



THE NUTHATCH

VOLUME 52 NUMBER 1

AN ENVIRONMENTAL NEWSLETTER

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2010

Mission Statement

To provide, on a local level, access to the natural world through educational programs such as meetings and field trips. To advocate the preservation of wildlife habitats and endeavor to create interest in native birds, other animals, and plants in Michigan.

Meetings are held at the 1st United Methodist Church, 1589 W. Maple Rd., Birmingham, MI 48009, Fellowship Hall, Room 152. Lighted free parking and barrier-free access.

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Great Gray Owl

WWW.OAKLANDAUDUBON.ORG

THRUSHES IN AUTUMN:

New Revelations about Migration



Gray-checked Thrush unknown artist

TUESDAY, JANUARY 12

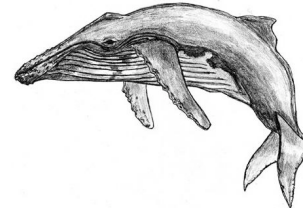
7:30 P.M.

Speaker: Julie Craves

Fifteen years of banding migrating Hermit, Gray-cheeked, and Swainson's Thrushes in the fall have given Julie Craves insight into the importance of urban stopover sites like the Rouge River Bird Observatory in Dearborn. What do the birds eat while they are here? How much body mass do they gain to help them get to their winter destination? How long do they stay around here?

Julie has the answers to these questions and more, and we'll hear what she has learned about these lovely birds as they journey south.

HABITS of HUMPBACKS



TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9

7:30 P.M.

Speaker: Chris Zimmel

Humpback Whales can be found in many oceans of the world. Nevertheless, they are one of the threatened species of whales, and considerable research has been done in trying to learn enough about these giants to produce workable conservation programs for them.

Chris Zimmel is a volunteer participant in the research on Humpbacks being done by The Dolphin Institute. She has participated in TDI's activities in Hawaii and Alaska, and she has a wealth of information about these magnificent ocean dwellers. You will not want to miss this interesting program.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Have you ever watched an adult bird feed its hungry youngsters after they tweeted and chirped endlessly? Have you ever seen a male grackle puff himself up really large to impress a female to show her that he is the one for her? Have you ever watched a vulture or hawk circle continuously for twenty minutes, gaining height, as it gets ready to fly someplace? Have you ever watched one coot chase another coot across the pond only to see that coot dive to avoid the confrontation? Have you ever seen a Cooper's Hawk swoop in to snatch a bird from your feeder just as you were beginning to enjoy the tranquil scene of birds eating there?

These are scenes that are not easily captured in a slide or single picture. These require video or actually being there to really understand what is happening. These are truly the scenes in nature that exemplify what it's all about. Being out in nature is the basis for an organization like ours. We celebrate the way life unfolds, the way tales are told right before our eyes. We wander trails looking for birds, plants, and butterflies so we can see what nature has to offer us each day. We travel to far-off places to see new wonders that we can't experience at home. We do what we can to enjoy nature all the time.

If we can't get out into nature, we try to bring nature to us. We put up feeders so that birds will come close to us. We go to Audubon Society meetings to see pictures and videos of nature that someone else experienced and listen intently as they describe their experiences. We read books that tell of nature's intricacies and mysteries that we can hardly imagine. We do what we can to bring the experiences of nature into our lives.

That said, I believe this is what we are trying to provide to our organization. We bring in speakers to give members a glimpse into someone else's nature experiences. They tell a tale of being there, seeing that extraordinary act of nature, that beautiful sight of a flower, or bird, or just the impressive feeling they had of the weather and that place. This is the value of coming to an Audubon meeting.

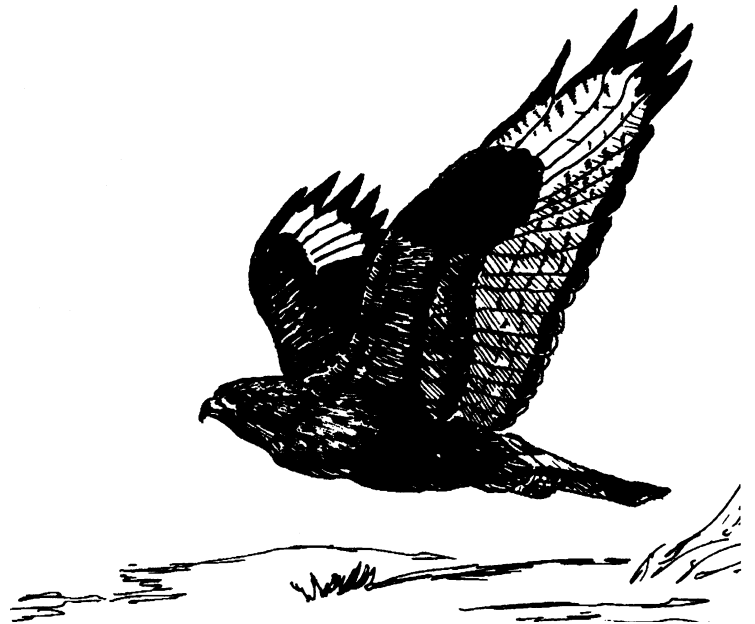
We also try to provide opportunities for you to experience these things firsthand. We offer field trips to local and distant areas to provide the constant experience of nature's awesome glory. And don't think that going to the "same old places" doesn't offer fresh experiences. Nature has a way of holding back something or providing something new that makes each outing different. The next time you go back, that missing element is there to surprise you. A new bird, new flower, unexpected

weather...it's all there to surprise and entertain you. It may not be all excitement and wonder every time you go out, but you have to go out to find what nature has in store for you. How do you think people find all those rare birds and rare plants and enjoy those bizarre weather events?

There have been several movies or other cultural statements that sum it up. The movie "Being There" had a point. "Just Do It" summarizes the idea here. You can't experience something without getting out and enjoying some of what you really think is worth doing. So, come to a meeting and enjoy the retelling of an adventure, or see those pictures that provide a glimpse into another world. Come out to a field trip, even if it's just the "same old place" and find out what Nature has up her sleeve. You'd be surprised. And that says nothing about the other part ... spending time with friends – new and old – both during and after any of these activities.

Just do it!

Don Burlett



WEB SITE

www.oaklandaudubon.org (and links)

"A bird does not sing because it has an answer -- it sings because it has a song."

Ancient Chinese Proverb

OAKLAND AUDUBON EVENTS CALENDAR 2010

DATE/TIME	EVENT	DETAILS
<i>Saturday January 2, 2010 All Day</i>	<i>NAS CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT</i>	<i>New participants call Nancy Tar, Compiler 248.399.7243</i>
<i>Tuesday January 12, 2010 7:30 P.M.</i>	<i>MEMBERSHIP MEETING</i>	<i>Thrushes in Autumn Speaker: Julie Craves</i>
<i>Saturday January 23, 2010 All Day</i>	<i>FIELD TRIP</i>	<i>Metro Beach & North Don Burlett 248.236.9486</i>
<i>Tuesday February 9, 2010 7:30 P.M.</i>	<i>MEMBERSHIP MEETING</i>	<i>Habits of Humpbacks Speaker: Chris Zimmel</i>
<i>Saturday February 20, 2010 All Day</i>	<i>FIELD TRIP</i>	<i>Short-eared Owls Don Burlett 248.236.9486</i>
<i>Tuesday March 9, 2010 7:30 P.M.</i>	<i>MEMBERSHIP MEETING</i>	<i>Galapagos Islands Speaker: Randy Baker</i>
<i>Tuesday April 13, 2010 7:30 P.M.</i>	<i>MEMBERSHIP MEETING</i>	<i>Osprey Reintroduction Speaker: Barb Jensen</i>
<i>Tuesday May 11, 2010 7:30 P.M.</i>	<i>MEMBERSHIP MEETING</i>	<i>Compulsive Lister Speaker: Don Chalfant</i>
<i>Tuesday June 8, 2010 7:30 P.M.</i>	<i>MEMBERSHIP MEETING</i>	<i>NATURE WALK Location: TBA</i>

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING OCTOBER 29, 2009

At Membership Officer Al Lewis's suggestion, we plan to enclose membership cards for many members with their copy of our newsletter, rather than mailing the card. This will save postage and also reduce the cost of envelopes.

President Don Burlett reported that the grand opening of the enlarged nature center building at Seven Ponds Nature Center took place on October 18, with the ribbon cutting done by Bee Naish and Patty Schemm, whose families were instrumental in getting the nature center started.

Joan Tisdale reported that she has over 700 photos of birds representing 270 species, which are being prepared

for the new Photo Gallery to be added to our Web site. This will be a terrific addition.

Response is still very slow to the request for members to let Don Burlett know if they will agree to get our newsletter via e-mail or the Web site. Without better co-operation from the membership, we will continue spending too much money on mailing the newsletter.

Some ideas for increasing membership were discussed.

Doris Applebaum
Recording Secretary



GREEN NEWS

GREEN CHEMISTRY

Did you know that Michigan became the first state in the U.S. to have a Green Chemistry Executive Directive when Governor Jennifer Granholm signed that document? The purpose of this directive is to protect public health and advance economic development. Talk about a win-win idea.

The Michigan House of Representatives has passed 3 bills that would make Green Chemistry projects eligible for economic-development assistance from the state. At the time of this writing, the State Senate had not yet passed similar bills.

So what is Green Chemistry? It is a set of principles that promote the design of products that are safe right from the beginning of their manufacture. Under our current system, too many products are put on the market and then we find out that they contain dangerous chemicals. This necessitates extremely expensive remedial action. If Green Chemistry principles are put into operation, the things we use in our daily life will do no harm to the ecosystems in which we live. The economic savings potential will be great, and people's health will no longer be put in jeopardy.

College students who aim for a career in the chemical industry need to know the principles of toxicology in order to know whether the work they will be engaged in involves toxic materials. Unfortunately, most colleges don't include courses in toxicology. There are some efforts under way in Michigan to improve that situation in our state, providing hope that that win-win future is closer to becoming a reality. (Information for this item was found in *From the Ground Up*, Summer 2009, published by The Ecology Center in Ann Arbor.)



FOCUS ON...
SHORT-EARED OWL
Asio flammeus

The Short-eared Owl can be found from North America to South America, parts of the Middle East, and Eurasia. Strangely, it is not found in Japan or most of China, and does not nest in the islands of the Arctic Ocean. It has nested on Iceland and on the Faroes, but there are no breeding records for Ireland. It will change its nesting locations depending on the availability of its favorite food, lemmings and voles, and on the ever-changing marshy conditions of its breeding habitats. Because of the continuous degradation of marshlands, this species is in decline in Europe and the United States.

This is a species adapted to swamps, grasslands, bogs in coniferous forests, boreal taiga, and the birch-willow zone of the Subarctic. But you can also find the Short-eared Owl in salt marshes, reed beds, swamps of coastal dunes, flooded meadows, and extended wheat fields. In Burma, Short-eared Owls have been found in large pea fields.

Surprisingly, this owl nests on the ground under protective cover of heather, grass, sedge, wheat, and corn, and always in open country. The male Short-eared Owl defends quite a large nesting territory, performing his courtship display mainly at dusk.

A rich food supply of voles and mice has been discovered by this species - surprisingly - in grassy areas near airports! This habit has been reported particularly in Canada. Airports cited in the literature are Vancouver International and Toronto International Airports. (*We here in Southeast Michigan know this to be true, and have long known of the Short-eared Owls seen in winter at the Sarnia Airport in Canada.*)

Facts from: *Owls of the Northern Hemisphere*, by Karel H. Voous



**CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE:
 NORTHWARD SHIFTS IN EARLY WINTER ABUNDANCE**

An excerpt from the *109th Christmas Bird Count* by
Daniel K Niven, Gregory S. Butcher, and G. Thomas Bancroft

ABSTRACT

We used Christmas Bird Count Data to investigate recent changes in the latitudinal center of abundance of North American birds. Among the 305 bird species in our study, there was a strong northward shift over the past 40 years. Of the 305 species, 208 (68.2%) shifted north. Wetland birds, forest birds, shrub birds, and generalists all had a majority of the species shifting northward, but grassland birds did not. These results and others are correlated with the warmer January weather experienced in the contiguous 48 United States over the past 40 years. There is no evidence that the species moving north are currently suffering population declines related to those moves, but if winters continue to warm, bird habitats and food supplies may not be able to track the warmer weather as effectively as many birds can.

111th CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

2011

*Our next Christmas Bird Count will be held on
 Saturday, January 1, 2011.*

Please mark your calendars.



**THE NUTHATCH:
 YOUR WAY**

Our goal is to reduce the costs of mailing and printing. Are you willing to accept your newsletter via e-mail or our web site? Please take a minute (just a single minute) to be courteous and either send Don Burlett an e-mail with your choice, drop him a line, or call and leave a message with that information. It would be so helpful and would also encourage us that the members do actually read the newsletter and are willing to respond.

Please respond to Don Burlett at:

baikalteal13@netzero.net

or

3655 Brauer Rd.
 Oxford, MI 48371

or

(248) 236-9486