

the Caller

September 2017, Volume 56, No. 2

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by GRAC, 6152 Georgeann Ct., Belmont, MI 49506-9783



On the web: www.graud.org Information: information@graud.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/grandrapidsaudubonclub/

September Meeting Notes

- Date:** Monday, September 25, 2017
Time: 7:00 PM social; 7:30 PM program
Location: John Donnelly Conference Center
Aquinas College
Speaker: Helen Taylor
The Nature Conservancy
Topic: The Changing Scale of Conservation

Helen Taylor, Michigan State Director for the Nature Conservancy, will discuss the changing scale of conservation as organizations, communities and leaders are faced with increasingly complex problems and solutions in the use and protection of natural resources.

Helen will describe how science and market-based strategies, policies and practices are expanding the scope and impact of conservation work from site to systems to sustainably achieve the long-term health of systems as large as the Great Lakes.

Helen has spent more than 27 years working on Great Lakes protection, policy and conservation. She joined the Conservancy in 1996 to lead its Great Lakes Program. Since 1999, she has served as state director of its Michigan program and served on the board of directors of the Conservancy's Great Lakes Project.

Prior to joining the Conservancy in 1996, Helen spent nine years working in the environmental policy field with a concentration in Great Lakes issues, pollution prevention, waste and public involvement. Her project work focused on facilitating and mediating environmental initiatives, partnerships and policies, and working as a consultant to industry, government (municipalities, state and federal agencies), and environmental organizations.

President's Corner

by John Chronowski

To begin the new season for Grand Rapids Audubon Club, I want to re-emphasize our organization's goals for this coming year. Great emphasis will again be placed on expanding our membership in the 18-50 age group. Tricia Boot will be coordinating efforts to try some unconventional activities (i.e. "Birds and Beer") to attract younger members.

We are in the process of trying to attract individuals to lead Junior Audubon. A concerted effort also will be made to expand the outreach of GRAC. We need to increase our stewardship with projects and organizations like Camp Blodgett, Blandford Nature Center, the Maher Sanctuary, Michigan Bluebird Society and developments like the recent land acquisition of the former Highlands Golf Club.

In regard to the Highlands Golf Club project: I attended a meeting in early August and came away with many positive thoughts. The Michigan Land Conservancy and Blandford Nature Center have worked out an arrangement to purchase this area, which would double the size of the Blandford.

The project is in Phase One, which includes paying off the mortgage. This will end any chance of commercial development. Phase Two will be the actual development of the land. The August meeting was held to gain feedback from interested groups and residents of the area. Some possibilities include the creation of more than two miles of trails, a prairie, more wetlands and a large body of water, a bike path, and other natural developments. The potential is unlimited. GRAC has the opportunity to help nurture a magnificent blueprint for this land which is really a "blank slate" in nature. Along with this project, there are endless possibilities for our organization if we are willing to seize the moment!

Deadline for October newsletter articles: **Sept. 28**

(send to Tricia Boot)

For membership information contact assistant treasurer Mary Austin at the address, phone number or E-mail on the back of the *Caller* or see website www.graud.org.



Ranger Steve's Nature Niche

Dust Baths

by Ranger Steve Mueller

The drama outside our window provides unending fascination. Deer blinds are primarily used during hunting season, but consider sitting in a blind throughout the year. My friends are more patient when it comes to blind use for observing nature niches.

My friend, Don Wollander, would spend the day in a wildlife blind with camera focused on a bird nest. He captured outstanding photographs and was rated the No. 1 in a world nature competition thirteen of 14 years. People find countless ways to enjoy the natural world.

Using our home as a blind, we see things we would miss when walking natural areas. When traveling outdoors, we witnessed things like a deer chasing a coyote that was described in my column. (If you missed it, search online at the *Cedar Spring Post* where niche articles are archived.) Another time, a young fawn saw me standing still and approached. It touched my knee with its nose before it thought "You are not my mama" and bounded off.

From our home, we can view our backyard fire pit where we burn brush, roast hotdogs and make S'mores. Karen woke me to look out the bedroom window where there was a thick gray cloud in still air over the fire pit. It was hard to see a Wild Turkey thrashing in the ash.

The turkey was taking a health-improving dust bath. Frequently, we find hollows in the sand along sanctuary trails where turkeys dry bathe. Dust bath sand is important for Wild Turkeys and fowl like domestic chickens. The attuned nature observer will witness woodpeckers, robins and other birds dust bathing. Water-filled birdbaths in the yard are good, and are used, but dry dust baths have special advantages.

Birds lie in bare sand and use wings to stir dry earth on themselves. They work the dirt into feathers. The turkey that discovered our powdered ash hit the jackpot. The fine powder works better than sand for helping to suffocate external parasites like lice, fleas, bedbugs, mites, ticks and fly grubs. The dust helps clog spiracles that allow for parasite oxygen exchange. It is not 100 percent effective, but neither is slapping mosquitoes for us.

The parasites might move to get away from the dust and the bird will more easily dislodge them from its body. Observe birds actively using their beak and legs to rid the body of parasites. Infested birds scratch and preen frequently. They exhibit broken or missing feathers. Do not confuse molting loss with parasitic damage. When molting, they lose the same corresponding feather on both sides. Notice each wing is missing the same opposing feather during molting.

Someone with me tried to help a nestling that had a mosquito on its head. He reached to remove the mosquito. Five young Eastern Phoebes jumped from the nest. We gathered the birds and put them back in the nest. I held my hand over the young until they calmed. Slowly I removed my hand and the birds stayed. My hand was black with lice. Nests are havens for parasites. When birds fledge the nest, they can begin behavior to reduce blood-sucking parasites that cause anemia, weight loss and general ill health. Dust baths are important health aids.

The very fine ash so light it was suspended in air like a cloud was excellent for helping the bird. It penetrated the feathers and coated the skin like an insect repellent. We are not the only ones that use nature to our advantage.

Natural history questions or topic suggestions can be directed to Ranger Steve (Mueller) at odybrook@chartermi.net - Ody Brook Nature Sanctuary, 13010 Northland Dr. Cedar Springs, MI 49319 or call (616) 696-1753.

Bald Eagle Stamp Program

by Henry Raad

This fundraising project helps to offset the cost of caring for sick and injured birds of prey at the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey in Maitland, Fla.

Collectable stamps are gathered by a local stamp club which sorts and sells the donated stamps to various buyers.

I am the "point person" for our club, so please give me stamps you wish to donate at any meeting or place them by the nametag box. There is no deadline to this ongoing project. Not sure about a stamp? Bring it anyway.

Collectable stamps include:

- any stamp collections
- any foreign, commemorative, airmail or special handling stamps
- any hunting and fishing license stamps
- mint plate blocks, especially older ones
- NO regular letter or Christmas stamps
- canceled or un-canceled but undamaged stamps

Leave at least a quarter-inch margin around cut stamps. If the card or envelope is interesting, do not remove the stamp.

Learn more about the Audubon Center at <http://www.audubonofflorida.org/>.



August 2017 eBird Summary

by Carol VanOeveren

The following is an overview of the unusual or rare eBird sightings for August 2017 for Allegan, Kent, Muskegon and Ottawa counties. This report does not include rare birds that are flyovers, unchaseable and those with sketchy details. Rare and unusual eBird sightings are updated daily on the GRAC website.

After the passage of a strong cold front, through mid-month was mostly dry and comfortable with below- to near-normal temperatures. More humid weather followed with on and off rain and thunderstorms. By the 23rd it had cooled into the 70s and remained cool (with a little rain) and pleasant through the end of the month.

Shorebird activity continued through August at Muskegon Wastewater and elsewhere. Twenty-five species were seen in the area with much of the movement occurring through mid-month and again during the latter part of the month. Some of the larger numbers at the Wastewater included 18 Semipalmated Plovers Aug 28, 94 Spotted Sandpipers and 54 Lesser Yellowlegs Aug 5, 82 Least Sandpipers Aug 4 and 100 Pectoral Sandpipers Aug 1. More unusual species included a **Black-bellied Plover** along 23rd St S of 118th Ave in Allegan Co Aug 17-28 and up to 20 at the Wastewater Aug 25-31; up to **99** (actual count) **American Golden-Plovers** at the Wastewater Aug 19-31, four along 23rd St S of 118th in Allegan Co Aug 23 and up to four at AAA Turf Farm in Ottawa Co Aug 26-29; **Piping Plovers** (see right); a **Willet** at the Wastewater Aug 27; a **Hudsonian Godwit** (see right); a **Ruddy Turnstone** at Holland SP Aug 28-30 and one at the Wastewater Aug 31; three **Red Knots** (see right); up to two **White-rumped Sandpipers** at the Wastewater Aug 4 and 25-31; **Baird's Sandpipers** at the Wastewater (up to 12), Ridgepoint Church in Ottawa Co (2), along 23rd St S of 118th Ave in Allegan Co (2), Coopersville Sewage Ponds (3) and 152nd Ave and Ransom in Ottawa Co (1); two **Stilt Sandpipers** at Caledonia Sewage Ponds, up to **18** at the Wastewater, one at 152nd Ave and Ransom in Ottawa Co and four at Coopersville Sewage Ponds; a **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** along 23rd St S of 118th Ave in Allegan Co Aug 19-23 and the Wastewater Aug 28 and 31; up to three **Short-billed Dowitchers** at the Wastewater and one at Coopersville Sewage Ponds and up to eleven **Red-necked Phalaropes** at the Wastewater Aug 19 and 24-26 and one at Holland SP Aug 27-31.

Warblers of interest including early migrants: a Louisiana Waterthrush observed while paddling the Rogue River near Rockford Aug 2, a Northern Waterthrush at a residence near Big Blue Lake in Muskegon Co Aug 5 and one at Huff Park Aug 14-15, a Tennessee at a residence in western Ottawa Co Aug 18,

a **Mourning** at a residence in western Ottawa Co Aug 17 and 23, a Hooded at Riley Trails Park Aug 8 and Port Sheldon Natural Area Aug 15 both in Ottawa Co, a Blackburnian at a residence in western Ottawa Co Aug 14, a Chestnut-sided at Jubb Bayou Park in Ottawa Co Aug 23, a **Prairie** at the Kalamazoo River channel (back side of known breeding territory) in Allegan Co Aug 6 and a Canada at Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve Aug 16. Small warbler movement of up to eleven species at Huff Park on Aug 30 and 31 including Black-and-white, Nashville, Magnolia, Blackburnian, Bay-breasted, Blackpoll, Black-throated Green and Wilson's.

Finds of the month: Great Egret is not an unusual species, but on the evening of Aug 16, former GRAC member Gus van Vliet observed **78** at the roost at the wetland E of Hotel Ave in Kent Co. This is an apparent five-county (Allegan/Kent/Muskegon/Newaygo/Ottawa) high count record for this species. The following morning he outdid himself by counting **81** leaving that same roost at 6:30 AM. **Piping Plovers** continued to be observed along the lakeshore. An adult and a juvenile were at Pere Marquette Park Aug 1, a juvenile continued since July at Holland SP Aug 2 and one continued at Muskegon SP beach Aug 5. A juvenile **Hudsonian Godwit** was found by Michael Boston Aug 24, and observed later in the day by Chip Francke, in the middle drawn-down cement cell at Muskegon Wastewater. The bird hung around through Aug 26 allowing many observations. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S38801327> to view Chip's photos. A **Red Knot**, either a juvenile or an adult in basic plumage, was seen by Doug Wassink at the pond on his farm at 152nd and Ransom in Ottawa Co Aug 26. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S38828411> for photos. Another was found by Michael Boston at the Wastewater on Aug 27 and continued the 28th, and one was found by Emily Tornga at the Grand Haven north pier Aug 29. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S38891191> for photos. It is unknown if these three are the same individual.

Other notables: a female **Common Goldeneye** at Muskegon Wastewater Aug 1; two **Horned Grebes** at Muskegon Wastewater Aug 30-31; up to two **Eared Grebes** continued since June at Muskegon Wastewater Aug 29; a large number of Double-crested Cormorants (350) at Muskegon SP, Snug Harbor Aug 5 and 400 migrating at Grand Haven SP Aug 30; an **American Bittern** at Lost Channel in Grand River in Ottawa Co; up to two **Least Bitterns** continued at Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve and one at Lost Channel in Grand River, Muskegon SGA Lane's Landing, Window-on-the-Waterfront in Holland and Bruce Bayou 129th Ave access in Ottawa Co;

(Continued on page 4)



(Continued from page 3)

a **Black-crowned Night-Heron** at Muskegon SGA Lane's Landing Aug 5 and Rivertown Crossings Mall ponds in Kent Co Aug 30; a very light morph Red-tailed Hawk (possible Krider's) at Muskegon Wastewater on and off through most of the summer; eight **Common Gallinules** (two adults with fledged young) at Lost Channel in Grand River in Ottawa Co Aug 2, nine (including fledged young) along 11th St N of Martin in Allegan Co Aug 19 (six continued there Aug 29), up to two continued at Window-on-the-Waterfront and one at Windmill Island Park in Holland; a **Lesser Black-backed Gull** at the Kalamazoo River mouth in Allegan Co Aug 6 and at Muskegon Wastewater Aug 9; 50 Common Terns at Holland SP Aug 29; 28 **Black Terns** at Holland SP Aug 28; est 50 Common Nighthawks overhead at E Grand Rapids Aug 29 – most I have seen reported congregating in the evening at this time of year in many years; a Peregrine Falcon at Coopersville Sewage Ponds (banded individual), Veterans Memorial Park in Muskegon, Muskegon Wastewater and Harbor Island (seen on falcon cam); an Olive-sided Flycatcher at several locations in Kent and Ottawa cos; thousands of swallows were congregating at the Wastewater Aug 11; a Winter Wren at VanRaalte Farm in Ottawa Co Aug 5; a Swainson's Thrush at a residence in western Ottawa Co Aug 29; up to three **Henslow's Sparrows** continued through the summer (last reported Aug 17) along 60th St SE E of Kraft in Kent Co; up to 31 **Dickcissel** still being observed (carrying food earlier in month and presumed breeding) at Muskegon Wastewater Aug 27 and thirteen along 60th St SE E of Kraft in Kent Co Aug 17; Bobolinks continued through the month at the Wastewater with a high count of **200** (154 throughout the property and 46 at the landfill) Aug 5; up to **55 Brewer's Blackbirds** at AAA Turf Farm in Ottawa Co Aug 26-29; and up to twelve (including juveniles) Orchard Orioles continued since late July at the Wastewater Aug 6.

Note: Whooping Crane "Lily" was still being seen at Schoonover WPA in Lenawee Co as of Aug 25.

Local bird report: On Aug 11, along the Paul Henry Thornapple Trail in Middleville, Gary Deckert reported "an albino swallow flying with a large number of Northern Rough-winged Swallows, which were harassing and attacking it continuously."

Maher Sanctuary Notes

by Chris Baer

Aug. 25 was a beautiful day to visit Maher Sanctuary. The birds were hopping, the bees were bopping and the flowers were blooming. At one place along the boardwalk, the sound of the bees was palpable.

Migrating birds flitted through the trees throughout the property along with birds who have not migrated. (Is anyone else concerned by the recent hurricanes roaring through a major flyway for our migrating birds?) I heard and sometimes saw song sparrows, yellow-rumped warblers, wrens, a catbird and a number of other sparrows all being very secretive in Maher's incredible, deep thickets.

The plants are in full bloom and seed production trying to beat the cold of late fall and winter. Blooming probably through mid-September are Lobelia, swamp-betony louse wort (white parrot beak-like flowers along the boardwalk), swamp thistle, shrubby cinquefoil, turtlehead, Joe-pye weed, pearly everlasting, virgin's bower, tall sunflower, thin-leaved coneflower, touch-me-not (fun to play with; touch the seed heads and they blast out the seed), goldenrod, sky blue aster, boneset, rosin weed and cup plant (the last two in the oak savannah).

The shrubby cinquefoil is especially spectacular in the area below the hill where a bench looks out over the wetland. What a sight!

The monarchs were zooming about their favorite flowers, Joe-pye weed, swamp thistle and boneset. They were here in numbers last year.

The "prairie" which has been taken over by a very prickly raspberry has big and little bluestem and in the past, blazing star has been seen and on this visit lupine was found. There is serious thought of removing the raspberries and returning the prairie to this area. More prairie plants could be added by application of seed from local sources. The lupine is a new plant to add to our list, as is a tick trefoil.

Unfortunately, knap weed was found near the aforementioned bench and was pulled, but most likely will return.

On a positive note, the trails are now cleared of trees and downed limbs. To see the power of the wind, look beyond the Bridge to Nowhere and see two huge trees literally pushed over in the last storm.

Workdays: Because of the frustration of cancelled workdays due to rain, only one Saturday a month will regularly be scheduled. This month we will aim for 9:30 AM to noon on Sept. 16. Weekdays will be impromptu at the whim of participants and depending on the weather. Watch the website for scheduling.



Upcoming GRAC Field Trips

Contact Becky Kuhn with field trip suggestions/ideas. Watch the *Caller* for future trip announcements. Visit www.graud.org for the most up-to-date trip list. Safety hazards: Driving in a caravan can be hazardous. Get directions from the leader and exercise caution on the road at all times. Have a passenger handle all radio or phone communications. Dress and drive for the weather.

Wednesday, Sept. 20, 9:00 AM

Thursdays, Sept. 21 and 28, 9:00 AM

Leader: Katie Bolt

Recurring Millennium Park Hikes

Hike Millennium Park to see what's hanging around (route depends on day/week). A good variety of birds have been reported from this diverse habitat near the river, which includes open and swampy ponds, lowland forest and various secondary growth.

Essentials: Sept. 20, meet at the corner of Butterworth and Riverbend to walk approximately one mile of the Hansen Nature Trail. Sept. 21 and 28, meet at the east end of Veterans Memorial Drive parking area for a three-mile walk.

Ecuador Birding Program

On Thursday, Sept. 21, eco tour guide Roberto Cedeño will present a special program at Graves Hall on Hope College's campus.

"Ecuador: Through the Eyes of a Professional Eco Guide" will include a look at Ecuador and Galapagos Islands from the perspective of an expert naturalist guide.

Cedeño has specialized in birds and photography for nearly three decades and has vast knowledge of the region's flora, fauna, culture and history.

The program is 7:00 to 9:00 PM and there is no cost to attend. This event, organized by Outdoor Discovery Center Macatawa Greenway, is sponsored by Hope College.

Learn more: <http://outdoordiscovery.org/events/eyes-world-renowned-eco-guide/>.

October Program Preview

Be sure to join us on Monday, Oct. 30 for our membership meeting and program. Our presenter will be Robert "Bob" Tarte, who will share "Feather Brained: My stumbling quest to become a birder and find a rare bird ... on my own."

Bob and his wife Linda live on the edge of a shoe-sucking, mink-infested swamp near Lowell. Bob is a writer and devoted pet owner. He spent 15 years helping to raise and release orphaned songbirds for the Wildlife Rehab Center, Ltd. in Grand Rapids, and has the scars to prove it.

Millennium Park Walk Report

Thursday, Aug. 24

by Katie Bolt

We had good walks all summer and were joined by a variety of birders at different times, but Thursday, Aug. 24 was an unusual day. Wayne and Jana Norlin, Jeanne Griffin and I were standing in the parking area when a Yellow-billed Cuckoo flew into a tree with a caterpillar in its beak, giving a good look for everyone (except Ed, who missed it). We had been hearing cuckoos for several weeks but this was the only good look. We also spotted a Baltimore Oriole and Blue-gray Gnatcatchers before we got on the trail. As we continued on, several deer crossed our path.

Along the trail to the bridge, we heard and saw most of our familiar birds (Downy Woodpecker, American Robin, Black-capped Chickadee, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Eastern Wood Pewee, Mallard, Red-Eyed Vireo, Great Blue Heron, Belted Kingfisher, Blue Jay, Hairy Woodpecker, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper and Song Sparrow). Kathy Haase caught up with us shortly before we crossed the Trestle Bridge and Jan Klemp caught up to us on the bridge.

On the trestle trail, we were thrilled to spot our first Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers of the year but were distracted by a Pileated Woodpecker which flew into a dead tree giving fantastic views. We picked up some Yellow-throated Vireos, and a Yellow-shafted Flicker before we got to the southern pond. At the pond, we were treated to Green Herons and eight Great Egrets. The egrets were jumping in the air, flying at each other and chasing each other around. As we watched them, a small darker duck landed among the Mallards. After much discussion and review of several resources, we identified it as an immature Hooded Merganser which was new for us at the park. We heard and saw Gray-headed Catbirds and Northern Cardinals before having two otters cross the trail in front of us.

When we returned to the paved trail, we encountered several mixed flocks of Black-capped Chickadees and warblers. Included in the warblers were American Redstart, Nashville, Magnolia and Prothonotary. We heard a Carolina Wren but did not see it. Two Cedar Waxwings were in the trees nearby. Our last bird appeared at first to be a lump on a log in the river, but on closer inspection, was identified as an immature Blue-winged Teal.

In spite of unpleasant weather (50s, periods of rain), it was one of the best days we've had at the park. It reached a point where we just couldn't believe we would see anything else. We were happy that those who were beginning birders in our group got a great look at the cuckoo. A good time was had by all.



Mary's Membership Musings

by Mary Austin

A membership in the Grand Rapids Audubon Club provides great benefits. These include a subscription to the *Caller* newsletter (which you are currently reading) nine times a year. You also have the availability of monthly meetings (September through April), where you can interact with other nature-minded members and learn from knowledgeable nature speakers at the Donnelly Center on the beautiful Aquinas College campus. In May, you are invited to attend our Annual Meeting, which is held at various local venues and includes a field trip, potluck supper and guest speaker.

Your membership entitles you to field trips with naturalists throughout the year. You can share in birding information through our website (www.graud.org), engage in other educational opportunities and participate in committee activities. You can be part of the birding experience through the Christmas Bird Count, the Spring International Migratory Bird Count and the annual Bird-A-Thon. You can experience a sense of pride when you visit our club's Maher Sanctuary in Barry County or when you learn how younger birders can be enriched through the Junior Audubon and Audubon Adventures programs.

You can become more involved with GRAC through our various committees. We currently need chairpersons for some committees. See the second to the last page of this *Caller* issue to learn about our various committees and then make the commitment to work in one or more of these committees.

You enjoy being a GRAC member, and you can share your membership experience. Ask a relative or friend to join you in attending our next general membership meeting on Sept. 25 or to accompany you on an upcoming a field trip. Possibly, your relative or friend might wish to attend and become a member.

As for other membership news, GRAC welcomes the following new members on our 2017-18 roster: **Cheryl Greco** of Hudsonville and **Kathleen Steele** of Grand Rapids.

GRAC appreciates all donations to the Club for our specially-designated funds (General Fund, Audubon Adventures, Junior Audubon, Maher Sanctuary and Scholarship). Those who obtain Sustaining, Patron and Life Memberships are additionally making a special contribution with their membership. We thank the following individuals who recently made contributions to GRAC:

General Fund: Phil Willemstein

Maher Sanctuary: John Chronowski

Sustaining Membership: Norm Sevensma

A sad announcement. I recently learned through Ranger Steve Mueller that GRAC friend Greg Chavez passed away on July 27 at age 56. Services were held on August 4 at the Reyers North Valley Chapel. Greg was a dedicated family man, community activist, passionate outdoorsman, avid sports lover, and longtime Grand Rapids Public Schools employee. Ranger Steve mentioned that Greg was a good birder with a great ability to see Snowy Owls as well as other birds often missed by others. Just before his unexpected death, Greg had called Steve to tell Steve about a Merlin he had been seeing in Grand Rapids. Our thoughts are with Greg's family at this time.

Remembering Marge Simmons

by Carol VanOeveren

Former long-time GRAC member Marjorie (Marge) Simmons passed away on Aug. 3 at age 93 in Carson, Cali. Marge was active in the "early years" of our reorganized club. She served as treasurer in the early 1960s and as secretary in the mid-60s. In addition to bird watching with her friend Florence Jarvis (also a GRAC member at the time), she was very involved with the Kent County Humane Society. She was associated with her father and brother in the family business, Simmons Roofing Co, for over 60 years and was one of the first female roofing contractors in the Grand Rapids area.

Condolences are sent to Marge's relatives and friends.

CraneFest is Around the Corner

Michigan Audubon's 23rd annual CraneFest is Oct. 14-15 at the Kiwanis Youth Area in Bellevue, Mich., overlooking Big Marsh Lake. This popular event is a celebration of Michigan's largest bird and raises awareness and appreciation of our natural heritage and ongoing conservation efforts.

The family-friendly festival offers events from noon to dusk, with the evening "fly-ins" ranking high on the list of attractions. The highest Sandhill Crane activity begins around 5:00 PM and continues through dusk, as hundreds of cranes descend on the area for the night.

Other events include artist and vendor booths, a children's education tent, live birds of prey and other animals and guided nature walks.

There is no cost to attend Saturday or Sunday, but there is a small parking fee. Tickets for the kick-off Sandhill Soiree on Oct. 13 at Darkhorse Brewing Company are \$25 to \$50. Dr. Pamela Rasmussen will present at the Soiree.

Find more information and tickets at www.cranefest.org.



FALL GRAC CALENDAR

September

- 16 Maher Sanctuary Workday
- 20 Field Trip: Millennium Park w/ Katie Bolt
- 21 Field Trip: Millennium Park w/ Katie Bolt
- 25 GRAC Board Meeting
- 25 General Membership Meeting
- 28 Field Trip: Millennium Park w/ Katie Bolt

October

- 30 GRAC Board Meeting
- 30 General Membership Meeting

Grand Rapids Audubon Club Membership Application

Name _____
 Street _____
 City _____
 State / ZIP+4 _____
 Phone _____
 E-mail _____

(Providing your E-mail address ensures that you will receive E-mail notification when the latest edition of the *Caller* newsletter is posted on the GRAC website.)

Individual	\$ 20.00	_____
Family	25.00	_____
Senior (65+)	12.00	_____
Student (14+w/ID)	12.00	_____
Sustaining	30.00	_____
Patron	60.00	_____
Individual Life Membership	400.00	_____
Donation <i>(General Fund, Jr. Audubon, Sanctuary, Scholarship, Audubon Adventures, etc.)</i>		_____

Total Amount Enclosed _____

Make checks payable to:
Grand Rapids Audubon Club, Inc.
 Send application and check to:
Mary Austin, Assistant Treasurer
2021 Valentine, NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49525-2922

Membership dues and contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Mission Statement:

The Grand Rapids Audubon Club brings together people who enjoy nature, especially wild birds. We seek to protect and improve our natural environment and to advance nature education throughout West Michigan.

GRAC Board Meetings are held at 6:00 PM prior to each month's general membership meeting.

Junior Audubon Meetings are held Saturdays at various locations.

General Membership Meetings are held the last Monday of the month (Sept. – May) at 7:30 PM at the John F. Donnelly Center of Aquinas College located at 157 Woodward Lane SE. December (Christmas Bird Count) and May (Annual Banquet) meetings are held at different locations and times. Upcoming field trip information is published in each newsletter. See the GRAC website for the complete field trip list. Any additions or deletions to the above calendar will be noted in future issues of the newsletter.

Serving You

GRAC Board and Committee Chairpersons are listed below for

Grand Rapids Audubon Club Board of Directors and Special Committees

The Board of Directors consists of the Executive Council, the Immediate Past President and Chairpersons of the Standing Committees. In addition to the Board Of Directors, "Special Committees" and "Resident Agent" are also listed below.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

5 officers + 4 elected board members

President – John Chronowski

Vice President – Becky Kuhn

Secretary – Cynthia Davidek

Treasurer – Jeff Neumann

Assistant Treasurer – Mary Austin

Board Member – Howard Huisman

Board Member – Rob Peters

Board Member – Sheryl Helmus

Board Member – Keith Helmus

Conservation – open

Field Trips – Becky Kuhn

Finance – Jill Goodell

Fund Development – Bea VerBurg

Historian – Linda Damstra

Hospitality – Henry Raad /

Rosemary Radius

Junior Audubon – open

Library – Norine and Jim Shea /

Fidencio Paradez

Maher Sanctuary – Chris Baer

Membership – Mary Austin

Nominating – Jill Goodell

Publicity – Tricia Boot

Scholarship – Katie Bolt

Website – Fred VanOeveren

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

(non-voting member)

Scott Hutchings 2014-15, 2015-16

STANDING COMMITTEES

Per 2013 GRAC Bylaws, there are

19 Standing Committees. Each

committee chairperson is a voting

member of the Board. Committee names

shown are per bylaws.

Audio/Visual – Robert Riepma

Bird Reports – Carol VanOeveren

Caller Editor – Tricia Boot

Caller Publisher – Becky Kuhn

Christmas Count – Tom Leggett /

Steve Mueller

SPECIAL COMMITTEES / CHAIRPERSONS

(non-members of Board of directors in this capacity)

Audubon Adventures – open

Insurance – Jill Goodell

RESIDENT AGENT

Larry Burke

Grand Rapids Audubon Club
6152 Georgeann Ct.
Belmont, MI 49306-9783

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Grand Rapids Audubon Club

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