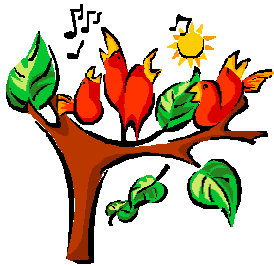


Grand Traverse Audubon Club Newsletter

March 2007
Issue #116

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Bird Notes

Upcoming Events

- ◆ **March 10** - Grand Traverse Field Trip. Meet at Logan's Landing, 7:30 a.m.
- ◆ **March 17** - Beginning Birders' Workshop. T.C. Library, 9:30 a.m. 947-8821
- ◆ **March 22** - Meeting 7:30 p.m. Great Lakes Campus, Rm. 211
- ◆ **April 7** - Field Trip - Houghton Lake, 8:30 a.m.
- ◆ **April 19** - Adopt-a-Highway & Trail cleanup, 9:30 a.m. 947-8432
- ◆ **April 21** - Field Trip - Arcadia Marsh, 7:00 a.m.
- ◆ **April 26** - Meeting 7:30 p.m. Great Lakes Campus, Rm. 211

Tawas Trip & Festival May 18 - 20 by Cindee DuBey

With snow on the ground and temperatures in the single digits (positive ones at least), Tawas in May is really a great thing to think about right now. Warblers, warblers and rails, ahhhyes. Tawas is always a great weekend even when the weather is less than perfect. Being a "migrant trap" makes Tawas an ideal place to bird in the spring. The trees are short and pretty much leafless and the birds are plentiful. Warblers galore, indigo buntings, scarlet tanagers, orchard and Baltimore orioles, it's a Birders Heaven. I hope you will join us again this year for a fantastic weekend of birding.

Michigan Audubon Society's Second Annual Tawas Birding Festival just happens to coincide with our Umpteenth Annual Tawas Spring Field Trip this year. This means that there will be lots of birders in and around Tawas this year. It also means that you need to make your reservations, camping or motel, NOW!!!

Larry, Penny (the dog) and I will be camping at Tawas Point State Park again this year. The park is accepting site specific reservations this year,

unlike last. We will be on site 129. It is in the back of the park, near Warbler Corner. That will be our "headquarters" for the weekend. We will plan to eat lunch there on Friday, Saturday and Sunday so feel free to bring your picnic lunches over and join us.

The plan is to bird the park on Friday, all day, starting at 6:00 if you are up for it. Saturday we will meet at the Bambi Motel at 7:30 and caravan out to Tuttle Marsh. When we've seen everything there is to see at the marsh, we'll head back to the park for lunch and afternoon birding. Dinner will be at the Chinese restaurant in town, and then we'll either return to the park or to Tuttle Marsh. Sunday we will again bird the park until noon when we'll meet to tally our birds for the weekend.

The MAS Tawas Birding Festival information is available at: www.tawasbirding.org. Events include Keynote speakers Bill and Elsa Thompson, editors of Bird Watchers Digest Magazine, the dedication of Tawas Point as a National Important Bird Area (3:30 Saturday) and numerous seminars and field trips. Registration is \$15 before May 1, and \$25 after that date.

Whitefish Bird-A-Thon by Leonard Graf

To help continue the research and conservation activities of the Whitefish Point Bird Observatory, our club will sponsor a Bird-A-Thon for WPBO on the club's May 18-20 weekend trip to Tawas State Park. We are asking you to pledge an amount per each bird species that are identified by either sight or sound by any of the club members on the trip. The count period will begin at 8:00 a.m. on the 18th and end at noon on the 20th. We expect to identify

about 125 species, depending on the weather and the timing of the bird migration. In return for your pledge, you will be helping WPBO, plus, you will receive a species list and a short narrative of the highlights of the weekend. Please send pledge to:

Leonard Graf
7329 Fouch
Traverse City, Mi 49684

Include your pledge per species ____¢
Your name, address, & phone number.

Upcoming Events, Cont.

- ◆ April 27 - 29 - Spring Fling at Whitefish Point, 922-9490
- ◆ May 5 - Field Trip to Grass River Natural Area, 8:30 a.m. 946-3624
- ◆ May 11-13 - Field Trip to Crane Creek & Magee Marsh.
- ◆ May 12- G.T. County Migratory Bird Count.
- ◆ May 18 - 20- Field Trip to Tawas State Park and Tuttle Marsh.
- ◆ May 24 - Potluck and Birding. River Rd. 5:30 p.m.
- ◆ May 26 - Field Trip to Skegemog Wildlife Area 938-5976



Enjoy those field trips coming up!

Upcoming Programs

by Nate Crane, Program V.P.

March 22 - The program will be on one of Michigan's most endangered species, the Piping Plover. Alice Van Zoren will present her first hand account of working with these shore birds in the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.

April 26 - Tom Ford's program will be on "Raptors in Flight". Spring is one of

the best times to view migrating raptors at locations all over the state. Tom will teach field marks and other characteristics to help in identification.

May 24 - The regular meeting will be a pot luck dinner at NMC's Appel Property on River Road. We will meet at 5:30pm. Make sure to bring your own table service and a dish to pass.

Grand Traverse Field Trip

by Nate Crane

On Saturday, March 10, we will meet at Logan's Landing on S. Airport Road at 7:30 am. The morning will start with birding Boardman Lake and the Governmental Center. These areas hold a nice assortment of diving ducks and wintering dabbling ducks. Later in

the morning we will bird the West Bay shoreline for more water fowl and Bald Eagles. In the afternoon we will drive to the Chum's Corners area for Snowy Owls, Snow Buntings, and Eurasian Collard Doves.

From the President's Pen

by Cindee DuBey

I can't decide if it's been a long or short winter. It started early and then left us and didn't return until mid January. But then boy did it return. I think we had a record low temperature for the Soo trip this year of 25 degrees BELOW zero on Sunday morning. Hopefully that was the last hurrah and spring and SPRING MIGRATION are fast approaching.

Speaking of the Soo trip, thanks so much to Jerry and Robbie Kolak for filling in as trip leaders. They did a fantastic job. We went places that I don't remember being before but there were great birds there. The strangest part of the trip, besides the Grafts not being there, was that the birds that we expected to see were absent but we saw many birds that we normally do not see on that trip. Global warming? At 25 below? Go figure.

I was contacted, via our website, by a Daisy Girl Scout leader wanting someone to come and talk to her troop about birds. Larry and I visited with the girls in early February. We took them feathers that were donated by various club members. These 5 and 6 year olds were totally fascinated by them and were even more excited that they got to keep them. I also contacted Cornell Lab of Ornithology

and got some posters for bird identification and book markers for each of the girls. Last, and certainly not least, the Club purchased finch feeders (a close out special) so that each girl got her own finch feeder to hang for the birds. I got an email from the leader and she and her daughter were thoroughly enjoying watching the chickadees on their feeders and finding it "very relaxing".

Near future events include a field trip on March 10 with Nate Crane. Nate has a wealth of knowledge of the Traverse City area bird population and it should be a great day of birding right here at home. The Beginning Birder's Workshop is on March 17 9:30 - 11:00 at the library. Ed and Carolyn always do a great job at putting this together for us. Be sure to come on over and meet new birders and share your knowledge with them. Also, bring along anyone that wishes to learn more about birding in our area. Then on into our spring parade of field trips geared to take advantage of the spring migration. I hope that you will plan to enjoy at least one and hopefully a lot more of these field trips. The birding is great but the company is even better, so come on along.

Arizona - Cloudless Skies, Warm Weather, Tons of Birds by Elise Brooks

Or not. The locals said it was the worst winter since 1996. The interstate highway was closed due to snow, the temperature dipped into the teens, and I caught a nasty virus. But despite being cold, sick, and snowbound, we had a great time.

Club members Ed and Carol Hartshorn, who are spending the winter near Sierra Vista, explored the area before our arrival, so we anticipated great birding. We weren't disappointed. Since Ed is always on the lookout, a trip into town for groceries yielded our first "life lister," the Great-tailed Grackle. (Hey, it was a parking lot!)

Our first true birding excursion was a hike into Scheelite Canyon where Ed's friend Dieter led us right to the Mexican Spotted Owl, almost as if we had an appointment.

On various hikes into the canyons and near the San Pedro River we saw Gila and Ladder-backed Woodpeckers, Red-naped Sapsucker, Hammond's and Gray Flycatchers, Say's and Black Phoebe, Loggerhead Shrike, Steller's and Mexican Jays, Chihuahuan Raven, Bridled Titmouse, Cactus Wren, Western Bluebird, Northern

Mockingbird, Curve-billed Thrasher, Phainopepla, Olive Warbler, Spotted and Abert's Towhees, Yellow-eyed Junco, Pyrrhuloxia, and Lesser Goldfinch. A trip to the local wastewater treatment ponds produced even more new birds: Cinnamon Teal, Northern Shoveler, a huge flock of Northern Pintails, male Ruddy Ducks with bright blue bills, a flyover by a Prairie Falcon, a Sora (finally!), Common Moorhen, and tons of Yellow-headed Blackbirds.

As we were leaving Ed and Carol in Sierra Vista, and heading toward Tucson, a Greater Roadrunner ran in front of the car giving us a good long look. Joe and I spent our last day in Arizona hiking the Sabino Canyon near Tucson, and even then we were finding new birds ... Verdin, Black-throated Sparrow, Black-throated Gray Warbler (!), and, at long last, four Gambel's Quail.

I keep thinking of cold, snowy old Arizona, and I guess we'll have to go back despite the weather because we still haven't seen an Acorn Woodpecker, or a Montezuma Quail, or a Burrowing Owl, or ... is there an end to this birding obsession?



Photo by Joe Brooks

"If you hear the sound of a car that won't start, it just may be a Cactus Wren."

Soo Trip Report

by Jerry Kolak

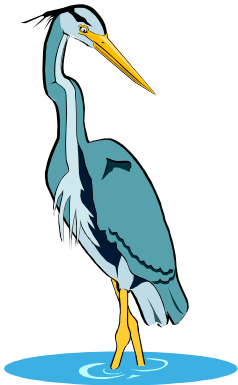
On Friday, February 16th, 14 of us were able to participate on our annual weekend birding trip to the Soo. We had a great deal of fun locating the birds listed below. We also enjoyed our fellowship together at various restaurants. I have found out that eating is a very important part of this trip. Just driving around all the backroads we managed to drive more than 200 miles. RED CROSSBILLS- A group of 7 at the corner of Ranger Road and M-28. SNOWY OWLS- 2 were located on Centerline Rd. SHARP-TAILED GROUSE 45-50 on 9 Mile Rd at Nicolet, & near Ridge. WILD TURKEYS- at feeders on Kinross Rd. EVENING GROSBEAKS, CEDAR WAXWINGS and ONE REDBELLIED WOODPECKER on Ranger Road. AMERICAN BLACK DUCK, MALLARDS, COMMON GOLDENEYE, COMMON MERGANSER at the loading dock for Sugar

Island. RUFFED GROUSE, PINE SISKIN, WHITE & RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH at Hulbert Bog. Many ROUGH-LEGGED HAWKS, PURPLE FINCH, SNOW BUNTINGS, and 4 NORTHERN SHRIKES throughout the area. Bald Eagle and many other common species were also seen. On the extended trip that four of us made from Feb 19-21 we were able to add WHITE-WINGED CROSSBILLS and COMMON REDPOLLS on West Curley Lewis Drive, and 2 HOODED MERGANSERS and 2 MUTE SWANS near Sugar Island. Just before sunset on the 19th we were able to view 1 SHORT-EARED OWL for 15 minutes flying on the east side of Forrest Road just north of 11 Mile Road. On the 20th, about 5:15 p.m. we returned and found 3 SHORT-EARED OWLS. It took a great deal of patience and time for these owls.



Photo by Sue Carlson

The essentials of birding.... a good scope, binoculars, and a keen observer.



The Great Blue Heron is always a great bird to watch!

Houghton Lake Trip

April 7

by Cindee DuBey

Have you ever been to a rookery? Have you ever seen 30 or more Great Blue Herons at one time? Well on April 7, you'll have your chance. We'll meet at the DNR boat launch on old 27 at 8:30 A.M. and drive up to the viewing platform on Houghton Lake Flats, then up to the rookery, and then on over to the Reedsburg Dam flood. Besides the nesting Great Blue Herons, we expect to see nesting Osprey and Eagles. We'll also see many duck species and possibly sandhill cranes, trumpeter swans, and

even black terns if they are back. It's a great way to get ready for the big spring migration push so plan to join us.

To find us, take US 127 to the M55 exit in Houghton Lake. Drive east on M55 for about a mile to the State Police Post. Turn north on Old 27 and drive past Coyle's restaurant. On the east side of the road is the boat launch. Just look for a bunch of people with binoculars and you know you've found us. Please let me know if you plan to attend 839-2758.

Arcadia Marsh

April 21

by Tom Ford

Last year's Arcadia trip produced over 80 species of bird sightings. Some members added new birds to their lists. American Bittern, Glaucous Gull, Savannah Sparrow, Wilson's Snipe, Solitary Sandpiper and Northern Harrier were some of my favorites last April.

As you may recall, Mother Nature served up a variety of weather conditions too; so remember to bring

layers of clothing and a thermos full of your favorite hot beverage. Pack snacks and a lunch, as we will break at Portage Lake in Onekama to chow down and watch the waterfowl there.

Meet at Tom's Food Market on 14th Street and Division at 7:00 a.m. We will carpool to Interlochen corners where we will meet more birders and then off to our first stop.

Crane Creek, Ohio

May 11 -13

by John Mesch

This will be the 12th year we have done a field trip to the southwest corner of Lake Erie.

This is a very birdy place in May as the migrating birds stop there to stoke up on bugs before making the trip across the lake. Last year our group found 120 species, including 19 species of warblers.

Last year's highlights were Wilson's Phalaropes and Pipits that Ken & Kay found at a nearby farm field. This year our trip coincides with International Migratory Bird Day, so we will be able to drive on the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge and see the banding, optics, and other demonstrations that will be taking place.

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. We will be gathering around the west boardwalk entrance around 6PM on Friday for supper at the picnic tables that the state park provides. Shirley & I will be staying at the Comfort Inn on Navarre Road, a.k.a. SR 2, in Oregon, Ohio. Reservations at 800-533-2100. My cell phone will be on during the trip - 231-499-1439. For any queries before departure, call me at 946-3624.



A half mile boardwalk makes a great birding trail.

Migratory Bird Survey

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".

Traditionally, the day for the North American Migration Count has been the 2nd Saturday of May. The Grand Traverse Migration Count for 2007 will be on the 2nd Saturday of May which this year will be on May 12, 2007. All skill levels are welcome !!!

Participants can choose whatever level they like to participate. Count day will last for all 24 hours of May 12. If you participate, you choose the length of time that day and the level or particular way in which you participate. You can do a stationary count and observe your feeder, yard, or some other specific single location or pick an area such as a park, Township, portion of the TART trail, VASA, or the like.

If you would like to take part, please call me at 938-5976. I will mail you a species documentation form and then provide a combined list of all the species and the number of each species observed by all the participants on the count day.



Photo by Bob Carstens

Board Notes

by Tom Ford, Secretary

In January the Board approved the purchase of bird feeders for the local Daisy Girl Scout Troop, the purchase total in the amount of \$15.78.

Committee assignments for 2007 were reviewed and set.

In February the Board approved the purchase of 144 mugs with the clubs Chickadee logo. The purchase will be

contingent on the mugs being dishwasher and microwave safe. Purchase total \$339.86. Mugs will be available soon.

The Board will also investigate the purchase of Dream Weaver Program from Michigan Audubon Society. This program would be used to upgrade our club website.



Checklist of Birds - Grand Traverse Area

Get your free checklist at any meeting or field trip. You can get one mailed by sending \$1.00 to: John Mesch, Treasurer
9793 Edgewood Ave.
Traverse City, Mi. 49684

Grass Lake Survey

by Bob Carstens

In the winter of 2005, Richard Earl from the DNR Office on Garfield Avenue contacted our club inquiring as to the possibility of obtaining our expertise in doing an avian survey of the Grass Lake Natural Area in Benzie County during 2006. The purpose of such a survey was to glean information that would enable development of an updated management plan. To this end, in 2006, one winter excursion on foot and several kayak excursions were made in April and May by Grand Traverse Audubon Club members Bob Carstens, Joe and Elise Brooks, Nate Crane, and

Bryce and Paula Dreeszen. Because of prior commitment to Michigan Audubon's Breeding Bird Atlas Update efforts, survey trips were not done in the summer of 2006. However, survey efforts will continue in 2007 with spring excursions and hopefully with at least one trip in the summer and fall also. G.T. Audubon members who do go there in 2007, please contribute your avian observations to our knowledge pool. Those having questions or observations please contact Bob Carstens at 938-5976.

Q. How do you identify a unique bird?

A. Unique up on it.

Bird Feeding Books

by Cindee DuBey

Thanks to all of you that sent suggestions on Bird Feeding Books. A member of our club asked if I would share all of the suggestions so here they are:

The Bird Feeding Book by Don and Lillian Stokes
National Audubon's Bird Feeder Handbook by Robert Burton
Easy to Make Bird Feeders for Woodworkers by Scott Campbell

Lives of North American Birds by Ken Kaufmann

Other suggestions were an Ortho Guide to feeding birds and a Peterson Guide to feeding birds. Molly also "Googled up" some very helpful information. The most recommended resource (and my personal favorite) was Tom Ford at Wild Birds Unlimited 946-0431.

New Members 2007

Welcome To:

Gary & Sue Carlson
 3992 Peninsular Shores Dr.
 Grawn, MI 49637

Don & Kathy Ehrenberger
 9876 N. Long Lake Rd.
 Traverse City, MI 49684

Lynne & Judy Myers
 2555 Tonawanda Lake Rd.
 Grawn, MI 49637

Roger & Heather Perry
 3075 Pilgrim Highway
 Frankfort, MI 49635

Ed & Carolyn Risk
 48 Highview Rd.
 Traverse City, MI 49686

Jim Turner & Kate Trainer
 2974 Feiger Lane #6
 Traverse City, MI 49684

Elena Wentz
 517 Grant St.
 Traverse City, MI 49686





**Grand Traverse Audubon Club
Board Members:**

President: Cindee DuBey,
(231) 839-2758

Vice Pres: Nate Crane

Vice Pres: Bob Carstens

Treasurer: John Mesch

Secretary: Tom Ford

Newsletter: Kay Beerthuis

Elected: Shirley Mesch

Ed Moehle

M.A.S. Rep: Elise Brooks



- Photo by Gerri Erickson

A Peregrine Falcon was a great sighting for birders in Traverse City this winter. It could be seen roosting on a window ledge at the Park Place Hotel and often perched on one of the courthouse spires. It stayed around for a number of weeks before we got a really cold spell and it moved on. The Peregrine was seen eating a Mallard and at another time, a Bufflehead Duck.

Grand Traverse Audubon Club
Kay Beerthuis, Newsletter Editor
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