

September 2024

Bird Notes

Newsletter of the Grand Traverse Audubon Club

grandtraverseaudubon.org

find us on Facebook and Instagram #gtaudubon

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It's fall. More and more, we're learning that nearly any bird can show up in nearly any location this time of year. Study your field guides and be ready for anything!

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!

Sept. 26, 2023 – Monthly Meeting: Insects!

Local entomological legend Duke Elsner will be bringing some of his insect collections and sharing with us some of the many ways that insects and birds are interconnected.

We'll have a short business meeting before the program, and we'll be voting on some revisions to the Club's bylaws. You won't want to miss the program and we need your votes!

Oct. 24, 2023 – Annual Meeting: “Eye of Newt and Toe of Frog”

This is the meeting when we elect officers for 2025. After this very important business meeting, we'll be treated to a program about Frog and Toads and Witches, just in time for Halloween! Sydney Giddings from the Recreation Department of the Huron-Manistee National Forest will share a very entertaining talk about how amphibians became associated with witchcraft.



Official GTA club logo by Tom Ford

Upcoming Field Trips

Sept. – Oct.

Sunday Morning Bird Walks. The last Sunday of each month will be an evening outing. Watch your email for details.

October 12

October Big Day with Grand Traverse Conservation District

Nov. 21, 2023 – Monthly Meeting: TBD

We're still working on this one ...

Upcoming Field Trips

Sunday Morning Bird Outings

We're back! Each Sunday from now through the end of October, Kirk Waterstripe will lead a group at a location in Grand Traverse or Leelanau County. If you're a beginning birder, or if you want to polish your skills, these trips are for you! Shorebirds at Boardman lake will be featured, as well as fall migrants at various locations.



Locations and times will be announced in BirdAlert emails, so watch your inbox.

Oct. 12 – October Big Day

Come to the Boardman River Nature Center at 9:00 AM to participate in a joint venture between Grand Traverse Audubon Club and the Grand Traverse Conservation District of the October Big Day. You'll be greeted by GT Audubon member Kathie Wiley and a facilitator with the GT Conservation District. The October Big Day is an annual bird census conducted throughout the world by volunteers like you. We'll be submitting observations and supporting conservation worldwide. You'll help count birds and learn how the data is entered online. We'll be walking around the Board River Nature Center grounds and along the Natural Education Reserve, which is part of the Boardman/Ottawa River Trail. 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM.

Registration is required for this event:

[October Big Day Birding Event Registration](#)

Contact: Kathie Wiley / treasurer@grandtraverseaudubon.org

Birding Calendar

September

Early in the month, watch for vagrant flycatchers. Migration intensity picks up this month, with more songbirds drifting through. Watch for sparrows and more warblers in "confusing" fall plumages. Migrating raptors come south too, with Osprey and Broad-winged Hawks among the early migrants.

October

Waterfowl are beginning to move south, so check lakes and the bays of Lake Michigan. Watch for bluebirds and other thrushes. Juncos will start to appear in the woods, then at feeders. Make note of the last date you see various species around your home or feeders.

November

Early November has been called Rarity Week, so keep your eyes open for anything. Rafts of ducks and grebes frequent the Lake Michigan bays. Late raptors like Red-tails and Rough-legs are in the fields. You might find an early Snowy Owl by the end of the month.

By-laws Revision – read ‘em and vote!

Your board has been revisiting the Club’s by-laws, and a few changes are in order. Here’s a link to the proposed changes: [CLUB BY-LAWS FINAL REVISION - 2024](#). Take a look and come to the September 26 meeting.

Looking ahead to 2025

The Board is planning activities for next year, and we’d love to hear from you! What trips, programs, and activities would you like to see next year? More outings close to home? One-day or multi-day trips to places farther from home? Send your ideas to the nearest board member, or to Kirk’s email on the first page of this newsletter.

Mark your calendars! Christmas Bird Counts are coming!

What better way to spend a day in December than counting birds? Want to participate in the field? Want to count at your feeder? Here are the dates and compiler contact info:

Grand Traverse – Dec. 12 (Saturday), contact Nate Crane at nmcrane@gmail.com

Lake Leelanau CBC – Dec. 18 (Wednesday), contact Kirk Waterstripe at 4walkinglightly@gmail.com or (231)883-2858

Antrim Co. – Dec. 20 (Friday), contact Curt Hofer at curthofer1@gmail.com.

Benzie Co. – more info in the November *Bird Notes*

Membership Renewal Time is coming up! This year, you can renew with an online payment! Just click [here](#) and use the PayPal option.

Bird Trivia

One for election season: By how many votes did the Wild Turkey lose to the Bald Eagle in the selection of our national bird? (answer on the last page)

Editor's Perch

Showing Up

After much deliberation, this month's column will not feature a directly political plea to vote as though the future of birds and other wildlife depends on it. Their future is still in either short-term peril or longer-term uncertainty, but this month's topic will be a bit wider.

Show up. I'm addressing each of you directly. If at all possible, speak up, write letters or emails, volunteer for science projects, bring snacks to a meeting, take a role in leadership. Organizations that support wildlife need your help. It's easy to send a check or donate online, and thank you if you do that, but people run these organizations, and, as much as they need your money, they also need you. Especially the little non-profits and clubs that get by on a shoestring budget and the efforts of a handful of people.

Close to home, there are many ways to contribute. Send something for this newsletter, a tale or a birding adventure, a couple photos, a poem, a product recommendation. Lead a field trip. Here's a little secret: you don't have to be an expert birder! The best leaders are those who keep everyone involved and make sure they're having a good time. If you feel a little more dedicated, volunteer for a board position. Without board members, the club ceases to exist and its assets get transferred to Michigan Audubon. It's in the by-laws that you were going to read and vote on.

More broadly, you can help birds by entering good data on eBird. Those data get used for a wide variety of projects. Take a moment to say hi to a fellow birder. We're not that weird, and basically friendly. Feeling a little more social? Volunteer to take someone to an outing or a meeting. There are many folks who don't like to drive at night, or in the winter.

As you contribute in one or more of the many ways possible, don't forget to clean your own lenses, a.k.a. take care of yourself. Come to a meeting and enjoy the company of people with similar passions. Spend time outdoors, among birds preferably. Take time to ground yourself and refill your cup with the amazing energy and peace that is our natural world.

- Kirk

Late Summer Highlights

Our big Sunday Bird Walk highlight so far was the Red-necked Phalarope!



An amazing flight of Broad-winged Hawks





Thanks, Joan K., for the photos.

Trivia answer: One vote!

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