



THE NUTHATCH

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“Conquering the Chorus: Birding by Ear”

Tuesday, April 9, 2019, 7:00 p.m.

Josh Haas

Ask any birder where they struggle with learning birds and songs are sure to come up. The diversity and breadth of songs matched with the lack of time we have with migrants brings unique challenges to birders wishing to learn and retain the many songs in the forest. This program will include tips and tricks for identifying birds by ear, how to approach the sheer number of birds to learn and also feature some of Josh’s best images as a bird photographer.



Inside This Issue

Nature Walk

Tuesday, May 14, 2019, 6:30 p.m.

E.L. Johnson Nature Center

Join us for our spring Nature Walk to be held at E.L. Johnson Nature Center in Bloomfield Hills. Meet in the parking lot near the Nature Center. Refreshments after the walk.



“All About Owls”

Tuesday, June 11, 2019, 7:00 p.m.

Christina Funk, Troy Nature Society

Discover the nighttime world of the owl as you meet live native Michigan owls up close and personal! We will investigate the mysterious lives of owls, their adaptations for survival, and what humans can do to help them.



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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Spring 2019

As I begin my sixth term as President (yes, years 11 and 12), I have reflected on what we have done and where we are as an organization. Obviously, I am proud of the board for this organization. A bunch of dedicated folks who are involved in other groups but do plenty to keep our profile up and the organization thriving. I have worked hard to make sure that we had good people on the board. In fact, I think that is one of my main jobs, keeping good people on the board and active. No complaints on that score.

However, when we get really good people in these positions, it's hard to replace them when they need a break. That's where we are with our Social Media Coordinator, Janet Hug. She's done such a fine job managing our Facebook page, always adding photos and video and other tidbits that really keep the interest of people. I suspect our inability to lure a volunteer is partly because people think it's a really tough job. But it's really a matter of letting the next person in line do what they can and not worry about meeting a high standard. And, trust me, a little work can really result in a good standard.

All that said, we really do need someone to step in and take this job (yes, it's a volunteer job without pay, much like mine) and do it for a while. Janet will help with some training and assistance. Just don't let the job intimidate you, just step up and join this fine group of people. You'll not regret getting involved. Just ask our board members about how they feel about the organization and board. Really, I did consent to a sixth term at the very high pay rate I get!! Ready to get me committed??

I plan to continue in this spot as long as the group finds me useful and responsible. And as long as I find the work rewarding and interesting. (No, I'm not quitting next week!) I still enjoy the field trips and people I meet while I do the job. Many opportunities come along that involve new and challenging experiences. Of course, I am getting older and there is a limit to what I can do sometimes. But I enjoy the group and I haven't worn out my welcome yet. Just wait.

Another year is upon us with new field trips and new challenges. We're headed to Columbus and Arizona this year and those will be fun trips. I am assuming the weekday birder mantle from Mike Mencotti and we'll see how long it takes for people to complain that I am not Mike!! I don't have any "life goals" that directly involve Oakland Audubon. I did accomplish one goal recently – I got to my seventh continent – Antarctica. Now, it's time to reel in the other one – seeing more than half the birds of the world. That'll come soon as I am already within 200 birds of that goal. But maybe I need to set a goal within the framework of Oakland Audubon. Maybe we can get 100 people involved with the CBC one year or maybe we surpass 300 members. Whatever it is, I won't blab it too much but you can bet I'll work on it. And with your help, we'll get the job done.

I enjoy working with everyone in this organization. I think we have one of the better Audubon groups and we really do offer a lot to the community. But there's always another goal or frontier to conquer. For me, that's what makes the job worth doing. I always want to leave an organization better than when I came. I'll let you be the judge if I am doing okay in this regard. Otherwise, I hope to see many of you at a meeting, a field trip or just out enjoying nature. And don't forget to support all our efforts to protect our natural environment. Thanks for letting me do this job.

Don Burlett


OAS BOARD MEMBERS

Elected Officers

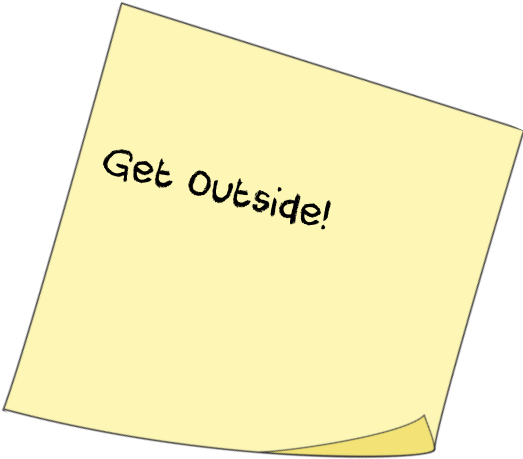
President	Don Burlett	(248) 236-9486	baikalteal13@netzero.net
Secretary	Doris Applebaum	(248) 542-2506	ibis4247@sbcglobal.net
Treasurer	Elaine Ferguson	(248) 470-2212	fergusonelaine6@gmail.com
Membership Officer	Dave Frye	(248) 627-5650	kestrel11@gmail.com
Field Trip Officer	Jeff Stacey	(248) 798-0508	jdstacey@ameritech.net
Program Officer	Dave Hoch	(248) 808-3696	hochdavid1@gmail.com

Appointed Officers

Young Birders Club Rep.	Kathleen Dougherty		kad8186@msn.com
Hospitality Officer	Alice Marotti	(248) 545-4165	amarotti@aol.com
Publicity/Fundraising	Phil Bugosh	(248) 763-3163	peb729@gmail.com
Web Co-Editor	Don Burlett	(248) 236-9486	baikalteal13@netzero.net
Web Co-Editor	Hannah Dunbar		oddbirdstoonest@gmail.com
Social Media Administrator	Janet Hug	(248) 736-2839	jkissnhug@comcast.net
Nuthatch Editor	Mike Dougherty	(248) 972-7802	mikeodoc@comcast.net
Seven Ponds Rep.	Dr. Greg Gossick		ggossickdds@sbcglobal.net
Environment/Conservation	Jerry Rogers	(248) 310-8212	jhrogers10@sbcglobal.net



Don't forget to fill
the birdfeeders.



Get outside!

Cover page banner photo credits: Jeff Stacey

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

(Details of these outings are on the Field Trips page of our website at www.oaklandaudubon.org)

Date	Event	Trip Leader(s)
<p style="text-align: center;">March 6, 2019 (Wednesday) 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Beaudette Park Start at Beaudette Park. Details will be on website the week of the outing.</p>	<p>Don Burlett</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">March 9, 2019 (Saturday) 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Lake Erie Metropark See website for details. Metropark annual or day pass required</p>	<p>Jeff Stacey Jim Koppin</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">March 24, 2019 (Sunday) 8:30 AM - 11:30 PM</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Owls and More Lake St. Clair Metropark An Oakland Owlets program. See website for details. Metropark annual or day pass required</p>	<p>Kathleen Dougherty</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">March 27, 2019 (Wednesday) 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Robert H. Long Park Meet in parking lot.</p>	<p>Don Burlett</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">March 30, 2019 (Saturday) 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Maple River SGA Meet at the Park & Ride near Price road west of US-127 (exit 91).</p>	<p>Jeff Stacey</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">April 5, 2019 (Friday) 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Woodcocks and Woodland Birds Highland Recreation Area An Oakland Owlets program. See website for details. A state parks passport is required.</p>	<p>Kathleen Dougherty</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">April 10, 2019 (Wednesday) 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Kensington Metropark Meet in Nature Center parking lot.</p>	<p>Don Burlett</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">April 14, 2019 (Sunday) 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Wetzel State Park Meet at the parking lot of Wetzel at the end of 27 Mile Road, just west of Werderman, A state parks passport is required.</p>	<p>Dan Gertiser Mike Mencotti</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">April 24, 2019 (Wednesday) 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Robert H. Long Park Meet in parking lot.</p>	<p>Don Burlett</p>

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

(Details of these outings are on the Field Trips page of our website at www.oaklandaudubon.org)

Date	Event	Trip Leader(s)
<p style="text-align: center;">April 26-28, 2019 (Friday—Sunday) Weekend Trip</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Columbus, Ohio Area Contact leader for details and hotel information.</p>	Don Burlett
<p style="text-align: center;">April 27, 2019 (Saturday) 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Indian Springs Metropark Meet at the Park Office parking lot. Metropark annual or day pass required</p>	Mike Mencotti
<p style="text-align: center;">May 4, 2019 (Saturday) 8:30 AM - 11:30 PM</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Birding on the Clinton River Trail An Oakland Owlets program. See website for details.</p>	Kathleen Dougherty
<p style="text-align: center;">May 5, 2019 (Sunday) 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Lake St. Clair Metropark Meet at the Nature Center parking lot. Metropark annual or day pass required</p>	Jim Koppin
<p style="text-align: center;">May 11, 2019 (Saturday) All Day</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Magee Marsh and Environs Meet in the parking lot near the boardwalk entrance. See website for details.</p>	Don Burlett
<p style="text-align: center;">May 18, 2019 (Saturday) 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Tawas State Park See website for details.</p>	Dan Gertiser
<p style="text-align: center;">May 26, 2019 (Sunday) 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Oak Openings Metropark See website for details.</p>	Dan Gertiser
<p style="text-align: center;">June 8, 2019 (Saturday) 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Lapeer State Game Area Meet at the main headquarters building on Vernon Rd.</p>	Dave Frye

Field Trip Reports

November 9 – Kensington Metropark

Leader: Mike Mencotti

Seven hardy birders endured unseasonably cold temperatures and gusty winds but were rewarded with some fine birds at Kensington Metropark on Wednesday, November, 8. Wildwing Lake had hundreds of ducks, most notably Ring-necked and Wood ducks. On the nature trails we were bombarded by hungry chickadees, nuthatches and woodpeckers that were shaking us down for a handout. We hit different parts of Kent Lake, and had a total of four Bald Eagles and four Trumpeter Swans for our efforts. A total of 41 species were tallied.

November 17, 2018 – Belle Isle State Park

Leaders: Don Burlett, Dave Frye (Jointly with Washtenaw Audubon)

It was a cool and breezy day at Belle Isle where we began the day's adventure, a joint Oakland and Washtenaw Audubon venture. 35 birders joined us for this trip. From the Nature Center parking lot, we wandered to the Blue Heron Lagoon for a large variety of ducks. En route we had a Cooper's Hawk fly over and an American Kestrel flying nearby. Then a Bald Eagle also flew through. Lots of ducks—12 species.

We then began to circumnavigate the island by car, gathering all three Swans, a Common Loon, lots of Horned Grebes and many other water species. We stopped at the Detroit Rowing property and were surprised by a Palm Warbler, still working the area for bugs.

We continued around the island and got Great Blue Heron and other species but no scoters today. We also spotted the Peregrine Falcon on the Whittier Building. We ventured inland to hike the trails west of the nature center and we were rewarded with Winter Wren, Cedar Waxwings, both Kinglets and a flyover Northern Harrier. We ended at the Nature Center for a few mop-up species and a White-crowned Sparrow. 57 species overall and a good time had by everyone.

November 21, 2018 – Robert Long Park, Walled Lake and Heritage Park

Leader: Mike Mencotti

Ten hardy birders helped wrap up this year's Wednesday Workshop/Field Trip Series on a festive note as we "tailgated" sipping coffee and munching doughnuts. Both were welcomed as the wind chill barely broke the 20s. The birding day, too, had a distinctively winter flavor with few ducks at Robert Long, our starting point. The morning began promisingly with a flock of 30+ Sandhill Cranes, and the back pond yielded a Lesser Black-backed Gull, first sighted by Jeff Stacey. Hopes high, we headed to Walled Lake. The waterfowl were scarce there too, with a Horned Grebe the highlight. Heritage Park gave us indoor warmth and lots of birds at the feeders. We then hiked the trails and found siskins, bluebirds, and -- fittingly on the day before Thanksgiving -- a small flock of turkeys. They made a perfect swan song to this fall's series. A total of 36 species were tallied.

Field Trip Reports (continued)

November 17 – Indian Springs Metropark

Leader: Kathleen Dougherty

The Young Birders' Club November field trip took place at Indian Springs Metropark. It was a chilly morning with some snow on the ground. A small group of birders met at the Environmental Discovery Center parking lot. The group immediately hit the trail hiking about 2 miles along the Hunter's Ridge Nature Trail which went through the Huron Swamp. Birding activity was low, but the group managed to see typical woodland species. After hiking, the group visited the Environmental Discovery Center and was treated to an impromptu look into the classroom to see some of the mounted birds, courtesy of one of the interpreters on duty. We also viewed the underwater exploration area. On the way out of the park, Wild Turkeys appeared wandering on the golf course. A few of us had a chance to see them, but the road was closed to the golf course. Wild Turkeys ignored the closure signs. In addition to the species checklist, a Cooper's Hawk was observed the day before the hike while previewing the logistics of the field trip.



Photo credits: Kathleen Dougherty.

Field Trip Reports (continued)

December 8 – Cranbrook Institute of Science

Leader: Kathleen Dougherty

The Young Birders' Club visited the Cranbrook Institute of Science in December for a unique behind the scenes tour of the collections. Several young birders and adults attended, 17 in total. Cameron Wood, collection curator, led the tour. Mr. Wood took the group into the collection vault that is rarely seen by most visitors. The group was able to view the extensive bird collection held at Cranbrook. Mr. Wood explained the history of Cranbrook and how the collection was started. The young birders were fascinated by the variety of specimens held within the collection. Youths were able to see specimens including extinct birds like the Passenger Pigeon, nests and eggs. In addition to the biological artifacts, the museum also holds cultural artifacts such as original prints of John James Audubon and pieces that represent how birds are viewed by different cultures throughout the world. Mr. Wood's expertise in anthropology provided insights about how bird symbols were important to many cultures. Some artifacts could not be photographed due to their religious significance. A pipe stem was adorned with the head of an Ivory-billed Woodpecker. The Ivory-billed Woodpeckers were a symbol of war to native peoples. The pipe would be smoked prior to going into battle. Everyone learned something new. Cranbrook is a great educational resource for all in Michigan. A special thank you to Cameron Wood and Michele Arquette Palermo for their expertise and assistance in making this field trip possible.

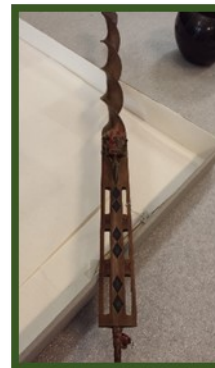


Photo credits: Kathleen Dougherty

Field Trip Reports (continued)

January 13 – Heritage Park

Leader: Kathleen Dougherty, Mike Mencotti

The Young Birders' Club visited Heritage Park in Farmington Hills on January 13. It was a clear, cold day. Veteran birder Mike Mencotti led the group along the trails. Mike volunteers at Heritage Park and offers his expertise for several nature programs there. Turnout for the day was high with three new families joining the hike. In total, twenty-five birders including eight young birders and their families enjoyed the sights at



Heritage Park. The lack of snow made travel on the trails easy. The park has several wonderful vistas to enjoy nature. Although bird activity was low, the group was treated to a fly over by an adult Bald Eagle. Mike noted this is only the second time he had

seen an eagle at the park. Eighteen species were observed along the trail with two other species heard, but not seen - a Belted Kingfisher and Eastern Bluebird. Heritage Park has an extensive Bluebird Trail with nest boxes. The group visited the Nature Center after the hike for snacks and hot cocoa. Everyone spent time looking at the wonderful bird feeding station and exploring the exhibits indoors. The Nature Center is a great place to visit and has numerous events and programs for the community.

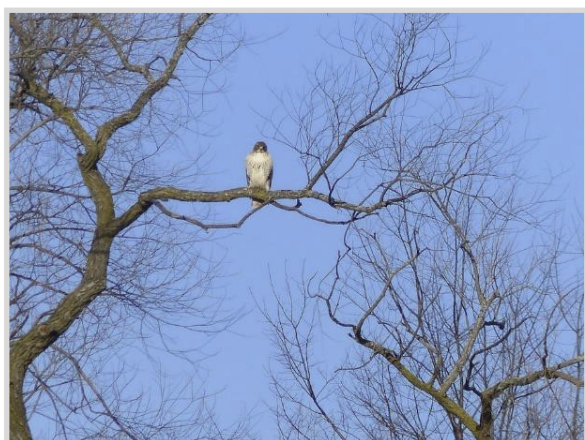


Photo credits: Lynn Manzi, Jim Law and Kathleen Dougherty.

Field Trip Reports (continued)

January 25-27, 2019 – Upper Peninsula Field Trip

Leader: Don Burlett

This traditional field trip began on Friday morning with the usual harrowing drive up I-75 through Grayling and Gaylord. As usual, cold temperatures and wind from the northwest were driving the lake effect snow bands into full production. Perilous driving was finally rewarded when we got across the bridge and into the UP.

We began our work by driving through the field near Rudyard and Pickford where numerous Snowy Owls were ornaments on telephone poles. Quite a few of these were the very white adults. From Pickford, we headed north to visit the Dafter landfill before it closed for the weekend. There we met with the Seven Ponds Expedition only to find just Herring Gulls, Common Ravens, Bald Eagles, a Red-tailed Hawk and some European Starlings, along with a stiff breeze and cold wind chill. We then headed to the Dafter Post Office, to be rewarded by both Pine Grosbeaks and Bohemian Wax-



Snowy Owl



Northern Hawk Owl

wings. To finish this first day, we drove north to the Chippewa County Animal Control building and walked behind to survey a gravel pit area. As expected, the Northern Hawk Owl was holding his position atop a spruce tree, just distant enough to make good photos difficult. But he was there, as shown to the left.

We retreated to the hotel, got spiffed up and headed downtown to have dinner at the Antler's, a traditional visit for first-timers. A nice dinner ensued with lively discussion and some libations. Back to the hotel for rest for a cold next day.

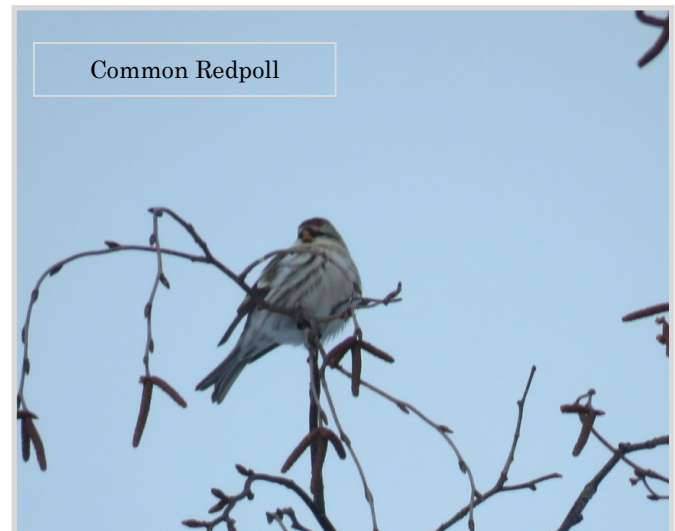
Field Trip Reports - continued

Saturday began with some chilly temperatures. The official temperature was about -15°F but our cars were panicking with readings as low as -58°F. (Wimpy cars!!) Anyway, we were off right away looking around for the absent Great Gray Owl but our first feeder visit netted us our Sharp-tailed Grouse. One was up in a tree, making photos quite easy.

We continued around and found plenty of Pine Grosbeaks, more Bohemian Waxwings, some very nice light phase Rough-legged Hawks, Ravens, Crows, a bunch of turkeys, woodpeckers, chickadees, Red-breasted and White-breasted nuthatches and others. In Pickford, we found some Common Redpolls, not very common in the UP this year. We then visited the Kinross Feeders to find them rather empty, of both feeders and birds. However, we did note a rare female Red-winged Blackbird at the feeders. That and an American Robin in Pickford were rather rare. We also made sure those late arrivers on Friday saw all the birds we had seen on Friday except Gull and red-tail. We also got the elusive Northern Shrike (actually two) that made the leader's day.



Sharp-tailed Grouse



Common Redpoll



Northern Shrike

One of the Bohemian Waxwings that we found exemplifies the concept of shape for northern birds – that is, smaller surface area per unit mass. Round is best, as this guy shows very nicely.



Bohemian Waxwing

Field Trip Reports (continued)

As the day faded and we headed back north to get the Northern Hawk Owl for everyone, a bird darted across the road ahead of us. The shape, size and color led the leader to say it was a Gyrfalcon. No pictures, a brief look....and we left it at that.

Saturday night, 7 of the warriors took in a college hockey game at Lake Superior State University. The Lakers kept their Saturday home record clean with a 5-3 loss. That's 0-5-1 on Saturdays at home. Oh well, the beer was good.

Sunday some headed out early, the rest headed south in search of Evening Grosbeak which we got east of Pickford. Then we headed home, everyone experiencing the Beast that is I-75 in winter. The highway was closed twice on Sunday but we all avoided problems and arrived safely home.

Finally, there was one species of bird seen on Saturday night which we haven't yet identified. Maybe you can help us out with this one!!!

The count for the weekend was 31 species (or maybe 32?!). Another good trip and just enough good stuff to encourage us for next year. And to hope for another Great Gray Owl.



Evening Grosbeak



Unidentified Duck Species

Photo credits: Don Burlett

Field Trip Reports (continued)

February 3, 2019 – St. Clair River Trip

Leader: Don Burlett

Another traditional winter field trip was held on the second thaw day after our mid-winter run-in with the polar vortex. Unseasonably warm weather, temperatures reaching the 30's, started with cloudy skies but eventually gave way to sunny skies. 23 birders took part in this trip. Navigating our way north to and along the St. Clair River with nine vehicles proved less trouble than might be expected.

The feeders at Lake St. Clair Metropark's Nature Center gave us a group of passerines along with a Cooper's Hawk that made an early visit to the site. The river was mostly clogged with ice in the lower stretches but soon gave way to patches of open water north of Algonac and at St. Clair. Lots of ducks were seen along the river in the open water including Long-tailed Ducks, Common Goldeneye, Redheads, Canvasbacks and others. Bald Eagles were seen on the ice and flying in the area. A special delight was the Merlin seen in the park in St. Clair. Sightings of a couple of Sharp-shinned Hawks had to make up for the absent Peregrine Falcon.

Lake Huron was completely free of ice and offered no help, especially in the sunny and warm conditions. No pain, no gain!! But lots of Long-tailed Ducks at close range were special.

All totaled, we had 43 species and a good day. Lunch, with a variety of lively topics topped off the day.



Merlin



Long-tailed Ducks

Photo credits: Don Burlett



Welcome to Flying WILD

Oakland Audubon cosponsored a Flying WILD Educator's Workshop recently in Oakland County. The workshop was held on January 27 at the Farmington Hills Nature Center. Oakland Audubon provided instructional expertise and promotional assistance. The Farmington Hills Nature Center provided facilities, resources, refreshments and handled event registration. Nearly 30 educators and volunteers attended. Attendees came from as far away as Fife Lake, Cadillac, Buchanan and Lake City. Educators included AmeriCorps students, volunteers, teachers, informal educators and naturalists.

Flying WILD is a supplementary curriculum for educators. The Educator's Guide contains lessons and activities focused on bird education to help learners understand the importance of birds. Educators are required to attend a professional development workshop to receive the guide. The activities are interdisciplinary and science-based including math, social science, language arts and technology. Flying WILD encourages educators to partner with community resources like Audubon to engage the youths in learning about birds and how they benefit people, the environment and the local community.



Oakland Audubon highlighted



Michigan Flying WILD is sponsored by the Michigan Alliance for Environmental and Outdoor Education and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Flying WILD, like other WILD projects provides objective information to help learners make informed decisions. The philosophy of Project WILD is "Teach WILD, Learn WILD and Be WILD", emphasizing the importance of wildlife in our world with the lessons about local wildlife resources. Nationally, Flying WILD is sponsored by the Association for Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

During the 4-hour workshop, educators participated in a few activities from The Educator's Guide, including birds as part of the food web, how loss of habitat impacts forest inhabitants and the challenges of migration. In addition to the activities from educator's guide, participants learned about Oakland Audubon, eBird and BirdSleuth. BirdSleuth provided feeders to all participants to use in Project Feeder Watch.

(continued on next page)

Welcome to Flying WILD

(continued)

Several staff members and volunteers at Farmington Hills Nature Center attended the workshop. Mike Mennotti leads many birding programs at the Nature Center. Participants had a chance to network with other educators. There was a sense of camaraderie that reflected a shared commitment to bird education and an understanding that birds are amazing, and that we all need to do what we can to conserve them. The workshop was requested by Ashlie Smith, the Nature Center Supervisor. I agreed to help as a Flying WILD facilitator. The workshop is part of Oakland Audubon's community outreach and the mission of Audubon to support education about birds and bird conservation. A special thank you to Maura Jung, retired educator who helped with the workshop and to Lynn Manzi for capturing these images from the workshop.



Photo credits: Lynn Manzi

Oakland Owlets ~ Birder of Year - 2018

After a five-year hiatus, the Oakland Audubon Young Birders' Club (the Oakland Owlets) re-started last year offering regular field trips and a special young birders' membership program. Oakland Audubon has a long-standing commitment to encourage participation in birding and outdoor exploration. By engaging youths in birding at an earlier age, Oakland Audubon seeks to nurture the next generation of bird conservationists. In 2018, I volunteered to coordinate programs for Young Birders. An element of the updated proposal for the Young Birders' Club was to provide incentives for participation. One incentive was to recognize young birders attending three or more programs during the calendar year. In 2018, nine Young Birders' Club programs were offered by OAS. One young birder, Megan S. attended three of these programs, thus meeting the qualifications for this recognition.



Megan is an elementary student who attends public school in Troy. Megan typically attends the Young Birders' Club programs with her dad. Megan lives with her parents and two older brothers. She likes to birdwatch and enjoys art—emulating of one the best-known naturalists, John James Audubon. Megan's family pets include tropical birds and fish. While still considering her career path, Megan is thinking about going into Ornithology. She is an avid hiker and keen observer of wildlife. At the January field trip led by Mike Mencotti, Megan spotted a Bald Eagle soaring overhead while most of the group was focused on an American Robin perched on a limb. On another hike, Megan quickly zoomed in on a Red-tailed Hawk distantly flying at the edge of the woods. It is always a joy to hike with Megan; she has bird vision and sees movements I cannot detect.

Megan was presented with a certificate of appreciation from OAS along with a copy of the *Kid's Bird Log*, on January 13th at the Young Birders' Club field trip to Heritage Park. The *Bird Log* encourages kids to record their birding experiences. Pictured with her brothers, dad and Young Birders' Club coordinator (me), Megan is displaying the certificate of recognition from Oakland Audubon.



The Oakland Owlet field trips provide opportunities for kids to spend time in the outdoors. These programs are supported by members of the Oakland Audubon Society. Thanks to all members for this support. Young Birders' Club field trips engage and encourage youths to learn about birds and bird conservation. Additionally, thanks to the many agencies that provide outdoor experiences to the birding community and young birders' parents who take time to bring their kids to Oakland Owlet field trips.

Young Birders' Club field trips and programs are open to all birders. Youths under 16 years must be accompanied by their parents. All young birders are asked to complete release forms to participate and allow OAS to use photographic images to promote our programs.

Visit <https://www.oaklandaudubon.org/young-birders> to learn more about upcoming field trips and programs.

2019 Oakland Owlets Field Trips

March - June

Owls & More – Sunday, March 24, 8:30 – 11:30 am Lake St. Clair Metropark – Harrison Township

The resident Great-horned Owl at Lake St. Clair Metropark has been nesting in the same place for more than 20 years. Lake St. Clair Metropark is one of the premiere birding hot spots in the area. Plan to hike about two miles, visit the nature center and check out waterfowl on the lake and nearby wetlands. Dress for the weather. Metroparks permit is required for park entry.

Meet at the Nature Center Parking Lot.

<http://www.metroparks.com/parks/lake-st-clair-metroparks/>



Woodcocks & Woodland Birds – Friday, April 5, 6:00 – 8:30 pm Highland Recreation Area – White Lake

American Woodcocks return to Michigan in spring. This unusual shorebird performs a unique aerial display known as the “sky dance”. It is an amazing sight to witness. Highland Recreation Area is ideal habitat for the woodcock and many other birds. Take an evening hike to see this outstanding natural area and then watch the “sky dance” at sunset. Dress for the weather and plan to hike 2 miles. Bring a lawn chair and binoculars. **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>

Spring Migration – Birding on the Clinton River Trail Saturday – May 4 – 8:30 – 11:30 am – Rochester

May marks the return of many migrating birds to Michigan. Wood warblers begin to appear as the trees leaf. This is the best time of the year to see these brightly colored songsters. Over the next few weeks, Michigan’s fields, forests and wetlands come alive as the dawn chorus announces that birds have returned to their breeding grounds. Plan to hike on the Clinton River Trail celebrating its 15th anniversary to see some of the birds along the trail. The Clinton River Watershed Council celebrates the importance of the River and its recreation benefits to the region. This event is ideal for anyone interested in birding, the Clinton River and hiking. **Meet at the Clinton River Watershed Parking Lot** located on 1115 Avon Road.

<http://www.crowc.org/>



2019 Oakland Owlets Field Trips March - June (continued)

Meet the Owls – A Special Membership Meeting for Young Birders Tuesday, June 11, 7 – 9 pm ~ Birmingham

Young birders are invited to attend this special meeting with Live Owls from the Troy Nature Center. Meet at the United Methodist Church at 1589 W. Maple Road.

The Young Birders' Club ~ Oakland Owlets offers field trips for youth 8 – 18 years. Young birders under 16 years old 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 Birder's Club programs are open to all birders. To register for Oakland Owlets field trips contact – Kathleen Dougherty, Coordinator at www.oaklandaudubon.org or kad8186@msn.com



Waste Management recognizes Kathleen Dougherty for her Volunteerism and Dedication to Outdoor Education

I first met Kathleen Dougherty in 2008. I can't remember where we met but it was likely a Trails, Water, Land Alliance meeting in Oakland County (formerly the Oakland County Green Infrastructure meetings). She asked me if Waste Management would allow the Oakland Audubon Society access to the Eagle Valley Landfill in Orion to do observations for the 2008 Christmas Bird Count (CBC). I'd never heard of the CBC. When she explained it, I was only too thrilled to be able to offer up WM's assistance. I knew that at some point, Eagle Valley would be applying for its Wildlife Habitat Certification through the Wildlife Habitat Council and this would be a great, meaningful project towards that effort. I was also excited myself to see what a CBC might yield in bird observations. I was not a bird watcher at the time, and even today consider myself a novice, but Kathleen has been instrumental in my education as well as a wonderful support person and educator that I turn to for assistance with bird and nest box monitoring and identification.

I also immediately began to run into Kathleen more and more at other events in the area. She and I are both members of the Michigan Alliance of Environment and Outdoor Education (MAEOE), another organization that WM supports upon learning about their important work. We would also run into each other at the MAEOE annual conference as WM began to offer up tours to conference attendees, helping them understand the science and engineering involved in managing society's waste.

Right after that first CBC in 2008, I was sharing my observations with WM employees and they mentioned that there was an injured Turkey Vulture out back (in December!?). My co-workers were kind enough to assist me in capturing the bird and another great lady, Dody Wyman (formerly of the River Raisin Raptor Center) allowed me to deliver this beautiful "Garbage Man of the Bird World" to her on Christmas Eve. We named the Turkey Vulture Eva Orion, having rescued her on Christmas Eve in Orion. Eva Orion is alive today, 11 years later, and resides at the Braveheart Raptor Center, just north of Muskegon, Michigan.

When Kathleen asked me to attend the Oakland Audubon Society meeting this month to receive acknowledgement from the group for WM's support, I immediately knew I wanted to reciprocate with a token of appreciation to her for all the introductions and education she has facilitated for me over the years since we met. She is most deserving of a Waste Management Volunteer Appreciation Award, presented to her on January 8th, 2019. Thank you Oakland Audubon Society for the wonderful work you do.

Kathleen Klein
Community Relations
Waste Management



**OAKLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY
2018 FINANCIAL STATEMENT
(unaudited)**

Assets (as of 1-1-2018)

Citizens Bank checking account **\$9,821.17**

Income

Dues \$ 3,515.00

Donations 1,680.00

Ornament sale 106.00

Young Birders Nuthatch Open 125.00

Total Income \$ 5,426.00

Expenses

Bank Charges \$ 24.00

Charitable contributions 700.00

Hospitality 239.28

Insurance 903.00

Mail fees and postage 82.00

Michigan filing fee 20.00

Printing - Nuthatch and other 152.63

Programs and field trips 409.00

Publicity 39.00

Rental fees 920.00

Website 168.00

Young Birders 98.87

Total Expenses \$ 3755.78

2018 Gain \$ 1,670.22

Net Worth as of 12-31-2018 \$11,491.39

Prepared by Elaine Ferguson, treasurer

2018 Christmas Bird Count

On December 15, 2018, observers from Oakland Audubon Society began the annual Christmas Bird Count. A total of 53 people in the field and 6 at feeders provided the necessary data. Conditions were definitely wintry, with temperatures ranging from 26-36°F, no significant snow cover, cloudy conditions and most of our open water being smaller streams. However, we worked hard and got a respectable 65 species. A total of over 18,000 individual birds were counted. The list below contains all the species seen.

Canada Goose	Hairy Woodpecker
Mute Swan	Northern Flicker
Trumpeter Swan	Pileated Woodpecker
American Black Duck	American Kestrel
Mallard	Blue Jay
Northern Pintail	American Crow
Bufflehead	Black-capped Chickadee
Common Goldeneye	Tufted Titmouse
Hooded Merganser	Red-breasted Nuthatch
Northern Bobwhite	White-breasted Nuthatch
Wild Turkey	Brown Creeper
Great Blue Heron	Carolina Wren
Turkey Vulture	Golden-crowned Kinglet
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Eastern Bluebird
Cooper's Hawk	Hermit Thrush
Bald Eagle	American Robin
Red-shouldered Hawk	European Starling
Red-tailed Hawk	Cedar Waxwing
Sandhill Crane	Snow Bunting
Ring-billed Gull	American Tree Sparrow
Herring Gull	Dark-eyed Junco
Great Black-backed Gull	White-throated Sparrow
Rock Pigeon	Song Sparrow
Mourning Dove	Swamp Sparrow
Eastern Screech-owl	Northern Cardinal
Great Horned Owl	Brown-headed Cowbird
Barred Owl	House Finch
Short-eared Owl	Common Redpoll
Belted Kingfisher	Pine Siskin
Red-headed Woodpecker	American Goldfinch
Red-bellied Woodpecker	Evening Grosbeak
Downy Woodpecker	House Sparrow

Miscellany

Submitted by: Doris Applebaum

THE VALUE OF BIRDS

As birders, we know how much enjoyment birds can provide. We may also realize that birds have some importance beyond the fun of seeing and identifying them. However, an article in the October-December 2018 issue of *Bird Life – The Magazine*, published by Bird Life International, shows how important birds really are. The article titled “Why We Need Birds (Even More Than They Need Us)” lists several reasons why this is so.

First, birds help to control pest insects. A recent study showed that the world’s birds eat 400 million to 500 million tons of insects in an average year.

Second, some birds pollinate plants, and the plants would not survive without the birds. As an example, there used to be 31 species of Hawaiian bellflowers; they are now extinct because the birds that pollinated them are gone, too. We need birds’ pollination services also; some 5% of the plants that provide food or medicine for us are there thanks to those services.

Third, without vultures, aka “nature’s cleanup crew,” the spread of disease from rotting carcasses would be much more likely. Other scavengers don’t find the dead animals nearly as quickly as vultures do, which allows diseases from the remains to spread. Furthermore, you may know that all the vultures in India were nearly killed off completely, because a veterinary medicine used on cows proved fatal to the vultures that fed on the cows’ carcasses. What has not been as well publicized is that this led to a tremendous surge in the number of India’s scavenging feral dogs—more than 5-1/2 million of them—which were not affected by the medicine. This in turn led to an increased spread of rabies, causing more than 45,000 human deaths.

Fourth, birds spread seeds through their droppings. In New Zealand, for example, 70% of plants in that country’s forests are there because certain bird species have dispersed the seeds.

Fifth, birds can help protect vegetation from other animals that would destroy them. The example given was the Salt Marsh Periwinkle, a snail that feasts on cordgrass in marshes of the southeastern U.S. Without certain shorebirds that eat the snails, those marshes would disappear.

Sixth: Many coral reefs depend on the guano of birds—especially seabirds—that leaches into the ocean from the birds’ nearby colonies. The droppings help to fertilize the reefs. Without this help, such as when rats destroy seabird colonies, the reefs do not grow nearly as well.

And seventh: A number of scientific discoveries owe their inspiration to birds. These include the zipper, modeled on the barbules of bird feathers. Also, it was of course the birds that fired our determination to find a way that we could fly. And the finches of the Galapagos Islands helped Darwin to develop his theory of evolution—possibly the most important scientific advance in history.

So, let’s continue to enjoy the birds, but let’s not forget the many debts that we owe them.

Miscellany (continued)

ONCE A WARBLER, ALMOST A BLACKBIRD

The Yellow-breasted Chat has been a controversial species for decades. Taxonomists (the folks who make classification decisions) originally placed it in the wood warbler family, the Parulidae, but many people complained that the chat is too unlike a warbler to belong there. Among other reasons, they said it is too big in size and too different in song to be classified with such beauties as the Blackburnian Warbler and the Northern Parula.

Finally, the American Ornithologists' Society has agreed. They have kicked the chat out of the Parulidae and, in fact, decided it is so different that it belongs in its very own family, the Icteriidae.

Icteriidae?? Isn't that the family of our blackbirds? No, not quite. The blackbird family's name has only one "i"; that family is the Icteridae. "Close, but no cigar"—only some confusion.

So, when thinking taxonomically about the Yellow-breasted Chat and blackbirds, remember to keep your eyes on the "i's".



Photo credit: Jeff Stacey

NATURE NOTES *by Allen Chartier*

My supply of questions is again running low, and the future of this column is looking uncertain. Please forward your questions either directly to me by email (amazilia3@gmail.com), or to any OAS officer who will forward them to me. You can also send photos, if you have a question or comment about anything you may want me to comment on.

A question came up during a recent field trip with regard to bill color in starlings. My first thought came from the age of immature birds versus adults and this is commonly seen in some species. Do any birds have seasonal change in bill color and, if so, why? Just curious. Juvenile to adult is common but in mature birds I am not sure. Certainly male ruddy ducks change bill color. What would be the mechanism for this?

The “bare parts” of birds include the bill, eyes, eye rings, and legs, and if unfeathered, the lores in front of the eyes. These can change color in quite a number of species, based both on the age of the bird and the season (breeding or non-breeding). Looking at your feeder birds, you may have noticed that Northern Cardinals have dusky-gray bills when juvenile, gradually becoming bright orange-red by late fall, that American Goldfinches have orange-pink bills in summer, and black bills in winter (and when juvenile), and that Chipping Sparrows have black bills in summer, and pink bills in winter (though they are very rare here in winter). Age-related changes in eye color occur in species like Eastern Towhees and Red-eyed Vireos, which have brown eyes when they’re hatched, turning red before the following breeding season, and Cooper’s and Sharp-shinned Hawks have yellow eyes when they’re hatched, which usually change to deep red after two years, though some individuals have intermediate orange eyes as adults. Hawks, and pigeons, have another “bare part”, at the base of the bill surrounding the nostrils, which is called a “cere”. The only color change I know about with that body part is in falcons, and the color change (variable depending on species) is age-related. Seasonal color changes occur in our herons and egrets, with brighter color in the breeding season on their bills, bare skin in front of their eyes, and sometimes their legs too.

European Starlings are especially interesting in that they have bare part color changes based on age, season, and sex. Juvenile starlings have all black bills, and adults in winter also have all, or mostly black bills. As spring approaches, their bills all gradually change to yellow. And as the birds come into breeding condition, the males get a pale blue patch at the base of their lower mandible, and the females get a pink patch. I have seen this often in starlings I’ve caught at banding stations, but if you look really closely during May and June, you might see these colors. The pink is harder to see against the yellow of the rest of the bill, but the pale blue isn’t too difficult to see if you have a good scope view.

NATURE NOTES (continued) by Allen Chartier

So, now that I've got you looking at starlings in your scope during May, when you should be looking at warblers (!), what about the mechanisms for these color changes. It seems clear that hormones drive these changes, as they are related to age, season, day length, and breeding condition. Color changes in facial skin are easier to understand, as the skin is living cells that are growing, are replaced, and are nourished by the bird's diet. The changes in other bare parts happen in a similar way. A bird's beak is not all bone, but is a layer of living cells covering a bony base, with clear keratin (like your finger nails) covering that. So, when the hormones change by season, age, or sex, they provide different nutrients to these living cells, which changes the mixtures of pigments (carotenoids and melanins), resulting in the change in color. But the exact mechanism on how this occurs is not well known.

An interesting article, "Seasonal Changes in the Color of Starling Bills", published in 1964 is available on-line at:

https://www.jstor.org/stable/4082738?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents



European Starling, breeding adult male. Photo by Allen T. Chartier.



European Starling, breeding adult female. Photo by Allen T. Chartier.

Bird Briefs (articles to look at on-line)

Submitted by Don Burlett

Bird Briefs

'Walnut Test' Reveals Parrots Are Shrewd Investors

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/grrlscientist/2018/08/27/walnut-test-reveals-parrots-are-shrewd-investors/#a2695f0b97f5>

This article discusses work done to test parrots and macaws about making sophisticated choices about food. Take a juicy piece of food now or take a token worth more or better food. Unsurprisingly, they showed some sophistication. However, these choices were affected by the general type of feeder the species was. Interesting stuff!

Forever Gone: Eight Bird Species Confirmed Extinct This Decade

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/grrlscientist/2018/09/07/forever-gone-eight-bird-species-confirmed-extinct-this-decade/#35d0d30d5926>

This article provides details on eight species known to have gone extinct this decade. Another sobering article for birders everywhere.

Meet The Dog That's Learning How to Help Save An Endangered Owl

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/grrlscientist/2018/09/10/meet-the-dog-thats-learning-how-to-help-save-an-endangered-owl/#2ba9340b27fe>

Interesting! A complex chain of predators is entangled in a fight for existence in Tasmania. Swift Parrots need nest holes but also does their predator, the Sugar Glider. A predator of the Sugar Glider is the Tasmanian Masked Owl, which also needs large nest holes. To help in researching these players, the scientists have trained dogs to find the pellets of the Masked Owl to help learn more that might save the parrots. Always a new twist on science!

Radar Weather Maps Can Forecast Bird Migrations And Aid Conservation

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/grrlscientist/2018/09/14/radar-weather-maps-can-forecast-bird-migrations-and-aid-conservation/#2b60cf39127b>

You all knew this – weather maps and radar can help tell where birds are going. Read on for more details on how this is done. Cool stuff.

Many people flee hurricanes. Some birdwatchers flock to them.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/science/2018/09/19/many-people-flee-hurricanes-some-birders-flock-them/?utm_term=.91e1a89d5682

Afraid of hurricanes? Maybe you're not a serious birder. Read about heading toward the storm to find those rarities.

Bird Briefs (continued)

Submitted by Don Burlett

Global Parrot Trade Threatens All Endangered Parrots By Spreading Deadly Virus

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/grrlscientist/2018/09/21/global-parrot-trade-threatens-all-endangered-parrots-by-spreading-deadly-virus/#241497a179de>

I'm sure that most global parrot trade is not usually going to be beneficial for parrots. However, you're probably not aware of the other problem here – viruses. Read on about how this is also detrimental to many endangered parrots.

Newly Discovered Hummingbird Species Is Already Endangered

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/grrlscientist/2018/09/30/newly-discovered-hummingbird-species-is-already-endangered/#3ac795f251aa>

This is an intriguing account of the discovery, nature of and status of this new species of hummingbird. Truly worth reading so you understand a bit about hummingbirds and bird ecology/biology. Maybe you want to go up above 11,000 feet to see this little wonder that is already threatened by man.

Getting to the root of long-term tree swallow declines

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/10/181017111043.htm>

Just as we would predict, lower flying insect populations and bad weather are proving a big problem for our local swallow species.

Scientists Discover A Rare Bird That's A Hybrid Of Three Different Species

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/grrlscientist/2018/11/09/rare-three-species-hybrid-bird-discovered/#51e4d8e07889>

Hybrids are one thing, triple hybrids are something altogether different. Here's a story of seeing a bird, trying to figure out what it was and getting a scientist involved. The song, genetics and all get into this picture. Interesting view into Citizen Science at its best.

Gulls Simplified by Pete Dunne and Kevin T. Karlson—Review

<https://medium.com/@GrrlScientist/gulls-simplified-by-pete-dunne-and-kevin-t-karlson-review-grrlscientist-315d33abb4bb>

Here's a review of a new book that just might help you get past all those confusing gulls. Worth a quick look.

Bird Briefs (continued)

Submitted by Don Burlett

For Birds-of-Paradise, Being Hot Is Not Enough to Win a Mate, They Must Also Have The Moves

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/grrlscientist/2018/11/20/for-birds-of-paradise-being-hot-is-not-enough-to-win-a-mate-they-must-also-have-the-moves/#32dc52c92fe4>

This an interesting look at birds-of-paradise and their courtship displays. The effectiveness of the display depends on color, movement, location and other factors. Check this out for a look into these bizarre birds.

Scientists work to save Puerto Rican parrots after Hurricane Maria

https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/kidspost/scientists-work-to-save-puerto-rican-parrots-after-hurricane-maria/2018/11/20/5d84ca28-e434-11e8-8f5f-a55347f48762_story.html?utm_term=.7a939b2b7cdc

A quick update on the fate of the Puerto Rican Parrot after Hurricane Maria swept the island. Numbers are staggering to look at. Short item.

Rare fossil bird deepens mystery of avian extinctions

https://www.birdwatchingdaily.com/news/science/rare-fossil-bird-deepens-mystery-of-avian-extinctions/?utm_source=sfmc-newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=rarefossilbird

Another look back at our current birds' ancestors and what happened to them many years ago. It's an interesting analysis of what may have been the reason for their demise.

The Genes That Make Parrots Into the Humans of the Bird World

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/07/science/parrots-genes-longevity.html>

A short article looking at the genetics of long life and intelligence in parrots that parallels that in humans. An interesting connection in the world of genetics.

BIRD ID QUIZ (SPRING 2019)



A) _____



B) _____



C) _____

Last Quiz (Winter '18-'19) issue photo quiz answers:

a) Rough-legged Hawk, b) Red-tailed Hawk and c) Red-shouldered Hawk

Explanation: a) Pale head, dark eye-line, black tail band at end of tail, pale upper wing in primaries, b) This could be a western red-tail or juvenile eastern, finely barred tail of pale color, fairly even colored upper wing; c) bands alternating dark and light of equal size, some color on underwing on leading edge of wing mostly dark head.

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

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

NOVEMBER 15, 2018

Our new Program Officer, Dave Hoch, has scheduled programs for the entire year of 2019 plus February 2020.

Our Facebook likes are up to 1,031.

Seven Ponds Nature Center Representative Dr. Greg Gossick reported that the family Halloween event called the Enchanted Woodland attracted about 200 people. An Eagle Scout project has been completed to provide the nature center with a new bird-feeding station, and 20 new bluebird boxes have been made.

OAS helped out at the Hawk Woods Fall Festival in October.

A Certificate of Thanks will be presented to Mike Mencotti, who has “retired” from leading our Wednesday morning field trips.

President Don Burlett has been invited to run for a spot on the Michigan Audubon board of directors.

JANUARY 24, 2019

Treasurer Elaine Ferguson reported that 2018 was a good year for OAS financially, mainly due to some unexpectedly large donations.

Membership Officer Dave Frye reported that our membership number and revenue are doing pretty well so far this membership year.

Field Trips for the first half of 2019 have been scheduled, and planning for the second half of the year will be done in March.

Janet Hug has continued to update our Facebook page, to maintain continuity until we find a replacement for her as Social Media Administrator. Our Facebook likes are now up to 1,116.

Seven Ponds Nature Center Representative Dr. Greg Gossick reported that two large grants were obtained to enable the nature center to upgrade its website and computer.

The May Nature Walk was set for May 14 at the E. L. Johnson Nature Center in Bloomfield Hills.

OAS board members continue to participate in events sponsored by various organizations, including signing up to help out at the Cranbrook Institute of Science “Spring into Science” event in April and Earth Day celebrations in April at Chrysler Corporation Headquarters in Auburn Hills and Heritage Park in Farmington Hills, and providing a presentation at the Michigan Science Teachers Association annual meeting in March.

Doris Applebaum, Secretary

UPCOMING MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS AND PROGRAMS

Date	Time	Program	Location
Tues., April 9	7:00 p.m.	“Conquering the Chorus: Birding by Ear”	First United Methodist Church (see below)
Tues., May 14	6:30 p.m.	Nature Walk	E.L. Johnston Nature Center
Tues., June 11	7:00 p.m.	“All About Owls”	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 Thomas Parlor. The facility is located on the south side of Maple Road between Southfield and Cranbrook Roads. There is plenty of lighted, free parking and barrier-free access. 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.

MEMBERSHIP MESSAGE

Welcome New Members!

Sue and Chuck Julian

Nicholas Rigney Family

Wayne Wieczorek

Our membership drive for 2019 is underway! Please pay your membership dues at a monthly meeting or by mailing in the membership form on page 32.

Thanks to everyone who helps sustain OAS with your membership contributions. We would be nowhere without you!



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
2780 SCENIC MEADOWS DRIVE
ORTONVILLE, MICHIGAN 48462

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