

# the Caller

October 2017, Volume 56, No. 3

published monthly September – April, bi-monthly May – August, November – December  
by GRAC, 6152 Georgeann Ct., Belmont, MI 49506-9783

On the web: [www.graud.org](http://www.graud.org) Information: [information@graud.org](mailto:information@graud.org)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/grandrapidsaudubonclub/](http://www.facebook.com/grandrapidsaudubonclub/)



## October Meeting Notes

**Date:** Monday, October 30, 2017  
**Time:** 7:00 PM social; 7:30 PM program  
**Location:** John Donnelly Conference Center  
Aquinas College  
**Speaker:** Bob Tarte, author  
**Topic:** Feather Brained: My bumbling quest to become a birder and find a rare bird ... on my own

Bob Tarte and his wife Linda live on the edge of a shoe-sucking, mink-infested swamp near Lowell.

When not fending off mosquitoes during temperate months and chipping ice out of plastic wading pools in the depths of winter, Bob writes books about his pets. His titles include *Feather Brained*, *Enslaved by Ducks*, *Fowl Weather* and *Kitty Cornered*.

Bob and Linda currently serve the whims of parrots, ducks, geese, parakeets, doves, cats and more.

For 15 years they helped raise and release orphan songbirds (including woodpeckers) for the Wildlife Rehab Center, Ltd. in Grand Rapids, and they have the scars to prove it.



## 2017/18 GRAC Field Trip Schedule and Preview

We are excited for another great year of field trips. Visit [www.graud.org](http://www.graud.org) for the complete list. Contact Becky Kuhn with field trip suggestions/ideas.

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, particularly in winter months. Hazardous weather may cancel a trip.

**Wednesdays, Oct. 4, Nov. 1, 9:00 AM**

**Thursdays, Oct. 5, 12, 26, Nov. 2, 9, 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:** Oct. 4 and Nov. 1, meet at the corner of Butterworth and Riverbend to walk approximately one mile of the Hansen Nature Trail. All other dates meet at the east end of Veterans Memorial Drive parking area for a three-mile walk.

**Saturday, Oct. 7, 7:30 AM**

**Leader: Larry Burke**

***Late Passerines and Hawks at Saugatuck Dunes***

Hike Saugatuck Dunes State Park in search of migrant warblers, thrushes, vireos, other passerines and hawks headed south. This excellent dune area generally holds a good variety of birds. When the hawks are moving, the dunes are among the best spots to watch them sail by. They may be overhead, next to you or low over the treetops below you.

*(Continued on page 5)*

Deadline for Nov/Dec newsletter articles: **Oct. 27**

(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](http://www.graud.org).



# Ranger Steve's Nature Niche

## Earth Aliens

by Ranger Steve Mueller

Earth aliens are killing or replacing native species by out-competing them. Does it matter to our lives, economy, and social and environmental wellbeing? How do invading aliens impact humans, birds and other life?

About seven percent of plants in North America were aliens from other continents by 1840. Presently, about three percent of plants in native habitats are aliens. Farm fields are planted with non-natives where aliens are critical to our health and survival. Many non-native yard plants please the eye but have negative impact on animals and native communities. It is a problem when aliens escape cultivated areas and invade native habitats. We need crops and farm fields, but we also need healthy native, alien-free habitats like Maher Sanctuary.

Garlic mustard is one species replacing native wildflowers and plants in forests. Organized groups pull the alien mustard on public and private land to help native species. The Mustard White and the West Virginia White butterflies are dependent on native mustards but are killed when they feed on the garlic mustard. Adults recognize chemicals in garlic mustard when they are searching for plants to lay eggs, and the chemicals trigger egg-laying. The caterpillars die when feeding on the plant.

Besides direct death by feeding, the alien plants replace native plants. This also happens with other plants and insects that have specific nature niche adaptations. Plants and animals evolve to co-exist. When alien plants cause plant species to disappear, associated insects and birds disappear.

Plants evolve chemicals over time that prevent herbivores from feeding on them. This allows successful reproduction of their kind. The Mustard White and West Virginia White have been able to circumvent the native mustard's chemical strategies, feed on them, and survive, while other species cannot use the plant. When only a few species evolve to feed on a plant, the plant's ability to reproduce and survive is improved. Such biodiversity adaptations allow species to survive and perform vital functions in ecosystems.

Most aliens from other continents are unable to survive, and disappear shortly after invading new habitat. Those that live often become economic or health hazards. For Native Americans, small pox that arrived with Europeans was deadly because they had not evolved defenses. Various fungi caused devastation and starvation. The Irish potato famine that caused the death and economic collapse for Ireland is one example.

Agricultural scientists work to protect cultivated crops from corn smut, fruit flies and many other threats.

Scientists also work to protect native communities and species important to the forest industry. White Pine blister rust had environmental impact leading to economic loss and community social hardship. When native plant communities cannot sustain themselves, the human economy declines. The alien emerald ash borer has caused billions in economic loss since it arrived and killed countless native insects and birds that depend on ash trees. Dutch Elm disease caused loss of trees, and DDT treatment caused severe environmental problems. Eagles and other species were pushed toward extinction. We are still working to remedy the problems caused by pesticides.

Native plants enrich soil fertility, maintain mycorrhizal fungi essential for nutrient absorption, and maintain nutrient cycles important to human communities. The economic importance is critical. Soils continue to decline as alien disruption causes loss of species. We add fertilizers to replace lost nutrients, but native species do it more efficiently. It is important to help native species survive to build soils and support native insects, birds and mammals that maintain our country's healthy economic, social and environmental bottom lines.

To protect your own interests, support healthy native species' biodiversity in your yard. Prevent alien species from simplifying healthy habitats. Alien species kill native species and harm our economy and social structure by impairing environmental health. Nationally, prevent current efforts to eliminate environmental law protections, parks and natural areas. Locally, manage your yard to support native species survival.

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

## September Finance Report

by Jeff Neumann, Treasurer

Checking Account Balance:	\$ 8,955.05
Edward Jones Account:	\$34,466.43
<b>Total Assets as of 9/25/17:</b>	<b>\$43,421.48</b>

Restricted Funds (included in the total assets)

Maher Sanctuary Fund:	\$2,859.04
Junior Audubon Fund:	\$4,040.12
Life Dues Fund:	\$9,103.00

The balances in the Maher Sanctuary and Junior Audubon Funds are restricted to expenditures for items related to the respective funds. The Life Dues Fund is not restricted as to what expenses may be recompensed, but the amount of such payments is limited to only the interest generated by the fund.



## September 2017 eBird Summary

by Carol VanOeveren

The following is an overview of the unusual or rare eBird sightings for September 2017 for Allegan, Kent, Muskegon and Ottawa counties. This report does not include rare birds that are flyovers, unchaseable and those with sketchy details. First and last fall dates (unless early or late) of common migrants are also not included in this report. Rare and unusual eBird sightings are updated daily on the GRAC website.

Labor Day weekend started on a warm and pleasant note, but a strong cold front blasted through late Labor Day crashing temperatures into the sixties through Friday with intermittent cold air showers. A long, very dry summer-like warmup and a record-breaking heat wave followed through late month with six consecutive, humid days of 90-plus degrees (Sept 21-26). After the passage of a strong cold front, temperatures returned to near normal ending the month.

Waterfowl began to congregate at Muskegon Wastewater. On Sept 4, Pam Rasmussen observed 17 waterfowl species including 200 Blue-winged Teal and **2,000** Northern Shoveler (plus a domestic Muscovy Duck that has been around all summer). Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S39008643> to view her list of 60 total species.

A small raptor movement at the west end of Lake Macatawa and Holland SP was observed in a total of about three hours by Carl and Judi Manning on Sept 19 – a Turkey Vulture, two Northern Harriers, four Sharp-shinned Hawks, a Red-tailed Hawk, 45 American Kestrels and a Merlin were counted along with 90 Blue Jays.

Twenty-two species of shorebirds were observed in the area during the month. The good influxes from late Aug of **American Golden-Plover** continued at Muskegon Wastewater with up to **90** there through Sept 29 (numbers dwindled significantly throughout the month), up to twelve continued since Aug at AAA Turf Farm in Ottawa Co Sept 27, one at Caledonia Sewage Ponds Sept 9-17 and 27 and up to four along 3rd St S of 118th Ave in Allegan Co Sept 17-18. Other notables included up to seven **Black-bellied Plover** at the Wastewater throughout the month, one at Holland SP Sept 19 and 25, at Caledonia Sewage Ponds Sept 20, at Grand Haven S pier Sept 22, Upper Macatawa Natural Area Sept 26 and two at AAA Turf Farm Sept 27; a **Ruddy Turnstone** at the Wastewater Sept 4; up to eight **White-rumped Sandpipers** continued since Aug at the Wastewater Sept 21 and one at 116th Ave/8th St wetland, Allegan Co Sept 5; up to seven **Baird's Sandpipers** continued since Aug at the Wastewater Sept 28; up to eight **Stilt Sandpipers** continued since Aug at the Wastewater Sept 21,

up to two continued at the Coopersville Sewage Ponds Sept 16 and one at Holland SP Sept 19; two **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** at S Moorland Rd and Heights Ravenna Rd, Muskegon Co Sept 2 and up to two and the Wastewater Sept 2 and 15; a **Short-billed Dowitcher** at the Wastewater Sept 2-14; a **Long-billed Dowitcher** at the Caledonia Sewage Ponds Sept 11-17 and at the Wastewater Sept 16-17; and a **Red-necked Phalarope** continued since late Aug at Holland SP Sept 4. Noticeably absent were American Avocets.

**Good early and mid-month warbler fallout:** Huff Park in NE Grand Rapids was definitely the place to be. Sept 2 produced ten species for Steve Minard – an Ovenbird, three Common Yellowthroat, an American Redstart, two Magnolia, three Bay-breasted, a Blackburnian and Chestnut-sided, two Black-throated Green, a Canada and a Wilson's. On Sept 3, Ethan Kibbey observed 14 species with 50 individuals. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S38976559> to view the checklist. On Sept 10, Ethan tallied 15 species and 45 individuals there. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S39107891> for the entire checklist of 62 species. Fifteen species were observed there again by Ethan on Sept 13 along with flycatchers and vireos included in the 65-species list. Twelve species with 24 individuals were picked up by Steve Minard at Cascade Peace Park Sept 3. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S38972585> for checklist. East Grand River Park in Ottawa Co produced twelve warbler species (plus some unidentified due to poor viewing conditions) with at least 33 individuals, plus a Philadelphia Vireo and two Swainson's Thrush, for Chip Francke on Sept 5. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S39015616> for checklist. On Sept 10, the south end of Reeds Lake in E Grand Rapids got into the mix. Steve Minard observed 15 species and 44 individuals plus an Alder Flycatcher and a Blue-headed and two Philadelphia vireos. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S39105322> for checklist. Although warbler migration seemed spotty this fall (some locations very good and others that were productive in the past failing to produce much), and dropped off significantly by month's end, 27 species were observed in Sept. The more interesting included Northern Waterthrush, Blue-winged (one at Upper Macatawa Natural Area, 84th Ave access Sept 9 and at Cedar Springs Sept 11 – late dates), Orange-crowned (one at a residence near Upper Macatawa Natural Area Sept 7 and at Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve Sept 15), **Connecticut** (one at a residence along 21st St S of 116th Ave in Allegan Co Sept 17), **Mourning** (one at Huff Park in Grand Rapids Sept 14, Upper Macatawa Natural Area Sept 20, East Grand River Park in Ottawa Co Sept 24 and  
*(Continued on page 4)*



(Continued from page 3)

Port Sheldon Sept 26), Hooded, Cape May, Northern Parula, Bay-breasted, Blackburnian, Blackpoll, Black-throated Blue, Palm, Canada and Wilson's.

**Finds of the month:** A juvenile **Sabine's Gull** and a **Parasitic Jaeger** were found by Rick Brigham, Marylou Graham, Caleb Putnam and Chace Scholten on a Lake MI pelagic trip five miles W of the Kalamazoo River mouth, Allegan Co on Sept 17. Visit

<http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S39241537> for photos. Albert Rowell had the surprise of his life when two immature **Glossy/White-faced Ibis** (these two species are notoriously difficult to differentiate) flew over while birding at Millennium Park Sept 19. Unfortunately, after much searching by many birders, the birds could not be relocated so a positive ID could not be made. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S39297414> for photo. This flyover is mentioned only because of the super rarity of the species.

**Other notables:** up to two Horned Grebes continued since late Aug at Muskegon Wastewater Sept 14; one **Eared Grebe** continued there Sept 4; an **American White Pelican** was observed with 200 Double-crested Cormorants at the cormorant nesting/roost island on Winnetaska Rd in Muskegon Sept 22; an **American Bittern** at Hoffmaster SP in Muskegon Co Sept 15; a good number of Great Egrets (**72**) at Frederik Meijer Gardens Sept 26; a **Black-crowned Night-Heron** at VanBragt Park in Holland Sept 17-23 and two at Upper Macatawa Natural Area in Ottawa Co Sept 27; **186** Turkey Vultures over the Coopersville Landfill Sept 4; up to two imm **Common Gallinules** continued since Aug along 11th St N of 117th Ave in Allegan Co Sept 8 and up to three at East Grand River Park in Ottawa Co Sept 23, 28; up to two **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** at Holland SP through the month, one at Muskegon Wastewater Sept 6-16 and one on a Lake MI pelagic trip five miles W of the Kalamazoo River mouth in Allegan Co Sept 17; a Yellow-billed Cuckoo at a residence S of Holland in Allegan Co Sept 17 – late date; 39 Common Nighthawk over E Grand Rapids Sept 11 and 12 overhead at a residence near Holland Sept 16 – late dates and encouraging counts for this declining species; a Peregrine Falcon at Holland SP, Harbor Island in Grand Haven, Muskegon Wastewater and in downtown Grand Rapids; an Olive-sided Flycatcher continued to be sighted since Aug at Huff Park Sept 17 (this is very unusual for this species to hang around at the same location for this long; it may be a different individual than the one seen in Aug or possibly misidentified), two at Port Sheldon Natural Area Sept 5 and one at Paw Paw Park East Sept 14 both in Ottawa Co; an Eastern Kingbird at Grand River Park in Ottawa Co Sept 27 – late date; at least **310** Blue Jays counted in two hours migrating along the lakeshore

at Jeff's Dune near Muskegon SP Campground Sept 30; Common Raven at Huff Park Sept 18; a Winter Wren at Hemlock Crossing Park in Ottawa Co, two at Henderson Lake NC in Muskegon Co and one at Plaster Creek Park in Grand Rapids and Calvin College Ecosystem Preserve; up to four Sedge Wrens still at Huff Park through Sept 25; seven Ruby-crowned Kinglets at Huff Park Sept 7; very good migration of Gray-cheeked at Swainson's thrush throughout the area; 40 American Pipit at Muskegon Wastewater Sept 28; a Fox Sparrow at Calvin College Ecosystem Preserve Sept 30 – first of fall; a White-throated Sparrow at Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve Sept 20 and 32 at Huff Park Sept 30; six White-crowned Sparrows at Outdoor Discovery Center in Allegan Co Sept 19 – first of fall; ten Dark-eyed Juncos at a residence near Huff Park Sept 19 – very ironic, harbinger of winter arrives and then a scorching heat wave follows; **100** Bobolinks still at Muskegon Wastewater Sept 16; two Rusty Blackbirds at a residence along 21st St S of 116th Ave in Allegan Co and one at Huff Park Sept 17 – first of fall and 21 along 3rd St S of 118th Ave in Allegan Co Sept 18; up to **60 Brewer's Blackbirds** continued since late Aug at AAA Turf Farm in Ottawa Co Sept 9; and two Purple Finch at Michigan and Leffingwell NE in Grand Rapids Sept 13 and one at Van Bragt Park in Holland Sept 21.

**Local bird report:** An **Osprey** was observed by Bill Oomkes on the corner of 84th St and Kalamazoo SE on Sept 12 and 13. It was seen sitting on the power lines and in dead trees on the Cornerstone Church property.





(Continued from cover)

With our changing climate, warblers seem to migrate later and this could be a good time for them. Birders of all skills are welcome.

**Essentials:** Meet at the McDonald's in Hudsonville at 7:30 AM and carpool from there. Folks closer to Saugatuck Dunes may want to meet the group in the north (main) parking lot at 8:00 AM. You may want a drink and a snack to keep you going until lunch.

**Saturday, October 14, 2:00 PM**

**Leader: Jeff Neumann**

**Fall Paddle on the Grand River**

Fall colors, great scenery, nature's sounds and birds will surround us as we enjoy the warmer hours of the day for a 5.7-mile paddle on the Grand River from Ada to Knapp Street. This is an approximately two-hour paddle.

**Essentials:** The cost is \$30 per person with a maximum of eight people for the trip. Reservations are required. Call or text Jeff to book your spot: (616) 437-9205. Meet at 2:00 PM at the I-96 & East Beltline commuter lot and we will head to the launch from there.

**Saturday, October 21, 8:00 AM**

**Leader: Steve Minard**

**Fall Migrants at Muskegon State Park**

We'll plan to check Lake Michigan to see what's on the beach, hike the jack pines in the dunes and hike the trails from the Snug Harbor Picnic area. Many birds are possible on the beach, or it could be quiet. In the trees late warblers, vireos and thrushes all are possible. In the past, owls have been found roosting in the pines. If we are really lucky, we could find one. If we run long, we'll look for a place to stop for lunch. If the state park is quiet, we will consider a stop at the Muskegon Lake Conservation Area or the Muskegon Wastewater. Birders of all skills are welcome.

**Essentials:** Meet at the Boy Scout Headquarters on Walker (north of I-96) at 8:00 AM. You may want a drink or snack to keep you going until lunch.

**Saturday, October 28, noonish** (depending on what the morning brings)

**Save this date! Details to follow for AM portion**

**Leader: Becky Kuhn with Brian Johnson**

This trip focuses on watching and learning from bird bander Brian Johnson as he bands birds at Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve. Check back later in month for details.

**Saturday, November 11, 7:30 AM**

**Leader: Steve Minard**

**Lakeshore Migrants**

We will plan to look for the best-reported late shorebirds, winter ducks, winter gulls or winter finches along the lakeshore. Winter ducks should be in the area, and the other late migrants should still be moving south.

This time of year presents an opportunity for birds that can be difficult to find in our area, so we'll check the bird-alerts and go with the best prospects. We are likely to start on the lakeshore with Holland State Park, Oval Beach or Douglas Beach as possible targets. From Lake Michigan, we're likely to work inland with stops possible along Lake Macatawa, the Kalamazoo River or the Todd Farm Unit of the Allegan State Game Area. If we are lucky, a mega-rarity will be chaseable and we may travel further afield. Bring your Family radio if you have one and we'll try to keep in touch between cars. This is planned as a morning trip, but we could extend it with a lunch stop.

**Essentials:** Meet at the McDonald's in Hudsonville, and carpool from there. Be ready to head out at 7:30 AM. You may want a drink or snack to keep you going until lunch. Come prepared for cold weather. A spotting scope could come in handy.

## Save the Dates!

Full details will be included in future *Callers*, or visit [www.graud.org](http://www.graud.org) now for complete information on any particular trip.

Saturday, December 30, 7:30 AM

Leaders: Tom Leggett and Steve Mueller  
*Kent County Christmas Count*

Monday, January 1, 2018, 6:00 AM

Leader: Steve Minard  
*New Year's Day in Kent County*

Saturday, January 27, 2018, 8:00 AM

Leader: Steve Minard  
*Winter Field Birding*

Saturday, February 17, 2018, 7:30 AM

Leader: Steve Minard  
*Allegan State Game Area Winter Trip*

Saturday, March 24, 2018, 9:00 AM

Leader: Jim Ponshair  
*Bluebird Box Cleaning at Muskegon Wastewater*

Saturday, April 7, 2018, 7:30 AM

Leaders: Lizzy Kibbey and Steve Minard  
*Muskegon County Duck Trip*

Saturday, April 21, 2018, 7:00 AM

Leader: Steve Minard  
*Spring Marsh Birds and Hawks*

(Continued on page 6)



(Continued from page 5)

Saturday, April 28, 2018, 7:30 AM  
 Leader: Lizzy Kibbey  
*Spring Migrants at Huff Park*

Tuesdays, May 1 and 8, 2018, 6:30 PM  
 Leader: Steve Minard  
*Tuesday Evening at Reeds Lake*

Saturday, May 5, 8:00 AM  
 Leader: Larry Burke  
*Paul Henry Thornapple Trail in Middleville*

Saturday, May 12, 2018  
 Spring Migration Count  
*North American Migration Count in Kent County*

## Millennium Park Report

September 2017

by Katie Bolt

We walked the Hansen Nature trail two Wednesdays in September. It's a pleasant and relatively short walk, but both times we were rewarded with small flocks of warblers migrating through. Interesting sightings included Black-throated Green, Magnolia and Common Yellowthroat warbler, Redstart, Warbling Vireo, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Brown Creeper, Pileated Woodpecker, Rose-breasted Grosbeak and Red-Headed Woodpecker. Joining us on various dates were Kathleen Steele, Jan Lewis and Kathy Haase.

Thursdays continue to be interesting in Millennium Park. We walked three of four Thursdays in September and found it is never the same from week to week. Often, there are small groups of interesting birds followed by stretches of few birds. We see a pretty good variety each time. In September we spotted Canada Goose, Mute Swan, Mallard, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Green Heron, Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, Killdeer, Solitary Sandpiper, Ring-billed Gull, Mourning Dove, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Merlin, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Eastern Phoebe, Great-crested Flycatcher, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Yellow-throated Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Carolina Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Indigo Bunting, American Robin, Gray Catbird, Cedar Waxwing, European Starling, Northern Cardinal and American Goldfinch. Joining us at different times were Kathleen Steele, Richard Harder, Jenni Hoonhorst, Jan Klemp, Kathy Haase and Ed (whose last name I didn't write down).

## Shorebird Fall Migration at Muskegon Wastewater Report

Saturday, August 26, 2017

by Becky Kuhn

Birding the same place at the same time over the years gives you insights into numbers and variety comparison. Thirteen birders saw how years of man's inroads into nature at nature's expense has aided in the declining number of shorebirds, as well as depth of variety.

I can be pleased that we saw 17 different species, but we rarely saw more than ten of a particular bird and often only saw one of a species. This is in contrast to much larger numbers we saw 20 years ago when I first joined Jim on fall shorebird field trips, which then included going to Ludington in search of Piping Plovers.

Good news is that Muskegon now has breeding Piping Plovers, but this year the entire family had departed prior to this outing.

We had great weather and were fortunate again in that a rare Hudsonian Godwit was still around for us to see clearly and compare to the nearby Dowitcher. We were able to see the difference between Lesser and Greater Yellowlegs and between Stilt and Yellowlegs; watch the Spotted Sandpiper bob his tail, to help with identification since his spots are mostly gone; see the difference in wing-tip length on the Baird's compared to Semi-palmated; the bib on the Pectoral and Yellowlegs, when not covered in mud; and rusty color of the Least, and yes, he was the smallest!

Steve Minard heard Plovers and drew our attention overhead so that we watched both Black-bellied and American Golden fly by, some getting a chance to see them in the farther-off fields.

When comparing Herring and Ring-billed gulls we saw Bonaparte's. Farther out of our accuracy range were Phalarope's, each species being slightly smaller and more delicately built than the last. About eight species of waterfowl were present; a Muscovy Duck and Hooded Merganser probably the most interesting.

Our tour around the ponds and grassy cells produced five varieties of swallows with Tree by far the most abundant, a Red-headed Woodpecker, Kingbird, Peewee, Savannah Sparrows and a Merlin, plus a number of commonly-seen birds.

Our group splintered at lunch. Those who continued to Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve missed getting to see Brian, but did catch a glimpse of a Nashville and Magnolia Warbler. We did hear one Marsh Wren but since we arrived in the afternoon, it was pretty quiet. Catbirds and Cardinals were vocal but it took some time before we finally heard a Robin.

Species count for MWS was 51 and 21 for MLNP. Nice day! Trip leaders were James Fyfe and myself.



## Hunting Mourning Doves and Sandhill Cranes in Michigan?

by Mary Austin

In early June, hunters attending the Michigan United Conservation Clubs convention passed measures to advocate for open hunting seasons for Mourning Doves and Sandhill Cranes in Michigan.

On September 20, House Resolution 154 was introduced in the Michigan legislature asking the Natural Resources Commission to add the Sandhill Crane to the games species list and seek U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approval to establish a Sandhill Crane hunting season. The House Resolution was then referred to the Committee on Natural Resources for consideration. Visit <http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?2017-HR-0154> to see a copy of the introduced resolution.

Ten years ago, voters in the state of Michigan voted that Mourning Doves would not be classified as a game bird and, therefore, could not be hunted in Michigan. Although House Resolution 154 does not address designating the Mourning Dove as a game species, there is some concern that the Michigan legislature might introduce a bill to overturn the law that prohibits the NRC from designating the Mourning Dove as a game species.

The possible hunting of Sandhill Cranes and Mourning Doves in Michigan is a simmering issue. In late June, Michigan Audubon formally opposed proposals regarding Sandhill Crane and Mourning Dove hunting in the state. If you would like further information, visit the following websites:

<https://www.michiganaudubon.org/michigan-audubon-opposes-proposal-state-sandhill-crane-hunt/>

<https://www.michiganaudubon.org/michigan-audubon-opposes-proposal-mourning-dove-hunt/>

I am trying to stay abreast of the crane and dove hunting considerations and will attempt to keep the GRAC membership apprised of the status of House Resolution 154 and any legislative action.

## Mary's Membership Musings

by Mary Austin

As you know, I write the "Musings" articles for general information (or at times for what might be considered general ramblings). In any event, in the spirit of general ramblings, I thought I'd share the titles of a few hard-to-find and very limited edition birding books:

*Amazing Birds of Prey* by E. Galls

*Attracting Birds to Your Feeders* by Carr DeNall

*Bird Watching at the Beach* by Franklins C. Gull (with forward by other Gull family members: Bonapartes, Ivory and Ross)

*Birding in the Desert* by Rhode Runner

*Birds as House Pets* by Perry Keet

*Corvidae in the United States* by Ray Venn

*Grassland Birds* by Dick Cissel, Bob O. Lync and Bob White

*How to Build a Better Nest Box* by Carolina Ren

*My Realm by the River* by King Fisher

*Partridges of Southern Asia and Africa* by Fran Colin

*Walking on Water (Lilies) – One Step at a Time* by Jay Cana

*Wetland Birding* by Scarlet I. Bis, A. Coot and Virginia Rale

*Who Stole My Nest?* by Rob Bin

A note to Chris Baer and the other people who have been caretaking and working at the Maher Sanctuary: You've been doing a great job! I received a short letter from a member who said she recently visited the Maher Sanctuary. She reported that she did pretty well on the boardwalk using her walker. (I think it's good to know that the boardwalk is in such good condition that someone using a walker can get around fairly well.)

Thank you to everyone who renewed their GRAC membership for the 2017-2018 fiscal year. If you are an individual whose membership ended June 30, 2017 and you have not yet renewed, please do so as quickly as possible. You can use the application/renewal form in this *Caller*.

Many words of appreciation to the following individuals who recently made donations to GRAC:

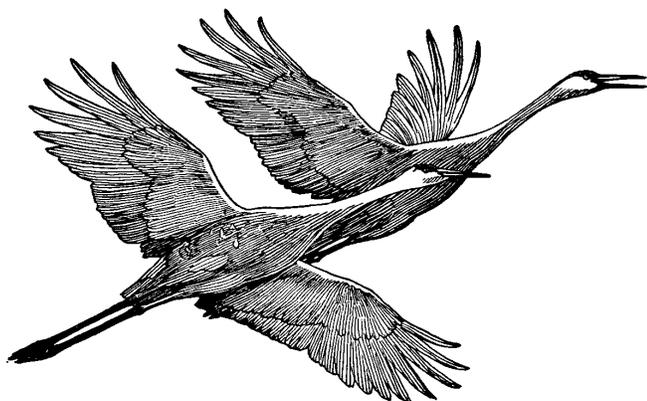
**General Fund:** Ruth Fridsma, Loretta Jones, Robert Riepma

**Junior Audubon:** Ruth Fridsma

**Maher Sanctuary:** Ruth Fridsma

**Maher Sanctuary (in memory of Judy McNally):** Chris Muldoon

**Sustaining Membership:** Eileen Shedleski





## Update on National Monuments

by Ed Bolt

My last report on the status of our threatened national monuments in Utah was late spring, when Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke was ordered by President Trump to review the status of our national monuments to recommend downsizing or not, or even elimination. One part of the thrust of that was to ensure that no federally-owned land create a barrier to achieving energy independence. Not all national monuments were targeted; only those established in the last 20 years and amassing more than 100,000 acres.

Since that order, Zinke has completed his quick tour and issued a preliminary report; also a leaked not-yet-final report. The recommendation is to reduce in size six of 37 national monuments, two of which are in Utah (Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante), one in Nevada, one in Oregon and two in the ocean. Reasons cited for proposed reductions are: 1. Designation hampers the local economies (the opposite is true). 2. Designation prevents the land from being used for “traditional uses” of medicine-gathering, sacred landscapes, hunting, wood-gathering, lumbering, mining, grazing, fishing (all untrue, in that existing uses are allowed to continue in the national monuments). 3. Establishment of these national monuments represents a “federal land grab” of land which really belongs to the states (the national monuments are already on Bureau of Land Management land, owned by the people of the United States; you and me).

The above are basically smokescreens for the real reason: to allow more oil and gas drilling, coal and uranium mining, lumbering and grazing on public lands. This, coupled with a firm belief that the monument legacy of past administrations should be reduced and the land given or sold to state or private hands.

During the short period for public comment prior to his preliminary report, 2.8 million letters were written to Sec. Zinke’s office, from people of all walks. Of these, 99 percent said “hands off” to any tampering. Zinke’s version of this, in his June 10 “Memorandum to the President” was: “Comments expressed a variety of views on the BENM...” (!)

Since the establishment of the Antiquities Act of 1906 under Theodore Roosevelt, our national monuments have been established by presidential declaration as a means of cutting-to-the chase to preserve America’s cultural artifacts and priceless landscapes. There is nothing written that gives the president the authority to reduce or eliminate a national monument. Only Congress has the right to do this. Unlike Zinke, Congress must report to the voters. Should Trump ask Congress to change boundaries, it will be challenged in court.

Senators Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters will oppose any reductions in Utah. You can contact Congressman Justin Amash’s office to urge him to oppose any reductions to any of our national monuments. Rep. Amash’s GR phone is (616) 451-8583; his Washington phone is (202) 225-3831. If you want to discuss further, contact me (616) 885-6307; [edwardbolt@gmail.com](mailto:edwardbolt@gmail.com).

---

## GRAC Members Recognized for Laudato Si’ Sanctuary Work

by Mary Austin

Two Grand Rapids Audubon Club members have been honored for their work with the Laudato Si’ Sanctuary at the Franciscan Life Process Center in Lowell.

The sanctuary was dedicated on July 27, 2017, to GRAC member Sister Mary Ann Schmitz, FSE, in appreciation for her caring for the land at the FLPC. Chris Baer, another GRAC member, was recognized for her expertise in restoring the land to a native prairie.

The prairie restoration began in 2014 as an Eagle Scout project. Boy Scout Joe Trenshaw organized the initial work of selecting the area, preparing the land, and gathering and planting seeds. His troop was instrumental in collecting the seeds, preparing the site, and seeding the area. Subsequently, volunteers have worked to improve the prairie. Various school groups have removed invasive plants and collected seeds to expand the prairie area. Chris reports that the workers have been of all ages and a great group.

“In setting apart this area we also wanted to encourage nesting and foraging areas for birds like meadowlarks, bobolinks and bluebirds,” Sister Mary Ann said. All plants in the sanctuary, including the grasses, lupine, bee balm and coneflowers, are native to Michigan.

“The seed is special because it is all local genotype and will be not only used to seed future acres there but in other projects in Kent County,” Chris said.

Laudato Si’ means “Praise Be to Thee.” This phrase reflects the opening words to the “Canticum of the Creatures,” a poem about creation written by St. Francis. The Franciscan Sisters intend the sanctuary to be a place set apart for contemplation and of refuge and protection for the plants and animals that reside there.

If you are interested in visiting the Laudato Si’ Sanctuary, call (616) 897-7842 for more information.



## FALL GRAC CALENDAR

### October

- 4 Field Trip: Millennium Park w/ Katie Bolt (recurring 5, 12, 26)
- 7 Field Trip: Saugatuck Dunes w/ Larry Burke
- 14 Field Trip: Fall Paddle w/ Jeff Neumann
- 21 Field Trip: Fall Migrants w/ Steve Minard
- 28 Field Trip: Bird Banding and more w/ Becky Kuhn & Brian Johnson
- 30 GRAC Board Meeting
- 30 General Membership Meeting

### November

- 1 Field Trip: Millennium Park w/ Katie Bolt (recurring 2, 9)
- 11 Field Trip: Lakeshore Migrants w/ Steve Minard
- 27 GRAC Board Meeting
- 27 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**

**Return Service Requested**

DATED MATERIAL  
PLEASE RUSH  
*Nine Issues per year*  
*Published monthly except May, July*  
*and December*

## Grand Rapids Audubon Club

---

### OFFICERS

**President:**

John Chronowski (915-9864)  
775 Bagley Ave., 49506-3001  
E-mail: [president@graud.org](mailto:president@graud.org)

**Vice President / Programs:**

Becky Kuhn (785-7072)  
6152 Georgeann Ct  
Belmont, MI 49306-9783  
E-mail: [vice.president@graud.org](mailto:vice.president@graud.org)

**Secretary:**

Cynthia Davidek (617-7940)  
6825 Burger Dr SE, 49506-1506  
E-mail: [secretary@graud.org](mailto:secretary@graud.org)

**Treasurer:**

Jeff Neumann (558-2609)  
217 Leyden Ave. SW, 49504  
E-mail: [treasurer@graud.org](mailto:treasurer@graud.org)

**Assistant Treasurer / Membership:**

Mary Austin (361-7993)  
2021 Valentine NE, 49525-2922  
E-mail: [membership@graud.org](mailto:membership@graud.org)

### THE CALLER STAFF

**Newsletter Editor:**

Tricia Boot (240-3565)  
2121 Blueberry Dr NW, 49504-2506  
E-mail: [newsletter@graud.org](mailto:newsletter@graud.org)

**Publisher:**

Becky Kuhn (785-7072)  
6152 Georgeann Ct  
Belmont, MI 49306-9783  
E-mail: [publisher@graud.org](mailto:publisher@graud.org)

**To Report Bird Sightings:**

Carol VanOeveren  
E-mail: [bird.reports@graud.org](mailto:bird.reports@graud.org)