

Grand Traverse Audubon Club

grandtraverseaudubon.org

find us on Facebook and Instagram #gtaudubon

Editor: Kirk Waterstripe (4walkinglightly@gmail.com)

Greetings! As your new editor, I welcome you. This is your newsletter, and there is plenty of room for your submissions. Please contribute and make it yours!

Let me know what you think and what you'd like to see. I look forward to crafting these pages together in the coming year.

On The Calendar

Our regular meetings are usually the fourth Thursday of the month at the Boardman River Nature Center on Cass Road at 7:00 pm. Everyone is welcome to attend!

Nov. 18, 2021 (Thursday) - Juliana Lisuk and Jillian Votava, from Inland Seas Education Assoc. in Suttons Bay, will discuss how Lake Michigan has changed ecologically over the last 25 years. Using data collected by Schoolship students, they'll show us how fish communities and water quality have responded to invasive species and warmer temperatures.

December 16, 2021 (Thursday) - ANNUAL HOLIDAY GATHERING WITH MEMBER PHOTOS AND VIDEOS. A favorite evening of sharing photos. We're always up for a good birding story too. Contact Kathy Flegel (flegels@centurytel.net) if you'd like to present something.

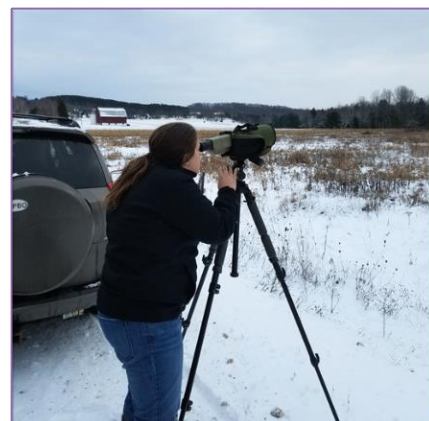


Official GTA club logo by Tom Ford

Upcoming Field Trips

December 18

Grand Traverse Christmas Bird Count (see page 2)



MEMBERSHIP DUES are due at the end of the year!
Click [here](#) to download the membership form.

Christmas Bird Counts in our area:

The Christmas Bird Count is the oldest citizen science project in the U.S. It all started when 27 hardy individuals counted birds on Christmas Day in 1900. Last year, over 71,000 people participated. Come on out and brave the cold for the birds! CBC data is used to spot trends and influence policy.

Counters spend the day in their assigned area, then often convene somewhere warm to share their lists and a meal. Contact the compiler for the Count in which you'd like to help. Yes, you're welcome to do more than one!

Grand Traverse Count – December 18 (Saturday)

Compiler: Leonard Graf, (231)946-5120

Leelanau Count – December 15 (Wednesday!)

Compiler: Nate Crane, (231)499-5460

Antrim County Count – December 17 (Friday)

Compiler: Curt Hofer, email curthofer1@gmail.com

Benzie County Count – December 17 (Friday)

Contact nedthebirder@gmail.com

If you live in one of the count areas, you can also participate as a feeder counter. Stay home and warm, and count birds that come to your feeders. Contact your compiler for more details.

Your Favorite Patch

In the past year and a half, we've all discovered or spent more time birding in places closer to home. Here's a place to share your treasures! In each issue, we'll feature a user-submitted favorite birding spot.



Leelanau Trail between Cherry Bend Rd. and Fouch Rd.

44.826184, -85.681941

This section of trail, right behind my house, runs through a swampy area that connected Lake Leelanau to Grand Traverse Bay a few

Birding Calendar

November

Keep your eyes peeled in early November for rare birds wandering through. The last of the migrating raptors are moving out this month, with a few lingering Red-tailed Hawks and some Rough-legged Hawks passing through.

Waterfowl migration is in full swing, with large rafts of diving ducks on Boardman Lake and Grand Traverse Bay, especially Redheads and Greater Scaup. Common Goldeneye and Bufflehead are also present.

Fruit-eating birds hit the berries and crabapples hard this month and next. Stop by the patches often.

December

Snowy Owls are showing up now, though they might not stay until January. Great Horned Owls start courting later in the month. Listen for their deep hoots.

As the inland lakes freeze, the ducks move to the Bay. Spots like Discovery Pier are good places to view them.

January

Time to start your year lists all over again!

thousand years ago. It's a wonderful mix of uplands with ash and cedar in the wet parts. While I don't put up huge lists from this spot, there is always a good deal of activity. Barred Owls and Red-shouldered Hawks live in the swamp. I usually find several species of woodpeckers there, including Pileateds. In season, chickadees, finches, warblers, kinglets, vireos, flycatchers and corvids make an appearance, along with flyovers of vultures, geese, Mallard and Wood Ducks, and the occasional Common Loon. The most recent big surprise was an Olive-sided Flycatcher in September!

To explore one of my favorite patches, park in the unpaved area where the trail crosses Fouch Rd., and walk south from there. It's about a half mile to the next road crossing, so you can get a nice walk out of the trip.

Kirk Waterstripe

To tell us about your favorite patch, preferably a little-known, seldom-birded local spot, email the editor!

Editor's Perch

Bird Safely this Season

It's fall! In addition to pumpkins and cider, we have late fall migrants to look forward to! The later fall warblers, kinglets and thrushes might still be lingering. Waterfowl are filling the lakes once again, with scoters, Long-tailed Ducks and Red-necked Grebes dotting the bays of Lake Michigan. All these treasures tempt us into environments that aren't as soft and forgiving as they were in spring.

First, other users are in the woods and fields. Archery deer season runs through December, and firearm (rifle) deer season opens November 15th. If you want to bird in areas away from trails and buildings, you should wear at least a little "hunter orange" or some other bright color. Remember, too, that harassing hunters, including scaring away their quarry, is illegal. No matter how you feel about what they're doing, please keep your views out of the woods. There are other forums in which to discuss ethics of hunting. Also remember they have paid to partake in their sport.

Second, those sea ducks and grebes can lure us out onto breakwaters, where we are subject to the whims of Lake Michigan. As we know, she can change moods in a hurry. Wind-driven spray and breaking waves can coat the surface in ice. Big waves sweep people off breakwaters every year. If you make a habit of breakwall birding, it would be wise to invest in some traction devices to strap on your boots. It's also wise to let someone know where you are going and when you expect to be back. It can be as simple as texting your birding buddy when you head out onto the breakwall and send another text when you get back.

Third, remember the wet and cold. Squalls can, and often do, sneak up on us. Know the signs of hypothermia. Protect yourself as painstakingly as you strive to keep the water spots off your optics! Wear an extra layer, preferably wool or fleece, and toss the rain jacket in the car so it's there if you need it.

As we all know, taking a few precautions can let you focus on the birds, literally. Without worry about the weather and your comfort, you'll be able to stay out there and maybe, just maybe, spot that Surf Scoter or jaeger as it cruises by over the waves.

Readers' Recommendations

In this space, you'll find recommendations for videos, websites, podcasts, books and other media goodies. If you have a recommendation, email the editor!

[American Birding Podcast](#) – if you like discussions of various aspects of birds and birding, tune in! New episodes posted every Thursday. Available through various streaming services.

Kirk W.

A Parrot Without a Name by Don Stap is perhaps my favorite book about birding. It covers a birding expedition to Peru probably in the 1970s and it is wonderfully written and has a ton of really good information on the birds of the neotropics. I suspect it is out of print, but probably can be found on Amazon or other similar sites.

Kevin Breen

[Expeditions](#) is a nature series streamed on the Amazon Firestick that I recommend. Produced by Clemson University, the programs are presented by Patrick McMillan, PhD, a Clemson University biology professor. Dr. McMillan does programs about flora and fauna at diverse locations around the United States. It is easy to see that his favorite fauna are birds. You never see him on screen without binoculars. The photography and narrative are excellent. Other good nature programming I have found on the Firestick is from Austria, Australia, France, and Canada public TV.

John Mesch

Trivia Night!

After the election of officers at the October meeting, Kirk Waterstripe led the 18 attendees in a bird trivia contest! Questions tested their knowledge of identification, bird biology, birding history, and birds in popular culture. The winning team members were John and Shirley Mesch, Kay Beerhuis, and Deb Harp. Congratulations! A very big thank you to [Wild Birds Unlimited](#) and [Rare Bird Brewpub](#) for donating prizes! We'll do it again sometime.

Membership?

Like what you're reading?
Consider joining the Club!
More info is available at
[Membership Information – Grand Traverse Audubon Club](#)

Member submissions

This space is for stories or photos submitted of our members. To submit your story or photo of birds or birders, email it to the editor!



Submitted by Kirk Waterstripe (just to get us started).

Check out the Grand Traverse Audubon Instagram page!



If you have an Instagram account, check out our page! Follow us! This is part of our publicity and outreach effort to reach younger folks and inform them of Club activities. #gtaudubon

Winter Finch Forecast

According to the Finch Research Network, there is a good crop of cones in eastern Canada, so the finches that visit us in the winter might stay up north this year. Bohemian Waxwings have a good crop of Mountain Ash to keep them close to home. For more information, check the link:



<https://finchnetwork.org/winter-finch-forecast-2021-2022-by-tyler-hoar>

Christmas Bird Count Survival Tips

It will be time before you know it. Gathering your gear in the dimly lit kitchen, sliding into your warmest boots, meeting up with your teammates in the pre-dawn cold...

Dress in layers. You can always peel them off if you're too warm.

Most likely, you won't be too warm.

A container of hot beverage will be appreciated, be it coffee, hot chocolate, tea, or hot cider.

Use restrooms whenever you can. After the coffee, you'll know why.

Before you have your fluids, check those in your vehicle, including coolant. You might be idling more than usual. Also, know how to turn off the stupid traction control so if you get stuck, you can get it into real four-wheel-drive (yeah, personal experience).

If you know where you're going, scout your area beforehand. Locate the fruit-bearing trees and shrubs. Check out the sheltered spots with conifers. Note where you hear flocks of chickadees, woodpeckers, and finches. Find the feeders!

If you're a repeat counter with a consistent area, try getting to know landowners before you start. Ask about access to good-looking areas. Explain what you're doing and what kind of vehicle you drive. It doesn't hurt to drop off a bag of seed for your favorite feeder-keepers either.

Here are a couple podcasts to get you in the mood:

Stories: <https://www.aba.org/american-birding-podcast-the-christmas-bird-count-stravaganza-episode/>

History, how it's done, etc.: [Bonus 01 - The Christmas Bird Count — The Field Guides \(thefieldguidespodcast.com\)](https://thefieldguidespodcast.com/bonus-01-the-christmas-bird-count-the-field-guides/)

Membership Survey Summary

Remember the survey that you received earlier this year? Here's a summary of what we learned:

- We have 122 members in the club.
- The majority (65%) of respondents have been in the club for 5 years or more.
- 25% rate themselves as advanced birders, and 58% rate themselves as intermediate.
- 40% attend 3 or more meeting per year, and 40% attend less than 3 meetings. The rest say they don't attend meetings.



- The Bird Alert notifications and bird outings were of the most interest to respondents, followed by monthly programs, conservation advocacy, and citizen science.
- Recommendations for future programming included bird identification, including by ear, “anything birding”, local birding issues, young birders, issues around “birding while black”, loons, and conservation issues.

Thanks to all those who responded. The Executive Board has been taking your comments into consideration when planning next year's activities. Hopefully, your recommendations will help us retain interest and attract others to the club.

Birds and Window Collisions

Now that birds are spending more time at feeders, close to our homes, we may see more birds colliding with windows. It's always hard to hear that sound, or see a feather stuck to the glass. The very windows through which we love watching can look like trees or sky to birds, or they might look like a passage through the house. Migrating birds are at risk too, as they journey through our neighborhoods. It's estimated that only about a third survive the collisions. Fortunately, there are some steps we can take. First, this podcast provides some excellent background information:

<https://www.aba.org/american-birding-podcast-bird-collision-basics-with-heidi-trudell/>

This podcast has links to several resources in the notes near the bottom of the page.

<https://www.birdnote.org/listen/birdnote-presents/clear>

Since the holiday season is rapidly approaching, you may want to consider giving the bird lover in your life something to help avoid collisions. Here's an example of one product that claims to make the window surface more visible to birds, yet allow viewing through the window:



<https://www.featherfriendly.com/residential>

Wild Birds Unlimited carries a few products too.

If you'd like to participate in monitoring window strikes, consider joining the [Avian Collision Team](#) through Massachusetts Audubon. There are some buildings in TC with quite a bit of glass. Monitoring generates data, which becomes the knowledge that powers thoughtful decisions that benefit birds!

Thanks for reading! Until the next issue in 2 months, keep your binoculars clean!