

# Nature Program

Grand Rapids Audubon Club



## If We Build It, They Will Come: Henslow's Sparrows, Grasslands and Restored Prairies

In the early 1800s, southern lower Michigan was covered in 2.23 million acres of prairie and savanna. Much of this was converted for agricultural purposes as the state grew. Over the last 35 years, experts have worked to reestablish tall grass prairies in the region, with the hope of providing new homes for species like the **Henslow's Sparrow**.

Over the last three summers, a research team has monitored restored tall grass prairies of various sizes with paired grasslands of other types (former agricultural fields, fallow fields, mowed fields) to determine how Henslow's Sparrows are faring with these restorations. Dr. Rob Keys will present insights into the natural history of this state-endangered bird and what his team is learning about the relationship of Henslow's Sparrows with grasslands and restored prairies.

For the past 16 years, Rob has served as a professor of science at Cornerstone University, where he teaches a variety of courses in the biology and teacher education programs, including courses in ecology, environmental science, vertebrate zoology and science methods for elementary and secondary teachers. He also directs undergraduate research at Cornerstone. His current funded research with undergraduate students looks at the relationships between grassland birds and vegetative and habitat structures in grasslands and restored prairies. This research is used to make management decisions at Pierce Cedar Creek Institute and other natural areas. In his spare time, Rob enjoys bird photography and taking long walks with his wife, Laura, and Australian Cattle Dog, Domingo.

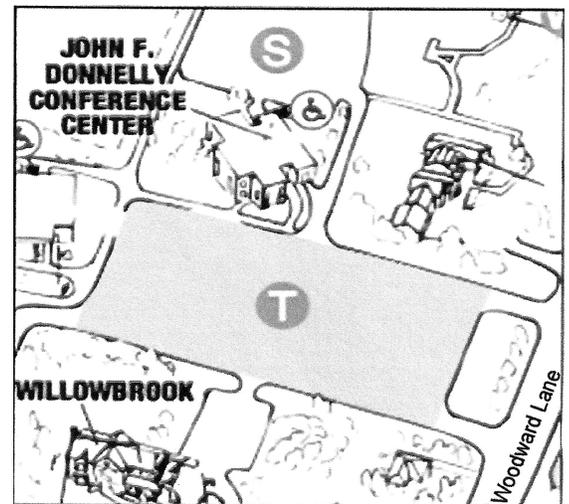
**Date:** Monday, March 26, 2018

**Time:** 7:00 PM social; 7:30 PM program

**Location:** John F. Donnelly Conference Center,  
Aquinas College

**Speaker:** Dr. Rob Keys

**Topic:** If We Build It, They Will Come:  
Henslow's Sparrows, Grasslands and  
Restored Prairies



The John F. Donnelly Conference Center at Aquinas College is located at 157 Woodward Lane SE. It is accessible from Fulton Street and Robinson Road. Parking is available off Woodward Lane in Lot T and Lot S. Lot S is the handicap-accessible entrance.

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**Public welcome – Free event**

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