

the Caller

April 2019, Volume 57, No. 8

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

www.graud.org | information@graud.org
www.facebook.com/grandrapidsaudubonclub/



April Meeting Notes

Date: Monday, April 29
Time: 7:00 PM social; 7:30 PM program
Location: John Donnelly Conference Center
Aquinas College
Speaker: David Ewert, American Bird Conservancy
Topic: Saving the Kirtland's Warbler

Hear the inspiring story of bringing North America's rarest songbird back from the brink of extinction. Learn how it's being protected and discuss what makes it so unique.

David Ewert, Ph.D., is the Kirtland's warbler program director and conservation specialist for the American Bird Conservancy.



President's Corner

by Sheryl Helmus

Recent questions had me thinking about birding ethics. What guidelines are established by respected bird experts? How do you or I understand their guidelines? And do our interactions with birds, their habitat and fellow nature enthusiasts line up with our outdoor ethics?

The American Birding Association Code of Birding Ethics gives us information to ponder. Some points in their code include the following:

- Promote the welfare of birds and their environment.
- Respect the law, and the rights of others.
- Ensure that feeders, nest structures and other artificial bird environments are safe.
- Group birding, whether organized or impromptu, requires special care.

Details in each section of the code gave me more to consider. Is it OK to use recordings to attract birds? If so, when, and with what species? How close is "too close" to nests, feeding sites and roosts? How can photography be done so birds are not stressed? Do I tell the public about a rare bird or do I share the information only with conservation authorities?

Do I know the park rules where I bird and obey them even if they interfere with the way I would like to view birds? Am I aware of, and respectful of, others using natural areas for their preferred outdoor activity? Do others in groups I bird with follow good birding ethics, too? Are my feeders clean and located in areas where birds will be safe from predators or window strikes?

Check the ABA online Code of Ethics in its entirety at: <http://listing.aba.org/ethics/>. They have ideas that helped me in answering some of my questions. I encourage you to read over their code and decide what is right for you.

Deadline for June newsletter articles: **May 31**

Send to: newsletter@graud.org

Continued on page 3



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 in April, 9:00 AM

Thursdays in May, 8:00 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, April 6, 9:00 AM

(Rain Date: April 13, 9:00 AM)

Maher Sanctuary Workday

Explore the GRAC-owned sanctuary and help to prepare it for the spring season. We'll replace rotten and damaged boards in the boardwalk. Boards, screws and drill bits will be provided. If you have them, please bring battery-powered drills, rakes, clippers/pruners, crow-bars/wonder bars, kneel pads and hammers. There will be boardwalk edge to rake, branches to clip/prune and boardwalk nail whacking. Wear appropriate clothing, sturdy shoes and gloves that you do not mind getting dirty. Check website for cancellations.

Saturday, April 20, 7:00 AM

Leader: Steve Minard

Spring Marsh Birds and Hawks

Join us to look for marsh birds at Lane's Landing in the Muskegon State Game Area. Rails should be in the marsh by this date, and Swamp Sparrows should be on territory. We'll see how the winds blow and either head over to the Muskegon Wastewater or Grand Haven to check out Harbor Island and hawk-watch locations to look for migrating hawks. At the wastewater, Northern Shoveler and Ruddy Duck are likely; in Grand Haven, we could see Caspian Tern on Lake Michigan or a Peregrine Falcon at the power plant. Rails also can be seen in Grand Haven. Birders of all skills are welcome.

Essentials: Meet at the Boy Scout Headquarters west off Walker Road just north of I-96 at 7:00 AM. We plan to bird until noon. You may want to bring a snack to hold you over until lunch.

Saturday, May 4, 8:00 AM

Leader: Larry Burke

Paul Henry Thornapple Trail in Middleville

This trail is the site of the annual Woodpecker Festival and is a great place to find Red-headed Woodpeckers and most of the other resident Michigan woodpeckers. Many other species should be present, including early migrating warblers and possibly summering Prothonotary Warblers. The paved, flat trail makes for an easy, safe, wheelchair-accessible walk. The trail more or less follows the Thornapple River and is bordered by bayous that invite many ducks and other waterbirds. The variety and number of birds should make this an enjoyable trip.

Essentials: We will meet at the Arby's at M-37 (Broadmoor Avenue) and 44th Street (northeast corner of the intersection) in Kentwood at 7:30 AM and carpool from there to Middleville. Alternatively, you can meet us at the Paul Henry Thornapple Trail behind Village Hall (100 Main St.) in Middleville at 8:00 AM. This will be a morning trip and we will be finished no later than noon. Be prepared for insects.

Tuesday, May 7, 6:30 PM

Leader: Steve Minard

Tuesday Evening at Reeds Lake

This trip is an evening walk to the Hodenpyl Woods area at the west end of Reeds Lake. Varied woodland, marsh and lake habitat provides a variety of birds right in town. On this trip, we will concentrate on waterbirds and early warblers. The boardwalk provides good views of the lake and marsh areas so we will visit it. Birders of all skills are welcome.

Essentials: Meet at the East Grand Rapids Utility Building parking lot on Reeds Lake Boulevard north of Gaslight Village at 6:30 PM. Waterproof footwear and insect repellent may be useful. Poison ivy is thick in places.

Tuesday, May 14, 6:30 PM

Leader: Steve Minard

Tuesday Evening at Reeds Lake

This trip is an evening walk to the Hodenpyl Woods area at the west end of Reeds Lake. Varied woodland, marsh and lake habitat provides a variety of birds right in town. The second week of May should be near the peak of spring migration, and just about anything is possible here. We will be looking for migrants. Birders of all skills are welcome.

Essentials: Meet at the East Grand Rapids Utility Building parking lot on Reeds Lake Boulevard north of Gaslight Village at 6:30 PM. Waterproof footwear and insect repellent may be useful. Poison ivy is thick in places.



GRAC Annual May Meeting

The Annual May Meeting will be held Monday, May 20 at Roselle Park, 1010 Grand River Dr., Ada, MI 49301. The entrance to the park is located directly across from Michigan Street and the park is located north of M-21 (Fulton Street).

Arrive early to enjoy a guided or solo stroll through the park. A potluck dinner is planned, so bring your favorite dish to pass. Bring your own serving utensils and table service. The only table service provided will be cups for the punch bowl, if needed. Our aim is to be as environmentally friendly as possible.

No reservations are needed and there is no cost. However, donations for the punch and cups will be accepted.

Hike – 5:00 PM –Becky Kuhn will lead a hike, or stroll the park on your own.

Punch Bowl – 6:00 PM – Time to mix and mingle.

Potluck Dinner – 6:30 PM – Self-serve dinner begins. Some suggestions for dishes to bring are: fresh fruit plate or fruit salad, fresh veggies or garden salad, specialty bread/rolls with spread, hot potato or vegetable dish, meat platter or hot casserole or meat dish, or dessert. Coffee and tea may be available depending on weather.

Meeting – 7:30 PM – Following dinner, a short business meeting will be held to vote on two important items: the Slate of Officers for 2019/2020 and the Proposed Budget for 2019/2020 (see page 4 to review budget*).

Caleb Putnam also will present a program on eBird, demonstrating its use and how the data is used in research.

**Proposed budget has been approved by the GRAC Board and approval by the membership is recommended. It will be discussed at the April 29 meeting and approved by membership at the May meeting.*

2019/2020 Board Nominations

Club members nominated for elected board positions:

President: **Sheryl Helmus**

Vice President: **Scott Hutchings**

Secretary: **Jeni Taheri**

Treasurer: **Jeff Neumann**

Assistant Treasurer: **Cynthia Davidek**

Board Member at Large: **Shawn Taheri**

Board Member at Large: **Tom Leggett**

Two Board Members at Large will serve the second year of their terms: **Landon Bell** and **Jan Lewis**

The election will be held at the annual meeting on May 20 at Roselle Park.

Birdathon Begins April 15

Each Birdathon team consists of at least two members to verify sightings. The time allotted for birding is six consecutive hours. (If you need more time, start another team!). Birding counts any time between April 15 and May 31 anywhere in Kent, Ottawa, Muskegon and Barry counties. Registration is \$25 per team and fundraising is encouraged. Teams may watch feeders or stroll on your own property. Visit the GRAC website for an updated entry form.

Trophies and bragging rights will be awarded! Funds raised support educational activities of the club. Teams are encouraged to invite new birders to participate. It's great fun and a good reason to be outside (or inside watching what is in your yard and at your feeder.)

March Finance Report

prepared by **Jeff Neumann, Treasurer**

Checking Account Balance: \$ 9,559.35

Edward Jones Account: \$44,143.57

Total Assets as of 3/25/19: \$53,702.92

Restricted Funds (included in the total assets)

Maher Sanctuary Fund: \$3,733.53

Junior Audubon Fund: \$4,144.12

Audubon Adventures: - \$ 343.30

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

CaringBridge for Ranger Steve

Ranger Steve (Mueller) has a CaringBridge page to update those interested in his cancer progression. Current treatment is not adequately effective. He hasn't posted for a couple years and some people previously notified did not receive notice of his recent post. If interested visit: <http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/SteveMueller>.

President's Corner

Continued from cover

The National Audubon Society's Guide to Ethical Bird Photography: www.audubon.org/get-outside/audubons-guide-ethical-bird-photography is another site that may help clarify your thoughts. It helped me with some remaining questions, even ones that did not involve photography. They state: "Respect for birds and their habitats must come before getting that perfect shot." For me, that means doing the right things for birds, habitat and people must come before my desire for the perfect birding experience.



Proposed Budget for 2019/2020

Each year the Finance Committee prepares a budget that is presented to the membership for approval. It outlines the use of money that we hope will be available for our fiscal year, which starts on July 1 and runs through June 30 of the following year. The proposed budget for the 2019/2020 fiscal year was reviewed and accepted by the Board at the March meeting and is presented below. It will be voted on by the members at the May membership meeting. If you have any questions related to the proposed budget, please contact either Keith Helmus or the treasurer, Jeff Neumann.

PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2019/2020

INCOME

Unrestricted:

Membership dues	\$2,500
Donations	1,500
Bird-a-thon	800
Fundraising/Miscellaneous	300
Christmas Bird Count	50
Transfer from accumulated unrestricted cash	750

Restricted:

Maher Sanctuary donations	600
Audubon Adventures donations	400
Scholarships donations	400
Junior Audubon donations	200
Transfer from accumulated restricted cash	600

TOTAL INCOME **\$8,100**

EXPENSES

Unrestricted:

Room rental	\$2,300
Program speakers	1,050
Club Expenses (Insurance, Postage, SOM filing)	850
Publicity/Marketing	600
<i>Caller</i> (Printing and Postage)	450
Fundraising/Sponsorships	300
Miscellaneous Expenses	200
Bird-a-thon	100
Christmas Bird Count	50

Restricted:

Audubon Adventures expenses	1,000
Maher Sanctuary expenses	600
Scholarships expenses	400
Junior Audubon expenses	200

TOTAL EXPENSES **\$8,100**



Ranger Steve's Nature Niche

Eagle Successes

by Ranger Steve (Mueller)

My father-in-law and I were driving the countryside when we spotted a Bald Eagle eating a car-killed deer. This is typical behavior for scavenger birds like Bald Eagles. Fish is a high dietary component. Golden Eagles regularly fed on federally endangered Utah Prairie Dogs killed on the highway near the entrance to Bryce Canyon National Park. Eagles were hit and killed while eating prairie dogs. I stuffed two for the park service. Golden Eagles and Utah Prairie Dogs numbers declined dramatically for several reasons as did Bald Eagles.

People realized Bald Eagles, like many species comprising our natural heritage, were declining. George J. Wallace, ornithologist from Michigan State University, recognized a problem when American Robins returned in spring to die in large numbers on the MSU campus where DDT was used. The poison bio-accumulated to a lethal level in robins that ate worms and insects. Rachael Carson in her book *Silent Spring* enlightened the general public to the veil of doom affecting a broad spectrum of wildlife and human health. Her book included information about DDT presence in human breast milk and other health hazards directly affecting people.

People and industry tried to discredit Carson with hopes that verified and supported science findings would be ignored. Activities to undermine scientific data continue as is currently prevalent by well-funded antagonists opposing climate change evidence. Successes that limited DDT use and other chlorinated hydrocarbons in our country helped eagles and other species increase populations and reduced human health hazards.

Rather than directly die from metabolized derivatives of DDT, eggs shells thinned and broke under the weight of the parent. With few young to replace long-lived adults, eagles declined toward extinction. It was thought our great grandchildren would not see eagles. Peregrine Falcons also disappeared from most of their range.

The establishment of the Endangered Species Act created hope for declining wildlife and hopefully would help reduce harmful chemicals in our own diet. With the banning of DDT use in the United States, conditions for eagles, falcons, other wildlife and humans improved.

Recently a friend and I took a Sunday afternoon drive toward Lake Michigan, along the coast and home. We observed twelve Bald Eagles with most being immatures. The young can be distinguished from mature adults because they lack a white head and tail. The long black underwings have white bands extending from near the body to wing tips. Eagles seemed to enjoy playing in wind currents above the bright sunny afternoon shoreline.

The pleasure of seeing young eagles that hatched from eggs with calcium-rich shells brings joy beyond knowing the species is recovering from chemical abuses humans released into the environment. It offers comfort knowing our grandkids and future generations might experience healthier lives if we maintain a safe environment for all life. That is one of the fundamental purposes supporting the Endangered Species, Clean Water and Clean Air acts. I envision children in the outdoors watching eagles play in the wind.

Experience elation when you see an eagle eating its fill on a road-killed deer. Eagle numbers are increasing despite well-funded efforts to discredit scientifically supported evidence documenting hazards. DDT still is heavily used around the world instead of safer alternatives. People will continue substantive discussions about current issues like the importance for replacing fossil fuels with long-term economically sound alternatives. The change to alternative energy can provide our kids and future generations with a healthy environment that serves food production, stable agriculture and sustainable environmental conditions for people and wildlife.

Bald Eagles now are a common part of our neighborhood nature niche landscape because we recognized our activities impacted their survival and implemented laws to protect them and our health. Whether it is PFAS, climate change, recycling household waste, or the kind, quantity, and frequency of chemicals we use to treat our yards and gardens, it not only affects Bald Eagle survival, we can protect our family's health and lives.

Chemicals help us live well but careful selection with minimal application is essential. We challenge our health and wellbeing along with that of coming generations if we do not take responsibility for eagle survival.

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.

Nature Niche Note:

Ranger Steve's Nature Niche appears weekly in newspapers and state and national publications. He selects one monthly and further edits it for the *Caller*. Additional articles are archived at: <http://cedarspringspost.com/category/outdoors/ranger-steves-nature-niche/>

Recent articles include: "Distance Disappears" about the environmental laws bypassed to build the border wall and how it directly impacts funding for Great Lakes protection and "Theory, Theory and Evolution" about scientific theory vs. theory in general use as a hypothesis, like swallows hibernating at the bottom of lakes.



Be There: Thornapple Woodpecker Festival

April 27 – Middleville

It won't be long before the Thornapple Woodpecker Festival is here. Saturday, April 27 is festival day.

Meet at the festival headquarters, Middleville Village Hall, 100 E. Main Street, to begin your hike along the Paul Henry Trail. Free parking is available in the lot behind the Village Hall and on the surrounding streets.

The festival runs 7:00 AM to noon. The primary focus of the event is birding along the Paul Henry Trail. GRAC and Barry County Bird Club members will be stationed along the trail to assist visitors in locating birds, including the Red-headed Woodpecker, the featured bird of the festival.

From 8:00 AM to noon, a motorized cart will be available to provide rides to those needing help with trail mobility.

Speakers will offer 45-minute presentations in the Village Hall Main Room. The speaker schedule is:

8:00 AM – *Bird Identification and Using eBird* with Cal and Jean Lamoreaux

9:00 AM – *Bird Photography* with Michael DeBoer

10:00 AM – *Kirtland's Warbler-An Endangered Species Act Success Story* with Bill Sweetman

11:00 AM – *Getting to Know the Michigan Bluebird Society* with Kurt Hagemester

The Village Hall Conference Room will offer a display of Michael DeBoer's photography.

Visitors are invited to continue their birding journey with a stop at the Maher Sanctuary located in northern Barry County. There, Chris Baer will advise birders of the highlights of the sanctuary. Directions to the Maher Sanctuary will be available at the Middleville Festival Headquarters.

Downtown Middleville businesses are looking forward to attending to the needs of festival visitors. Festival-supporting organizations include the Barry County Bird Club, Grand Rapids Audubon Club, Middleville Township and the Thornapple Trail Association.

GRAC is seeking additional volunteers to be trail guides and stationary spotting scope assistants. Contact Mary Austin at information@graud.org to find out more about volunteering opportunities.

Upcoming Michigan Birding Festivals...and More

Just like the flowers springing up at this time of year, birding festivals will be blooming. Here's a rundown of some of the major festivals and their websites for obtaining more information.

April 26-28 (Fri.-Sun.) – 31st Annual WPBO Spring Fling, Whitefish Point Bird Observatory, Paradise, Mich. (<https://wpbo.org/spring-fling>)

April 27 (Sat. 7:00 AM-noon) – Thornapple Woodpecker Festival, Middleville Village Hall, 100 E Main Street, Middleville, Mich. (<https://woodpeckerfest.webs.com>); see article at left

May 16-19 (Thurs.-Sun.) – Indiana Dunes Birding Festival, Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore (near Chesterton, Ind.) (<https://indunesbirdingfestival.com>)

May 16-19 (Thurs.-Sun.) – Tawas Point State Park Birding Festival, Tawas Point Lighthouse, 686 Tawas Beach Road, East Tawas, Mich. (michiganaudubon.org/news-events/calendar)

May 31-June 2 (Fri.-Sun.) – Cerulean Warbler Weekend, Michigan Audubon Otis Sanctuary, 3560 Havens Road, Hastings, Mich. (michiganaudubon.org/news-events/calendar)

Other Events of Interest:

May 11 (Sat. 9:00 AM-3:00 PM) – Backyard Bird Habitat Workshop, Michigan Audubon Offices, 2310 Science Parkway, Suite 200, Okemos, Mich. (michiganaudubon.org/news-events/calendar)

May 27-June 30 – Kirtland's Warbler Tours, Hartwick Pines State Park, Grayling, Mich. (michiganaudubon.org/kirtlands-warbler-tours/)



GRAC CALENDAR

April

- 4 Field Trip: Millennium Park Hikes (recurring 11, 18, 25)
- 6 Maher Sanctuary Workday (rain date is April 13)
- 20 Field Trip: Spring Marsh Birds and Hawks w/ Steve Minard
- 27 Thornapple Woodpecker Festival
- 29 GRAC Board Meeting
- 29 Membership Meeting and Nature Program

May

- 2 Field Trip: Millennium Park Hikes (recurring 9, 16, 23, 30)
- 4 Field Trip: Paul Henry Thornapple Trail w/ Larry Burke
- 7 Field Trip: Reeds Lake w/ Steve Minard
- 14 Field Trip: Reeds Lake w/ Steve Minard
- 20 Annual May Meeting

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
 Vice President – Scott Hutchings
 Secretary – Tom Leggett
 Treasurer – Jeff Neumann
 Ass't Treasurer – Cynthia Davidek
 Board Member – Landon Bell
 Board Member – Keith Helmus
 Board Member – Becky Kuhn
 Board Member – Jan Lewis

Field Trips – Becky Kuhn
 Finance – Keith Helmus
 Fund Development – *open*
 Historian – Linda Damstra
 Hospitality – Bea VerBurg, Henry Raad and Rosemary Radius
 Insurance – Jill Goodell
 Junior Audubon – *open*
 Library – Norine and Jim Shea / Fidencio Paradez
 Maher Sanctuary – Chris Baer
 Membership – Theresa Dykhuis
 Nominating – Scott Hutchings
 Publicity – Tricia Boot
 Scholarship – *inactive*
 Special Events – *open*
 Website – Fred VanOeveren

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
 Conservation – *open*

SPECIAL COMMITTEES / CHAIRPERSONS

(non-members of Board of directors in this capacity)
 Aud. Adventures – Mary Austin
 Insurance – Jill Goodell

RESIDENT AGENT

Larry Burke

Grand Rapids Audubon Club
3426 13 Mile Rd. NE
Rockford, MI 49341

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Grand Rapids Audubon Club

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