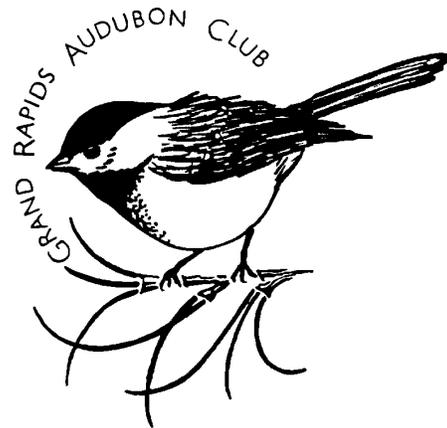


the Caller

October 2018, Volume 57, No. 3

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October Meeting Notes

Date: Monday, Oct. 29
Time: 7:00 PM social; 7:30 PM program
Location: John Donnelly Conference Center
Aquinas College
Speaker: Clayton Daughenbaugh
Topic: Wilderness Icon:
Utah's Red Rock Canyonlands

Guest speaker Clayton Daughenbaugh will present "A Wilderness Icon: Utah's Red Rock Canyonlands," which includes a 15-minute multimedia program narrated by Robert Redford. This "journey through red rock splendor" will invigorate and motivate viewers to participate in the movement to protect these unique lands.

Clayton also will speak to his own experiences as Conservation Organizer for the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance and his concerns about current attacks on our protected wilderness areas. Aspects of specific concern include President Trump's administration's efforts to repeal and replace the Bears Ears and Grand Staircase Escalante National Monuments, as well as reversing progress made to protect the largest unprotected wilderness area in the lower 48 states.

With his varied professional background and on-the-ground experiences, Clayton brings a unique perspective to the topic. He has chaired the Sierra Club's Wildlands and Wilderness team and has held many volunteer positions with conservation groups.

"These public lands are among the most beautiful and most intact portions of Creation remaining," Clayton said of the wilderness areas. "We have a great responsibility to act to protect these special places."

Deadline for November newsletter articles: **Nov. 1**

Send to: newsletter@graud.org

President's Corner

by Sheryl Helmus

At our September meeting I was reminded of some of the success stories for birds in Michigan. Our speaker, Doug Klein, talked about the reintroduction of two extirpated species in our state. Today, restored populations of Trumpeter Swans are an exciting sighting for many birders every year. Reintroduced Wild Turkey sightings are considered commonplace for many people. Some young birders find it hard to believe that not long ago people wondered if these birds would ever be seen again in Michigan.

Our bird sightings for the September meeting also had encouraging news. Peregrine falcons were seen in two downtown areas by GRAC members in the previous week. Peregrines, along with other top predators, suffered severe population losses from DDT and other pesticides four to five decades ago. Many thought these birds were doomed to extinction. By changing and regulating the chemicals we used, and through reintroduction efforts, we now see growing numbers of reproducing peregrines, eagles, osprey and other birds of prey throughout West Michigan.

Two members reported hearing a Barred Owl calling west of the sports field as they came into our meeting at Aquinas College. Other members reported an American Redstart, a Ruby-crowned Kinglet and a Northern Harrier in city parks and along a local highway. These sightings are good news that show our metropolitan area provides healthy habitat for many bird species.

Gloom and doom stories are in the news every day. However, each of us can gain hope from the success stories of the past and take positive action today. We can work to make changes that will have positive impacts for wildlife in the future. Studies by the Nature Conservancy show that urban and suburban areas can provide habitat critical to the survival of birds and other wildlife. Adding green space for animals can provide healthier places for the people who live there, too. Each of us can help with this.

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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, particularly in the event of hazardous winter weather. Particularly bad weather may cancel a trip.

Thursdays, Oct. 11, 18 and 25, 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 varies). 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.

Saturday, Oct. 20, 8:00 AM

Leader: Steve Minard

Fall Migrants at Muskegon State Park

We'll check Lake Michigan to see what's on the beach, hike the jack pines in the dunes and hit the trails from the Snug Harbor Picnic area. In the trees, late warblers, vireos and thrushes are possible. In the past, owls have been found roosting in the pines. 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, Oct. 27, 9:00 AM

Maher Sanctuary

See article by Chris Baer on page 3 for details

Saturday, Nov. 17, 7:30 AM

Leader: Steve Minard

Lakeshore Migrants

We'll plan to look for the best reported late shorebirds and winter ducks, gulls and finches along the lakeshore. Winter ducks should be in the area, and the other late migrants should still be moving south. We're 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're lucky, a mega-rarity will be chaseable and we may travel further afield. 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 on this trip.

Tuesday, Jan. 1, 6:00 AM

Leader: Steve Minard

New Year's Day in Kent County

Get your bird list for 2019 started in Kent County. We'll try to track down some of the birds seen on the Christmas Count (see page 7 for details) and look for whatever sounds good. We'll start at 6:00 AM to look for owls in the Cannonsburg State Game Area and vicinity. At dawn, we'll shift to looking for winter passerines, waterfowl and hawks. Birders of all skills are welcome to join us and start their bird list for 2019.

Essentials: Meet at the new Ada McDonald's on M-21 at the Citgo Gas Station by 6:00 AM. This is across M-21 from Amway and near the post office. We plan to be back at McDonald's at 8:00 AM for a break and in case anyone wants to join us. 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, Jan. 19, 8:00 AM

Leader: Steve Minard

Winter Field Birding

This winter trip will 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. 9, 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. Full details available on GRAC's website and in upcoming issues of the *Caller*.



President's Corner

continued from cover

If you are planning fall plantings, include native species that provide high-quality food and shelter. Encourage your friends and local governments to add green infrastructure too.

Share your love of birds with others and talk about the need for clean air and water for all life, including people. You can spread awareness and encourage others to join in supporting wise use of our earth. The future of people, birds and all living things will benefit from wise choices made today.



Help Us to Spread the Word About GRAC – It's Easy!

by Tricia Boot, *Caller Editor and Publicity*

Have you ever mentioned your involvement with the Grand Rapids Audubon Club to a local birder only to be met with bewilderment and surprise that our city supports a "bird club"? There is no lack of interested nature lovers and birders in our community, but it is a challenge to reach all of those who may be interested in joining our club.

A robust and engaged membership helps ensure a sustainable and strong GRAC. With very little effort and almost no time commitment (I promise!), you can help us to grow our membership and connect local folks with meaningful educational programs, fields trips and more.

Here are a few easy ways to help spread the word:

- Like us on Facebook and invite your friends to do the same:
www.facebook.com/grandrapidsaudubonclub/
- Share GRAC's Facebook events (programs and field trips) and other posts with your own social network
- Send interesting bird and nature photos to newsletter@graud.org for use on the club's Instagram page (@grandrapidsaudubonclub)
- Request copies of program flyers (by emailing the address above), and post at your favorite coffee shop, break-room at work, etc.

Your efforts are appreciated and make a difference!

Maher Sanctuary Update

by Chris Baer

A sign has been placed at the beginning of the boardwalk encouraging walkers/birdwatchers to tread lightly in the sanctuary. A small plastic box (thank you Sheryl) is now affixed above the North Country Trail brochure box (we have their approval) on the kiosk. It holds GRAC business cards with information about meetings and social media addresses. A laminated flyer for the current meeting will be posted on a tree (short screws) at the edge of the parking lot.

The Consumer's Energy request to move the power poles now located north of 108th Street behind the houses has been delayed. They were planning to put the poles about 35 feet south of 108th Street in the wetland of the sanctuary and extend from Wood School Road toward Humphrey Road well past the Maher west property line.

The trees along the power line would have been cleared and extremely toxic herbicide would have been used to prevent any re-sprouting or invasion by shrubs or young trees. The contractor representative of Sigma Technologies, Ltd., mentioned in her conversations with me that the view on Google Earth did not show the wetland. My mention of a possible Environmental Impact Statement may have influenced their decision to delay the move. The area where the power line is now has already been cleared/poisoned. It seems a shame Consumer's Energy would move the power line with the expense of building a new one and dismantling the old one.

Field Trip to Maher

A field trip is planned at Maher and Otis sanctuaries on Oct. 27 starting at 9:00 AM at Maher. Participants can carpool from the Arby's on M-37 (Broadmoor Avenue) and 44th Street (northeast corner of the intersection) at 8:30 AM. To reach Maher from the north, take Alden Nash (Lowell exit or from M-21) south until it dead-ends into 100th Street. Go left and take Baker Street at the first right. That turns into Wood School Road at the Barry County line. Take the first right at 108th Street and the parking lot for Maher is on the left after a short distance.

When our club first formed, members would not go "birding" but would go on hikes and look for birds and nature things. That is what we will be doing on this trip. We will look for birds, creatures of the wetland, upland and forest. There might be some asters still blooming and we might even see evidence of the bear that made its appearance last month. We will be on the boardwalk and some of the trails on this loop walk. If it has rained the boardwalk can be slippery. Sturdy shoes may be helpful.

A work day is being planned in November to replace some of the boards on the boardwalk that are impressively rotten or have foot-ankle-leg-eating holes. Watch the website for the date and time.



A Fall Visit to the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore

by Katie Bolt

On Sept. 21, Jan Lewis and I took a trip to the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. Jan had a commitment to photograph birds and other forms of nature in the park. I went along to help spot birds and because I wondered what the park had to offer. We tried to hit as many different areas as possible in two-and-a-half days, which was definitely not enough time. The park is comprised of many different small habitats scattered around Porter County, Indiana.

At one time, a large marsh filled the area behind the Lake Michigan Dunes from Michigan City to Chicago. Much has been filled in by industry and large portions of the dunes also were mined to provide sand for glass and the steel industry. The park consisted of areas that have either been protected for many years and were not developed as well as re-claimed areas that are no longer being used. The Indiana Dunes State Park—in existence since the 1930s—is included within the National Lakeshore.

The first afternoon, we went to the Great Marsh Trail where we saw at least 40 Wood Ducks, many in breeding plumage. We were both amazed as we had never before seen so many in one place. Large flocks of Blue-winged Teal flew in circles before landing, showing off their beautiful wing patches as they all turned simultaneously.

We returned to the marsh the next morning and got to see a variety of warblers, vireos, woodpeckers and sparrows. After that, we checked out the observation tower at Indiana Dunes State Park. The pine trees had a number of Blackpoll Warblers. The only gull species on the beach was Ring-billed. Next was Pinhook Bog, southeast of Chesterton.

The bog portion of this area is only open on certain dates, but there are other good trails in the area. We went out on the bog, which was not terribly birdy but did see carnivorous plants such as Sundew and Pitcher Plant.

The bog is quite large and has been protected since the 1960s. We finished the day by hiking about six miles at Cowles Bog. This is actually a fen and not a bog but it's hard to get the name changed! The trails were beautiful and well maintained. The walk began along a marshy area which held a nice variety of migrating warblers. The trail rose into a wooded area with rolling hills. We opted to skip the section with a steep climb and good views of the beach. Up in the woods, we were surprised to find a Northern Mockingbird and happy to see Yellow-bellied Sapsucker as they seem to have been harder to find this year. Surprisingly (to me, anyway), White-throated Sparrows are quite common in the dunes at this time of year.

Sunday morning was focused on more of the Indiana Dunes State Park. We hiked Trails 10 and 9 in a 3.5-mile loop. The area with the most birds was again along a marshy area. A highlight was a Red-headed Woodpecker. The area along Long Lake at West Beach just outside of Gary again offered a nice assortment of warblers. The 250-step climb on the Dunes Succession Trail only brought a Blue Jay for the birders but provided great views of Gary and downtown Chicago at the top. There was a beautiful beach at the bottom which was being well used.

Jan was able to explore other areas after I left. We were both amazed at the variety of habitats and really wild areas in such close proximity to a major city. It would be great fun to visit in the spring and to spend more time exploring. It took about two hours to drive from Grand Rapids to Chesterton and most of the sites were easily accessible. We would highly recommend taking the time to explore this beautiful area.

Annual CraneFest Oct. 13-14

by Mary Austin

Sandhill Cranes are birds that people crave to see. Spectators will have that opportunity Saturday, Oct. 13 and Sunday, Oct. 14 at Michigan Audubon's 24th Annual CraneFest. The event runs noon to dusk each day at the Kiwanis Youth Conservation Area, 22300 15 Mile Road, Bellevue, MI 49021.

CraneFest, one of Michigan Audubon's signature events, features guided nature hikes, a conservation raffle and nature-themed art vendors. There will be food trucks and kids' activities. Michigan Avian Experience will present live birds of prey from 3:00 to 5:00 PM on both days. Nature Discovery will exhibit Michigan reptiles and amphibians from 1:00 to 6:00 PM on Saturday only. The main attraction of each day is in the evening when hundreds of migrating Sandhill Cranes fly in next to Big Marsh Lake to roost for the night.

Big Marsh Lake is the location of one of the largest congregations of Sandhill Cranes in the country. The cranes fly into and out of the marsh all day, but it is an incredible experience to watch the amazing numbers of birds flying in between 5:00 PM and dusk.

Admission to CraneFest is free. Parking is \$7. For more information, see www.cranefest.org.



Ranger Steve's Nature Niche

Bird Eggs and Shells

by Ranger Steve (Mueller)

Bird eggs taste good to us and to other creatures like birds, snakes and mammals. Successful egg hatching is a difficult challenge.

This year, an American Robin built a nest in a precarious location at Ody Brook and by the time its second egg was laid, I saw the nest on the ground. The first egg lay unbroken. A second egg was laid on the remaining nest platform base but was abandoned.

Size of eggs correlates with bird size but other variations occur. Precocial birds whose young develop adequately to leave the nest promptly like ducks, have larger eggs with more nutritional content. That allows the chick to grow more inside the egg before hatching. It readies the young for rapid nest departure.

Altricial birds like chickadees that hatch small, naked and featherless develop in smaller eggs. The parent feeds the helpless babies and needs to continue incubating to keep young from dying of hypothermia.

Egg shape is important for survival in nature niches. Round eggs can roll like a marble. Oblong eggs that are narrow at one end and wide at the other will roll in circles. Cliff dwelling birds use little nest material and the oblong egg shape prevents them from rolling off the cliff. They roll in circles. Screech owls have nearly round eggs placed in a cavity nest where they cannot roll away.

More tapered eggs that are somewhat pointed are characteristic for birds with cup nests like those of thrushes and sparrows. It allows eggs to better fit for incubation. The adult bird forms a brood patch on her breast that is featherless and filled with blood vessels during breeding season. She cools her breast by sitting on cool eggs. The heat is transferred to the developing embryos in the eggs. When the egg warms against her breast, she rolls the egg to a cooler portion of the shell. The activity evenly heats the eggs.

Eggs exposed in view would be targets for predators if they were white against the modeled gray brown ground location like where killdeer and many other shorebirds have nests. Eggs' shells become colored as the shell is developed in the oviduct. They frequently have spots that develop when the egg is temporarily stationary and are streaked with movement. A ring may be present at the wide end as the egg is pushed along the oviduct.

Birds tend to lay one egg a day until they complete their clutch. During the 24-hour egg development process, the egg is fertilized by a male and the embryo moves through the oviduct where the shell encases the life-giving material for chick development.

The embryo is small with a large yolk attached to nourish development. As the chick grows, the yolk becomes smaller as nutrition is transferred to the young

bird. Egg white acts as a shock absorber, provides protein, water and insulation. Under the shell surface are two membranes that protect from bacterial infection.

Between the two membranes an air sac is located at the large end of the egg. The air pocket facilitates movement of oxygen and carbon dioxide in and out of the egg. The shell might appear solid and impervious but the embryo would suffocate without constant diffusion of vital gases through the shell.

Eggs are laid wide end first. As the egg shell is developing, muscles in the oviduct contract to push the egg along. The pressure narrows the end where contractions force movement. Calcium is added along the way making the egg ridged by the time it is laid. When preparing your next egg meal, examine the shell, membranes, egg white and yolk. Then enjoy good nutrition and taste.

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.

Field Trip Report: Millennium Park, September

by Katie Bolt

September was a good month of birding at the park in spite of the fact that the mosquitoes were out in droves. We had to cut one walk short due to rain but otherwise, the weather was quite pleasant.

The warblers came through in small numbers but a nice variety as with the vireos. Warblers included American Redstart, Magnolia Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Canada Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler and Cape May Warbler. Vireos included Red-eyed, Yellow-throated and Warbling.

We had a good long look at an immature Broad-winged Hawk which we saw catch and eat something. We struggled to identify the hawk and thank Caleb Putnam for helping us out. The woodpeckers were out in good numbers with Downy, Hairy, Pileated, Red-bellied and Northern Flickers giving good shows. Green Herons were regular and Great Egrets chased each other in the large pond on the Trestle Trail.

The eagles had left the nest but were seen in other parts of the park. Ed and I were joined by Kathy Haase, Jeanne Griffin, Jenni Hoonhorst, Amanda and David Whitehouse and Andrew Blok.



September 2018 eBird Summary

Very Unusual and Rare Sightings by Carol VanOeveren

The following is an overview of the very unusual and rare eBird sightings for September 2018 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.

A rather stagnant weather pattern of hot, humid weather and rounds of thunderstorms with heavy rain moved in Labor Day weekend and lasted through the following Wednesday. By the 6th, temps cooled into the 70s with lower dew points after the passage of a strong cold front. The remnants of tropical storm Gordon skirted to the south, and a warm, dry and pleasant period followed through mid-month due to the blocking effects of Hurricane Florence. A few showers, thunderstorms and humidity moved in the 18th through the 20th (our 19th day of 90 or better this summer during this timeframe) followed by a drier period, much cooler temperatures and a little rainfall through the end of the month.

AAA Turf Farm in Ottawa Co was the shorebird hotspot early in the month. **American Golden-Plovers**, **Baird's**, **Stilt** and **Buff-breasted sandpipers** all put in appearances as well as a **Wilson's Phalarope** (see below for numbers and dates). Very good warbler movement in Kent Co on Sep 7. Lamoreaux Park and the Hodenpyl Woods area of Reeds Lake had eleven and 15 (total from several different observations) species reported respectively. Visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S48357516> for Lamoreaux Park and <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S48344681> for one of the many reports from Hodenpyl Woods. Very impressive **Blue Jay migration** of **1,580** counted in about an hour streaming south over the channel at Lake Macatawa Sep 27. **Eighteen waterfowl species** were observed by Caleb Putnam at the Muskegon Wastewater Sep 27. Visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S48784505> for his entire checklist.

The best finds: A **Ross's Goose** and at least one **Ross's x Snow Goose hybrid** were observed at the Wastewater by Caleb Putnam Sep 27. A **Harlequin Duck** was found at Holland SP Sep 30 by the Mannings and other observers. Visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S48852735> for photos. An **American Avocet** in non-breeding plumage was seen at Muskegon Wastewater by several observers Sep 6. Visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S48329007> to view Brad Heath's photos along with other species.

Six were observed at the Kalamazoo River mouth by Rick Brigham Sep 23. A **Red Knot** was found at Grand Haven City Beach (immediately S of Grand Haven SP) by Tom Pavlik Sep 14. Visit <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S48500337> for Curtis Dykstra's photo at Grand Haven SP. Bird still at the park Sep 15. A female/immature type **Connecticut Warbler** was found by Curtis Dykstra at Hemlock Crossing Park in Ottawa Co Sep 11.

Other notables: a **Greater White-fronted Goose** at the Wastewater Sep 9 and three there Sep 13; three **Snow Geese** at the Wastewater Sep 21; **4,500 Northern Shoveler** at the Wastewater Sep 2 and at least **8,000** there Sep 27; at least **10,000 Ruddy Ducks** at the Wastewater Sep 27; two **Red-throated Loons** at Douglas Beach Park Sep 26; one **Eared Grebe** continued at the Wastewater Sep 15; an **American White Pelican** on the Grand River near Martinique Island in Ottawa Co Sep 27; a **Black-crowned Night-Heron** at Mill Point in Spring Lake and one also at Millennium Park in Kent Co Sep 8, one continued since Aug at VanBragt Park in Holland Sep 18; up to nine (several immatures) **Common Gallinules** continued since Aug at Covell Park in Muskegon Co Sep 11, two at Grand Haven SGA Bruce Bayou 132nd Ave access Sep 5 and one continued since summer at the 129th Ave access Sep 8, up to three at 11th St lake in Allegan Co Sep 6-8; two **Black-bellied Plover** at Holland SP Sep 7 and three there Sep 19; up to five **American Golden-Plover** continued since late Aug at AAA Turf Farm in Ottawa Co Sep 9 and one there Sep 23, up to five along 116th Ave E of 29th St in Allegan Co Sep 10, one at Grand Haven SP Sep 10, up to five at the Wastewater Sep 20-27; a **Ruddy Turnstone** continued since Aug at the Kalamazoo River mouth in Allegan Co Sep 18, up to two at Holland SP throughout the month, up to four at Grand Haven SP Sep 10-29, one at Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area Sep 18, two at Saugatuck Dunes SP Sep 24; four **White-rumped Sandpipers** at Caledonia Sewage Ponds Sep 7, one at the Wastewater Sep 15; up to eight **Baird's Sandpipers** continued since late Aug at AAA Turf Farm Sep 7, up to six continued since Aug at the Wastewater Sep 25, up to three at Allegan SGA Todd Farm Sep 3-5, three at Hayes St and 74th Ave in Ottawa Co Sep 15, one at Holland SP Sep 30; one **Stilt Sandpiper** at the Wastewater off and on through Sep 27, three along 80th Ave between Taft and Cleveland Sts (DeVries Meats) in Ottawa Co Sep 1, up to two at AAA Turf Farm Sep 2-6, two at Allegan SGA Todd Farm Sep 3, one at Hayes St and 74th Ave in Ottawa Co Sep 14-15; up to four **Buff-breasted Sandpipers** at the Wastewater Sep 1-10, up to two continued since Aug 31 at AAA Turf Farm Sep 6;

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a **Wilson's Phalarope** continued since late Aug at AAA Turf Farm Sep 5; a **Herring x Lesser Black-backed Gull hybrid** at Holland SP Sep 30; a **Black Tern** at Holland SP Sep 6; **350 Common Terns** and **50 Forster's Terns** at Holland SP Sep 6 and **220 Common Terns** at Grand Haven SP Sep 13; a late **Black-billed Cuckoo** at Fallasburg Park Dr and Beckwith Dr in Kent Co Sep 27; an **Olive-sided Flycatcher** at a residence near Seidman Park in Kent Co Sep 3-6, one at Upper Macatawa Natural Area Sep 7, one at Hoffmaster SP in Muskegon Co Sep 14, one at Millennium Park Sep 18, one at Reeds Lake Sep 26; a **Golden-winged Warbler** at Hoffmaster SP Sep 14, one at a residence in W Ottawa Co Sep 16; a **Mourning Warbler** at Upper Macatawa Natural Area Sep 10, one at Caledonia Sewage Ponds Sep 24; a **Clay-colored Sparrow** at Upper Macatawa Natural Area Sep 19; two **Brewer's Blackbirds** at AAA Turf Farm Sep 4; **Purple Finch** reported at several locations in the four-county area with a high count of 14 female/immature type at Pine Creek Park in Ottawa Co Sept 7; a **Pine Siskin** at Pine Creek Park Sep 13, up to three at a residence in W Ottawa Co Sep 16-18.

2018 Christmas Bird Count Kent County Center at Two Mile and Honey Creek Roads by Ranger Steve (Mueller)

The club has paper bird count records dating to back to 1953. I began placing the data on an Excel spreadsheet in 1986 when I became count coordinator and added the historic data sometime during the 1990s. That is 64 years of data tabulated. I use the data when summarizing the current year's count by looking for interesting comparisons and include a couple of notes in the summary report.

It would be helpful for someone to proof my data entries and help get the tabulated data in order so it can be made available for club members. Let me know if you are interested in such a project.

Participants for the count meet at 7:30 AM on Dec. 29 at Wittenbach/Wege Agriscience and Environmental Center (WWC), 11715 Vergennes Rd. in Lowell, Mich. 49331. Field teams are organized and depart by 8:00 AM. They return around noon for lunch. Joan Heuvelhorst will prepare a \$5 lunch, or bring your own. Section findings are collected at 5:00 PM. Participate part or all day. Participation is free with any donations sent to support the Audubon.

Owlers head out in the predawn. If you are interested let us know. Bird species sighted during count week that were not seen on count day in the count circle are added as "count week" species. Numbers are not added but the species are included. Count week includes the three days prior to and after the count.

Have a great time enjoying birds, birders and gathering data useful for tracking bird locations and species abundance.

Feeder counters within the count circle add valuable data. It will be helpful to let Tom know if you will be a feeder counter so he can provide procedure. Some counters join a field section in the morning and count at their feeders in the afternoon.

Direct inquiries to count coordinators:

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

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

See the Grand Rapids Audubon Club website for maps.





Finance Committee Musings

by Keith Helmus

Have you ever wondered how your membership dues are spent? Did you the club funds various projects?

Membership dues are used for a number of expenses but the largest of these is for the rental of the rooms at the John Donnelly Conference Center at Aquinas College. The fees we pay include the use of the space for our Board and Membership meetings. Aquinas also provides an audio/visual technician to operate the equipment at the meetings. Another large expense is for the speakers for our monthly meetings. Attempts are made to find interesting presenters to speak on a variety of fascinating and informative subjects related to birding and nature. These speakers are paid a reasonable fee for their services. Additional club expenses include publicity costs, *Caller* production and other nominal expenses. Typically, we do not receive enough money from membership dues during a fiscal year to cover all of our expenses. However, we usually receive generous donations from members and others. Also, we have fundraising events such as the Bird-a-thon that help pay for the shortfall.

We also have a number of special programs that are funded by money that is specifically restricted for such programs. This money cannot be used for general club purposes but must be used only for the designated programs that the donors have stipulated. There are three programs that have funds available for a specific use: Audubon Adventures, Junior Audubon and Maher Sanctuary. See the report at the top right of this page for current balances. There is one other program, Scholarship, that we hope will have funds available for the specific use of providing scholarships for qualified candidates for bird- and nature-related programs.

Each year the Finance Committee prepares a budget that is presented to the membership for approval that outlines the use of money that we hope will be available for a fiscal year. Our fiscal year starts on July 1 and runs through June 30 of the following year. The budget for the 2018/2019 fiscal year was prepared and approved by the membership at the May 2018 meeting. Any significant changes in the current budget must be presented and approved by the membership. In the coming months, the Finance Committee will start to work on next year's budget. If there are any items that you would like to have us consider in next year's budget or if you have any questions related to the club's finances, please contact either the treasurer, Jeff Neumann, or me. We welcome any and all suggestions and questions.

September Finance Report

prepared by Jeff Neumann, Treasurer

Checking Account Balance: \$ 9,829.40

Edward Jones Account: \$42,274.76

Total Assets as of 9/24/18: \$52,104.16

Restricted Funds (included in the total assets)

Maher Sanctuary Fund: \$3,523.53

Junior Audubon Fund: \$4,024.12

Audubon Adventures: \$ 300.00

The balances in the Maher Sanctuary, Junior Audubon and Audubon Adventures Funds are restricted to expenditures for items related to the respective funds.

Volunteer Opportunities

by Scott Hutchings

Our Librarians are retiring, and we need some volunteers to take over the lending library. It's a great opportunity to relax at the meeting and talk about birds and birding books with the other members.

Tricia Boot, who edits the *Caller*, also handles the club's publicity. She welcomes help distributing flyers and other printed media and brainstorming ideas for getting out the word about the club.

We still have a couple of leadership openings: Fund Development Chairperson, to handle fundraising, and a Special Projects Coordinator for various club events.

And we always need Peoplefeeders to bring snacks to the meetings and folks to help on the various committees. You can find a list of the Committee Chairpersons on the website, or contact me.

Field Trip Report: Sept. 29 at Paul Henry Trail

Doug Klein and his group had a great trip on the Paul Henry Trail the Saturday after he spoke at our membership meeting. Forty-one species were found or heard by about 18 people on the trip. Best birds were a Bald Eagle who repeatedly dive-bombed a group of Canada Geese. Attendees also saw both teal, 50 Sandhills, Pectoral Sandpiper and Greater Yellowlegs, plus 45 Killdeer, lots of Yellow-rumps and three Cooper's Hawks.



Theresa's Membership News and Thought for the Day

by Theresa Dykhius, Membership Chairperson

I can't think of a better way to start this month's article than by extending a warm welcome to our newest members:

Todd and Carol Smith, Shawn and Jeni Taheri

We are so grateful for your support of our organization and look forward to your participation in all the things we do to make GRAC so special!

Now to my "thought for the day" for this month:

"I cannot endure to waste anything so precious as autumnal sunshine by staying in the house. So I have spent almost all the daylight hours in the open air." Nathaniel Hawthorne, Oct. 10, 1842

Even though Mr. Hawthorne's quote was written in 1842, it is as relevant today as it was way back then. The quote reminds me of the daylight hours I spent on the recent GRAC trip to the Paul Henry Trail in Middleville. I can't believe I lived so close yet never managed to make a visit to this fabulous place. If I had been there by myself, I would not have seen half the birds that the leaders of the trip and other participants pointed out to me.

There were several runners that passed us with earbuds in their ears and music blaring. I wished they could hear the "music" I was enjoying on that beautiful fall day: the sounds of the wind in the trees, the leaves blowing across the path, the chirps and calls of the birds, ducks and geese and at times the peaceful quiet that only nature can provide. After my experience on the Paul Henry Trail, I am more excited than ever to go to the trip to GRAC's own Maher Sanctuary at the end of the month. Find more information on page 3 of this *Caller*. Take advantage of these wonderful opportunities!

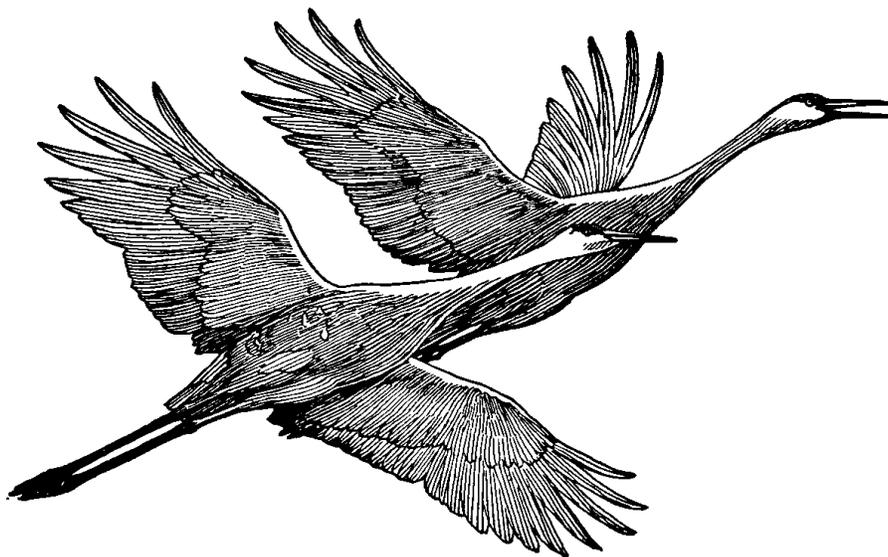
It was a pleasure to meet those of you who renewed your membership at September's meeting. Thank you for your support and also to those who renewed memberships through the mail. GRAC does not receive any funding from the government or any other organization. We rely on memberships and fundraisers to finance GRAC's operations.

If you aren't currently a member and enjoy attending the meetings and other activities, please consider becoming a member. The cost of an annual membership is very reasonable. Please feel free to stop by the membership table at the monthly meetings and we will be happy to help you. Applications for membership also are available online and on page 11 of this *Caller*.

Speaking of supporting GRAC, the following people not only paid for memberships but also made additional contributions to support our general fund or specific programs. We can't thank you enough for your generosity!

General Fund: Steve and Ellen Alkema, Kathleen Haase, Margaret Bradshaw

Maher Sanctuary: Adam and Tricia Boot





Bits and Pieces

by Mary Austin

I've been collecting various "bits and pieces" having to do with birding. I thought I'd share them with our *Caller* readers on an ongoing basis. This article focuses on counting raptors during migration in Michigan.

Throughout Michigan, birders keep track of migrating raptors in the spring and/or fall. Some notable watch-sites in the Upper Peninsula are Whitefish Point near Paradise and Brockway Mountain near Copper Harbor. The Hawk Migration Association of North America (www.hmana.org/hawk-watch-sites/) also lists the Mackinac Straits at Mackinaw City and the southwestern shore of Lake Huron just north of Port Huron as significant watch-sites where the raptors are officially counted.

Sites along the Detroit River are especially great for watching the fall hawk migration. The Detroit River Hawk Watch at Lake Erie Metropark website (<http://www.metroparks.com/the-detroit-river-hawk-watch-at-lake-erie-metropark/>) reports that for over 35 years the Detroit River Hawk Watch has been conducted at the Lake Erie Metropark. For over 20 years, the boat launch in the park has been the primary site.

Why count the raptors at the Metropark? The data compiled provides information on long-term raptor trends. In addition, the public is educated with programs at the Lake Erie Metropark Marshlands Museum, particularly during the annual Hawkfest in mid-September.

The numbers of migrating fall raptors flying over the Metropark watch site have been as low as 30,000 to over 600,000 during the three-month count season (Sept. 1 through Nov. 30). Broad-winged Hawks and Turkey Vultures usually appear in the largest numbers. Sixteen other species also are regularly counted. Those species include Bald Eagle, Osprey, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, American Kestrel, Swainson's Hawk and Golden Eagle.

On Sept. 29, the Broad-winged Hawk count was 200 for the day. On Sept. 30 (a somewhat rainy day), no Broad-winged Hawks were recorded. The total Broad-winged Hawk count for September was 46,764! While 96 Sharp-shinned Hawks were counted on Sept. 29, only 25 were counted on Sept. 30. Sharp-shinned Hawks took a monthly second place with 1,627 for September. Turkey Vultures were 510 on Sept. 29 and 321 on Sept. 30. In third place, the Turkey Vulture count for September was 1,516. The total Detroit River raptor count through Sept. 30 was 363 for the day and 51,015 for the month.

Additional Detroit River Hawk Watch information (including daily reports) can be found at www.drhawkwatch.org.

Become a Citizen Scientist: Join the 2019 Climate Watch

You're invited to get involved with the GRAC in helping Audubon to conduct meaningful research in our community via the Climate Watch program. Climate Watch is a new community science program that explores how North American birds are responding to climate change. The program was launched in the wake of the birding public's overwhelming response to Audubon's 2014 report, "Audubon Birds and Climate Change Report," which highlighted the risks that climate change poses to birds across the continent.

The next Climate Watch is Jan. 15-Feb.15. Participants are asked to give a two- to four-hour time commitment. You will be tasked with choosing twelve spots within a ten-kilometer by ten-kilometer grid in Kent County. Try to select spots where Eastern Bluebirds or White- or Red-breasted Nuthatches are likely to be seen or heard. Each spot you select should be at least 200 meters away from all other spots to avoid double-counting the same areas. Count those species and report your findings to eBird.

Why those birds? Audubon's promotional materials for the initiative said "bluebirds and nuthatches are easy to identify, have an enthusiastic constituency, and Audubon's climate models for these specific species offer strong predictions for range shifts for us to test. In future years, Climate Watch will include additional target species threatened by climate change covering a broader range of habitats and regional interests."

Email climatewatch@audubon.org to request additional information. Or, contact GRAC's Becky Kuhn to get involved: bexrecky@gmail.com or (616) 437-9205.

And don't forget another popular way to become involved in citizen science: the 2018 Christmas Bird Count, scheduled for Dec. 29. Find more details on page 7 of this *Caller*.

Your participation in these activities helps to provide experts with important information about species' numbers, distribution and habits. It's a fun way to become involved in protecting the environment and helping bird populations.





GRAC CALENDAR

October

- 11 Field Trip: Millennium Park (recurring 18 and 25)
- 20 Field Trip: Fall Migrants at Muskegon State Park w/ Steve Minard
- 27 Field Trip: Maher Sanctuary
- 29 GRAC Board and Membership Meetings

November

- 17 Field Trip: Lakeshore Migrants w/ Steve Minard
- 26 GRAC Board and Membership Meetings

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.

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 and/or Audubon Adventure)</i>		_____
Total Amount Enclosed		_____

Make checks payable to:
Grand Rapids Audubon Club, Inc.
 Send application and check to:
Cynthia Davidek, Assistant Treasurer
832 Fairmount St. SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49506-1506

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

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 – Sheryl Helmus | Field Trips – Becky Kuhn |
| Vice President – Scott Hutchings | Finance – Keith Helmus |
| Secretary – Tom Leggett | Fund Development – <i>open</i> |
| Treasurer – Jeff Neumann | Historian – Linda Damstra |
| Ass't Treasurer – Cynthia Davidek | Hospitality – Bea VerBurg, Henry Raad and Rosemary Radius |
| Board Member – Landon Bell | Insurance – Jill Goodell |
| Board Member – Keith Helmus | Junior Audubon – <i>open</i> |
| Board Member – Becky Kuhn | Library – Norine and Jim Shea / Fidencio Paradez |
| Board Member – Jan Lewis | Maher Sanctuary – Chris Baer |

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT *(non-voting member)*

John Chronowski 2016-17, 2017-18

STANDING COMMITTEES

- Aud. Adventures – Mary Austin
- Audio/Visual – Robert Riepma
- Bird Reports – Carol VanOeveren
- Caller* Editor – Tricia Boot
- Caller* Publisher – Peggy Falk
- Christmas Count – Tom Leggett / Steve Mueller

SPECIAL COMMITTEES / CHAIRPERSONS

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

- Aud. Adventures – Mary Austin
- Insurance – Jill Goodell

RESIDENT AGENT

Larry Burke

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Rockford, MI 49341

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Grand Rapids Audubon Club

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