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September 2025

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# Bird Notes

## Newsletter of the Grand Traverse Audubon Club

[grandtraverseaudubon.org](http://grandtraverseaudubon.org)

find us on Facebook and Instagram #gtaudubon

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There's a new editor on the horizon! It's been my pleasure to leave my thoughts on these pages, and to keep you informed. Please consider contributing photos, thoughts, bird articles and related items to *Bird Notes* in the future.

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*Official GTA club logo by Tom Ford*

## On the Calendar

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

## September 18 (Thursday)- Kirkland's Warbler Program by Dr. Steve Roels

Dr. Roels is the Kirkland's Warbler Program Director for the American Bird Conservancy and the Kirkland's Warbler Conservation on Team Coordinator. He earned his Ph.D. from Michigan State University in 2018, studying bird community recovery and ecosystem services in tropical forest restorations. He has conducted field research in Michigan, Kansas, Texas, Colorado, Vietnam, and Panama. His scientific work has been published in peer-reviewed journals including *Avian Conservation and Ecology*; *Restoration on Ecology*; and *Agriculture, Ecosystems, and Environment*.

## Alison Vilag's coming back on October 23rd!

Join us for a lively presentation from intrepid birder and bird counter Alison Vilag, the self-described "Boreal Vagabond", who has traveled extensively and worked as a bird surveyor in numerous interesting places. On a Tuesday night in late April 2024, Alison Vilag's friend Tim Baerwald, a fellow migration counter, asked if she'd be able to meet him Thursday morning at a remote Upper Peninsula boat launch 8 hours away. She said yes: the boat would be taking them to Manitou Island—5 miles off the tip of the Keweenaw Peninsula—and Manitou Island is an incredible concentration point for migrating birds. But Manitou's migration is little-studied, and the island, situated in a particularly treacherous sweep of Lake Superior, is uninhabited. Alison will be sharing what she and Tim learned about raptor migration on Manitou—and will share the general experience of witnessing avian movement from a remote island.

This is also the meeting where we conduct a bit of essential business: electing the folks who will serve on the Executive Board for 2026. See the item below introducing our slate of officer candidates.

Park in the Aspen parking lot, next to the Dennon Museum. The program will be in **Scholars Hall, room 217 at 6:30 pm**. Parking permits are not enforced in the evening.

Note: there won't be refreshments at this meeting. The board decided in favor of financial responsibility over catering by NMC's Hawk Owl Café. Bring your water bottle!

## Upcoming Field Trips

### Owl Banding with Friends of Whitefish Point



Remember Nova and Chris from our special program back in June?

GT Audubon Club is organizing an overnight field trip to Whitefish Point on **Sept 28th** to observe mist-netting and banding of owls. Nova says, *The Friends of Whitefish Point runs an Owl Banding Station during the spring, summer and fall at Whitefish Point. Visit and learn about the wonders of migrating owls and their adaptations and migratory journeys throughout the country. You may even have a chance to see an owl up close! The \$30 donation for your ticket goes directly towards supporting this long-term monitoring project so that we can continue to do this critical work and share it with many more people.*

\*Note: It will be prime fall color season, so making your travel arrangements very soon is advised. Contact leader Mary Ellen Newport with any questions: (419) 494-6471

Sign Up: [White Fish Point Field Trip 2025](#)



Thanks to NMC for co-sponsoring this event!

### Sept. 14, 21, 2025 (Sunday)– Sunday Morning Bird Outings

Every Sunday from now through the end of October, one of our members will lead a group at a location around Traverse City. If you're a beginning birder, or if you want to polish your skills, these trips are for you! Like last year, on the last Sunday of each month, the walk will take place in the evening.



Locations and times are listed on the website so check them out!

## Membership milestone and invitation

At the board meeting on August 28<sup>th</sup>, Treasurer Kathie reported that our current membership has reached 150! It's been a while since we've had that many members. Thanks to all who have joined recently!

## We're a Non-profit organization!

For several months, the Board has been debating whether or not to pursue non-profit status. After learning that it's not as complicated as we thought, we decided to apply. As of mid-August, our application was approved! What does this mean?

We're pleased to tell you we determined you're **exempt from** federal income tax under Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Section 501(c)(3). Donors can deduct contributions they **make** to you under IRC Section 170. You're also qualified to receive tax deductible bequests, devises, transfers or gifts under Section 2055, 2106, or 2522.

Watch for more information on projects we're considering for 2026; keep the Club in mind in your year-end giving!

## Executive Board candidates for 2026

As mentioned above, our meeting on October 23<sup>rd</sup> is Election Night! We'll be electing a slate of officers to the Executive Board for 2026. Here's the slate as it stands currently:

President – John Imboden (continuing)

Vice-President – vacant

Secretary – Jared Gugnitz (continuing)

Treasurer – Kathie Wiley (continuing)

Publicity & Newsletter – Jenny Young

Member-at-large – Kirk Waterstripe

Past-President – Kathy Flegel (continuing)

Would anyone like to consider serving as Vice-President? Ask your nearest board member about the responsibilities, which aren't bad. We share a lot of the work on the board.

## Meeting night change – watch for the survey!

Last year, the Board moved our meeting night to the third Thursday of each month since we were moving several meetings to avoid holidays. We were promptly informed that the Grand Traverse Rock and Mineral Club meets on those nights, and several members also attend those meetings. After discussion, the Board is putting it out to the membership: which night would you prefer for our meetings, the first Thursday, or the second Thursday. Watch for the survey in your Birdalert email and please respond!

## Houghton Lake Sewage Pond Recap

On Saturday, August 16, the field trip led by Curt Hofer netted 52 species sighted between the 3 locations: HL Sewage Ponds, HL Flats, and Reedsburg dam. Notables: Black Terns, Canvas Back Ducks, 5 Osprey, & a Pied-billed Grebe. Curt was able to take a picture of an active Barn Swallow Nest at the Flats.



## Members Photos – Let's see yours!

Our Webmaster & Treasurer Kathie Wiley reminds you that our website has space for your photos [here](#). Please consider submitting your photos of birds, birders, or beautiful places. Email Kathie at [dujour1@gmail.com](mailto:dujour1@gmail.com).

## Christmas Bird Counts – save the dates!

December 19 (Friday)– Antrim County  
Contact: Curt Hofer  
[curthofer1@gmail.com](mailto:curthofer1@gmail.com)

TBD- December – Benzie County  
Contact: Doug Cook  
[nedthebirder@gmail.com](mailto:nedthebirder@gmail.com)

December 20 (Saturday)– Grand Traverse County  
Contact: Nate Crane  
231-499-5460

December 17 (Wednesday) – Leelanau County  
Contact: Kirk Waterstripe  
[4walkinglightly@gmail.com](mailto:4walkinglightly@gmail.com)



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

***This newsletter was written by a human, not by a robot!***