

the Caller

October 2022, Volume 61, No. 3

published monthly September – April, bi-monthly May – August, November – December
by GRAC, 217 Leyden Ave SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504



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

October Meeting Details

- Date:** Monday, October 24
Time: 7:30 PM program
Location: John Donnelly Conference Center
Aquinas College
Speaker: Terry Grabill
Topic: Tales from the Road: Mitten Big Year

Michigan birders, take note! Are you dreaming about your 2023 birding goals? October's program is for you. Terry Grabill is a recently retired middle school science teacher and West Michigan birder who made a Michigan Big Year run in 2021. On his way to recording a whopping 323 species for the year, he logged an obscene number of miles, had some great adventures, and met many amazing people along the way. Terry's talk will describe tales from the road of his Mitten Big Year.

The public is invited to attend this interesting program as a guest of the Grand Rapids Audubon Club. There is no charge for admission.

Species Spotlight

By Mallary Webb

October in Michigan brings an abundance of migrating birds. While deciding upon a subject for this little column for October, my first thoughts were Sandhill Crane or Brown Creeper. But on a recent birding walk in Hodenpyl Woods with some Audubon club friends, we found ourselves practically surrounded by Ruby-Crowned Kinglets (*Corthylio calendula*), and inspiration struck!

This tiny cutie is a member of the family Regulidae (along with five other species worldwide), but it is the sole member of the genus *Corthylio* due to its unique song and red crown (instead of yellow/orange with black outline for the other five). Its only fellow Regulidae family member in North America is the equally adorable (and slightly smaller) Golden-Crowned Kinglet, which is part of the larger genus *Regulus*, where the rest of the family's species are classified.

The Goldcrest (essentially the Eurasian version of the Golden-Crowned Kinglet) is known as "King of the Birds" in some European folklore. Both Aristotle and Pliny the Elder described a legend of a competition between all birds to crown their king based on who could fly the highest – the eagle had the lead, but a tiny bird had hidden among the eagle's tail feathers and kept flying higher even after the mighty eagle became exhausted and had to land. Hence the Latin (and common) family name of "little king" (Regulidae/Kinglet).

Continued on page 5

Sad News

By Tricia Boot, Vice President, acting President

It is with a heavy heart I share that Scott Hutchings, Grand Rapids Audubon Club president, passed away on Oct. 1 after several months of hospitalization for a complex health crisis. I don't think I can overstate what a shock and loss this is for our club and community.

Scott gave much time, energy and passion to our club. His upbeat personality, hard work and can-do spirit were vital to getting us through the difficult pandemic years. He always raised his hand to help; always.

My sympathy is with each of you who counted him as a friend. Our deepest condolences extend to his family, particularly Lori, his loving wife of many years. We will share more news when it becomes available, including ways we can honor Scott's memory, and support his family. Look for a full tribute in November's *Caller*, where we will celebrate Scott's life and his **MANY** contributions to our club.



Mackinac Straits Raptor Watch Update

by Mary Austin

Our club has been a supporter of the Mackinac Straits Raptor Watch (MSRW). Read on further to learn what MSRW is currently doing in the Straits area.

The fall 2022 hawk count is being conducted at Point LaBarbe, which is just north and west of the Mackinac Bridge. The count runs August 20 to November 10. The public is encouraged to stop by and look for migrants and learn more about why the Straits area is so important to raptor migrations. Contact MSRW at info@mackinacraptorwatch.org to learn when a raptor naturalist might be onsite to assist bird watchers in identifying migrating raptors.

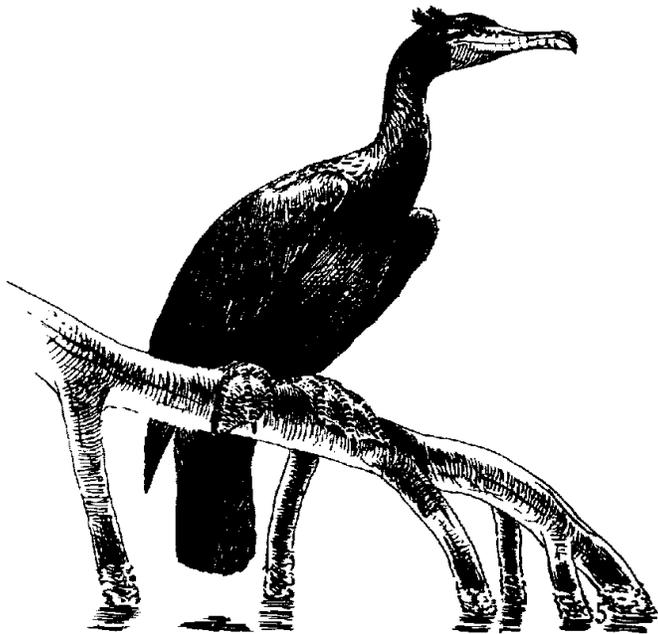
Owl banding began September 15 at Point LaBarbe and will continue nightly until November 10. If an individual or a group of ten or less would like to discover how owls are banded, visits can be scheduled. MSRW asks that all owl banding visitors are members of MSRW to help defray some of the banding costs.

August 20 marked the start of the fall waterbird count conducted on alternate days from McGulpin Point in Mackinaw City and Graham Point in St. Ignace. Those interested in waterfowl migration can stop at the daily count location. To learn the daily count location, contact MSRW at the above email address. The best time to see waterbirds is usually between sunrise and 10:00 am.

MSRW is tagging Monarch Butterflies as they move south on their 2,500-mile journey to Mexico. Some of the monarchs tagged are expected to travel into Mexico and survive the winter. In March, the survivors will begin the first stage of the spring migration to reach locations in more northern Mexico or Texas before they lay their eggs and die. It will take at least one more generation of monarchs to reach the Upper Great Lakes, and in late summer the next Super Generation will begin the long migration southward. Visitors are encouraged to come to Point LaBarbe to discover how these delicate butterflies are tagged.



Want more information about MSRW? Check out their website at www.mackinacraptorwatch.org.



Lakeshore Birding

by Emily Tornga

There are so many different and wonderful ways to bird. Some birders love spending the day in the woods, watching their bird feeders, or even driving around a wastewater facility. If you are looking for something unique to do this fall, a trip out to the lakeshore might be just the thing you need to spice up your birding routine.

Locations like Holland State Park and Grand Haven State Park are fairly accessible, provide good views of birds, and have ample parking. You won't have to hike out very far to see birds, as both locations have piers you can walk out on. They are the perfect spot to scan the shore for migrating shorebirds and the occasional rare gull. If you are lucky, this is a great time to spot a Purple Sandpiper, Dunlin, or Black-bellied Plover. Scanning the lake, you will have the opportunity to see great numbers of migrating ducks, cormorants, terns, and gulls.

A few tips to keep in mind when you go: As lakeshore weather can be a bit different than inland, it is a good idea to wear layers and prepare for colder or windier conditions. Pack a scope if you have one, but this is certainly not necessary to have a great time- your binoculars will be just fine. Be careful on the pier in wet conditions as it can get slippery, and if conditions are not favorable, birding from the shore or your car can still be a great way to watch the birds. The joy of birding the lakeshore is that there is always something new passing by, and you never know what rarity the ole lake will blow your way. Good luck and I hope to see you out on the lakeshore!



On Looking

By Spencer High

This summer, I found myself building a new ritual.

Now, I'm not usually one for rituals or traditions, as it puts too much pressure on myself, and I'm bad at keeping self-made promises. But, this particular ritual wasn't at all difficult to form and has led me down a rabbit hole of self-discovery and is a bottomless pit of curiosity. This ritual of course, is looking.

Over the past two years I have been restoring my yard to contain only native species in the hopes that it would attract more birds to my yard and become a thriving habitat for all sorts of living things. It took some time to familiarize myself with our native species, build a retaining wall, remove the ornamental plants from the previous owner, fell a dead ash tree, and wait out winter; but, as of May 17th, all the plants had been planted and seeds had been sown, and it was done.

I didn't know what came next and what I was supposed to do once everything was planted. I had never had a daily relationship with plants and was venturing into new territory in my relationship with nature.

Lacking any clear path forward, all I could do is look.

By spending 10-20 minutes a day looking at my garden, I have discovered just how little I know about our ecosystems, and the relationships that play out in them every day. Without this ritual of looking, I would not have seen the 21+ species of native bees that have been drawn to the flowering forbs. I wouldn't have seen the development of Virginia Tiger Moth caterpillars who have found some of these plants as suitable hosts. Nor would I have seen an Eastern Tailed-blue Butterfly caterpillar injected with eggs by a parasitizing wasp. And best of all, I would not have seen the clan of 6 migrating warblers spend an entire afternoon foraging for a meal within the 320 square feet that I planted.

There's an expectation that in order to feel connected with nature, we have to go to it. But this summer I found this couldn't be further from the truth. Nature exists all around us, and we are by no means separated from it just because we live in a more urbanized area.

By spending time looking, identifying, and doing a little bit of basic research - I have had a glimpse of how complex and wonderful our world is. I know there is still so much I don't know, and I have a lifetime of discoveries ahead of me. However, I have my new ritual, and every time I step outside there's a chance I'll see something new that was just waiting to be discovered.

So, if you need me, I'll be in the garden.

Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance Recap

by Cynthia Maas

Clayton Daughenbaugh's presentation for the September membership meeting was informative as well as a call to action. Presenting on the mission of SUWA, he highlighted the importance of everyday Americans to defend and protect the wilderness at the heart of the Colorado Plateau and in Utah's West Desert – and beyond. The commitment to preserve our public spaces for the wonder and enjoyment of all future generations, both human and non-human alike, is resounding for everyone.

We all can be a voice for protecting wild spaces! All walks of life call earth our home, and if we do not speak out for it, who will?

To follow the continuing, ongoing work of SUWA and track the progress of the America's Red Rock Wilderness Act, visit www.suwa.org/act-now/. Thank you for those who have reached out to your representatives to voice your alignment with conservation.



Grand Rapids Lending Libraries: Free, Useful, & Handy

By Cynthia Maas

Grand Rapids Audubon Club maintains a lending library of both books and videos available for our members enjoyment and education. The library is open for members to peruse at all membership meetings September through April.

Once you have a borrowed bird guide in hand, you may need to borrow equipment to reach the full potential of your outdoor experience. Did you know Grand Rapids has a lending library of camping, sporting, and clothing items to rent? The mission of Thrive Outside Gear Library Grand Rapids is to level the playing field by offering access to outdoor spaces and equipment to anyone in need. The Gear Library facility in Roosevelt Park has outdoor gear rentals for you to use for birdwatching, sledding, camping, hiking, hammocking, playing yard games, and more - free to residents of Grand Rapids.

To become a member and borrow gear, please come to the gear library to register. Learn more about Thrive Outside GR at www.grandrapidsmi.gov/thriveoutside.



Fall Field Trips

See the GRAC website for full field trip information.

Millennium Park Hikes

Leaders: Katie Bolt, Jeanne Griffin or Kathy Haase
Thursdays 8:00 AM (May through September)
or 9:00 AM (October through April)

Hike Millennium Park to see what's hanging around. Flat 2.0 or 3.0 mile loops are planned to see whatever might show up. Many birds have been reported from this varied habitat near the river. There are ponds, swampy ponds, lowland forest and various secondary growth. This can lead to a good variety of birds.

Essentials: Meet at the end of the dead-end section of Veterans Memorial Drive east of Maynard at 8:00 AM or 9:00 AM. Take Collindale south from Lake Michigan Drive. Take a right (west) on O'Brien for about a half-mile. Go left (south) on Maynard past the beach entrance to Millennium Park. Turn left (east) on Veterans Memorial Drive and park near the end of the road.

Safety Hazards: Always dress for the expected weather conditions. Paved trails have bike traffic and the trail may crossroads. So, watch for auto and bike traffic. Please exercise caution on the roads driving to and from the meeting place.

Saturday, October 15, 8:30 AM

Leader: Steve Minard

Fall Migrants at Muskegon State Park

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

Essentials: Meet at the South Beach Parking Lot of Muskegon State Park at 8:30 AM. You may want a drink or snack to keep you going until lunch.

Safety Hazards: Driving in a caravan can be hazardous. Get directions from the trip leader for travel to the next stop. Please exercise caution on the roads at all times. Please have a passenger handle all radio or phone communications while in a car.

November 5, 2022, 7:30 AM

Leader: Steve Minard

Lake Shore Migrants

We will plan to look for the best reported late shorebirds, winter ducks, winter gulls, or winter finches along the lake shore. Winter ducks should be in the area, and the other late migrants should still be moving south. This time of year presents an opportunity for birds that can difficult to find in our area, so we'll check the bird alerts and go with the best prospects.

We are likely to start on the lake shore 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 Atacama, the Kalamazoo River, or the Todd Farm Unit of the Allegan State Game Area. If we are lucky, a mega rarity will be chase able 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. We can leave any extra cars in the carpool lot just north of the I196 freeway. 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.

Safety Hazards: Cold weather and slippery winter driving are the main hazards. As with winter trips in particular, bad weather may cancel the trip. Driving in a caravan can be hazardous. Get directions from the leader for travel to the next stop. Please exercise caution on the roads at all times. Please have a passenger handle all radio or phone communications while in a car.





Editor's Corner

by Cynthia Maas

On September 17, Tricia Boot and I had the pleasure of representing the Audubon Club at Rosa Parks Circle for the art and activism fair celebrating Grand Rapids' newest mural, Seeking a Pleasant Peninsula. Featuring famous landmarks and species in Michigan, the mural was created by local artist Maddison Chaffer and unveiled with a ribbon cutting ceremony, complete with a butterfly release. The mural ended up winning the installation award with ArtPrize!

"Though I can't claim that this mural alone will inspire wide scale ecological reform, I firmly believe in the power of art to, at the very least, spark curiosity. Curiosity lays the foundation for casual interest, which has the potential to blossom into a profound appreciation. From this deeper appreciation for our natural landscape, my partners and I hope that our community will find a newfound commitment to preserving this one-of-a-kind state that we call home." - Maddison Chaffer

The event was a huge success. Animal conservancies, nature preserves, parks departments, and environmental nonprofits gathered and networked, inviting the public to join causes together. The booth for the GRAC was very well attended. With nearly 70 interested people signing up, we found many likeminded folks that have a passion for the great outdoors.

Finding community can be a daunting or intimidating step forward. Thankfully, there are many opportunities to take a step outside of your comfort zone and explore new places. With the fall foliage just around the corner, don't put off your stroll – now is the perfect time to discover something new!

Continued from page 1

Ruby-Crowned Kinglet ID Tips:

- The Ruby-Crowned is a little larger than the Golden-Crowned Kinglet, and the golden crown of the Golden-Crowned is lined in black and MUCH more conspicuous than the Ruby.
- Don't confuse with a goldfinch or pine siskin at a glance – these little ones prefer bugs, for one, but they are also CONSTANTLY moving. Even if they pause on a branch, they're likely flicking wings or tail. They always look like they've had way too much espresso. Also, their tiny, thin bills are decidedly un-finch-like, certainly not meant for opening seeds!

- The namesake ruby crown is not often seen – it's only present on males, and only really visible when they are agitated or if you get *just* the right angle on them when they're scratching their heads/non-existent necks.
- Their song is shockingly loud for a bird this size. I've always heard it as three parts: an accelerating, thin *pweweee, pwewee, pwewee*; then chattering for a few seconds; and the end section that reminds me a bit of a Carolina Wren or Cardinal.

If you want to see these adorable, hyperactive birds this fall, I'd highly suggest going out ASAP to any wooded area (think general warbler habitat). They're only going to be moving through for a few more weeks, and numbers drop off sharply in early November. On their way to their wintering grounds in the southern U.S. and Mexico, they will be voraciously eating insects, but a little on the quiet side compared to spring. They say, "for warblers in fall, go where chickadees call," but that could really also apply to Ruby-Crowned Kinglets. Hodenpyl Woods as I mentioned above is almost certain to continue to have them this month, also Millennium Park, Pickerel Lake, Huff and Ball Perkins Parks, Blandford Nature Center, etc. Enjoy the confusing fall birding, fellow bird nerds!

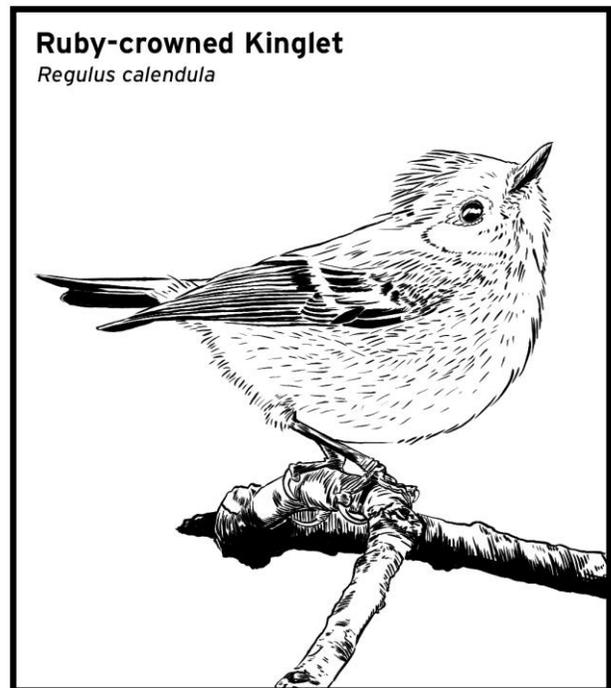


Illustration by Spencer High



Birding Puzzle

By Mary Austin

For this puzzle, just unscramble the letters of these common backyard birds.

1. JLEUBAY _____
2. MICAERAN BORIN _____
3. FTUTED ITOUMTSE _____
4. RONUNMIG VODE _____
5. MICAERAN DFLOGNICH _____
6. THIWE-STEARBED THUANTCH _____
7. THENORRN RINCADAL _____
8. SHUOE NICFH _____
9. NWODY DOWPEOKECR _____
10. CABLK-PAPCED ICKAHCEDE _____
11. THENORRN KEFLCIR _____
12. EDR-LIEBLED DOWPEOKECR _____

Follow Grand Rapids Audubon on Social Media

Follow our feed for the latest news in and around Grand Rapids about birdwatching, the conservation community, and events to attend. Tag [@grandrapidsaudubonclub](https://www.instagram.com/grandrapidsaudubonclub) in your outdoor discoveries and let us know what you see outside!

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/grandrapidsaudubonclub>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/grandrapidsaudubonclub>

- Sign up for rare bird alerts to be sent to your email for any county and state page (also territory, province, country, etc.) on eBird.
- To receive notifications on what eBird considers to be rare, scroll down and click on “Rare Bird Alerts” in the blue left-hand column of the page and then click the green “Subscribe to this alert”.
- The eBird links for Allegan, Kent, Muskegon and Ottawa counties will remain on the “Bird Sightings” page of the GRAC website for easy access.

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER | 12. |
| NORTHERN FLICKER | 11. |
| BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE | 10. |
| DOWNY WOODPECKER | 9. |
| HOUSE FINCH | 8. |
| NORTHERN CARDINAL | 7. |
| WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH | 6. |
| AMERICAN GOLDFINCH | 5. |
| MORNING DOVE | 4. |
| TUFTED TITMOUSE | 3. |
| AMERICAN ROBIN | 2. |
| BLUEJAY | 1. |

Answers to Backyard Birds Word Scramble:



UPCOMING EVENTS (visit the GRAC website for details)

October

- 6 Field Trip: Millennium Park Hike (recurring 13, 20, 27)
- 15 Field Trip: Fall Migrants in Muskegon with Steve Minard
- 24 GRAC Membership Meeting and Nature Program

November

- 3 Field Trip: Millennium Park Hike (recurring 10, 17)
- 5 Field Trip: Lakeshore Migrant with Steve Minard
- 28 GRAC Membership Meeting and Nature Program

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</i>)		

Total Amount Enclosed _____

Make checks payable to:
Grand Rapids Audubon Club, Inc.
 Send application and check to:
Jeff Neumann
217 Leyden Ave SW
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

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	Field Trips – Steve Minard
Acting President – Tricia Boot	Finance – open
Vice President – Tricia Boot	Fund Development – open
Secretary – Shawn Taheri	Historian – Linda Damstra
Treasurer – Jeff Neumann	Hospitality – Henry Raad
Ass't Treasurer – open	Junior Audubon – Hannah Safford
Board Member – Mary Austin	Library – Kathleen Haase
Board Member – Jeni Taheri	Maher Sanctuary – Chris Baer
Board Member – Spencer High	Membership – open
Board Member – Cynthia Maas	Nominating – open

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

(non-voting member)
 Sheryl Helmus 2018-19, 2019-20
 Website – Fred VanOeveren

STANDING COMMITTEES

Audio/Visual – Robert Riepma
 Bird Reports – Carol VanOeveren
Caller Editor – Tricia Boot/Cynthia Maas
Caller Publisher – open
 Christmas Count – Tom Leggett
 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
217 Leyden Ave SW
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Return Service Requested

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

Grand Rapids Audubon Club

OFFICERS

Acting President:

Tricia Boot
Email: president@graud.org

Vice President:

Tricia Boot
Email: vice.president@graud.org

Secretary:

Shawn Taheri
Email: secretary@graud.org

Treasurer:

Jeff Neumann
Email: treasurer@graud.org

THE CALLER STAFF

Editor:

Tricia Boot & Cynthia Maas
Email: newsletter@graud.org