

# THE NUTHATCH

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## Preserving Michigan's Dark Sky Heritage

### Sally Oey

Tuesday, September 8, 2020, 7:00 p.m.

When you step outside at night, do you see stars? The natural darkness of night is quickly vanishing, and with it the natural nocturnal ecosystem. This has profound consequences for flora and fauna, including for human health. Yet much of the artificial light at night is unintended light pollution. This presentation will explain the problem and the simple steps everyone can take to help preserve and restore Michigan's unique dark sky resources.



Photo by Matthew Hodgson



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Mike Dougherty

Welcome to the World

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Summer 2020

It's a new world. Much to our chagrin, we have had to make changes thrust upon us by nature. The coronavirus has forced us into a state of isolation and all its accompanying factors. Boredom is the main issue we have with the isolation forced on us. We are used to gathering for stimulating activities and the chance to exchange ideas and stories with friends. I don't need to tell any of you this, you're either still a bit isolated or making changes to the way things were done before. The worst part is that we don't know if the old normal will ever be back.

As an organization, we have had to make tough decisions (not so tough if you actually care about the people that they affect) and to rethink how we go forward from here. Everyone has heard this and it is especially a concern of organizations where the typical routines involve gatherings for close contact – meetings, field trips, etc. Will we have to limit field trips, enforce social distancing, go birding with masks on, etc.? I don't know about you but it may be a difficult adjustment. It's not the type of thing we are about. But trust me, we will take all of you into account.

Of course, birding and all its very great aspects can still be done as an individual. I suggested "Lock Down Birding" as a diversion from sitting inside and moping around. It's been a fun thing for me, given the time to closely look at what comes and goes in my yard. I hope that a number of you took this to heart and spent some extra time doing this. And you still may be able to get to some parks and wander around without running into huge crowds. Of course, that may require you to find some smaller, less well known parks for this. The huge Metro-parks may get too crowded to be much fun as a birder, with everyone walking around just to get exercise and be outside. We'll have to see how that goes.

Meanwhile, the board has been meeting via telephone to make sure we are on top of anything needing attention. That has meant canceling events and looking into the crystal ball to see how and when we can do things. Anytime you want to provide insight, feedback, etc., feel free to let us know your thoughts. That's what we live for, feedback on what we do as a group.

So, I hope you enjoyed the spring migration to whatever extent you were capable of doing. Hopefully, the summer will be a little less restrictive and you can do a little more than sit at home and wait for the next announcement. Here's hoping that I get to see many of you sooner than later. Take care and be well.

Don Burlett

## OAS BOARD MEMBERS

### Elected Officers

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Cover page banner photos

Indigo Bunting, Scarlet Tanager, Dickcissel - OAS Photo Gallery

Rose-breasted Grosbeak—Mike Dougherty

# Field Trip Reports

**Due to restrictions resulting from the Covid-19 outbreak all scheduled field trips this spring were canceled and there are no reports for this issue. We are hopeful that there will be field trips to report on for the September issue.**

## THE ENDANGERED ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

The U.S. Endangered Species Act is under attack. One of the suggestions being made is that endangered species protection should be removed from the federal government and turned over to the states.

This is interesting since a couple of states—West Virginia and Wyoming—have no state law protecting any endangered species. Also, scientific evidence in regard to listing or delisting a species is required in only 27 states. Should wildlife experts be consulted when a state project that may affect an endangered species is being considered? There are 38 states that say no.

In view of this, it seems logical that the Endangered Species Act should continue as a federal law, especially since its passage in 1973 (by a bipartisan 355-4 vote) indicated that Congress wanted to be sure that the federal government could protect a species that lacks protection on the state level.

Currently, science rather than economics is the prevailing aspect in decision-making regarding endangered species on the federal level. However, some people are urging that economics should be the major consideration.

As for the possibility that climate change may be a serious threat to a species, the Trump administration has recently removed climate change from consideration in endangered species decisions.

Lawsuits have been filed against some of the above-mentioned efforts to reduce endangered species protection. It looks as though the courts may have to be the major defense against the campaign to dismantle the U.S. Endangered Species Act.

(Information for this item was found in the Spring 2020 edition of *Defenders* magazine, published by Defenders of Wildlife.)

## UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

Due to the Covid-19 virus we have had to cancel a number of planned field trips. There may be additional field trips scheduled between this edition of the newsletter and the September edition. If additional field trips are scheduled an email will be sent out to the members that have an email address on file and updates will be posted on our website. We will be adhering to all State of Michigan guidelines pertaining to group gatherings and recommended precautions. Please refer to our website for current information before leaving for a field trip.

Details of these outings as well as any new field trips or cancellation notices may be found on the Field Trips page of our website at:

[www.oaklandaudubon.org](http://www.oaklandaudubon.org)

Date	Event	Trip Leader(s)
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>June 13, 2020</b> (Saturday) 8:30 AM - 11:00 AM</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Awesome Ospreys</b> <b>Kensington Metropark</b> Meet in the Windfall Hill parking lot. <b>Please contact leader if you plan to attend.</b> Metroparks permit or day pass required.</p>	<p><b>Kathleen Dougherty</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>July 18, 2020</b> (Saturday) 8:30 AM - 11:00 AM</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Red, White, &amp; Blue Bird Hike</b> <b>Bear Creek Nature Park</b> Meet in the Bear Creek Nature Park parking lot on Snell Road, Rochester, MI</p>	<p><b>Kathleen Dougherty</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>August 15, 2020</b> (Saturday) 10:00 AM - Noon</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Insect Search</b> <b>Indian Springs Metropark</b> Meet in the Environmental Discovery Center parking lot. Metroparks permit or day pass required.</p>	<p><b>Kathleen Dougherty</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>September 19, 2020</b> (Saturday) 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Wander at Twilight Time</b> <b>Drayton Plains Nature Center</b> Meet in the Nature Center parking lot.</p>	<p><b>Kathleen Dougherty</b></p>

# Christmas in Spring

Pete Blank

I was raised in a Jewish household. We lit our Hanukkah candles each December and I was lucky to have a birthday around that time too. Lots of presents! Now that I'm older, my wife Erin and I put up a small tree each Christmas and decorate it with a box of ornaments that we keep in the basement. Our little tree has the traditional red and silver orbs, but probably an unusual amount of bird ornaments compared to the average household.

But for me, nothing compares to the ornaments on the trees in the month of May. The real bird ornaments. The last two weeks have brought back that familiar feeling of Christmas in spring. We live in Royal Oak, which is aptly named given all of the oak trees on the neighborhood streets. The oaks, maples, and other trees have brought in more than their fair share of birds recently. No doubt to eat the insects devouring the young leaves.

Over there, a Nashville Warbler in that Bradford pear. And a Northern Parula. What's that bird with the quick song? A Magnolia Warbler in the Norway maple in the neighbor's yard. Across the street are 2 Blackburnian Warblers in a red oak tree. Their bright orange faces making it seem as though parts of the tree are on fire. A Tennessee Warbler is belting out song from its tiny body down the street. Gorgeous black and orange Baltimore Orioles have been gracing us with their presence at our oriole feeder. Ruby-throated Hummingbirds are back too. A Black-throated Green Warbler is in the top of one of the tall trees in Wagner Park, not far from where I saw the robins mobbing the Screech-Owl last week. There's a female Scarlet Tanager quietly working her way out a silver maple branch, just below the Chestnut-sided Warbler. And that's within a few blocks of our house.

About a mile away is Tenhave Woods. What a gem of a little park. I'm thankful that the Royal Oak Nature Society has done such a fine job maintaining it. Erin and I go there often to look for birds, wildflowers, and herps. It never disappoints. The absence of invasive plants and the variety of canopy heights in the understory is striking. The fence around the park has kept the deer out, and the plants show it. The fact that many of the trails are underwater, and that we need to wear rubber boots to make our way, just adds to the appeal. The Trilliums (red and white) were in full bloom last week. The Trout Lilies and Bloodroot the week before that. The Gray Treefrog chorus is so loud I feel it in my soul.

The trees at Tenhave Woods are also lit up with Christmas ornaments. Black and orange Redstarts flitting in the trees above. There's a Veery, adorned in its reddish hue, in the brush. A Blue-headed Vireo, with its strong white spectacles, is working its way through the foliage. An Ovenbird is walking across that fallen log. What's that small bird there with the black face? A Bay-breasted Warbler. There's another one! At one point I could see 3 male Black-throated Blue Warblers from one spot. The Canada Warbler, showing off its yellow throat and black necklace, by the pond where we sometimes see the Wood Ducks, was a real treat. When Tenhave Woods is hopping with birds it's tough to tear myself away.

Do the birds even know how colorful they are? Some birds will stay and breed here. Others are just passing through on their way farther north.

(continued on next page)

## Christmas in Spring (continued)

I hope everyone, one day, gets to see the brilliant orange of an oriole. I defy anyone not to be in awe of the red and black pattern of a male Scarlet Tanager. The blue of an Indigo Bunting still stops me in my tracks after all these years of birding.

I'm also grateful that, due to the work of so many conservationists spring is not silent, as Rachel Carson warned us it might be if we did not act. Instead, spring is a holiday full of spectacle, both sight and sound. I hope you enjoy this annual holiday as much as I do.

Soon enough, this year's spring migration will be over. There will be lots of breeding birds to see in summer. And the more subtle fall migration will be here before I know it. With its raptors and monarchs and quiet warblers heading south. But I can't wait until next spring, and another birding Christmas, arrives.

Merry spring Christmas to all, and to all good birding!

Pete Blank



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If you are an Amazon user and would like to help benefit OAS, simply [CLICK HERE](#) add us to your favorite charity list and then shop! A percentage of your purchases will be donated to OAS and will help support our organization.

If you aren't using Amazon Smile, try it out. We'll appreciate it!

## YES, WE'RE STILL SAVING STAMPS!

For more than 30 years, OAS has been sending large packages of canceled stamps to Audubon of Florida. They in turn sell stamps by the pound to a stamp dealer and use the proceeds to help offset the cost of maintaining their raptor rehabilitation facility. OAS Secretary Doris Applebaum recently sent the latest batch of stamps to Florida on our behalf and received a thank-you from them.

Any foreign stamps are welcomed in this project, as well as any U.S. commemorative stamps. Commemoratives spotlight a particular subject and are available for only a relatively short period, so they are considered valuable to stamp collectors.

Recent commemoratives honor the State of Maine's 200th anniversary, journalist Gwen Ifill (part of the Black Heritage series), and champion golfer Arnold Palmer. Each year the Chinese New Year is also celebrated; this is the year of the rat, and an unusually beautiful (honest) rendition of a rat was featured. Other fairly recent examples feature four military working dogs, four scenes of state and county fairs, and five post office murals.

Another beautiful example is a booklet of 10 different orchids. Though this is not technically a commemorative, it will appeal to collectors of plants on stamps.

There is also a semipostal stamp this year (a type of stamp that raises funds for a cause by charging a few cents extra). This one is titled "Healing PTSD" and features the condition known as post-traumatic stress disorder.

These are only a few of the recent possibilities—and any commemorative stamps from years gone by are very welcome also.

The stamps known as definitives are not included in this project. These are small, usually square, stamps that often show a U.S. flag. Definitives may cost the current first-class rate but may also show lower values, in which case they may feature a variety of subjects. They are available for extended periods of time and there are so many in circulation that they are not valuable to stamp collectors.

Christmas stamps are not usually useful, but we do send those showing paintings of religious subjects, since there are collectors of art on stamps and also collectors of religion on stamps who might be interested. We put them in a separate packet within the larger package of stamps so they can be easily removed in case they are not acceptable.

OAS is always looking for stamps to send to Florida. If you would like to be part of this project, take your stamps to any OAS event. You don't even have to remove the stamp from the envelope. Bring in the entire envelope if you wish, but if you do cut the stamps off, try to leave at least ¼ inch on each side. Do not remove the stamp entirely from its backing on the envelope.

You can give the stamps to Doris, or to any other OAS officer, who will get your stamps to her. She sends packages of stamps periodically to Audubon of Florida. If you are not sure whether a stamp is useful for this project, bring it in anyway. Doris looks over every stamp to make sure it is proper before sending it on its way.

This is a very easy and inexpensive way to help a worthwhile project connected with birds. So—save those stamps!



## 2019 IUCN RED LIST OF BIRDS UPDATE – SOME BAD NEWS, SOME GOOD

Each year the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) reassesses the level of endangerment of a number of bird species, and updates the organization's Red List for those species. Like our country's Endangered Species List, the Red List has various categories that indicate levels of danger to survival of the species, but the Red List includes all known species worldwide.

The Red List categories are: EX (Extinct), EW (Extinct in the Wild, indicating that there are some individuals in captivity, often part of captive-breeding efforts), CR (Critically Endangered), CR-PE (Critically Endangered and Possibly Extinct), CR-PEW (Critically Endangered and Possibly Extinct in the Wild, indicating that there are some individuals in captivity), EN (Endangered), VU (Vulnerable; this is equivalent to our Endangered Species List category of Threatened), NT (Near Threatened), LC (Least Concern), DD (Data Deficient; no one knows what the status of these species may be).

The IUCN utilizes the knowledge of experts throughout the world. There are Red Lists not only for birds but also for all other groups of animals as well as plants and fungi. They all act as a sort of "early warning system."

In 2019, the IUCN reassessed the status of 273 bird species and made changes to 87 of them. Of these, 52 species were found to be in a worse situation than before, and 35 were found to be improving.

Among the species considered to be in more trouble than before, one is native to the U.S.—the Black Rail, which rose from the level of NT to EN. Because this species needs a certain water level in which to nest, the expectation of sea level rise and severe storms due to climate change was deemed a threat to the ability of the Black Rail to avoid extirpation from much of its U.S. range.

Of some other "worse situation" species, two had been listed as CR-PE and are now listed as EX. One that was listed as CR-PEW is now believed to be EW. One species that was considered CR is now listed as EX and four species previously listed as CR are now listed as CR-PE. One species that was previously listed as DD is now listed as CR, and another is now considered EN.

Three of our species were found to be improving. The Cerulean Warbler and Black-capped Vireo were downlisted from VU to NT. Even better, Cassin's Finch was downlisted from NT to LC.

Every four years, a more extensive reassessment is done, and 2020 is one of those years, so this year there will be a larger number of species looked at. With the current threats to our Endangered Species Act, it is at least somewhat reassuring to know that there is another way of indicating how the birds (and other species) of the world are faring, so that efforts to prevent extinction can move forward.

(Information for this article was found in the January-March 2020 issue of *BirdLife – The Magazine*, published by BirdLife International.)

## Information vs. Communication – A Birding Issue

I have been birding for most of my life. During that time, I have birded a lot on my own but I have always preferred birding with others. It's more fun and rewarding as an experience. Throughout my birding career, knowing where to go and when to go to see birds has always been a key element of birding. You don't stand in a cornfield expecting to see Green Herons, especially in winter.

That said, every birder needs to garner "information" about what is being seen – where and when. That's a key element in going out to see birds. At the same time, "communication" of what is being seen – where and when – is also a key to seeing birds. When I started off, you were pretty much on your own when it came to finding birds. Then along came birding hotlines – phone numbers where you could call in and find out what had been seen - where and when. This was a major step forward in getting the information you needed to pursue seeing birds, especially the rarer ones. These "hotlines" lasted a good while until the Internet came along and added a new dimension to communication of bird sightings. This was faster and the hotline transcriptions were now available another way. Soon, "listservers" came along where you could subscribe and get the messages in almost real time, adding another advantage to your list of tools for birding.

Along came eBird, a tool provided by the Cornell Lab for Ornithology. This tool allowed you to enter sightings of birds and generate lists of what you had seen - where and when. Wow, a great tool. Then they further developed it and allowed you to go looking at records from various locations and to get that needed information to see some new birds. Then, they started generating reports from various areas – states, countries, etc. – that you could get daily or at other intervals. And you can now pick species that you want reports of when they appear. The information age is in full bloom. A real boon for birders everywhere.

But with every tool comes the other edge of the sword. With eBird, birders now rarely report from the field what they are seeing to the old "listserver". It's easy to enter your bird list but now you have to wait and hope that enough information is available via eBird to allow you to go see a bird. It has happened that rare birds show up but unless you're "in the loop", you don't find out about the bird until tomorrow. You're out of luck if it doesn't stay in that spot long. Hence, the problem with information as it has developed. Unless you spend a lot of time crafting alerts with eBird, you will miss birds because no one wanted to take the time to "communicate".

I am not going to indict anyone for not caring about these issues. It's just a natural collateral problem with the improved information systems we develop. The alerts try to overcome this issue but they haven't yet solved the problem that a message on a listserver or phone call will solve. Just wanted to express a certain amount of sadness about the birding world that has developed and let everyone think about it.

Don Burlett

## Lock-Down Birding Challenge – Thoughts on Birding in Isolation

It started off simply – a challenge to help occupy members of our Audubon group with something that they were naturally interested in – birding your yard (or an area close by). The idea was to bird an area for the two months that might be affected by the “stay at home orders” issued by the state. A healthy way to occupy time birding while we stayed safe from the virus plaguing us all. Sounded like a good idea.

As things developed, it would involve several key ingredients. Persistence – the idea that you would bird an area like your yard for two months would require persistence, especially if you birded it every day. And you would want to do that so you didn’t miss anything. Competitiveness – this came in when you ask people to generate a list of birds seen. It’s always going to be human nature to compete to see if you can do better than someone else.

So, away we went. I sent out some early postings to get people’s interest up and to let them know what they might accomplish. On a personal basis, it involved several other aspects. Anticipation of the daily walks through the yard would always be good, hoping for a really good bird. At the same time, a bit of frustration would creep in as one continued to miss a bird that “really should be there”. Migration has a way of humbling any birder since each migration is different and some species pour through your neighborhood while others avoid it like the plague. Waiting for warblers to arrive is always a frustrating thing too. Why don’t they pay attention to the calendar like you. “They should be here now!!!” And this year’s spring has been merciless in its importation of cold air from the north.

Good things come from this effort in the form of observations that we don’t usually pay much attention to. For instance, the variety of calls that a Tufted Titmouse can use is incredible. You actually have to watch them sing those notes to realize it’s really them singing. Then there’s the breeding season activities. Nesting birds and their spots, the courtships. The feeling when you watch a duck fly into the trees along your driveway and realize that, yes, Wood Ducks do like trees. Then there’s the odd occurrence of a Rusty Blackbird staying in your yard for over 25 days in a row. You expect them to migrate through but you don’t think they’ll take up semi-permanent residence in one spot. The shock of seeing a robin’s nest in a spruce, seeing five eggs there one day, then chicks another day and then an empty nest a day or two later. Yes, everyone needs food but why the chicks?

As experiences go, this one has been a roller coaster of emotions, discoveries and observations. To enjoy those birds that nest in your yard, to watch the Red-winged Blackbird chase a crow and then a crow chase a vulture. It’s all part of the game of birding and doing it in these tough times, one has to be creative. I hope everyone in this organization enjoyed doing this a little. I did and it increased my yard list by seven species this spring already. Possibly more to come.

However, the bottom line is that we all hope to be back birding with our friends and to share these observations and the joy they bring. So, keep birding no matter what life throws at you. Enjoy!!!!

Don Burlett

# 2020 Oakland Owlets Field Trips

## July - October

### Red, White & Blue Bird Hike - Saturday, July 18, 8:30 am – 11 am Bear Creek Nature Park ~ Rochester

Take a hike at Bear Creek Nature Park. Discover birds that are red, white, or blue. If available, natural areas stewardship manager, Benjamin VanderWeide, will discuss natural area restoration projects that benefit birds at Oakland Township Parks. Plan to hike about 2 miles. Bring your own binoculars and dress for being outdoors. Meet in the Bear Creek Nature Park parking lot on Snell Road, Rochester, MI. There are no public restrooms. The park is free and open to the public.



[http://www.oaklandtownship.org/boards\\_and\\_commissions/parks\\_and\\_recreation/bear\\_creek\\_nature\\_park.php](http://www.oaklandtownship.org/boards_and_commissions/parks_and_recreation/bear_creek_nature_park.php)

### Insect Search - Saturday, August 15, 10 am - Noon Indian Springs Metropark ~ White Lake Township



Explore the amazing diversity of insects at Indian Springs Metropark. Insect experts Susanne Greenlee and Doris Applebaum will lead a hike to hunt for insects in the restored prairie at the park. Insects are abundant at summer's end and are easy to find. A wide array of prairie plants in flower attracts beautiful butterflies and birds. Prepare to hike about 2 miles. Bring binoculars and a hand lens if you have them. A Metroparks permit is required for park entry. **Meet at the Environmental Discovery Center Parking**

**Lot** located at 5125 Indian Trail off of White Lake Road.

<https://www.metroparks.com/facilities-education/indian-springs-environmental-discovery-center/>

### Wander at Twilight Time - September 19, 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm Drayton Plains Nature Center ~Waterford

Twilight is a transition time between light and dark. It is a time when many animals are active. Hike along the Clinton River at the Drayton Plains Nature Center. DPNC is a 138-acre natural area with trails through many wetland habitats. Bats, herons, ducks, and other water birds can be seen as the sun sets. Terri Chapdelaine, Director of Bird Studies, and Ian Ableson, stewardship manager from Six Rivers Land Conservancy, will assist with the hike. Dress for the weather and bring your binoculars. Plan to hike about 2 miles. **Meet at the Nature Center Parking Lot** at 2125 Denby Road in Waterford. Access to the nature center is free and open to the public.



<https://www.waterfordmi.gov/Facilities/Facility/Details/Drayton-Plains-Nature-Center-1>

( continued on next page )

# 2020 Oakland Owlets Field Trips

## July - October (continued)

### Woodland Bird Walk - Saturday October 17, 8:30 am - 11 am Highland Recreation Area ~ White Lake



Highland Recreation Area contains some of the most unique and high-quality conservation areas in Oakland County. These areas include some of the best intact examples of natural communities that provide critical wildlife habitat. Friends of Highland Recreation Area will share information about how these natural areas are managed. Plan to hike 2 miles, bring your binoculars and dress for the weather. **Meet at the Goose Meadows Parking lot.** State parks passport is required for park entry.

<http://www.michigandnr.com/ParksandTrails/Details.aspx?id=455&type=SPRK>

*The Young Birders' Club ~ Oakland Owlets offers field trips for youth 8 – 18 years. Young birders 15 years and younger must be accompanied by an adult. These age appropriate programs provide educational experiences and snacks for kids. Young birders must complete a release form. Young Birders' Club programs are open to all birders. To register for Oakland Owlets field trips contact – Kathleen Dougherty, Coordinator, at [www.oaklandaudubon.org](http://www.oaklandaudubon.org) or [kad8186@msn.com](mailto:kad8186@msn.com)*



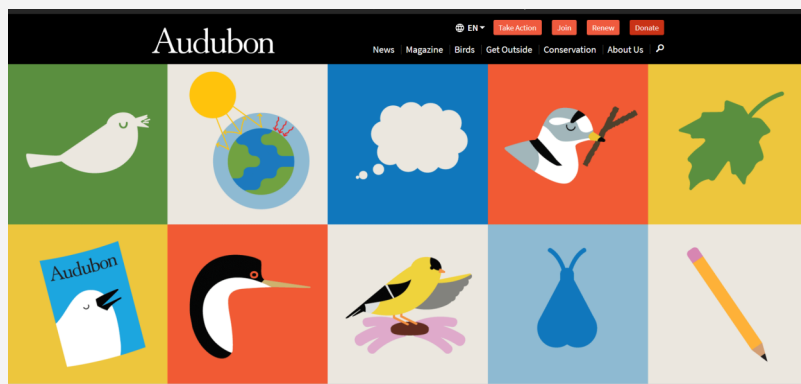
# Resources Online: Learning for Young Birders

There are many online learning opportunities for young birders to use while the stay at home order is in place and school is closed for the rest of the school year. Thanks to all the wonderful organizations committed to further education and bird conservation.

**The National Audubon Society** has developed a set of lessons for children. Discover these lessons at <https://www.audubon.org/get-outside/activities/audubon-for-kids> Lessons thus far include:

- Get to know Birds
- All About Owls
- Birds on the Move
- Plants are for the Birds

Visit this website and download activities that can be done to explore each topic. In addition, there are interactive games, crafts, videos and quizzes.



**Cornell Lab of Ornithology K- 12 Education** has weekly lessons for children to discover the wonders of birds. The education team has developed science and nature activities for cooped up kids. Sign up to receive weekly lessons at <https://www.birds.cornell.edu/k12/science-nature-activities-for-cooped-up-kids/>. In addition, sign up for newsletters and join Facebook groups to see what others are doing throughout the country. CLO K-12 Education has other activities suitable for children to learn about birds, habitats and exploring nature. Search the website to see other resources and lessons you can download and use: <https://www.birds.cornell.edu/k12/3-5-resources/>



**Cornell Lab of Ornithology Bird Cams** provides an opportunity to watch birds' nesting activity through Nest Cams at <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/cams/>. Nest cameras are focused on birds including Red-tailed Hawks, Ospreys and more. When combined with CLO K-12 resources, children can explore science by observing nesting behaviors and the life cycles of birds. This level of inquiry meets the Next Generation of Science Standards. NestWatch is a CLO project dedicated to tracking nesting birds and has online resources for everyone. NestWatch supports a citizen science project where anyone can contribute to scientific research by checking nests throughout the nesting cycle. Here is a link to lesson through CLO K-12: <https://www.birds.cornell.edu/k12/nestwatch/>

Also explore, NestWatch.org to learn about nesting birds at <https://nestwatch.org/>



## **Bird Briefs (articles to look at on-line)**

**Submitted by Don Burlett**

### **Thinking Like A Parrot: How Do Parrots View The World?**

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/grrlscientist/2019/09/19/thinking-like-a-parrot-how-do-parrots-view-the-world/#2ce94e3eba30>

Want to understand why parrots can act like they do? This article talks about a book that delves deeply into parrots and how their social and environmental evolution has made them endearing friends and partners. Worth taking a look.

### **Where Eagle Feathers Fall Like Snow**

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/06/science/lebanon-birds-hunting-conservation.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share>

A society works to prevent unnecessary hunting of birds in Lebanon. This is an example of people working to protect birds in a country where hunting birds has been a tradition for many years. This a nice article of a great effort to retrain a population about nature.

### **How Birdwatching Changed in the 2010's**

<https://www.birdwatchingdaily.com/news/birdwatching/how-birdwatching-changed-in-the-2010s/>

Cameras, eBird, bird tracking technology, birds and birders at the movies and conservation successes all have contributed to a massive change in birdwatching. The article also leads into other topics of interest to birders in these changing times. Who knows what's next!! A read worth doing.

### **They're Stealthy at Sea, but They Can't Hide From the Albatross**

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/27/science/albatross-ocean-radar.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share>

A new police force may be assembling in the near future, one aimed at fishing boats that are trying to hide. Equipping albatrosses with radar and transponders, researchers were able to detect sizeable numbers of fishing boats not using their AIS (Automatic Identifications Signal) while at sea. The albatrosses cover huge areas and are attracted to fishing vessels. A tricky way to catch illegal fishing.

### **Meet the Bird Medics of New Delhi**

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/07/science/kites-birds-conservation-india.html>

It's a sad irony that the popular hobby of flying kites in India is resulting in numerous injuries to kites - Black Kites. A group has been working to save these birds but have an uphill fight. Kites need meat to survive and this is not supported by many Indians. The article discusses cultural as well as environmental issues for the birds there.

## **Bird Briefs (continued)**

**Submitted by Don Burlett**

### **46,000 Year Old Bird Found 'Frozen In Time' In Siberia**

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/grrlscientist/2020/02/26/46000-year-old-bird-found-frozen-in-time-in-siberia/#2758aa37bd2e>

A Horned Lark body was found frozen in ice in Siberia and determined to have died 46,000 years ago. This specimen will be useful for understanding the climate at that time and to look at evolution of the species over the years.

### **Parrots Make Predictions Based On Statistical Probabilities**

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/grrlscientist/2020/03/03/parrots-make-predictions-based-on-statistical-probabilities/#2c5e31782d99>

A study was conducted using Keas (New Zealand parrots) to determine if they could make decisions based on statistical inference. This had previously been considered limited to higher apes. It was found that these birds were very good at understanding the choices and how to make them. A fun read!

### **This teeny skull trapped in amber belongs to the smallest dinosaur ever found**

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/science/2020/03/11/this-teeny-skull-trapped-amber-is-smallest-dinosaur-ever-found/>

You may have heard about this tiny dinosaur, where only the head remains in the amber sample that contained it. If only we knew more about this. Regardless, it's a curiosity and may tell us more about dinosaurs than we knew before.

### **What to Name the Oldest Modern Bird Fossil? Wonderchicken**

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/18/science/wonderchicken-bird-fossil.html?referringSource=articleShare>

A rock with a fossil skull dated to 66.6 million years ago is the latest discovery that details birds as we know them. This skull places it just about the time of the huge asteroid hit that eliminated most dinosaurs. Take a look at the picture proposed for this bird!

### **Why Birds Are the World's Best Engineers**

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/17/science/why-birds-are-the-worlds-best-engineers.html?referringSource=articleShare>

And you thought birds just build nests!! Well, it's an intriguing bit of science to explore and one researcher is doing just that, studying nest structure and how it all works. Leave it to the birds to provide another problem for science to solve. Cool stuff!



## Bird Briefs (continued)

Submitted by Don Burlett

### **Blue Macaws Are The Gardeners Of The Forest**

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/grrlscientist/2020/04/14/blue-macaws-are-the-gardeners-of-the-forest/#14ad68ce7d0c>

Many of us understand the concept of seed dispersal. However, a further understanding and how it helps certain species of birds is what you get with his article. It discusses how Macaws disperse seeds from palms that they use as a food source. A bit technical, it's still a useful look into environmental issues associated with many birds.

### **NZ's native birds thrive under Covid-19 lockdown**

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/414232/nz-s-native-birds-thrive-under-covid-19-lockdown>

Finally, an item on the effect of the corona virus on birds. It's a short article that covers several different angles on what the virus lockdown is doing for birds and other habitats.

## **NATURE NOTES** *by Allen Chartier*

***Allen is waiting for your questions!***

***Don't be shy! If you have a question you would like Allen to answer in a future Nature Notes column or a topic you are interested in hearing more about, you can email it to him at:***

[amazilia3@gmail.com](mailto:amazilia3@gmail.com)

## BIRD ID QUIZ (Summer 2020)



A) \_\_\_\_\_



B) \_\_\_\_\_



C) \_\_\_\_\_

**For the answers and explanation for this issue's quiz see page 22.**

**No Peeking!**

**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
MARCH 26, 2020**

The board met via conference call due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

President Don Burlett said that it was a tough decision to make, but he had to cancel OAS activities through at least much of May in order to keep everyone protected. This included the April membership meeting and May nature walk as well as field trips. Cancellations are also affecting Young Birders Club events.

It is also expected that the April Earth Day events at Heritage Park in Farmington Hills and Fiat-Chrysler World Headquarters in Auburn Hills will also be canceled, as well as the April “Spring into Science” event at Cranbrook Institute in Bloomfield Hills. OAS had planned to be represented at all of these events.

Because Don will have to bow out of the presidency in the fall for a year while he attends to another urgent responsibility, Past President Sue Wright has indicated a willingness to take over as President in his absence. (NOTE: We have since learned that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Don’s other responsibility will be delayed for a year, so he will be able to continue as OAS President in the coming year.)

Our Facebook page continues to operate, reaching about 1,400 people daily, with about 1,500 following/liking the page.

Our website has also been popular, with unusually high numbers of people visiting in recent months. Website Editor Hannah Dunbar has posted COVID-19 information along with event cancellations as necessary.

OAS Seven Ponds Nature Center Chapter Representative Dr. Greg Gossick reported that the Nature Center would be closed until at least April 5, though the trails remained open. Programs had to be canceled, as well as the planned nature tour to Florida.

The Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy requested a letter from OAS in support of the Superior Greenway Expansion Project. President Don Burlett obliged with a letter on behalf of OAS to the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Board in which he spoke of the importance of the Greenway to threatened species of birds in our area. He also explained that completion of this project will provide corridors needed for nesting and migrating birds, and it will decrease the fragmentation of land that negatively impacts birds.

Doris Applebaum  
Secretary

**OAKLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS UPDATE**

**MAY 22, 2020**

Due to the continuation of the stay-at-home order by Governor Whitmer, the OAS board of directors did not hold the scheduled April board meeting.

Also, because it has not been possible to hold membership meetings or field trips, or engage in other activities with OAS participation, a call for updates from board members by President Don Burlett indicated that there was not much to update.

A May 10, 2020, email to the board members from Treasurer Elaine Ferguson indicated that our checking account balance as of that date was \$14,814.27, our 990-N form for 2019 was filed in April, and contributions were sent from OAS to six nonprofit organizations (Bird Center of Washtenaw, Howell Nature Center, Wildlife Recovery Association, Clinton River Watershed Council, North Oakland Headwaters Land Conservancy, and Six Rivers Land Conservancy).

Publication of the OAS newsletter is continuing; our Facebook page and website also continue operating. Other than those, OAS activities continue to be on hold as we wait for an end to the Governor's stay-at-home order.

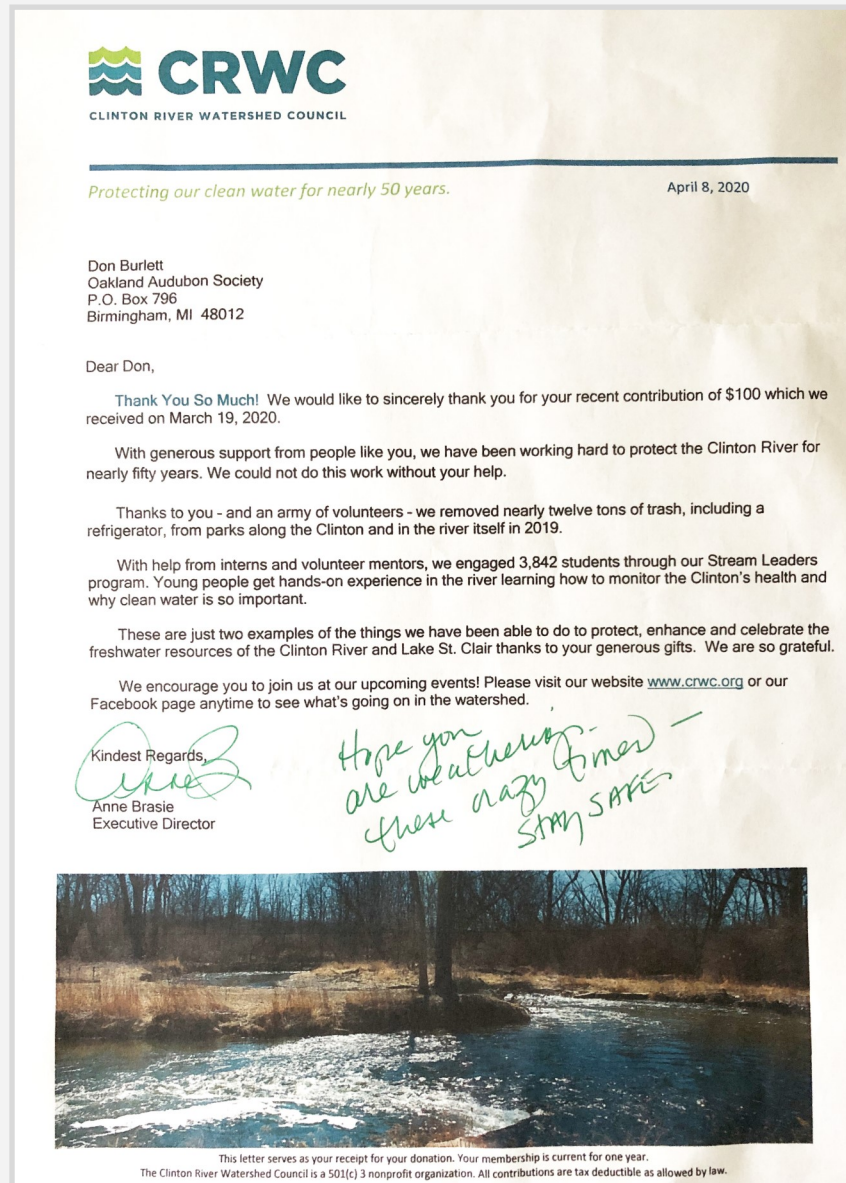
Doris Applebaum  
Secretary

**MEMBERSHIP MESSAGE**

**Our membership drive for 2020 is underway! Please pay your membership dues at a monthly meeting or by mailing in the membership form on page 23. Thanks to everyone who helps sustain OAS with your membership contributions. We would be nowhere without you!**

## Your Membership At Work

A thank-you letter was received from the Clinton River Watershed Council for a donation OAS provided. Thank you for helping to support local conservation minded organizations!



## UPCOMING MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS AND PROGRAMS

Date	Time	Program	Location
Tues., September 8	7:00 p.m.	Preserving Michigan's Dark Sky Heritage	First United Methodist Church (see below)
Tues., October 13	7:00 p.m.	Climate Change	First United Methodist Church (see below)
Tues., November 10	7:00 p.m.	Habitat	First United Methodist Church (see below)

Monthly membership meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month (except December, May, July and August) at 7:00 p.m., at the First United Methodist Church, 1589 West Maple Road, Birmingham, in the children's room, Room 132. The facility is located on the south side of Maple Road between Southfield and Cranbrook Roads. There is plenty of lighted, free parking. Our meetings are free and open to the public. For meeting cancellation information, check our website, call a board member or call the church at (248) 646-1200.

### Bird Quiz Answers for Summer Quiz on Page 18

This issue (summer '20) photo quiz answers: a) Field Sparrow, b) American Tree Sparrow and c) Song Sparrow.

Explanation: a) Rufous and gray, especially on head, solid white eye-ring with entirely pink bill, one obvious wing bar, b) Rufous and gray on head, breast and belly paler and more buffy than field sparrow, two white wing bars, bicolored bill – dark above and yellow below, dark spot on breast not visible in this picture (also typically not seen in summer) and c) Gray and rufous on head (with other variations possible), dark bill, no white wing bars, white moustachial strip diagnostic, streaking on breast and flanks.

How'd you do with the ID's of these juvenile birds? Keep score throughout the year to see how you do!



# OAKLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate with an (X) in the box any personal information above you do not want listed in the OAS membership directory.

Check also if you are a member of:

\_\_\_\_ National Audubon Society

\_\_\_\_ Michigan Audubon Society

**OAS needs and welcomes volunteers — please participate if you can!**

Check if you have the skills to help:

\_\_\_\_ Become a board member

\_\_\_\_ Lead a field trip or present a program

\_\_\_\_ Fill an open position (Position: \_\_\_\_\_)

Please check appropriate line:

\_\_\_\_ Member renewal

\_\_\_\_ New member

\_\_\_\_ Change of address

## *OAS Membership Fees*

- Individual      \$15
- Family          \$20
- Contributing    \$25
- Supporting      \$50
- Benefactor     \$100

## *Our Mission*

- To provide, on a local level, access to the natural world through educational programs such as meetings and field trips.
- To advocate the preservation of wildlife habitats and endeavor to create interest in native birds, other animals and plants in Michigan.

Please make checks payable to:  
OAKLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY

Mail to:  
OAS MEMBERSHIP

2145 COLONY CLUB CT.

WEST BLOOMFIELD, MICHIGAN 48322

*Oakland Audubon Society is a 501(c)(3) organization.  
Your donation is 100% tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.*