



THE NUTHATCH

VOLUME 52 NUMBER 5

AN ENVIRONMENTAL NEWSLETTER

Nov / Dec 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.

Page 2
 President's Column
 Page 3
 Membership Officer
 Membership Dues
 Christmas Bird Count

Page 4
 Bird Group Names
 Butterfly Field Trip
 Page 5
 A New Wren
 Slender Chance

Page 6
 Events Calendar
 Schedule
 OAS Board Members
 Page 7
 Nuthatch Your Way
 Membership Form
 Group Name Answers

Back Cover
 Meeting Schedule

www.oaklandaudubon.org



**WALKING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF
 ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE:
 BIRDING IN BORNEO, SULAWESI & HALMAHERA**

Tuesday November 9, 2010 / Speaker: Steve Pike

In January and February 2010, our speaker visited Malaysia and Indonesia, where he experienced the exciting wildlife and culture of these diverse Southeast Asian countries. Also known as the Malay Archipelago, this region was made famous by the English naturalist, Alfred Russel Wallace. It was Wallace who happened to write to Charles Darwin with his ideas about evolution, which prompted Darwin to finally get his monumental book, *The Origin of Species*, into print.

Steve is an outstanding photographer, and he will be showing us views of some unusual and beautiful birds of this region as well as interesting mammals and insects, plus spectacular scenic and cultural images. You will not want to miss this adventure to a part of the world that most of us will never see in person.

President's Column



President's Column – Nov-Dec 2010

Upon Reflection.....

My first two years as President are drawing to a close and it is traditional to look back on this time and reflect. It all began unexpectedly and then suddenly I was President of OAS. Okay, I also volunteered to be liaison with Seven Ponds Nature Center, since it was real close to home. Okay, so far, so good.

As I started working with the great group of people on the board, it became apparent that there were a couple of issues to deal with. First, since I am an avid field birder, it became apparent that our field trips were suffering from apathy or some other disease. Attendance had reached almost all-time lows and getting anyone out to a field trip was difficult. So I decided that, in spite of the fact that no one would volunteer to coordinate field trips, we needed to have some and quickly. It took almost a year to get a response out of folks but suddenly people were back doing field trips. That was very heartening and, in combination with our strong monthly programs, we were actually getting people to take part in what we were offering.

Next came the website. The website existed but we were not using it as effectively as we could. So I got the software and started making website updates myself. Shortly thereafter, Joan Tisdale joined me and initiated the photo gallery that so pleasantly adorns our website. It has become a jewel in the crown and is still growing in splendor. Our website is now mostly up to date and provides the latest news on happenings in our society.

Finally, there was the newsletter. I must admit that I found this a challenge. Having a great deal of experience with organizations, I saw that a printed newsletter was a thing of the past and that electronic dispersal of information was the model we needed to pursue. I began asking people to get the newsletter by e-mail or off the website and we now have 50 people willing to go that route. So starting in 2011, a group of folks will be getting their newsletter themselves or via e-mail. We will reduce our costs and continue to work on our communication routes.

As an officer, I have enjoyed the challenge and have enjoyed working within the society. I only hope that a few more people take on the challenge to be part of the board and help run this society. Apathy is the only thing that can bring us down. Take a moment to remember the fun you've had on a field trip or at a meeting and think about how it all happened. Thank those that chipped in along the way and see if you can't repay that effort with a little of your own. I'd be happy to see you working with us. And I know you'd enjoy it. We can only flourish if we all cultivate the crop. And please, take a moment to get out and enjoy some of these activities. That's what it's all about. See you at a program or field trip. Good birding. Enjoy nature.

Don Burlett

OAS Welcomes Our New Membership Officer

Once again, we have a new OAS board member. David Frye has agreed to become our new Membership Officer, taking over for Al Lewis. I want to personally thank Al for all the hard work and dedication he has provided OAS for the past number of years. It's volunteers like Al that help keep this organization afloat. I think the entire board will agree that Al has been an asset and good friend for these many years.

I also want to welcome David to the OAS board and I am confident that he will make many nice contributions as we move forward as an organization.

Don Burlett

SPEAKING of MEMBERSHIP

***** 2011 Annual Membership Renewals *****

Membership renewal began in September for 2011. Please pay directly at any membership meeting, held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month, or mail check made out to Oakland Audubon Society. Send to: OAS Membership, 2780 Scenic Meadows Drive, Ortonville, Michigan 48462.

***** Prompt payment is always appreciated *****

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT



Every year tens of thousands of volunteers throughout the Americas take part in an adventure that has become a family tradition among generations. Families and students, birders and scientists, armed with binoculars, bird guides and checklists, go out on an annual mission - often before dawn. For over one hundred years, the desire to both make a difference and to experience the beauty of nature has driven dedicated people to leave the comfort of a warm house during the Holiday season.

Each of the citizen scientists who annually brave snow, wind, or rain to take part in the Christmas Bird Count makes an enormous contribution to conservation. Audubon and other organizations use data collected in this longest-running wildlife census to assess the health of bird populations - and to help guide conservation action.

From feeder-watchers and field observers to count compilers and regional editors, everyone who takes part in the Christmas Bird Count does it for love of birds and the excitement of friendly competition -- and with the knowledge that their efforts are making a difference for science and bird conservation. This year OAS is scheduled to participate on Saturday, December 18th; all new participants are instructed to call Scott Jennex @ (248) 212-9582.

How many birds can you match, with their correct group name?

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| A bevy of | hawks |
| A bouquet of | swallows |
| A brood of | partridges |
| A cast of | sparrows |
| A charm of | geese |
| A covey of | quail |
| A flight of | hens |
| A gaggle of | owls |
| A nye of | doves |
| A siege of | crows |
| A skein of | pheasants (flushed) |
| A cover of | geese |
| A wisp of | snipe |
| A parliament of | herons |
| An exaltation of | coots |
| A murder of | finches |
| A host of | pheasants |
| A dole of | larks |

Answers on page 7

**BUTTERFLY FIELD TRIP
INDIAN SPRINGS METROPARK
AUGUST 7, 2010**

The weather cooperated and so did the butterflies, as 10 people enjoyed the sighting of a wide variety of species. Included were four kinds of swallowtails, three kinds of skippers, an extra subspecies of the Common Ringlet, and a whole palette of colors—red, white, blue, yellow, brown, orange, and black.

The final count was 20 species (20-1/2 if you count that extra subspecies), which was a very respectable total. All in all, an enjoyable OAS outing.

Doris Applebaum



A NEW WREN FOR NORTH AMERICA



If you have seen a Winter Wren out west as well as in our area, you can now add an extra species to your life list.

For years, birdsong expert Donald Kroodsma maintained that because Winter Wrens in the eastern U.S. sang significantly different songs from those in the west, they should be considered two different species. In his 2005 book *The Singing Life of Birds*, he showed that where the two types meet, they do not interbreed.

Now the American Ornithologists' Union, the official arbiter of bird classification in North America, has finally agreed that Kroodsma was right. The AOU has split "our" wren (which is still called the Winter Wren) from the western type, which is now called the Pacific Wren.

For good measure, the Winter Wren that is found in Eurasia (which is called simply "the Wren" over there) has also been split from the two North American species.

In its 2010 classification changes, the AOU has made a number of other interesting decisions. The Black Scoter, which used to be considered the same species both in North America and Eurasia, has been split into two species. Our bird is now called the American Scoter. The Black Scoter is now found—officially—only in Eurasia.

The Osprey has been upgraded. It is now considered unique enough to have a whole family to itself and is no longer in the same family as the hawks, eagles, kites, and harriers.

A number of other changes were made, mostly of more interest to ornithologists than birders, and as DNA and other studies proliferate, we can expect that the changes will keep coming.

SLENDER CHANCE

Is the Slender-billed Curlew on your life list? If not, you may be out of luck. No sighting of this shorebird has been reported since 2001, in Hungary.

A coordinated search for this species started in the fall of 2009, in the slender (no pun intended) hope of finding birds to which a satellite tag could be applied, so that the wanderings of the birds could be followed.

This species does wander. In the past, individuals have been known to start off in Siberia and migrate all the way through Europe to the Middle East and North Africa.

The search team is interested in any past sightings of this species, as clues to help narrow the search. If you have ever seen this species, you are asked to notify the Chair of the Slender-billed Curlew Working Group at nicola.crockford@rspb.org.uk.

If you are interested in more information, click on www.slenderbilledcurlew.net. (Information for this item is from an article in *World Birdwatch* magazine, December 2009, published by BirdLife International.)

OAKLAND AUDUBON EVENTS CALENDAR 2010 / 2011

(Check the OAS Website for details)

Tuesday November 9, 2010 7:30 PM	MEMBERSHIP MEETING	Southeast Asia Speaker: Steve Pike
Saturday November 20, 2010 8AM-12 NOON	BELLE ISLE FIELD TRIP	Leader: Don Burlett
November 26,27,28 2010	LAKE MICHIGAN WEEKEND FIELD TRIP	Leader: Don Burlett
Saturday Dec. 18, 2011 All Day	NAS CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT	New participants call Scott Jennex, 248-212-9582

Tuesday January 11, 2011 7:30 PM	MEMBERSHIP MEETING	eBird: Observations Speaker: Darrin O'Brien
Tuesday February 8, 2011 7:30 PM	MEMBERSHIP MEETING	Birding Australia & New Zealand Speaker: Don Burlett
Tuesday March 9, 2011 7:30 PM	MEMBERSHIP MEETING	Cranial Capacity of Corvids Speaker: Dorothy McLeer
Tuesday April 12, 2011 7:30 PM	MEMBERSHIP MEETING	Hidden Habits of Humpbacks Speaker: Chris Zimmel

OAS BOARD MEMBERS

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**THE NUTHATCH YOUR WAY
(Help OAS Reduce Costs)**

A reminder note to our members - please contact OAS President Don Burlett to indicate how you would like to receive the Nuthatch. We are trying to reduce costs and would like to have as many members as possible either get the newsletter from the website or have it e-mailed directly to them. Please take a moment to consider how much money we could use for other programs if we reduce newsletter mailing costs. We look forward to hearing from you.

OAKLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM / Nov-Dec 2010

NAME: _____
 ADDRESS: _____
 CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____
 PHONE: (____) _____
 MOBILE: (____) _____
 E-MAIL ADDRESS: _____

Please advise of any personal information you do not want 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

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:
 OAKLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY

MAIL TO:
 OAS MEMBERSHIP
 2780 SCENIC MEADOWS DRIVE,
 ORTONVILLE, MICHIGAN 48462

Group Name Answers:

- A bevy of quail
- A bouquet of pheasants (flushed)
- A brood of hens
- A cast of hawks
- A charm of finches
- A covey of partridges
- A flight of swallows
- A gaggle of geese
- A nye of pheasants
- A siege of herons
- A skein of geese
- A wisp of snipe
- A cover of coots
- A parliament of owls
- An exaltation of larks
- A murder of crows
- A host of sparrows
- A dole of doves



Sparrow Identification Quiz

Who am I?



(A) _____



(B) _____



(C) _____

Answers will be posted in Jan. / Feb. issue