



THE NUTHATCH

www.oaklandaudubon.org

“ADVENTURES OF A YOUNG BIRDER”



TUESDAY, MAY 10, 2011

7:30 P.M.

Speaker: Harold Eyster

The future of birding lies with our young people, and Harold Eyster is a prime example of how some of today’s teenagers are leading the way. Harold was the American Birding Association’s “Young Birder of the Year” for 2009. Join us to learn about some of the interesting experiences that Harold has already had in his still-young birding career.



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“JUNE BIRD WALK”

TUESDAY, JUNE 14, 7:00 PM

Our annual nature walk will take place at the Hawk Woods Nature Center.

The center is located at 3799 Bald Mountain Road, Auburn Hills, Mi.



NOTE THE EARLIER MEETING TIME.

We will have refreshments afterwards.

Please refer to the website for details.

President's Column



As the months of May and June arrive, we should be well into the spring migration and beginning to settle in for breeding bird surveys and other activities. With trips in Ohio (Magee Marsh) and Michigan (Dolph Nature Center) for spring migrants in May and a prairie trip in June along with a trip to Seven Ponds to learn more about our plants, we'll be at peak activity. The wonder of it all is fantastic and yearly lists will be growing by leaps and bounds.

Speaking of growing by leaps and bounds, look around you at OAS. We have made great strides to grow and increase our activity (much like the birds) and we are becoming very popular. With the continued improvement in our newsletter, the constantly good programs and the expanded and popular field trips, we can't ask for much more. I am proud of this organization for the hard work it has done and the growth we have seen. All I can say is keep up the good work.

As for the rest of the year, we are planning to continue the torrid pace of our field trips and to keep the program meetings at a high level. If you have any field trips that you would like to consider or have some target birds that we can seek out, let us know. Ed and I would be glad to help get a new bird or two for pretty much anybody in the group. We'd also like some feedback on the weekend trips. Although these take more work to set up, scout, etc., they are great fun and provide a fantastic opportunity to get to know each other better. And, as I have said in the past, the birding is great but the after-parties are fantastic!!

Finally, I would like to say that I am keenly interested in getting more young people out birding and learning about nature. I encourage everyone to consider bringing a young person (child, nephew, grandchild, whatever) out on a field trip. We are trying to develop some young birders with special programs and I hope you will support this work. Our future depends on it!

Have a great spring and summer and see you all at the next field trip.

Don Burlett

Great News from Aransas National Wildlife Refuge



Artwork by: Judith Vivell

The Aransas/Wood Buffalo population has set a record! On a February 11, 2011 flight over the refuge, U.S. Fish & Wildlife personnel counted 238 adults and 42 juveniles = 280 total whooping cranes. With the addition of a confirmed report on February 8th of a single whooping crane in north Texas, the flock size is now estimated at 281. This breaks the previous high of 270 reached in the fall of 2008. The flock of 281 consists of 236 white-plumaged adults and 45 juveniles.

The Aransas/Wood Buffalo flock is the only naturally occurring wild migratory population of whooping cranes in the whole world, and this entire flock was down to only 15 birds in 1941. That means every one alive today is a descendant of those 15. Every whooper alive today either hatched at the Canadian nesting grounds or is a descendant of a whooper that hatched there. Check out the table below to see the progress from 1940 to the current winter.

Population of Whooping Crane Natural Flock (Aransas/Wood Buffalo Flock)			
1940-Present* (Winter Counts)			
Year	# Cranes	Year	# Cranes
1940	22	1998	183
1950	34	1999	185
1960	33	2000	177
1970	56	2001	174
1980	76	2002	185
1990	146	2003	194
1991	132	2004	216
1992	136	2005	218
1993	143	2006	237
1994	133	2007	266
1995	158	2008	270
1996	160	2009	263
1997	182	2010	281

PERILS OF MIGRATION

Migrating birds face numerous dangers as they wend their way between their breeding and wintering areas. Bad weather and predators take a toll, wind turbines add many more casualties, and every year the disorienting lights in tall buildings cause millions of night-migrating birds to crash to their death.

However, even if the weather is great, predators don't find them, and neither tall lighted buildings nor wind turbines are in their flight path, migrating birds can meet their end in various other ways.

For example, open oil pits and tanks have proved fatal to many birds. Exxon/Mobil was ordered to pay a \$600,000 fine and spend \$2.5 million to modify its U.S. oil facilities in which many migrating birds died.

Power lines are another hazard. PacificCorp has agreed to pay \$1,410,000 in fines and spend more than \$9 million to modify its equipment after hundreds of Golden Eagles and other migrating birds were electrocuted.

Sometimes it seems miraculous that any birds survive their perilous migration.



(Some information for this item was found in *World Birdwatch* magazine, published by BirdLife International.)

FAITHFUL TO THE OLD HOMESITE

Many people have noticed birds returning to a nest that had been used the previous year. There are reports of Bald Eagles using the same nest for as many as 20 years. However, an article in the September 2009 issue of *Hawk Migration Studies*, published by the Hawk Migration Association of North America, reported some nest-fidelity examples that are truly amazing.

Researchers have found a Gyrfalcon nest in Greenland that has been used for a minimum of 2,360 years. The guano in this nest was some six feet deep, and it was the radiocarbon dating of that material that told the researchers the ancient age of the nest. And this nest is still in use!

Radiocarbon dating is considered reasonably accurate for this kind of work. Although it is not exact, it led to a date for the start of this nest of between 2,360 and 2,740 years before the present.

Several other old Gyrfalcon nests were found during the Greenland research project, and three were dated to a beginning of more than 1,000 years ago. One of them contained a Gyrfalcon feather dated to 670 years ago. The climate of Greenland is so cold and dry that the material in these nests has been very slow to decay.

Like Bald Eagles, Gyrfalcons are known to reuse nest sites for many years, so the researchers were not surprised to find evidence of such activity, but they certainly never expected the results that they got. It gives new meaning to the old phrase "home sweet home."



"We Welcome Our Newest Oakland Audubon Members"

Patricia Brandon	Austin Guzman
Nancy Brown	Edward Lewandowski
Marilyn Burgis	Elmer & Joanne Morehouse
Terry and Thomas Hoenle	Debra & Mike Savino
Julie Campbell	Deborah Logan
Kathryn McDonald Fotouhi	Celeste Watts
Theresa Celusta	Harold Stack
Greg & Karen Gossick	Linda Sutherland & Michael Mumford
Richard, Helen & Lena Jositas	Stevie Kuroda & Bruce Watson
Janet Hug	

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

MARCH 24, 2011

The board authorized a donation of \$100 to Seven Ponds Nature Center to continue our membership in that organization.

Programs have been scheduled for the rest of 2011, and plans are beginning to be made for 2012.

Membership Officer Dave Frye reported that we have passed the 200 mark, including 25 new members. Things are looking up!

Field Trip Officer Ed Lewandowski is continuing to add new locations and has lined up some new leaders who have special expertise in certain areas.

President Don Burrett has finalized plans for our first “young birders” event in early April. He hopes to make this an ongoing project to bring more and more young people into the world of birding.

Planning for our next Christmas Bird Count in December 2011 is already gearing up.

OAS continues to send packages of canceled U.S. commemorative stamps and foreign stamps to Audubon of Florida to help with fund-raising for their raptor rehabilitation facility. They sent us a nice thank-you for our latest batch.

Doris Applebaum
Recording Secretary

DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
TUES., MAY. 10	7:30 pm	Adventures of a Young Birder Harold Eyster	First United Methodist Church, (see below)
TUES., JUNE 14	7:30 pm	OAS Nature Walk	Hawk Woods Nature Preserve
JULY	N/A	Summer Break (No Program)	N/A
AUGUST	N/A	Summer Break (No Program)	N/A
TUES., SEPT 13	7:30 pm	A Birding Excursion to Southern Africa Barb Baldinger	First United Methodist Church, (see below)

Membership Meetings & Programs 2011

MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Monthly membership meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month (except December, June, July and August) at 7:30 p.m., at the First United Methodist Church, 1589 West Maple Road, Birmingham, Fellowship Hall, Room 152. The facility is located on the south side of Maple Road between Southfield and Cranbrook Roads. There is plenty of lighted, free parking and barrier-free access. (Barrier-free access located at entrance off first parking lot on Pleasant St.) Our meetings are free and open to the public. For meeting cancellation information, check our website, call a board member or call the church at (248) 646-1200.



New Bird to Science Emphasizes the Critical Need to Conserve the Remaining Dry Forests of Madagascar

In a recent issue of the scientific journal *Zootaxa*, researchers from Madagascar and the United States described a new species of forest-dwelling rail. The new bird was named *Mentocrex beankaensis*, with the genus *Mentocrex* being endemic to Madagascar and the new species *beankaensis* being coined after the type locality, the Beanka Forest in western central Madagascar. This species was distinguished from another in the same genus, known from the eastern portion of the island, based on aspects of size, plumage, and DNA.

The project resulting in this description was the joint efforts of scientists from the University of Antananarivo and Association Vahatra in Madagascar and the Pritzker Laboratory for Molecular Systematics and Evolution at The Field Museum in Chicago. Marie Jeanne Raherilalao and Steve Goodman conducted the morphological portion of the study, and the molecular genetics aspects by Nicholas Block, a graduate student with the University of Chicago's Committee on Evolutionary Biology who is based at The Field Museum.

The dry forests of western Madagascar have been drastically reduced in size. Estimates proposed by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) indicate that 97 percent of the original forest cover in this portion of the island has disappeared since humans arrived some 2,500 years ago. Over the past decades these remaining dry forest areas have been the sites of numerous discoveries of plant and animal species new to science. The Beanka Forest is a largely intact area resting on exposed limestone formation with razor-sharp pinnacle like structures, which are known in Malagasy, the language of Madagascar, as tsingy.

The Beanka Forest in a remote portion of the island is managed since late 2007 by the Association Biodiversity Conservation Madagascar (BCM) and funded by Bioculture (Mauritius) Ltd., which has started programs for the socio-economic development of surrounding communities, forest restoration, and the conservation of the site. The director of BCM, Mr. Aldus Andriamamonjy, notes, "We [BCM] have taken an approach to the conservation of the Beanka Forest resting on working in unison with local people to fulfill aspects of their economic and development needs and bestowing a sense of natural patrimony of the organisms that live in their forest. These are aspects critical for any long-term successful project. The discovery of this new species of bird and other organisms during the late 2009 expedition underlines the importance of our mission and the uniqueness of the Beanka Forest."

In late October to early November 2009, the Association Vahatra, in collaboration with BCM and several other research groups working on the flora and fauna of Madagascar, organized a large-scale biotic inventory of the Beanka Forest, a zone of about 14,000 hectares. This is the period when a specimen of the new rail was obtained and that led to the naming of this new species. Several new species of plants, invertebrates and vertebrates were discovered and *Mentocrex beankaensis* is the first of a series from the expedition to be named. Dr. Marie Jeanne Raherilalao, Professor at the University of Antananarivo and Association Vahatra, mentioned, "that even after many decades of research, nature is always full of surprises, even for organisms such as birds that have been intensively studied. The recent rediscovery in the northern portion of the island of the Madagascar Pochard, a species that was thought to be extinct and the discovery of this new species of rail, are cases in point. This underlies the importance of field research and biotic inventories".

Source: [Field Museum](#)

OAKLAND AUDUBON FIELD TRIP CALENDAR 2011

(Check the OAS Website for details)

www.oaklandaudubon.org

Date	Location	Trip Leader
Sat, May 7, 2011 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM	Dolph Nature Area (Ann Arbor)	Don Burlett
Sat, May 14, 2011 7:00 AM – 6:00 PM	Magee Marsh (Crazy Day)	Don Burlett
Sat, June 11, 2011 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM	Grassland/Prairies	Allen Chartier Don Burlett Ed Lewandowski
Sat, June 25, 2011 8:00 AM – 12:00 Noon	Seven Ponds Nature Center	Mike Champagne

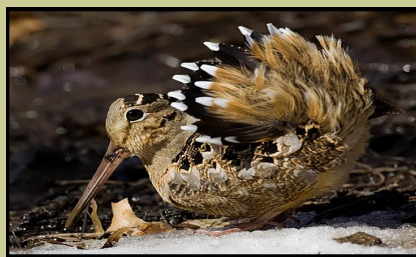


Field Trip Reports

February 18-20, 2011 Upper Peninsula Trip

It was fantastic to gather 17 birders from 3 states and 6 Michigan Counties for this trip. The trip began on Friday as 6 birders made their way to the Upper Peninsula via the Midland Cogeneration Ponds, Chippewa Nature Center and Manistee. Friday highlights included Horned Grebes, lots of ducks, a White-winged Scoter, several Bald Eagles and a number of other birds. On Saturday and Sunday, with all 17 birders present we birded near Rudyard, Dafter, Dunbar Forest, the Soo, Hulbert Bog, the Bear Butt Inn and a number of other locations in and around the eastern UP. Among the birds seen were Common and Hoary Redpolls, Pine Grosbeak, Snowy Owl, Bohemian Waxwing, Pine Siskin, Glaucous Gull, Gray Jay and many other winter birds. All totaled, we saw 60 species in the 3 day extravaganza. The dinner Saturday night at Antler's in the Soo was the cultural and social cap of the trip. In spite of some issues along the way (winds high enough to close the Mackinac Bridge Friday night), snow and cold temperatures, everyone had a great time and added some birds to their lists. Leader – Ed Lewandowski

Field Trip Reports



February 26, 2011 St. Clair River (Metro Beach to Port Huron)

A relatively peaceful winter day greeted the 7 birders along for this trip. We began by walking into the woods at Metro Beach to see the Great Horned Owl sitting in her bucket on the eggs/young. We then proceeded to Sunshine Point to see hundreds of Mergansers, Common Goldeneyes, Swans and some Eagles. We eventually headed to Port Huron by swinging around Lake St. Clair and through Algonac and Marine City. The river was largely clogged with ice but a good number of ducks and other birds were about. There were 350 Long-tailed Ducks at Port Huron along with 7 White-winged Scoters and a Harlequin Duck. Also, a Peregrine Falcon was sitting on a nest box under the bridge. We also saw many other ducks and raptors. The trip tallied 34 species and everyone seemed to enjoy the ducks of winter.

Leader – Don Burlett

March 19, 2011 Oakland County Parks Field Trip

This trip started at Beaudette Millpond in Pontiac where many waterfowl were strangely absent. Three Horned Grebes were the highlight along with a Pied-billed Grebe, several Ring-necked Ducks, Bufflehead and a couple of Redhead. We moved to Robert Long Nature Center and found a Great Blue Heron, 3 Tree Swallows and a Brown Creeper among the many Mallards and Canada Geese. Also seen were Killdeer, Ring-billed Gulls and a bunch of Song Sparrows. The next stop was Heritage Park in Farmington Hills and we spotted a Rusty Blackbird and a Pine Siskin. This park was quiet except for some Northern Flickers, House Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos. Finally, we went to American Center Marsh which had a few Killdeer, a couple of Ring-necked Ducks and Canada Geese. We spotted our only Common Pigeons here. It was a fun day for a group of 12 birders, enjoying the sunshine and temperatures warming into the 40's. We totaled 38 species but failed to find some ducks that were hiding out at Cass Lake. Leader – Don Burlett.

March 31, 2011 Civic Center Park

Despite cloudy skies the Woodcock Display was quite a success.

14 ice cream eating birders were present to watch as many as 4-6 Woodcock display overhead and around the field area off of Cross Creek Parkway and Deepwood Drive in Auburn Hills.

The brief hike at Civic Center was very quiet but we did find an Eastern Phoebe on the n. end of the park.

Thanks to everyone for attending this event it was great to see new faces and meet folks that live by my neck of the woods. Leader – Ed Lewandowski.

Warbler Identification Quiz

Who am I?



A) _____



B) _____



C) _____

Mar / Apr Answers

A) Field Sparrow B) Grasshopper Sparrow C) Swamp Sparrow



OAKLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM



NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: (____) _____

MOBILE: (____) _____

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Please check (X) any personal information above you do not want listed in the OAS membership directory.

CHECK ALSO IF YOU ARE A MEMBER OF:

____ NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

____ MICHIGAN AUDUBON SOCIETY

OAS NEEDS AND WELCOMES VOLUNTEERS!
PLEASE PARTICIPATE!

CHECK IF YOU WISH TO VOLUNTEER:

____ TO BECOME A BOARD MEMBER

____ LEAD A FIELD TRIP/PRESENT A PROGRAM

____ FILL AN OPEN POSITION

____ POSITION (_____)

PLEASE CHECK APPROPRIATE LINE:

____ MEMBER RENEWAL

____ NEW MEMBER

____ CHANGE OF ADDRESS

OAS Membership Fees

- INDIVIDUAL \$10
- FAMILY \$15
- CONTRIBUTING \$25
- SUPPORTING \$50
- BENEFACTOR \$100

Our Mission

- 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.

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:
OAKLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY

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ORTONVILLE, MICHIGAN 48462