

Grand Traverse Audubon Club Newsletter

March 2006
Issue #112

www.grandtraverseaudubon.org
GTAC@grandtraverseaudubon.org



Upcoming Events

- ◆ **March 18** - Beginning birder's workshop T.C. Library 9:30
- ◆ **March 23** - Meeting 7:30 p.m. Room 211, Great Lakes Campus
- ◆ **April 20** - Adopt-a-Highway & Trail 9:30 a.m. at Windy Moraine trailhead M-109
- ◆ **April 22** -Field Trip to Arcadia Marsh 7a.m. Tom's Market 14th St. 922-9490
- ◆ **April 27** - Meeting 7:30 p.m. Room 211, Great Lakes Campus
- ◆ **May 5 - 7** - Field Trip to Crane Creek, Ohio
- ◆ **May 13** - Migratory Bird Count, 938-5976
- ◆ **May 12 - 14** - Field Trip Tawas & Tuttle Marsh
- ◆ **May 20** - Field Trip S. Manitou

Bird Notes

Beginning Birder's Workshop

by Carolyn Moehle

The Beginning Birder's Workshop will be Saturday, March 18th, 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. The workshop will be at the Traverse Area District Library at 610 Woodmere.

BIRDERS OF ALL AGES are invited to a casual, informative gathering.

1. Learn basic birdwatching techniques.
2. Hands-on demonstrations of binoculars and spotting scopes.
3. Help with use of field guides to birds.

Many selections will be available to view.

4. Tips on attracting birds to your backyard feeder.
5. Helpful tips from Wild Birds Unlimited.
6. Last, but not least, meet your friendly, knowledgeable Audubon Club members and have your birdwatching questions answered!

The Soo in the Winter

by Barb Graf

Eighteen people were ready to leave before 7:30 a.m. on Saturday, February 11 at the Plaza Motor Motel to bird the Soo. Criss Crossing the roads south of town, we saw Sharp-tailed Grouse, Snow Buntings, Hairy, Downy, and Pileated Woodpeckers, Common Redpolls, Rough-legged Hawks, Bald Eagles and Snowy Owls. Dunbar Forest revealed Pine Grosbeaks, Pine Siskins, Blue Jays, Red- and White-breasted Nuthatches, American Goldfinches and Purple Finches. Frequent Ravens, Crows and "Cravens" were also seen. A prize sighting was the Northern Hawk Owl at Soo Junction. Gray Jays, Black-capped Chickadees and both Nuthatches were on Basnau Road in Hulbert bog. Even though we tried several times, we could not locate the previously sighted Great Gray Owl or our usual annual sighting of the Gyrfalcon; but this just gives us a reason to return next year.

Additional birds seen on pre-trip excursions by the Grafts and the Kolaks

(Jerry & Roberta and Al & Sandy) included: In the Soo area, a Northern Goshawk capturing a Mourning Dove; a Red-tailed Hawk; two Lapland Longspurs amid a flock of Horned Larks and Snow Buntings. The Dafter Dump held several Bald Eagles and a Glaucous Gull. Hulbert Bog had a Boreal Chickadee.

With three meals at all-you-can-eat buffets, no one had any reason to go home hungry (The Wall, Abner's and McGowan's). Fledgling and experienced birders had a great time, with some sighting of "life" birds. For a more complete report check out our web page.

Jerry & Roberta Kolak, Al & Sandy Kolak (TN), Nancy & John Skelley, Larry & Cindee Dubey, Ed & Carol Hartshorn, Joe & Elise Brooks, Tom & Steffi Podolan, John & Shirley Mesch, Barb & Leonard Graf

Upcoming Events, Cont.

- ◆ **May 21** - Nature North, T.C. Civic Center
- ◆ **May 25** - Meeting Potluck Dinner and Birding 5:30, River Road.
- ◆ **May 27** - Field Trip Skegemog Lake, 938-5976
- ◆ **June 17** - Field Trip South Manitou Island

The Loons on Duck Lake

by Stephany Podolan

Our meeting on March 23 will feature, "Following a family of Loons through the Summer," by the Loon Ranger of Duck Lake, Steve Bates. Steve is a retired educator who has spent many hours, going out in his kayak every day possible, to protect the loons and educate the public about them. Last summer a family of loons was successful in raising two little ones. Another nesting pair was not so lucky, as some young boys cut the rope buoys and

raced in the area. They drove the loon off its nest and the pair did not come back. People need to know that loons need their space. Even the loons seem to know they have a friend in Steve Bates, coming up to greet him and follow his kayak. Be sure to make this meeting and hear all about the job of loon ranger and the family of loons on Duck Lake.

Arcadia Marsh Field Trip

by Tom Ford

Birders planning to attend the Arcadia field trip April 22 should be prepared for nearly a full day of birding. Dress for spring weather and bring snacks and a lunch. Please remember that your leader loves oatmeal

raisin or peanut butter cookies. We should see approximately seventy-five to one-hundred species of birds including waterfowl, migrating raptors, early passerines, and a few shorebirds.

From the President's Pen

by Cindee DuBey

Wow, what a snowstorm! Hope everyone had fun doing the Great Backyard Bird Count. I bet your birdies were glad to find the feeders full (you did fill them, right?) because natural feed is much harder to find with all of the snow on the ground. Hopefully by the time this newsletter gets to you, the "blizzard of 06" is a memory and our spring birds are starting to arrive.

Spring is my FAVORITE season of the year. Bird migration fascinates me and I get excited as each new arrival appears at my feeder. Red-wing blackbirds are the TRUE harbingers of spring and although I eventually get tired of them, I get really excited when the first red-wings, grackles and even cowbirds arrive. Although the first robins are exciting, we all know that they have been here all along and are just coming out of hiding. My favorite spring bird is the rose-breasted grosbeak and I get really obnoxious and call all of my birder friends in the area (beware Carol and Ed) when the first male appears. Then come the hummers. When I first started feeding birds, people said May 15- September 15 so I dutifully hung the hummingbird feeder on May 15 and instantly a hummer would be there. One year I hung it May 4, and again had a hummer. One year, I had hummers before I had feeders out. I was frantically

washing the feeder and waiting for the syrup to cool as I watched Mr. Ruby tap at my kitchen window as if to say, "Hurry up lady, it's been a long trip and I'm starved". I now put my feeders out in April as soon as I'm pretty sure they won't freeze.

Birding in the spring is awesome and I hope that you will come out on some (or all) of our field trips. If you can't make the trips, at the very least, make time to watch your feeders for the new arrivals and don't forget to report them on birdalert. After all, I get almost as excited when you see a new bird as when one comes to my yard.

We've got some great programs lined up for this spring too so I hope you'll make time to come to our meetings (besides it's dark by then and the birds are sleeping so you can take time to come to the meetings). Don't forget our potluck at the NMC Appel property in May. It's our last "meeting" for the season and we've had some really good warbler sightings in previous years. It's always fun to get together and share birds and food (my two biggest passions).



"Spring is my FAVORITE season of the year."

Crane Creek, Ohio

by John Mesch

This will be the 11th year we have done a field trip to the southwest corner of Lake Erie. It has always been fun, and often has a surprise or two. We expect to bird Metzger Marsh, Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge, Magee Marsh, Crane Creek State Park, and the nearby fields that partially flood in May. The dates this year will be May 6,7,8. This does not coincide with International Migratory Bird Day this year, so some of the features of previous years will not be available, like the bird banding demos, the binocular tent, and the auto tour of Ottawa NWR. We received permission last year to ride our mountain bikes on the Ottawa NWR roads and we expect this will be available again this year.

Shirley and I will be biking Ottawa on Friday around mid-day - if it is not raining - with binoculars and scope. We would love to have you join us. Give me a call on my cell phone on Friday so we can get together (231-499-1439).

Later Friday afternoon we will be birding the Crane Creek boardwalk. Park at the west end of the parking lot, near the west boardwalk entrance.

There is no food service available in the area where we bird so bring picnic food for supper on Friday and lunches on Saturday and Sunday. The weather was pretty decent last year so we enjoyed dining on the picnic tables at the Crane Creek Lake Erie beach. Shirley and I will be spending Friday and Saturday nights at the Comfort Inn on Navarre Road, a.k.a. SR 2, in Oregon, Ohio. Reservations at 800-533-2100.

Last year the warbler count was down somewhat, but the shorebirds were quite good. My favorites were the American golden plovers. We have often seen what Kay calls "Florida birds" down there - like snowy egrets, little blue herons, and glossy ibises. We hope you will join us for this adventure.



*It's Warbler Time!
Chestnut-sided
Warbler*

Tawas State Park & Tuttle Marsh

by Cindee DuBey

Don't tell the other trip leaders, but this is the BEST trip of the spring. We'll meet at Bambi's Motel (in town) May 13 at 7:30 A.M. and caravan out to Tuttle Marsh. This is an area where we have seen Wilson's snipe, American bitterns, least bittern, osprey, ducks, teals, sora and Virginia rails, a black-billed cuckoo, a blue-wing and golden wing warbler (at the same time) and lots of other great stuff. After we've seen all that we can see there, we'll go back to Tawas Point State Park and bird. Bring your lunch and you can picnic with us at the park (we are camping there). For those of you that have never been to Tawas Point, Tom Powers, author of Great Birding in the Great Lakes, (and I can't find the book for a direct quote) says that if he had to chose one place to bird where he couldn't move outside of a 15' circle, it would be Tawas Point.

At the park we've seen rarities like summer tanager, Harris sparrow, western kingbird, and mockingbird as well as all of the Michigan spring migrants especially warblers. On one

weekend trip, nine of us were watching seven different species of warblers in the same tree, at the same time. I'll never forget that particular moment because while we were standing there, a great crested flycatcher almost landed on Ken Beerthius' head and he never saw it because he was watching other birds. We stayed in the same spot for 45 minutes watching birds come to us. Now that's birding at its funnest, I mean finest, actually I mean both!

Saturday night we will go into town for dinner and then back to the park to see what has arrived while we were gone. Sunday morning we will bird the park again and meet at DuBey's campsite at noon for lunch and to go over the trip list. We've always (?) totaled over 100 species, even the weekend that we got snowed on.

Larry and I are camping at the park so you are welcome to camp with us (we'll have the ranger let you know where we are). If you are not campers, some are staying at Bambi Motel, 989 362-4582.



*Eastern Bluebird -
Spring is on the way!*

Coming Attractions

by Barb Graf



*Ruby-throated
Hummingbird*

Bird watchers are always interested in methods of attracting birds for a closer view, whether it is knowing what type of seed a species enjoys or having a mouse for a nearby Northern Hawk Owl. One species I look forward to returning to our yard every year is the Ruby-throated hummingbird. It took me many years to entice them, but now they even return to where my hummingbird feeder was located last year! As hummingbirds seem to prefer the color red, after the last frost date (mid- to late May), I plant red flowers and buy a hanging Fuchsia plant. Out

comes my feeders, which get a thorough cleaning. Then I bring a solution of sugar water (1/4 cup sugar per cup of water) to boiling, stir well, and let cool. Do not add red food coloring.

Hummingbirds' tongues are prone to a type of "thrush." I don't know if this is a result of the red food coloring or from unclean feeders. It is very important to maintain a clean feeder and to change the "juice" in it frequently, especially in warmer weather. With little effort you can enjoy these "flying jewels" through to Fall!

Nature North

by Cindee Dubey

This year, the Grand Traverse Audubon Club will be participating in the Nature North Expo on May 21, in the Civic Arena in Traverse City. We will have a booth with Michigan Audubon materials as well as Grand Traverse Audubon fliers and (hopefully) Grand Traverse Area bird checklists (how is that for pressure, checklist committee?). I will need

volunteers to help man the booth on that day from 10:00 - 4:00 (I think). I'll have more information in April after the meeting but please keep that date open to help share your love of birds and birding with others who are just wondering about it. Let me know if you can help.

Potluck Dinner

by Kay Beerthuis

Thursday, May 25 at 5:30 p.m. we will have a potluck dinner at NMC's Appel property. This is about one mile from Keystone on River Road. Look for an Audubon sign and turn over the railroad tracks. We will meet rain or shine since there is an inside place to eat. Bring your own table service and a dish to share. Decaf coffee will be provided.

Bring your binoculars for some after-dinner birding. A Golden-winged warbler has nested on this property for years. The Boardman River runs by the area and attracts many birds also. Come and join us for an evening featuring good food and good birding.

Question:
Why do
hummingbirds
hum?

Answer:
Because
they don't
know the words.

Board Notes

by John Mesch, Secretary

1. Pledged \$2000 from Walter Hastings Fund toward the construction of an observation platform at Tobego Marsh.
2. Decided to participate at the Nature North expo at the Civic Center May 21.
3. Discussed upcoming programs and field trips for 2006.
4. Discussed upcoming Christmas Bird Counts.
5. Approved the 2006 budget for presentation to the general membership.
6. Reviewed committee assignments.
7. Discussed the need to purchase a digital image projector. There is a consensus of the board that we should do this.
8. Agreed to rent a projector from NMC for the February meeting.

Members: Join our email groups: **birdalert & GTAudubon**, club news.
Email your name & the email address you want to : kay@grandtraverseaudubon.org

Migratory Bird Count

by Bob Carstens

The first North American Migration Count was in 1992. The purpose was and is to give each and every Birdwatcher the opportunity to enjoy a day's birding during Spring Migration with the knowledge that the result of their findings, together with the birds counted by others, would fit together like pieces of a puzzle and reveal the status of bird migration on a specified date.

The goals of the North American Migration Count are:

- To obtain a "snapshot" of the progress of Spring Migration.
- To obtain information on the abundance and distribution of each species.

- Initiate more participation among Birders within a state and between states.
- Create challenges and goals among birders while collecting useful information.
- Aid in organization and centralization of data.
- Have fun.
- Establish the second Saturday in May as "National Birding Day".

This year's North American Migration Count takes place on Saturday, May 13, 2006. Anyone desiring to participate please call 938-5976. The contributions of all participants regardless of skill level is valued.



Native Plants

Program by Tom Ford

Our meeting on April 27 will be in Room 211 of the Great Lakes Campus of NMC. This is on Front Street, near Barlow St. Tom Ford, a local artist and one of our board members, will present a program on native plants. Start thinking of spring and be sure to attend this meeting for some great ideas.

Tom's program notes :

"The native plants program I will be presenting for April will be primarily digital images of rare plants found in Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. I will also have a handout on native plants for attracting wildlife; a biased list of my favorites for birds, butterflies, and hummingbirds."

The Serendipity List

by Kay Beerthuis

If the definition of serendipity sounds like a definition of birding, it often is. Big listers are driven to chalk up bird species, still trying to top the same list of Phoebe Snetsinger's, who saw over 8,500 bird species before she died. While this is an amazing accomplishment, few people will ever be on that level of birding.

I have decided to keep a different kind of birding list. My list can never be done by you or anyone else, and there's

no competition. On this list, I keep all the serendipities of birding.....the times I found something that really made me amazed, surprised, or really happy. Aren't these the sightings you talk about, remember, and feel excited about? Looking back on the notes of these memories can't help but make you a dedicated birder.

Start a Serendipity List.....YOU and only you, get to decide what goes on it!

serendipity:

1. The faculty of making fortunate discoveries by accident
2. The fact or occurrence of such discoveries
3. An instance of making such a discovery

South Manitou Island (May 20 & June 17)

by Tom Ford

*"spring
wildflowers
that are
literally
knee-deep"*

In Mid May and again in mid June I will lead field trips to South Manitou Island (SMI). SMI lies about 7 miles northwest of Sleeping Bear Point. It is one of two islands in the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. The southern most island in an archipelago of some two dozen islands that extends northeast to the straits of Mackinac.

The trips to SMI will focus on the islands unique plant life. However, do not leave home without your binoculars, the birding will be excellent as the timing for both trips coincides with bird migration and breeding on the island.

A nearly climax undisturbed old growth forest, limited human interference, and an absence of white-tailed deer make SMI a unique outdoor laboratory for the naturalist, botanist, and birder. These factors allow for a profusion of native

spring wildflowers that are literally knee-deep in places.

On the June trip, expect to see Coreopsis, Puccoon, Dune Lily, Campanula, Sand Cress, and Green Milkweed flowering in another undisturbed habitat, the dune plateau. We will travel by tour trucks to the trailhead, and then hike a short distance to the top of the dune. Be prepared for an ascent comparable to the dune climb area on the mainland. Bring plenty of water, pack light, and pace yourself. No hurry to reach the top.

Ferry service is in Leland on the Manitou Transit. Cost for the round trip boat ride is approximately \$25.00. There is an additional fee for the truck tour, approximately \$10.00. Pack a lunch and snacks. Plan to be in Leland by 9:00 a.m. for departure at 10:00.

**New and Renewal Members**

Leonard Graf, Treasurer

Thanks for renewing or joining!
Add to the membership booklet:

Auer, Tom
6757 Franklin Woods, TC 49686

Counts, Alice
597 South Long Lake Rd. TC 49684

Crane, Nat
721 S. Union, TC 49684

Ginsburg, Dick & Andi
1836 N. Cleveland, Chicago, IL 60614

Harp, Deb & Ron
3778 Brook Dr. TC 49684

Hartshorn, Ed & Carol
7258 W. Phelps, Manton Mi 49663

Hood, Jack
1717 Hwy 31N, Apt.24, TC 49686

Leinbach, Paula
1313 Ramsdell, TC 49684

Rutila, Betty
732 Washington, TC 49686

Schumacher, Trish
114 Cisne Circle Brighton, Co 80601

Simon, Peter & Carol
7915 E. Old Orchard Rd. TC 49684

Need more copies of the newsletter? Print them in COLOR from our web site at:

www.grandtraverseaudubon.org/news.html

Next Newsletter Deadline: May 31

For Sale Corner

-Sony TR-81 Hi-8 HandyCam, with 8X optical zoom. \$50. John Mesch, 946-3624

-Pajaro waist bag for birding guides, \$9.95 Kay Beerthuis, 947-8432



**Grand Traverse
Audubon Club
Board Members:**

President: Cindee Dubey,
(231) 839-2758

Vice Pres: (Program-open)

Vice Pres: Bob Carstens

Treasurer: Leonard Graf

Secretary: John Mesch

Newsletter: Kay Beerthuis

Elected: Shirley Mesch

Andrea Stewart

M.A.S. Rep: Tom Ford



**Photo by Deb Harp
2005 - 2006 is the winter of Snowy Owls!**

Grand Traverse Audubon Club
Kay Beerthuis, Newsletter Editor
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