! As they say, “One good tern deserves another.”

DETROIT AUDUBON SOCIETY 2017 FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

Detroit Audubon field trips offer fantastic year-round birding opportunities. We visit renowned hotspots in Michigan, Ohio, and Ontario during songbird, shorebird and raptor migration seasons. Other trips focus on the many interesting resident species in our area. Most trips are free, but please note some parks have entrance fees. Everyone is welcome, especially beginning birders.

Please fill out the online form for your chosen trip, visit www.facebook.com/detroitaudubon, email jac@detroitaudubon.org or call (313) 960-3399 by the Thursday before each field trip so we can contact you about any changes. Please include your name, number coming, phone and email. Interested in carpooling or giving folks a ride? Let us know!

Elmwood Cemetery **Friday July 14, 2017 9 AM**

Leader: Detroit Audubon Program Coordinator

Detroit Audubon is pleased to continue its monthly bird walks at Elmwood Cemetery! Designed by renowned landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead and dedicated in 1846, the cemetery provides a unique opportunity to experience the nature, culture, and history of Detroit. Elmwood Cemetery is conveniently located and a great place to bird! As always, we are happy to offer equipment and expertise to beginning birders. We will be keeping track of every bird sighted to compile a Elmwood Cemetery Bird List.

To RSVP: Fill out the form [HERE](#) or email staff@DetroitAudubon.org



Cape May Warbler.
Sharon Korte photo

Pointe Mouillee* (Cost \$10—Reservations Required)**

Saturday, August 5th, 8 AM

Leaders: Jim Fowler and Jim Bull

This is one of the premier shore birding areas in the interior of the continent when water levels are favorable. Only four vehicles can be accommodated on the dikes. We will be bringing a 15-passenger van. You must RSVP by

Thursday, August 4, to reserve a spot.

Meet: at 8900 Sigler Road, South Rockwood, MI

Directions: Take I-75 to Exit 26 and drive east on south Huron Rd to U.S. Turnpike. Turn south and look for Sigler Road. Turn east and drive to the parking lot at the end. This will be a caravan into the dikes with ride-sharing required.

To RSVP: Please email us at staff@DetroitAudubon.org or [click here:](#)

Elmwood Cemetery

Saturday August 26th at 7:30 AM

Leader: Detroit Audubon Program Coordinator

This is one in a series of walks to explore the birds, unique landmarks, and history of this beautiful 86-acre cemetery, which is among the top “must-see” historic sites in Detroit.

Location: 1200 Elmwood Avenue, Detroit, MI 48207. Park near the cemetery headquarters or on the road along the edge of the pond.

To RSVP: Fill out [the form here](#) or email staff@DetroitAudubon.org

Eliza Howell Park

September 9, 2017 8:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Leader: Leonard Weber

The focus of this walk is on the early Fall migrants, including Warblers. One never knows exactly when the migrating birds will be present in great numbers, but at this time of the year and of the month there are often as many species present as at the middle of the spring/May migration.

To RSVP: Please [fill out this form](#) or email staff@DetroitAudubon.org

Humbug Marsh

Saturday, October 7, 2016

Leader: Jim Bull

Humbug is a key area for the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, which Detroit Audubon fought to save from development. Eagles, Osprey, water birds, and songbirds are possible here. Because Humbug Marsh is one of the last coastal wetlands on the Detroit River, it is extremely important to waterfowl, other migratory birds, certain insects that depend on wetland, herpetofauna, and fish. Many of these species are regionally rare.

To RSVP: Fill out [the form](#) or email staff@DetroitAudubon.org

Elmwood Cemetery

Friday, October 13th at 9 AM

Leader: Detroit Audubon Program Coordinator

This is one in a series of walks to explore the birds, unique landmarks, and history of this beautiful 86-acre cemetery which is among the top “must-see” historic sites in Detroit.

Location: 1200 Elmwood Avenue, Detroit, MI 48207. Park near the cemetery headquarters or on the road along the edge of the pond.

To RSVP: Please fill out [form here](#) or email staff@DetroitAudubon.org

Eliza Howell Park

October 21, 8:00 – 11:00 AM

Leader: Leonard Weber

The Fall migration continues, though the species are different from early September. At this time of the year, a variety of sparrows are moving through the park (seeing 7 species of sparrows on one walk is quite possible). Purple Finches are among the other birds we will be looking for.

To RSVP: Fill out [this form](#) or email staff@DetroitAudubon.org

Owl Prowl, Oakwoods Metropark

Friday November 3, 2017 at 7:00 PM

Leaders: Kevin Arnold and Jim Bull

We will call for owls and expect to hear them call back, and hope to call them in close where we can see them. This program is especially good for families with children.

Directions: From I-75, exit at West Road and go west to Telegraph (M-24). Turn left on Telegraph, right (west) on Van Horn (which becomes Huron River Drive), then left on Willow Road to Oakwoods Metropark (32901 Willow Road, New Boston) on the left. Meet at the Nature Center. Annual Metropark sticker or daily pass required.

To RSVP: Please [fill out form](#) or email staff@DetroitAudubon.org

Elmwood Cemetery

Saturday November 4th at 9 AM

Leader: Detroit Audubon Program Coordinator

Yet another in a series of walks to explore the birds, unique landmarks, and history of this beautiful 86-acre cemetery.

Location: 1200 Elmwood Avenue, Detroit, MI 48207. Park near the cemetery headquarters or on the road along the edge of the pond.

To RSVP: Please fill out form [here](#) or email staff@DetroitAudubon.org



Brown Thrasher.
Sharon Korte photo

Sandhill Crane.
Bruce Szczechowski photo



Point Edward and Lake Huron Shore, Ontario
Saturday, November 11, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM (Cost \$10)

The focus of this field trip will be on water birds and early winter arrivals. Historically, this has been a field trip where we see many uncommon species! In the past, we have seen Bohemian Waxwings, Common Loons, Red-throated Loons, all three species of Scoters, Little Gull, Mergansers, Longtailed Duck, Evening Grosbeak, and multiple species of Grebes. This is a car caravan field trip, stopping at multiple locations. We will stop for lunch at a restaurant along the way. Lunch is not included. There is no limit on the number of cars for the locations and this is not a strenuous trip. We will walk approximately half a mile at two locations with level ground.

Starting Location: We will meet at the Ontario Tourist Information Center in Sarnia (1455 Venetian Blvd, Sarnia, ON N7T 7W7, Canada)

Ending location: Pinery Pinery Provincial Park (9526 Lakeshore Rd./ Highway 21, Grand Bend, ON N0M 1T0, Canada)

Directions: Take I-94 east to Port Huron; take Blue Water Bridge to Sarnia. Meet at the Ontario tourist information center. Passport or enhanced driver's license required for entry into Canada and back into the U.S.

To RSVP: Please [fill out form](#) or email Staff@DetroitAudubon.org

Sandhill Cranes at Jasper-Pulaski Fish and Game Wildlife Area
Saturday November 18, 11 AM to 2 AM (Cost \$75)

Leader: Jim Bull

Yes, this a long trip to this northern Indiana refuge, but it is well worth it to see 8,000-20,000 Sandhill Cranes, including cranes from Michigan that stop over here on their way to the Gulf Coast and Florida wintering grounds. Beginning about one hour before sunset, flocks of cranes kite into Goose Pasture Viewing Areas from all directions. They gab, socialize and dance. One jumps here, then another and another until they seem like giant popcorn kernels in a pan. Their dancing is at once inspiring and comical. They spend an hour or two at this activity before returning to roosting

marshes, which are closed to the public.

We will stop for lunch on the way down, and for dinner on the way home. Once we arrive at the wildlife area we will look for cranes in the surrounding farm fields, and do some other birding before it is time for the cranes to show up at Goose Pasture.

Our meeting spot for leaving will be announced to those who register.

We will rent a 15-passenger van. The price of \$75 must be paid in full two weeks before the trip. Others may caravan with us or meet us there. Food costs are not included.

To RSVP: Fill out the [form](#) or email staff@DetroitAudubon.org

Tricolored Heron.
Bruce Szczechowski photo



Belle Isle, Detroit

Saturday November 25, 9 AM

Meeting Location: Belle Isle Nature Center, Detroit

This gem of Detroit's park system (now a state park) is an excellent birding location for viewing migrant and wintering waterfowl!

Directions: Take Jefferson to the Belle Isle Bridge. Cross over and drive to the east end of the island and park in the Nature Center parking lot. State Park pass or daily use fee required.

To RSVP: Please fill out [form](#) here or email Staff@DetroitAudubon.org

Elmwood Cemetery

Saturday December 2nd at 9 AM

Leader: Detroit Audubon Program Coordinator

Another in a series of walks to explore the birds, unique landmarks, and history of this beautiful 86-acre cemetery which is among the top "must-see" historic sites in Detroit.

Location: 1200 Elmwood Avenue, Detroit, MI 48207. Park near the cemetery headquarters or on the road along the edge of the pond.

To RSVP: Please fill out [form](#) or email Staff@DetroitAudubon.org

Detroit Christmas Bird Count Reservations Required**

Sunday, December 17, 2017

This is one of the oldest Christmas Bird Counts. Birders spend the entire day covering a 15-mile diameter circle in parts of northern Oakland County to count as many birds as possible. This is part of counts all over North America used to study bird populations. Meet for pizza and count wrap-up at day's end.

To participate, call Tim Nowicki at (734) 525-8630 or tnowick@gmail.com or contact our office at Staff@DetroitAudubon.org

Rockwood Christmas Bird Count (Reservations Required)

Tuesday December 26, 2016

Public hike: 9 AM to 11 AM

Christmas Bird Count: Detroit Audubon cosponsors this all-day annual count of the 15-mile diameter circle which includes Grosse Ile, Lake Erie Metropark, Trenton, Rockwood, South Rockwood, Newport, and Oakwoods Metropark. A chili dinner will be provided.

RSVP: Please out [this form](#) or email us at Staff@DetroitAudubon.org

If you want to participate in the all-day count, please contact our Research Coordinator Erin Rowan at erowan@DetroitAudubon.org.

Cooper's Hawk.
Sharon Korte photo





CITIZEN SCIENCE UPDATE: SAFE PASSAGE

by Erin Rowan

Detroit Audubon's Safe Passage Great Lakes program begins again this fall, from August 15th until October 31st. We need volunteers to survey buildings 2-4 times per week, early in the morning in downtown Detroit, Southfield and Troy.

Would you rather stay close to home? If you know of a building in your neighborhood that has highly reflective glass, mirrored glass, or corridors of glass, you can provide us with the address and some photos of the building and your building can be added to our survey list.

We are going to have another Monthly Nature Program devoted to Safe Passage Great Lakes and will have two training sessions offered to new and returning volunteers before the fall season begins on August 15th. Exact dates of presentations and training sessions will be announced soon!

If you are interested in being a volunteer for Safe Passage, please call or email our Research Coordinator Erin Rowan at 313-800-1578 or email her at erowan@detroitaudubon.org.

To learn more about Safe Passage Great Lakes, visit [THIS PAGE](#).

CONSIDER SUBSCRIBING TO MICHIGAN BIRDS AND NATURAL HISTORY

by Allen T. Chartier

MICHIGAN BIRDS and Natural History is a publication of Michigan Audubon and is published four times a year (since 1994). Its mission is to provide a forum for the publication of research on the natural history of Michigan, with an emphasis on birds. It is also the home of the Michigan Bird Survey, Michigan Butterfly Survey, Michigan Christmas Bird Counts, North American Migration Count, and the proceedings of the Michigan Bird Records Committee.

I am sure some of you subscribe to this publication, but based on conversations I have had with birders all around the state, the value—even the existence—of this publication is not well known. At its core is the Michigan Bird Survey, which was begun in the former *Jack Pine Warbler* journal in the 1940s, and has been published quarterly almost continuously ever since.

I will readily admit that I have been entering all my bird sightings into eBird since 2012, and am actively working on getting all my sightings entered back to the mid-1970s. For sure, eBird is a great resource, but there are many things it does not do. A huge amount of historical data is still not contained in eBird (that includes a huge amount of my own data). The vast majority of the data contained in the Michigan Bird Survey, prior to the turn of this century, is also not included. Researchers wishing to compile complete county lists often start with eBird, but cannot claim to have done their due diligence until they have scoured over the decades of useful information contained in the Michigan Bird Survey. Additionally, compilers of these quarterly bird surveys provide context for population increases and declines, first county records, first state records, influxes of rarities, and the like, integrated with weather and climatic data that eBird does not provide.

MICHIGAN BIRDS publishes so much more, including an annual butterfly survey that has served to document range expansions and new species in the state. The opportunity for first-time authors remains an attraction, even though many graduate and doctoral students now publish

elsewhere. Everyday birders—birders like me—can make contributions to our understanding of Michigan's birds and other wildlife. I have compiled and published summaries of all state records of Varied Thrush and Rufous Hummingbird, and several authors have written excellent accounts of the first state records they have been involved in finding. The Christmas Bird Count data is not only published, but is analyzed in the context of weather patterns, observer effort, and historic averages, which is not available online. Over the years, Dr. Alan Kurta and some of his students have published interesting papers on the mammals of our state; and many other topics have occasionally appeared in the journal, including articles on dragonflies, reptiles, and amphibians.

I would encourage everyone interested in Michigan's birds, and other aspects of our great natural heritage, to subscribe to this journal and to tell all your birding friends about it. It is a great way to support bird conservation in Michigan; and the hard-working, all-volunteer editorial board of *MICHIGAN BIRDS and Natural History* will greatly appreciate it. It is available as a print publication, or in electronic format (PDF). Go to the Michigan Audubon [website](#) to subscribe:

Editor's Note: Allen T. Chartier has served on the Michigan Birds and Natural History editorial board since 1994. He writes a [blog](#) about Hummingbirds and other birds of SE Michigan, and has a website (www.amazilia.net). He also maintains a bird-banding station at Lake St. Clair Metropark and does bird surveys on Belle Isle including banding migrating Sawwhet Owls there. He is one of the few bird banders in the nation certified to band hummingbirds, which have very tiny, fragile legs and feet. You can see his photos at on [flickr.com](#).



MYSTERY BIRD

If you guessed Cedar Waxwing, you were right! These handsome, mostly tan-colored birds are so sleek that they almost look as if they don't have feathers at all. The adults have a swept-back crest and a black face mask, which was the give-away in the photo. They get their name from red waxy spots on their secondary wing feathers, which are actually enlarged feather shafts at the tips, colored by pigments from the red berries they eat. While they feed on insects on the wing and glean them from vegetation, most of their diet consists of berries of many kinds, some of which are poisonous to humans. They are known to eat fermented berries (and act a bit inebriated afterward).

Except when they are nesting, Cedar Waxwings are very gregarious and are usually seen in flocks. Birders often say you seldom see just one Cedar Waxwing.

The rarer Bohemian Waxwing is bigger, has reddish-brown undertail coverts (white in Cedar Waxwing), and lacks the yellow belly and sleek appearance of the Cedar Waxwing. The courtship ritual involves the male presenting a berry to the female, who takes it, then hops back to offer him the berry, which he may then offer to her again, etc. This charming ritual may be repeated for several minutes.