
BIRD NOTES

GRAND TRAVERSE
AUDUBON CLUB

www.grandtraverseaudubon.org

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March 2025



Upcoming Programs

March 20 - Great Lakes Piping Plover Recovery Program
Vince Cavalieri, wildlife biologist at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, will present a program on the recovery of the Great Lakes Piping Plover in the Great Lakes. In recent seasons Sleeping Bear has been the summer breeding site for $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of the entire Great Lakes piping plover breeding population and is thus extremely important for the survival and recovery of this federally endangered species.

April 17 - Birding in Ecuador
Jenny Young will share her adventures from the cloud forest to the Amazon Basin, from ecolodges to travel by canoe. Join us for a tropical travelogue as far from the cold and snow as you can get!
Special venue: this program will be at the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy building at 2846 N Three Mile Rd.

Our meetings are held at the Boardman River Nature Center at 7:00 pm. Doors open at 6:30. All are welcome; building is accessible to all.

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Upcoming Field Trips

April 19 - The Club's annual field trip to Arcadia Marsh (on Route 22, Manistee County). We'll look for Sandhill Cranes, waterfowl, blackbirds, early warblers, and much more. Meet up at the car wash by Meijer on US 31 South at 7:00 AM and then carpool/caravan to the marsh. If it more convenient for folks, we'll also stop at Wendy's parking lot at Interlochen Corners at 7:20 am to carpool/caravan to the marsh. If you would like to meet the group at the marsh parking lot off of M-22 (44.489058, -86.231795) please advise the leader in advance. Contact leader Jenny Young with questions: jenny@timandjenny.com.

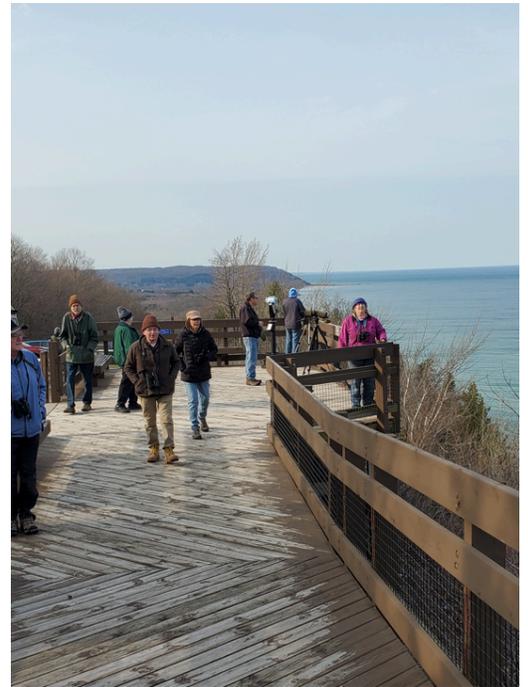
*Parts of this trip will be accessible to those with mobility issues.

Sundays in April, May and June - Sunday Bird Walks are back for another season!

Our first outing will be on **April 6th at 7:30 am**. Meet at Logan's Landing/ Medalie Park for some spring migrants and waterfowl. Check the Audubon Club's [Events](#) page for locations and times for future Sundays.

May 3 - Sportsman's Park Field Trip (East Jordan area in Charlevoix County; coordinates 45.152546, -85.131905)

Join member Curt Hofer for a pleasant morning of birding beginning at 8:00 am. There is a large marsh that attracts a variety of ducks, waders, and seasonal shorebirds. Interesting raptors such as Merlins and Northern Harriers often show up as well as more common Bald Eagles and Ospreys. There are several good areas to find passerines that like wet areas. New last year is a nature trail / board walk through part of the marsh that is an easy hike. A spotting scope would be helpful but it isn't necessary. Contact leader Curt Hofer (curthofer1@gmail.com) with any questions



**Attention! Bird
Flu is here!**
If you find a dead bird, DO
NOT PICK IT UP!
Bird flu has been affecting
wild bird populations
around North America. To
be on the safe side, please
don't handle dead birds.

Board Briefs

The Board is investigating the feasibility of becoming a Not-for-Profit 501 (3c). If members have recent experience with this process, guidance and advice on the application process are welcome! Contact any Board member!

Great Lakes Audubon has opportunities for shared funding of programs and events that support bird conservation in Michigan. We are currently considering a collaboration that involves tagging Rough-legged Hawks, which are experiencing population decline. Stay tuned to find out ways to become involved in these collaborative efforts in our area.

Your board is really interested in figuring out ways to be more welcoming to younger birders. Board members met with Indiana Audubon and developed a list of ideas, and we are discussing prioritizing and implementation. If anyone among GTAC members is interested in helping us craft a social media presence, please let us know!

Board member Kathie Wiley has been valiantly dealing with various agencies and governmental units to receive permission to place the GTAC Loon Platform off of TC-owned property in Boardman-Lake. Correctly constructed artificial loon nesting platforms protect nests from predation by eagles or on-shore predation by raccoons and others. Our platform was constructed by Eagle Scout Cooper Nash in 2024 and we hope to successfully launch it as soon as the ice clears from the launch site.

The Board meets monthly to help shape club activities and consider options for improving GTAC's mission to serve birds and birders in the Grand Traverse, Leelanau, and Antrim County area.

Submitted by Maryellen Newport, Board member At-large. She's the members' voice on the Board. If you have concerns or suggestions, contact her at maryellen.newport@gmail.com



COMMUNITY EVENTS

April 26 - TADL MakerFest,
GT Civic Center's Howe
Arena, 10 am - 2 pm

GTAC will be at MakerFest again
this year. Tell your firends and
bring the kids to this family-
favorable frenzy of fun! Check
tadl.org for more details.

NMC EES birding classes!

April 25-26 Birding By Ear
May 2-3 Birding For Beginners

Improve your birding skills with
local birder Kirk Waterstripe
Sign up for either, or both!
Contact EES at 995-1700 or
nmc.edu/ees.



Past Highlights

Birding the eastern U.P. -
Feb. 1 & 2

There were 8 members who
attended this trip; Jenny Young
was the leader. Several people
drove up to St. Ignace the night
before; the group met at the
Budget Host Motel in St. Ignace at
10:00 am on Saturday, February 1st
and birded until almost dusk from
there. A few people saw a
Northern Shrike driving up to St.
Ignace (near Levering). The
highlights were 6 Snowy Owls in
Rudyard and 19 Bald Eagles (seen
all over...not all put on eBird since
many were seen while driving). On
February 1st, the weather was
cold, but sunny and little wind, so
it made for a pleasant day of car
birding. The next morning, it was
snowing in St. Ignace and the
visibility limited, so most of the
group headed home with a few
people stopping at Bates Road to
see a big flock of snow buntings
with a few Horned Larks mixed in.
Overall a good trip, but
disappointing there do not seem
to be many of the winter finches
in the UP this winter (eg: Evening
Grosbeaks, Pine Grosbeaks,
Crossbills, or Redpolls), but the
group had a good time anyway!

(photo by Jenny Young)

Call for Volunteers!

We need you!

April 26 - MakerFest
Come hang out at the GTAC table
and meet folks, help with a fun
bird-related activity for the kids!

May ?? - Power Island Migrating
Bird Survey
Date TBD after the Island Ranger
gets the boat in the water!

June 8th - Detroit Bird Alliance
We need a couple folks and
spotting scopes to greet our
guests at Medalie Park as they
bike around Boardman Lake.

Contact your nearest board
member for more details!

Follow us!
You can find the
Grand Traverse
Audubon Club on



Tell your friends!
And their kids!



Birds to Watch For...

According to eBird here are some
species to find in the narrow windows
of migration, with times and places.

Northern Saw-whet Owl - reports are
often from the end of March. Try
getting out before sunrise or after
sunset in areas with dense conifers
near water.

American Woodcock - Listen for the
peent after sunset in damp fields
during April.

Short-eared Owl - Watch for them over
fields and marshes in the latter part of
April.

Mackinac Straits Raptor Watch



Naturalist's Corner...

Winter Fruit

This time of year, the tasty fruits are all gone. Fruit-eating birds like American Robins, Eastern Bluebirds and waxwings are left with highbush cranberry (*Viburnum trilobum*), a few shriveled Riverbank Grapes, and waxy fruit like Wax Myrtle (eastern Great Lakes) and Poison Ivy.

Yes, those waxy white pellets are food for woodpeckers, robins, bluebirds, Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) warblers, swallows, tanagers, and mockingbirds. The fatty layer provides much-needed calories and nutrients for hungry winter residents and early migrants caught by a cold snap.

Think about that when you're looking for birds in early spring: find the fruit! Some of it may be on those hairy vines we've all learned to avoid!



This newsletter was written by a real live human!

Providing nest material

Want to do your local birds a favor this year? Put out some nest material. While birds can usually find what they need, here are a few human-sourced materials that are safe for your avian neighbors:

- dog hair (save as your dog sheds)
- tall grass (cut in into shorter pieces)
- feathers (if you have chickens or know someone who does)
- the moss that's growing where you don't want it
- wood shavings from your shop (NOT treated wood!)
- your hair!
- mud (let the hose drip a little; robins line their nests with mud)

Editor's Perch (short this time)

April

The earth is waiting
One last snow will come
Then colors and smells and sounds
Sensations and tastes
Fill our souls with spring

Night Noises

Tree frogs and toads sing
Hundred voices all night long
Please shut the hell up!

Bird Behavior Bingo

Want to add another dimension to your birding, and more appreciation of birds? In your birding this spring, make note of the behaviors you see. Check the boxes and get a bingo!

Pecking	Courtship display	Hunting	Flocking	Courtship feeding
Dabbling	Fighting	Bark gleaning	Diving	Drinking
Sunning (Thermo-regulation)	Singing (territory/ mate attraction)	Food caching	Flycatching (Hawking)	Displacement
Carrying a fecal sac	Leaf gleaning	Mobbing	Drying wings	Defending territory
Kleptoparasitism	Distraction display	Copulation	Nest-building	Plunge-diving