

the Caller

November/December 2017, Volume 56, No. 4

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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/

November Meeting Notes

Date: Monday, November 27, 2017
Time: 7:00 PM social; 7:30 PM program
Location: John Donnelly Conference Center
Aquinas College
Speaker: Caleb Putnam
Topic: Night Flights

The majority of migratory birds migrate at night. During these flights, many species utter a nearly-continuous series of short calls, or flight calls. Flight calls are a cutting-edge way to experience bird migration. Ornithologists are increasingly using microphones to document this phenomenon, tracking bird populations and species composition of night migrants.

This field is well-suited to the contributions of amateurs, as one can cheaply and easily build a high-quality microphone, create recordings of the sounds using a computer, and identify the birds passing over one's house by analyzing the recordings.

Speaker Caleb Putnam has been recording nocturnal flight calls since 2009 at his home in Sparta, Mich., analyzing them with free software, and contributing his recordings to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology for use in long-term monitoring efforts. Caleb will explain how the microphone setup works, how to identify flight calls, and where interested birders can go to get started in this groundbreaking field of ornithology.

Caleb is a Michigan native and Michigan Bird Conservation Coordinator for Audubon Great Lakes and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. He earned a B.S. in Biology from Alma College in 1999 and an M.S. in Environmental Studies from the University of Montana in 2003.

Deadline for January newsletter articles: **Jan. 1, 2018**

(send to Tricia Boot)

President's Corner

by John Chronowski

I would like to provide some background information on the recent House Resolution 154, which passed in the Michigan House of Representatives. This recommends that the Natural Resources Commission add the Sandhill Crane to the game species list in Michigan and seek U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approval to establish a Sandhill Crane hunting season.

The apparent rationale for this resolution is based on the following: the Sandhill Crane population in Michigan has been estimated at about 25,000 and has grown at an average rate of 9.4 percent per year for the last ten years. The agricultural community has complained that the cranes feed on seeds of germinating corn during the spring migratory season. Nuisance permits to eradicate Sandhill Cranes that are damaging crops have increased about 500 percent since 2006. This is a wasted resource, since the meat of these birds is not harvested.

There is a harvest management policy for the Sandhill Crane. If the population exceeds a set number, a ten percent harvest is possible. Minnesota, Kentucky and Tennessee have permit-only crane hunting seasons. In the past hunting season, 800 cranes were harvested in Kentucky and Tennessee.

Resolution 154 has gone to the NRC, which does not have to act on the resolution. If they choose to further discuss this resolution, they must provide two 30-day comment periods before taking action. A meeting is planned for Nov. 9 in Lansing with the NRC. Look for additional information at www.graud.org.

GRAC hasn't taken a formal position as of this writing, but the Board has some concerns. We encourage our membership to contact the NRC to voice support or objections concerning the proposed hunting season. E-mail your opinions to nrc@michigan.gov or call Cheryl Nelson at (517) 284-6237. Remember we are in the "business of birds" but we must keep in mind the bigger picture: a balanced natural environment that respects all citizen interests



GRAC Field Trips

Visit www.graud.org for the complete 2017/18 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.

**Thursdays, Nov. 9, 16, 30, Dec. 7, 14, 21, 28
9:00 AM**

Leader: Katie Bolt, Jeanne Griffin or Kathy Haase
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: Meet at the east end of Veterans Memorial Drive parking area for a three-mile walk.

Saturday, November 11, 7:30 AM

Leader: Steve Minard
Lakeshore Migrants

We will 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. We are likely to start on the lakeshore, possibly at Holland State Park, Oval Beach or Douglas Beach. 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. 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. Come prepared for cold weather. A spotting scope could come in handy, as would a drink or snack.

Save the Date:

Saturday, December 9

Daytime Photography Outing in Grand Rapids

Watch www.graud.org for details

Saturday, December 30, 7:30 AM

Leader: Tom Leggett and Steve Mueller
Kent County Christmas Count

See page 8 for details

Monday, January 1, 2018, 6:00 AM

Leader: Steve Minard

New Years Day in Kent County

Get your bird list for 2018 started in Kent County. We'll try to track down some of the birds seen on the Christmas Count and look for whatever sounds good. We will start at 6:00 AM to look for owls in the Cannonsburg State Game Area and vicinity. At dawn, we will shift to looking for winter passerines, waterfowl and hawks. Birders of all skills are welcome to join.

Essentials: Meet at the downtown Ada parking lot near the McDonald's Express by 6:00 AM (turn off M21 by Amway and look for the parking lot to the east). Watch for possible updates, the area has major redevelopment and I'm not sure McDonald's will still be there. We plan to finish around 11:30 AM. Dress for cold weather and bring a snack or warm beverage to keep you fueled up.

Saturday, January 27, 2018, 8:00 AM

Leader: Steve Minard

Winter Field Birding

We will plan to search for winter birds such as Snowy Owl, Northern Shrike and Snow Bunting. These can be quite nomadic and hard to find, so we'll try to cover lots of territory. We'll search fields in northern Ottawa County and Muskegon County northwest of Grand Rapids. We'll probably check some of the Crockery Creek bottomlands looking for Red-shouldered Hawk. If conditions permit, we'll try to include the Muskegon Wastewater in our search. Expect to spend most of the time in the car searching the fields for anything different. Bring your CB or Family radio if you have one and we'll try to keep in touch between cars. Birders of all skills are welcome.

Essentials: Meet at the Boy Scout Headquarters west off Walker Road just north of I-96 at 8:00 AM. We plan to bird until noon, you may want to bring a snack to hold you over until lunch.

Saturday, Feb. 17, 2018, 7:30 AM

Leader: Steve Minard

Allegan State Game Area Winter Trip

Explore the Allegan State Game Area, including the Swan Creek Highbanks and the Todd Farm Unit, for winter birds. We are going at a time to avoid the late goose-hunting season. Bald Eagle and Rough-legged Hawk are likely to be near the flocks of Canada Goose at the Todd Farm Unit. Wild Turkey, Northern Shrike and Ross's Goose have been found in past winters. With luck, winter finches will make an appearance. Bring your CB or Family radio and we'll try to keep in touch between cars. Birders of all skills are welcome.

Essentials: Meet at the McDonald's in Hudsonville and carpool from there. A spotting scope will come in handy, as will a bit of food and a warm beverage. We plan to bird until noon. Lunch after is an option.



October 2017 eBird Summary

by Carol VanOeveren

The following is an overview of the unusual or rare eBird sightings for October 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 most common migrants also are not included in this report. Rare and unusual eBird sightings are updated daily on the GRAC website.

The warm weather continued into the first two weeks of October with some much-needed rain finally moving into the area on the 6th. Heavy, soaking rains arrived on the 11th and over the following weekend, breaking the droughty conditions. Dry and mostly above-normal temperatures prevailed through the 22nd followed by very wet (wettest Oct on record in Grand Rapids) and cold conditions through the end of the month (wet snow on Halloween). As with last year, no hard freeze in the Grand Rapids area.

Large numbers and rafts of waterfowl were delayed, perhaps influenced by the warm weather, although 1,400 Northern Shovelers were observed at Muskegon Wastewater Oct 7 along with 2,250 Ruddy Ducks, which built to an estimated 10,000 on Oct 13.

A hawk movement was observed at the east end of the Muskegon channel by Ric Pedler on Oct 10. In one and a half hours, he observed 47 Turkey Vultures, 29 Sharp-shinned Hawks, a Cooper's Hawk, eight Red-tailed Hawks and an American Kestrel, plus 220 Blue Jays.

Seventeen warbler species (not as many as last year [22] and no rarities) were seen in the area during the month. Among the more interesting: a rather late Ovenbird (Calvin College Ecosystem Preserve Oct 10), Northern Waterthrush (one at Upper Macatawa Natural Area Oct 11), Orange-crowned (observed in all four counties), Nashville (one at Pine Creek Park in Ottawa Co and Plaster Creek Park, Grand Rapids Oct 29), Common Yellowthroat (one at Lake Macatawa W end Oct 28), Magnolia, Bay-breasted, Blackburnian (one at Chief Hazy Cloud Park, Kent Co Oct 7), Blackpoll, Black-throated Blue (one at Huff Park Oct 12-13, a residence in western Ottawa Co Oct 16 and a male still in breeding plumage at Hoffmaster SP in Muskegon Co Oct 26), large numbers of Yellow-rumped reported throughout the area, a late Black-throated Green (one at Hoffmaster SP Oct 18) and Wilson's (one at Harbor Island, Grand Haven Oct 6).

Finds of the month: a female **Harlequin Duck** was observed inside the north breakwall at Holland SP Oct 28 by Kevin Vande Vusse. It remained there through the 31st. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S40168982> for photo. **Surf Scoters** were seen at two inland locations

and two along the lakeshore. Two observed at Reeds Lake in East Grand Rapids by James Markham Oct 13 were joined by two more on Oct 16 with up to three still present through the 25th. Allison Kulka and Chandler Mancuso found three at Muskegon Wastewater Oct 14. Six were observed at Holland SP Oct 16 by Carl and Judi Manning and Elizabeth Notman. Seven were observed at Douglas Beach Park on Oct 22 by Rick Brigham. Nine **Black Scoters** were found by Rick Brigham at Holland SP Oct 27. A very rare **Pomarine Jaeger** was harassing and being harassed by gulls at Holland SP on Oct 26. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S40135466> for Carl and Judi Manning's photos. A **Short-eared Owl** at Tyler Farm in Muskegon Co made Doug Wassink's day Oct 2, and five were seen by Rick Brigham and Chace Scholten at Allegan SGA Todd Farm Oct 29 with three continuing Oct 31. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S40200194> for photo. On Oct 26, a very observant Brad Heath again discovered a **LeConte's Sparrow** at Hoffmaster SP in Muskegon Co. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S40134030> for seven beautiful photos, plus photos of other species including a male Black-throated Blue Warbler still in breeding plumage. Brad also found a LeConte's at this location on Oct 13 last year.

Other notables: twelve Snow Geese along Moorland Rd S of Heights Ravenna Rd in Muskegon Co Oct 28 – first of season and 77 at Allegan State Game Area Todd Farm Oct 31; up to twelve **Cackling Geese** at East Paris Nature Park in Kent Co, four at Coopersville Sewage Ponds, three at Muskegon Wastewater and up to nine at the Coopersville Goose Field; two Tundra Swans along 24th St S of 116th Ave in Allegan Co Oct 17 – first of season; White-winged Scoters at Reeds Lake, Medbery Park (White Lake channel) in Muskegon Co, Holland SP and Douglas Beach Park; a few Long-tailed Ducks at Hoffmaster SP in Muskegon Co and Holland and Grand Haven SP late month; a **Red-throated Loon** on a Lake MI pelagic trip 5 mi W of Kalamazoo River mouth Oct 1; Horned Grebes at Reeds Lake, Holland SP, Lake Macatawa and Douglas Beach Park (16); a **Red-necked Grebe** at Grand Haven SP Oct 29; up to six **Eared Grebes** at the Wastewater mid- through late month; large numbers of Double-crested Cormorants migrating along the lakeshore – 520 observed on a Lake MI pelagic trip W of Kalamazoo River mouth Oct 1 and 900 at the nest/roost site on Winnetaska Rd in Muskegon Oct 2; a late **American White Pelican** at the W end of Lake Macatawa, sitting on a homeowner's dock, Oct 27-30 drew many observers (same bird may have been seen Oct 26 at Hoffmaster SP); a late Osprey at Millennium Park Oct 20; a Rough-legged Hawk observed on a boat trip on Grand River from East End Park to Pottawattomie Bayou
(Continued on page 4)



(Continued from page 3)

in Ottawa Co Oct 20 – first of season; a late **Common Gallinule** at Grand Haven SGA, Bruce Bayou, Cypress St access Oct 3; up to 16 **Black-bellied Plovers** at the Wastewater throughout the month, one at AAA Turf Farm in Ottawa Co Oct 5 and up to two at 120th Ave potholes in Allegan Co Oct 17-29; two **American Golden-Plovers** at the Wastewater Oct 2, one continuing since late Sept at Caledonia Sewage Ponds Oct 5, three at AAA Turf Farm Oct 5, up to 27 along 23rd St S of 118th Ave in Allegan Co Oct 10-28 and up to twelve at 120th Ave potholes in Allegan Co Oct 21-23; two **Short-billed Dowitchers** at Coopersville Sewage Ponds Oct 22; one **Long-billed Dowitcher** at Coopersville Sewage Ponds Oct 21-22; **225 Bonaparte's Gulls** at Holland SP Oct 12 and **390** at W end of Lake Macatawa Oct 27; up to two **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** continuing at Holland SP Oct 5-12 and one at Coopersville Sewage Ponds Oct 3; many sightings of Peregrine Falcons – the Wastewater, Harbor Island in Grand Haven, downtown Grand Rapids, Caledonia Sewage Ponds, Winstrom Preserve in Ottawa Co, the Muskegon Lake channel, Mt Pisgah Dune Boardwalk in Ottawa Co and the Coopersville Sewage Ponds; a late Eastern Wood-Pewee at Big Blue Lake in Muskegon Co Oct 3; a late Eastern Phoebe at Huff Park and Reeds Lake Oct 29; a **Northern Shrike** along 122nd Ave E of 6th St in Allegan Co Oct 30 – first of season; a late Philadelphia Vireo at Hoffmaster SP in Muskegon Co Oct 22; two massive flocks of Horned Larks totaling **550** at Allegan SGA Todd Farm Oct 29; a late House Wren at Huff Park Oct 18; Winter Wrens present at many locations in all four counties; a late Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher at Millennium Park Oct 9; excellent migration of Golden- and Ruby-crowned kinglets through the area; a Gray-cheeked Thrush at Huff Park Oct 9; a late Brown Thrasher at Reeds Lake Oct 16; **107** American Pipits at the Wastewater Oct 2 and at least **170** at 120th Ave potholes in Allegan Co Oct 27; **50 Lapland Longspurs** at Allegan SGA Todd Farm Oct 29 – first of season and one at 128th Ave and Bingham in Ottawa Co Oct 30; three Snow Buntings along 23rd St S of 118th Ave in Allegan Co Oct 25 – first of season and up to 24 at the Wastewater late month; an American Tree Sparrow at Huff Park Oct 10 – first of season; Fox Sparrows at several locations in the four county area; excellent migration of White-throated (high count of at least 122 downed by heavy rain at a residence in Douglas Oct 11) and White-crowned (high count of 52 at same residence Oct 13) sparrows during the month; a late Indigo Bunting at Reeds Lake Oct 15; nine Bobolinks still at Upper Macatawa Natural Area, 84th Ave access in Ottawa Co Oct 7; two late Eastern Meadowlarks at Haworth Wetland Restoration in Allegan Co Oct 22; Rusty Blackbirds present in all four counties throughout the month with a high count of 40 at the Kalamazoo River

channel in Allegan Co Oct 1; Purple Finch at a residence in western Ottawa Co, a residence in Georgetown Twp in Ottawa Co, Millennium Park and a residence near Hoffmaster SP; **225** American Goldfinch eating weed seeds at Grand Ravines Park in Ottawa Co Oct 11; and a few Pine Siskins in the area – Huff Park, a residence near Hoffmaster SP, south Reeds Lake and Hoffmaster SP.

Note: Whooping Crane “Lily” was still being observed associating with Sandhill Cranes at Schoonover WPA in Lenawee Co Oct 27. Visit <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S40145897> for photos.

Saugatuck Dunes State Park Report

Saturday, October 7, 2017

by Larry Burke

On a morning that offered the possibility of rain, the weather was kind to the three birders who joined me for this field trip. The warm temperature certainly was welcome.

Walking out from the parking lot, we were greeted by several Eastern Bluebirds, a Red-bellied Woodpecker, an Eastern Towhee and an Eastern Phoebe. We found that the short road that had formerly been a dirt road had now been asphalted over and, after a right turn, led into a newly-platted residential subdivision, a disappointing sight. House construction had not yet begun, so we were able to find sparrows, juncos and Golden-crowned Kinglets in the woodland-edge habitat that resulted from clearing trees for the individual lots.

The north trail to the lakeshore yielded Field Sparrows, White-crowned Sparrows and more juncos. Further down the trail toward the beach we tallied a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, a Blue-headed Vireo, a Nashville Warbler and a “Baypoll” Warbler. We were unable to identify it as either a Bay-breasted or a Blackpoll Warbler. A Winter Wren also put in an appearance. The beach did not produce anything remarkable. With winds out of the south, the conditions were not favorable for migrating raptors.

We left the park and headed into Douglas to see what Wade's Bayou had to offer. A Great Blue Heron, several Pied-billed Grebes and a Gadwall were noteworthy. When we finished up around noon, we had a trip list of 41 species.



Mary's Membership Musings

by Mary Austin

GRAC runs successfully because of the dedication and volunteer efforts of our members. GRAC has various committees to which our members can volunteer their time and enthusiasm. Because of these committees, GRAC gets things done for the benefit of the club as a whole and for individual members.

The committees and executive officer positions are listed on the second to last page of this *Caller*. People are needed in many areas. Each member has something valuable to offer our club. Each member needs to ask: "What can I do to help?"

This article highlights the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee members procure candidates for the slate of officers for the upcoming GRAC year. (As a note, the GRAC fiscal year runs July 1 to June 30.)

Participating on the Nominating Committee is a good way to get to know other members and, at the same time, make a valuable contribution toward the goal of maintaining active club leadership.

Scott Hutchings heads the Nominating Committee and could use your help. Get involved now. Contact our club's president John Chronowski at president@graud.org to offer your assistance.

As for another topic, in the last issue of the *Caller*, I mentioned that more information would be provided about possibly allowing Sandhill Crane hunting in Michigan. Please read John Chronowski's article in this *Caller* for an update on House Resolution 154 regarding Sandhill Crane hunting.

GRAC thanks those who have recently made donations to our club:

General Fund: Steve and Ellen Alkema, Katie and Ed Bolt, Mary Jane Dockeray, Hank Veldman

Maher Sanctuary: Tricia and Adam Boot

GRAC extends a warm welcome our newest member, **Joe Engel** of Ada.

My thanks go to Phil Willemstein, who again has provided enormous assistance in contacting individuals who have not yet renewed their memberships for the 2017-18 membership year. If you are one of those members, please renew now. You can find the application/renewal form in this issue of the *Caller*.

Muskegon Wastewater and Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve Report

Saturday, September 30, 2017

by Becky Kuhn

Norine and Jim Shea joined me to check out Muskegon Wastewater and watch Brian Johnson band birds. It was a beautiful day to be outside. We started on the south side of Apple Avenue off Swanson Road. The first section of trees between the creek and the fields is an easy place to look for birds we wouldn't find on the water.

We struggled a bit with the morning sun, but finally got around to the back of the trees and started seeing warblers: multiple Yellow-rump, Black-throated Green, Tennessee and a Nashville. In the upper branches to midway down was a Pewee, Phoebe, robins, jays, White-breasted Nuthatch, Downy and Red-bellied woodpeckers, and starlings. Joining in the morning feeding closer to the ground were White-throated, Savannah and Song sparrows, cardinals and chickadees. Gulls, geese and a few ducks flew over the fields, while a couple of Killdeer ran around in them (23 species).

Across the road and around the ponds to the holding ponds, we passed hundreds of shovelers and Mallards along with a few Bufflehead, Ruddy Ducks, five Mute Swans and a Pied-bill Grebe.

The grass-rimmed cell held a few shorebirds: nine pectorals, three Greater Yellowlegs, three Semipalmated Sandpipers and more Killdeer. A further cell held four Lesser Yellowlegs and gulls, ducks and more Killdeer. We checked out the eastern side of the ponds and found three coot, before making a quick dash through the grassy cells and heading to see Brian.

In the cell area were White-crowned, Lincoln, Savannah and Song sparrows, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-winged Blackbirds, Great Blue Heron and one Barn Swallow (30 species).

It was interesting to watch Brian casually hold birds, measuring wings and tails, checking for fat and skull development and weight.

While we were there he caught chickadees, Catbird, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow-rump and White-throated Sparrow. It is a pretty area to walk but no new birds were added to our list (17 species seen).





Ranger Steve's Nature Niche

Nighthawk's Hidden Nest
by Ranger Steve Mueller

Field season is winding down and I spend more time reflecting on summer observations and discoveries. Many summer resident birds have headed home for the winter. We might think birds have their primary residence here and head south with human snowbirds for the winter. Instead, many spend more time in wintering areas and only four or five months in summering areas. Wintering areas might best be described as their primary residence.

In summer, they return to raise a family where days are long and they can hunt insects for extended periods to feed begging young. In that regard, this might be considered their hometown residence even if they are not on breeding grounds as long as on wintering grounds. Here, many species start life in beautiful barren habitats.

Fortunately, finding nests is difficult. It allows for successful young rearing. During a bird's lifetime, it needs to successfully raise two young that reach adulthood to produce offspring of their own. To maintain a stable population, a mother bird needs to replace herself and the father with young that reproduce.

Nighthawks typically have two eggs in a nest and might have two broods each summer. If she lives five years, that would be 20 young produced during her lifetime. If her species maintains a stable population, 18 of her young would not survive to reproduce. If more than two survived to reproduce, the population would increase. If less than two survive, the population decreases. Many species currently are experiencing population declines due to poor young survival. Habitat loss is an important reason birds are unsuccessful at maintaining populations.

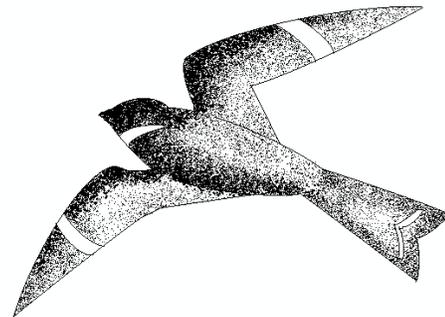
Nighthawks nest in open, sandy gravel areas with little vegetation. The nest is on flat ground or in a slight depression on barren ground exposed to sun, rain and predators. Nighthawks are not actually "hawks." They are nightjars that prey on flying insects. In the evening, dawn and after dark, they feed on airborne insects. They frequently are observed over cities where light attracts insects. Unlike most nightjars, such as the Whip-poor-will, nighthawks will feed in the sky at midday. Their long, narrow wings have a white bar across the wing running from front to back. The bar can be seen closer to wingtip than to the body.

During breeding season, I happened upon a nesting nighthawk that flushed from its nest in an open, sandy gravelly soil. Pine trees surrounded the opening. She held tight to the nest until I was too close, flushed, and began flopping about on bare ground with one wing outstretched as if it were broken. Her activity drew my attention. I knew she was trying to distract me away from the nest.

I left and returned 15 minutes later. She flushed again. After a short time of searching the ground, I found a slight depression with two well-camouflaged eggs that blended with surrounding stones. When the parent was sitting on the nest in the open, I could not see her until she flushed. The mottled appearance of her feathers helped her become invisible and she became one with the barren ground.

I did not eat the eggs like a fox or some other predator might. Instead, I took notes on the bird's behavior and noted how well her behavior, nest site and camouflage contributed to the species' survival in its nature niche. Hopefully, both her eggs successfully survived to reproduce as adults. That is unlikely. Survival of offspring is low and the nighthawk population is declining for unknown reasons. There is evidence that fewer insects exist today. I recall when our car windshield needed to be scrubbed every time we purchased gasoline in summer. That is no longer necessary because we hit fewer insects. That could reduce nighthawk survival chances. We can hope insects maintain healthy numbers to adequately supply food for nighthawk young rearing.

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.



Correction

by Tricia Boot, *Caller Editor*

Due to an editing error, the October edition of "Ranger Steve's Nature Niche" ("Earth Aliens") included the incorrect percentage of nonnative plants in native areas. The second sentence of the second paragraph should have read: "Presently, about **37 percent** of plants in native habitats are aliens." My sincere apologies to Steve Mueller and our readers for the mistake.



Historical Archives

Music in the Archives

by Linda Damstra

In late October, I packed two bins with material from the Grand Rapids Audubon Club archives and delivered those to the fourth floor of the Grand Rapids Public Library. Julie Tabberer, History & Special Collections Librarian, met with me to accept the donation of these items of historical significance to GRAC. In preparation for handing over this material, I browsed and took notes on the notebooks and scrapbooks that are now a part of GRPL's permanent collection.

There are two bins of scrapbooks, notebooks and folders still at my home to itemize before handing them over to be preserved in the archives of the public library. Once there and cataloged, the collection will be available to anyone interested in learning about the history of the club and its founding members.

It has been interesting and richly rewarding to read through the earlier minutes of the club meetings. The object of the club in the early days was stated as the "Protection and Study of Birds." As an example, members and officers in 1928 were encouraged to send articles to farm papers and give talks in schools about "preserving shrubbery and doing away with the cats." At that same meeting, "Mr. Spencer gave a very interesting talk on bird enemies."

Music in some form was a common part of the early meetings. Before the meeting adjourned in April 1928, members were entertained by "several selections by a string trio including Doris Dirksey at the piano, Marian Works, cello, and Elizabeth Spencer, violin."

In May 1929, 75 members and friends met at the Lone Pine Inn (where was that?) where the table was beautifully decorated with apple blossoms and robins. After a chicken dinner, the club was entertained "with several selections by Mrs. Winifred Nye, one which the words were composed by Myrtle Koon Cherryman and music by Winifred M. Nye."

Sometimes, it was poetry that entertained. In October 1929, a basket lunch was had around a bonfire at an outdoor meeting on a day described as "lovely and Autumn Coloring perfect." Members had been asked to take part in the entertainment by giving their favorite bird poems. Several of these were original; all were enjoyed. At the annual dinner meeting in May 1930, the poem "Who's Who" written by Miss Ermina Ayer was read by Miss Harriet Ayer and also very much enjoyed.

Last, but not least, as they say, is the record of the May 11, 1959 meeting. After the speaker, a member of Oberlin College, gave a "fine and illustrated talk on Bird Homes," the secretary wrote, "Mrs. Strong then led in singing 'God be with you till we meet again.'"

I know there are poets in our midst. I have read some of your fine work. Do we have any musicians? It would be fun and enriching to open a meeting now and then with music and poetry, wouldn't it?

October Finance Report

by Jeff Neumann, Treasurer

Checking Account Balance: \$ 9,561.33

Edward Jones Account: \$35,688.19

Total Assets as of 10/30/17: \$45,249.52

Restricted Funds (included in the total assets)

Maher Sanctuary Fund: \$2,979.04

Junior Audubon Fund: \$4,140.12

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.

Conservation News

A new page on the GRAC website is intended to keep members up to date on the latest conservation and environmental issues that may affect birding populations and other wildlife.

The stated objectives are: "To protect and promote Nature and the Environment, with emphasis on birds. Our primary focus is local, with hands-on involvement in local places, projects and issues. For areas farther away, our efforts may be limited to letter writing. We seek to stay abreast of issues and inform the general membership on current conservation issues of importance, from local to worldwide."

The page includes links to articles of interest and calls to action. Visit www.graud.org/conservation.html.





Christmas Bird Count 2017

Kent County with Center at Two Mile and Honey Creek Roads

Saturday, December 30

7:30 AM

Wittenbach/Wege Agriscience and Environmental Center,
11715 Vergennes Rd., Lowell, MI 49331

Have a great time enjoying birds and gathering data useful for tracking bird locations and species' abundance. GRAC has a long history of citizen science that supports research and birder fellowship. For example, comparing winter numbers, and population stability. This event is a good introduction to birding and to the Audubon club, and is a good family activity.

Feeders within the count circle add valuable data. Let us know before count day if you will be a feeder counter only. Some counters travel a section in the morning and then count at their feeders in the afternoon. In the event of a blizzard on count day, feeders can save a count, despite reduced numbers.

Please direct inquiries to trip leaders Tom Leggett and Ranger Steve (Mueller). Bring \$5 for a hot lunch to be prepared by Joan Heuvelhorst, or BYO lunch. Participate all or part of the day. There is no cost; donations support the National Audubon Society.

7:30 AM – Arrive WWC

8:00 AM – Field teams depart WWC

Noon – Lunch at WWC

5:00 PM – Collect and tally section findings at WWC

Tom Leggett - (616) 249-3382 or tomleggett@hotmail.com

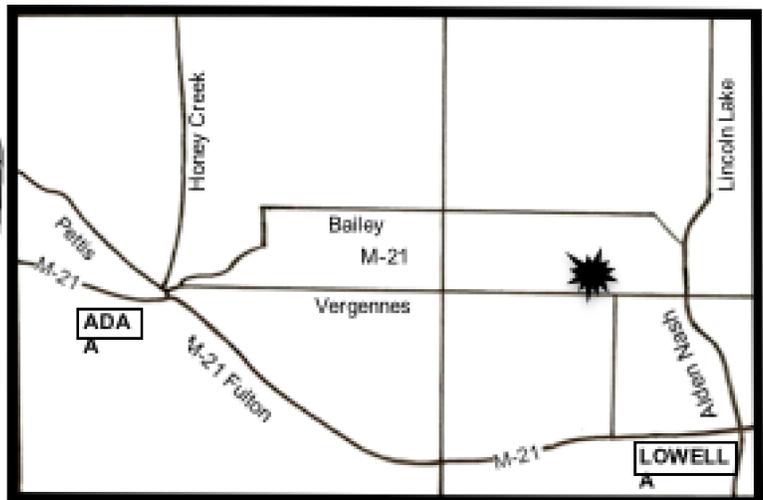
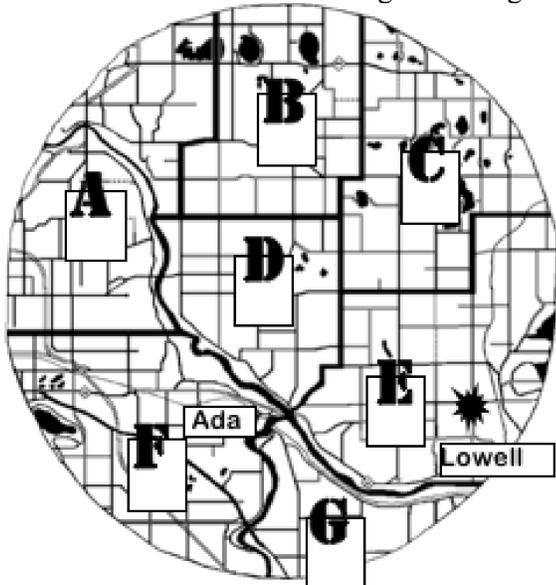
Ranger Steve (Mueller) - (616) 696-1753 or odybrook@chartermi.net

Directions to WWC:

From Grand Rapids: east on M-21 (Fulton St) through Ada; just after crossing the Grand River bridge turn left (north) onto Pettis; take the first right (east) onto Vergennes St; about five miles to the WWC.

From North US 131: exit 101 M-57; east about ten miles to Lincoln Lake Rd; turn right (south); follow Lincoln Lake Rd about 20 miles to traffic signal at Vergennes St; right (west) about one mile to the WWC (on right).

From the South: Lowell exit on I-96; north on Alden Nash through Lowell on the same road (the name changes); about two miles north of Lowell to traffic signal at Vergennes; turn left (west) about one mile to the WWC (on right).





GRAC CALENDAR

November

- 9 Field Trip: Millennium Park Hikes (recurring 16, 30)
- 11 Field Trip: Lakeshore Migrants w/ Steve Minard
- 27 GRAC Board & General Membership Meetings

December

- 7 Field Trip: Millennium Park Hikes (recurring 14, 21, 28)
- 30 Field Trip: Kent County Christmas Count

January

- 1 Field Trip: New Years Day in Kent County w/ Steve Minard
- 27 Field Trip: Winter Field Trip w/ Steve Minard
- 29 GRAC Board & General Membership Meetings

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

Field Trips – Becky Kuhn

Finance – Jill Goodell

Fund Development – *open*

Historian – Linda Damstra

Hospitality – Bea VerBurg

Junior Audubon – *open*

Library – Norine and Jim Shea /

Fidencio Paradez

Maher Sanctuary – Chris Baer

Membership – Mary Austin

Nominating – Scott Hutchings

Publicity – Tricia Boot

Scholarship – *inactive*

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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