

August 2026

Bird Notes

Newsletter of the Grand Traverse Audubon Club

grandtraverseaudubon.org

find us on Facebook and Instagram #gtaudubon

Editor: Jenny Young publicist@grandtraverseaudubon.org

It is hard to believe summer is quick coming to an end. There has already been a nice variety of shorebirds coming through (particularly at Boardman Lake) and soon the songbirds will be migrating through followed by ducks. Get out and enjoy this new season!

- Jenny Young



Official GTA club logo by Tom Ford

Be sure to bookmark the calendar to keep up with all of our events:

[Events 2026 – Grand Traverse Audubon Club](#)

Program Events

Our program meetings are starting back in September and we have a great line up for the rest of the year. We meet at Boardman River Nature Center at 7pm unless otherwise noted. See website (Events tab) for more information.

- Sep 10: Dr. Paul Coussens, professor of animal science at Michigan State University, will present a program on Avian Influenza. Come and learn about the bird flu virus, where it hides in nature, how it jumped to mammals and humans, how it impacts agriculture such as eggs and chickens, and what we can do about it.
- Oct 8 (venue TBD): North Sky Raptor Center will showcase some of their ambassador birds and provide information on their mission. In addition, this will be our annual election. If you are interested in serving on the board, please contact Kathy Flegel at kflegel33@gmail.com
- Nov 12: Linda Woods with The Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians will describe her ceremonial Eagle Staff and the steps that led to her earning such an honorable symbol. In addition, she will describe what birds are so special (and why) to the Anishinaabe culture.
- Dec 10: Annual Club Holiday Gathering with a showing of member photos and videos.

Upcoming Bird Walks and Community Events

- With the days getting shorter, we will be moving the Sunday morning hikes to a bit later in the morning starting on August 30th (see below for times). The last scheduled hike of the year will be October 18th. See website for additional information and link to location.
- **Sunday bird hikes:**
 - **August 23 (8:00 am):** Mitchell Creek Meadows Nature Preserve.
Leader: Jenny Young jenny@timandjenny.com
 - **August 30 (8:30 am):** Pyatt Lake Preserve (New Parking Lot off Peninsula Drive).
Leader: Kathie Wiley dujour@gmail.com
 - **September 6 (8:30 am):** Leelanau Trail at Fouch Road
Leader: Kirk Waterstripe 4walkinglightly@gmail.com
 - **September 13 (9:00 am):** Maple Bay Natural Area
Leader: Kathie Wiley dujour1@gmail.com
 - **September 20 (9:00 am):** Timbers Recreation Area
Leader: Jenny Young jenny@timandjenny.com
 - **September 27 (3:00 pm) *Special Event*** Young Birders Walk - Reffitt Nature Center
This walk will introduce children of all ages and their parents to the wonder and joy of birds and bird watching. Children 12 and younger should be accompanied by an adult. Limited number of extra binoculars will be available.
Leader: Maryellen Newport maryellen.newport@gmail.com
 - **October 4 (9:00 am):** Medalie Park-Logan's Landing
Leader: Jenny Young jenny@timandjenny.com
 - **October 11 (9:00 am):** Arcadia Marsh Nature Preserve
Carpool Option: Meet Kathie at Chums Corners Ace Hardware at 7:30 am
Leader: Kathie Wiley dujour1@gmail.com
 - **October 18 (9:00 am):** Glen Haven Beach
Leader: Kirk Waterstripe 4walkinglightly@gmail.com
- **Community events:**
 - **August 27th (8:15 to noon):** Set sail aboard the schooner *Inland Seas* for a voyage to Gull Island (Bellow Island) a protected bird sanctuary off Northport Bay. Chat with local birding experts, including Dr. Keith Grasman from the *Wings Over Water Research Institute* and Nate Crane from GTAC! Tickets are \$65, link to tickets: <https://schoolship.org/public-and-family-programs/>
 - **September 21 & 22:** Eagle Presentation by Dr Carl Palazzolo at local libraries
Dr. Carl Palazzolo, a wildlife veterinarian for over 48 years, will be sharing pictures and information on bald eagle biology and behavior from his new hard-cover book *The Comeback of our National Symbol in Michigan*. The proceeds of sales will go to the rehabbers and other behind-the-scenes people that do so much of the work to care for injured wildlife.
September 21 (6:30 pm) at Peninsula Community Library (2893 Island View Rd). Live Eagle will be present!
September 22 (5:30 pm) at East Bay Township Hall (1989 Three Mile Rd. N)

Meet a Member – Grady Povolo



Meet one of our youngest members of the club; Grady Povolo is only 11 years old and already has a pretty big life list! His parents (Pete and Tana) have been big supporters of Grady's passion, shuttling him to various places to bird and even incorporating birding into their family vacations.

How long have you been birding and what got you interested?

I don't remember it, but my mom has a video of me at almost 4 years old looking at a bird book and using it to teach my little sister the common bird species of Michigan. Like most families, during COVID, we didn't have a lot to do, so we spent time watching the birds at our feeder or taking hikes in the woods. That got me even more intrigued!

Where is your favorite place to bird around the Traverse City area?

Medalie Park and the Boardman Lake Trail is good because there is always something unique to see year round. Recently there was

a pair of Stilt Sandpipers. I've also seen Tundra Swans, Caspian Terns, and Purple Martins there. The fields and ponds by the Meijer in Acme Township can also be a good birding spot. I have seen Eastern Meadowlarks, Green Herons, American Kestrels, various hawk species, and Northern Shrikes in the wintertime.

What has been one of your favorite experiences while birding?

If sitting in a lawn chair in my driveway with a pair of binoculars counts, then watching a pair of Eastern Bluebirds from nest building through fledging four chicks was definitely a favorite experience of mine. Also, this year on spring break, my family went to Florida. We got to see Burrowing Owls in Cape Coral. They were super cute, and it was interesting to see them living in people's front yards.

What advice would you have for young people who are interested in getting into birdwatching?

If you're able to, put a feeder in your yard filled with black oil sunflower seeds. You'll be sure to get Chickadees, Nuthatches, and Tufted Titmice, which are fun to watch throughout the year. A field guide will help you with identifying the birds. A good beginner guide is the "Birds of Michigan Field Guide" by Stan Tekiela because the birds are organized by color which is helpful if you don't know their names yet. The Merlin Bird ID app by Cornell has both sound and photo ID features. Finally, a pair of basic binoculars are good to have so you can see birds from a distance.

Besides birding, what other past times or interests do you have?

I play soccer, basketball, and enjoy participating in theater with a local group. I also like to read and build nest boxes with my dad.

What is your favorite bird and why?

My favorite bird is the Eastern Bluebird because I enjoyed watching them complete a nesting cycle in my yard. They seem to have a friendly and tame personality.

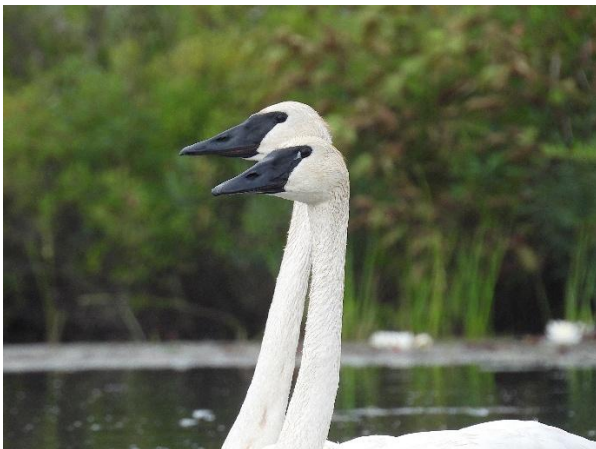
How Can I Help Grand Traverse Audubon Club?

Our club is run purely by volunteers and we would love to see more of you get involved – remember many hands make light work!

- Our annual election of board members is in October. If you have interest in running for a board position and/or want to help with the nomination committee, contact Kathy Flegel kflegel33@gmail.com. We will have at least one open position (Member at Large)
- Cornell's annual October Big Day is scheduled for Saturday, October 10th. This is a 24-hour event where people worldwide watch and count as many bird species as possible. Spend anywhere from 10 minutes in your backyard to a full day recording birds into eBird or Merlin. If you would like to lead a GTAC field trip on October Big Day, contact Kathie Wiley: dujour1@gmail.com
- If you are interested in providing snacks for the monthly program meetings, contact Merry Vanderlinden at merryvl@yahoo.com
- If you have any ideas for our 2027 monthly member program meetings, contact Ron McCullick at ronmccullick@charter.net
- If you have ideas for newsletter content, or better yet, are willing to write a short article for the newsletter contact publicist@grandtraverseaudubon.org
- If you have interest in helping with young birder program contact publicist@grandtraverseaudubon.org
- Donate to our fundraiser for Long-Eared Owl GPS tracker. Choose Walter Hastings Env/Education Fund in this link: [Donate](#)

Editor's Perch –Birding By Kayak

One of my favorite ways to bird in the summer is by kayak. I find the woodland trails get fairly quiet in summer, but there is always something interesting to look at while out paddling. The birds also seem less likely to flush when you are in a boat. My favorite places to kayak around here are Platte River in Sleeping Bear Dunes and Cedar River through Leelanau Conservancy's Cedar River Preserve. Here's a few from a recent trip on Cedar River:



Trumpeter Swans



Great Blue Heron