



# THE NUTHATCH

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## The Highs and Lows of Birding The Tropics

Tuesday, January 13, 2015

7:30 p.m.

Don Burlett

In Peru, birding can take you from the Amazon River basin below 750 feet of altitude all the way to mountains above 14,000 feet. With habitats ranging from hot and humid to dry and cold, the variety of birds is simply tremendous.

Tonight our world-traveling President will tell us all about his trip to Peru, detailing the highs and lows, the birds (and other animals), and the fantastic sights to be seen.



*Inca Tern by Bill Lynch*



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## Antarctica 101

Tuesday, February 10, 2015

7:30 p.m.

Dr. Orin Gelderloos

You may have seen other programs about the Antarctic, perhaps featuring the wildlife and/or the scenery, but tonight Dr. Orin Gelderloos will show us what makes the ice-covered bottom of the world ecologically special.

Join us for a different way of looking at and learning about this fascinating continent.

Dr. Gelderloos is a Professor of Biology and Environmental Studies at the University of Michigan's Dearborn campus.



*Emperor Penguins by  
Martha de Jong-Lantink*

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

### *What is membership?*

Every once in a while, I think about strange things. Why am I a chemist? Why is that person's name spelled that way? You get the gist. Well, I started thinking about our organization and I thought – we have members. What does that mean? What does it imply? Well, the first step (being a logical research scientist) is to understand the definition of membership. According to the online dictionary, membership is “the state of being a member, as of a society or club.” Well, what is a member? Again, the dictionary says a member is “a person, animal, plant, group, etc., that is part of a society, party, community, taxon, or other body.” For us, the answer falls out as a “part” of an organization. Well, that's great. “Part” is a pretty vague answer. Sounds like a politician wrote that one up. So now what?

I thought about it a little more and decided that the vague answer really does work for us. Our “members” are “part” of an organization and there is no simple definition that fits all of them, except one possibility. That possibility is that they all feel it is important that we carry on with our mission. Now, we aren't Star Trek, with its mission beyond the stars. Our mission is our purpose, “to provide, on a local level, access to the natural world through educational programs such as meetings, field trips and a newsletter” and “to advocate the preservation of wildlife habitats and endeavor to create interest in native birds, other animals, and plants in Michigan.” That seems like a good reason to be a member of this group.

But that doesn't cover it all. There are always a number of personal reasons for being a member. Obviously, some want to be a member so that they can feel they are part of a group with similar interests. This is a large social driver for human behavior. Also, there is the possibility that people want to be a member to gain knowledge offered via our programs. Of course, you don't have to be a member to do that. There's also the altruistic reason of doing something for other people. I certainly feel that the officers and others involved in our activities have this sense. Some want to be able to say they are a member just to say so. I'm sure there are many other reasons.



All I want to say about this is that we are glad that, on some level, you want to be part of this group. We appreciate participation at any level. Be President, run a committee, show up to program meetings – these all support what we do and why we do it. And I am sure that most of our members are “members” of other organizations and for many of the same reasons. I actually encourage membership in other groups. We can only provide so many services. There are other groups that are more focused on environmental concerns, some on other outdoor activities and more. There are lots of them and they all want you to join and participate. Since we don't have unlimited time and money, we have to focus at some level. So why not Oakland Audubon.

Moving forward, I can only suggest that whatever level of interest you have, there may be other groups that can supplement what we do and offer. Sierra Club, American Birding Association (ABA), and many others come to mind. Just remember that a member is whatever you want to make of it. So as they say in the Army ads, “Be All You Can Be!!!” And we'll be here to help, whatever that is. See you at an event soon.

Don Burlett

*Page one owl photos by Jeff Stacey: Barred, Great Horned, Long-eared, Short-eared, Northern Saw-whet*

# THE OAKLAND OWLETS—OAS YOUNG BIRDERS CLUB

by Lisa Badgero

The Oakland Owlets finished up 2014 with a program on the various citizen-science research projects of Cornell Lab of Ornithology. This program was supported by Oakland County Parks and was held at the Wint Nature Center at Independence Oaks.

Starting out 2015 the Oakland Owlets will head back to Wint Nature Center for the Great Backyard Bird Count in February. The GBBC is a wonderful program created by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology to get a snapshot of bird activity in the United States and many other countries.

The Oakland Owlets will have many more outings and training opportunities next year. One subject that interested the young birders is photography and we are still looking for someone to lead a class on nature photography. If you know of anyone, or are interested in leading the class yourself, please let me know.

Our trips for 2015 will include visits to the Kellogg Center, Kensington Metropark, Magee Marsh in Ohio, Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge, Highland Recreation Area, and a few more. Everyone is really looking forward to a great year of birding and we hope to see you at our events!

Sources for information regarding the Oakland Owlets and our events:

Lisa Badgero — [mcarthurl2001@yahoo.com](mailto:mcarthurl2001@yahoo.com)

Janet Hug — [jkissnhug@comcast.net](mailto:jkissnhug@comcast.net)

Oakland Audubon Society website: <http://www.oaklandaudubon.org/>

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/oaklandaudubon](http://www.facebook.com/oaklandaudubon)

Twitter: @OaklandAudubon

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## UPDATE FROM TOURNAMENT CENTRAL

by Dave Frye

Round one of our 64-entry "Our Favorite Bird Tournament" is in the books with most of the top-seeded birds moving through to the second round. There were a couple surprises, however. Two of the big upsets were witnessed in the Raptors, Owls, Woodpeckers division, where the 13th seeded Red-shouldered Hawk was chosen over the 4th seed Snowy Owl and then the 15th seeded Red-headed Woodpecker knocked off the 2nd seed Peregrine Falcon. Two other upsets were seen in the Warblers, Sparrows division when the 12th seeded Kirtland's Warbler defeated the 5th seeded Black-throated Blue Warbler and later, the 13th seed Indigo Bunting bested the 4th seeded Rose-breasted Grosbeak. The newcomers to the field this year are really getting support and making their mark!

The 2015 Tournament will continue at each membership meeting through April when we will choose "Our Favorite Bird."



*Kirtland's Warbler by Robert Epstein*

## UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

(Details of these outings are on the Field Trips page of our website at [www.oaklandaudubon.org](http://www.oaklandaudubon.org))

Date	Event	Trip Leader(s)
Sunday, January 11 8:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.	Wild Card Trip	Ed Lewandowski
Saturday, January 24 8:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.	St. Clair River Trip	Don Burlett
Saturday, February 7 8:00 a.m.—12:00 noon	Beaudette Park/ Oakland County Ducks	Dave Frye
February 21-22 Weekend Trip	Upper Peninsula	Don Burlett



*Snow Buntings by Jeff Stacey*

### 2015 Membership Renewals

Memberships run from January 1 to December 31 each year. Our renewal campaign has begun for 2015, so we ask that you consider renewing now. Please use the form on page 12.

### Welcome to Our Newest Oakland Audubon Members!

Carole Beverwyk  
Pamela and Mike Dougherty  
Jody and Dennis Harrington  
Amy and Mike Metz family  
Gina and Erik Weyhrauch



## FIELD TRIP REPORTS

### October 11 — Algonac State Park – Leader: Don Burlett

It was a cool but sunny day for this outing for 12 participants. We started at Lake St. Clair Metro-park and walked briefly along the woods from the Nature Center. We came across a few warblers along the edge of the woods, including Tennessee, Orange-crowned, Nashville, Yellow-rumped, Palm, Black-and-white, and Common Yellowthroat. We also had an Eastern Towhee and a very cooperative Red-tailed Hawk that seemed unperturbed by having our group of 12 birders walk directly underneath him taking pictures.

We then drove to Algonac State Park and walked the trails for a while. There we saw a Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, and Kestrel (to add to the Bald Eagle seen on the way there). We also had a Winter Wren, some Eastern Bluebirds, three thrushes (Swainson's, Hermit, and American Robin). We also had wonderful looks at a male Purple Finch in the trees.

We discovered that this park had lots of habitat and would be a good stop in the spring. We totaled 52 species for the day. And it was a nice fall day.

### October 26 — River Bends Park/Yates Cider Mill – Leader: Ed Lewandowski

Just another fall day – cool and sunny. Just perfect for birding, right? Well, we headed out to River Bends Park in Macomb County to find out. Thirteen birders found themselves wandering through colorful woods in search of treasures for the trip list. We found many of the usual suspects (chickadees, nut-hatches, woodpeckers, etc.) but added a few good ones. We found a Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglets, and Yellow-rumped Warblers. Still in search of birds, we moved to Holland Ponds to see if anything else was available. We were rewarded by finding a couple of Fox Sparrows.

The final reward was a stop at Yates Cider Mill for cider and doughnuts. What an afterparty! It doesn't get any better than this. Don't miss this one next time!

### November 8 — Lake Erie Metropark – Leader: Jim Koppin

Despite it being a cool and rainy day, 12 participants came out for some birding at the Metropark. The woods at the park were rather quiet with just a few species seen. These were highlighted by a flock of about 70 Pine Siskins in the alder trees on the nature trail loop. Migrating raptors were not present during our visit. Waterfowl were not that easy to find either, with the duck hunters in the area. However, there were good number of Ruddy Ducks, American Coots, Common Loons (8), and Horned Grebes (30). A total of 38 species were seen for the visit.



*Common Loon by Joan Tisdale*

## FIELD TRIP REPORTS (*continued*)

### November 22 — Belle Isle – Leader: Don Burlett

A brave group of 14 of birders ventured forth on Saturday morning to bird on Belle Isle. The roads getting to the island were passable in most places but the roads on the island were sheet ice when we arrived. However, you can drive on ice (witness the Zamboni at Joe Louis Arena) and with care all made it to the nature center safely. Later, the warming temperatures and salt from trucks made the roads okay.

The birding was a bit odd because the pond across from the nature center was frozen over and that limited the ducks, etc. to the edges of the island. Still, we managed to see nine species of ducks (no scoters), swans (possibly all three species), lots of Horned Grebes (all around the island) and no cormorants. There was one Great Blue Heron hanging out on the edge of a small piece of land in the ponds on the southwest end of the island.

We had looks of varying length at two Peregrine Falcons, a Cooper's Hawk and a Red-tailed Hawk. We also had good comparative looks at Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, and Great Black-backed Gull, all sitting on the same piece of ice in the river.

The passerine population was dominated by hundreds of Cedar Waxwings feeding on the berries and bathing in the water channel near the hiking paths. We also had three species of woodpeckers, many of the usual suspects (chickadee, nuthatch, titmouse, jay) in small numbers. We also had great looks at a responsive Winter Wren and a female Eastern Towhee. Our only sparrows were a handful of White-throated Sparrows and some House Sparrows at the nature center. Sadly, this was our third straight year without Fox Sparrows. We did see a couple of Hermit Thrushes skulking in the brambles. Finally, Bryn Martin spotted a couple of American Pipits on the lawn near the beach on the north side.

Overall, we saw 44 species of birds on the trip, not bad under the conditions. It all ended with an after-party with a small group.



*Great Black-backed Gull by Sue Wright*

### **Volunteers Needed – OAS Website Project**

Our President, Don Burlett, is looking for a group of volunteers to help with a project that will eventually be on our website. He has been interested in establishing a local birding spot map for Oakland County for a while and he is ready to tackle this. The idea is to have volunteers develop a series of profiles on various parks and locales that might be considered birding “hotspots.” The aim is to provide all local birders with a map with hotspots that potentially will include descriptions of the parks, pictures from all four seasons, a trail map, possible connection to eBird for recent information and other information (fees, etc.). With the work divided amongst a group of workers, we can handle a fair number of parks in our first year, with the aim to go live in 2016 with a map containing 20-30 parks.

If interested, please contact Don Burlett and we will gather this committee early in 2015 to discuss what we are going to do and set up assignments for the members of the group. Please contact Don if you have questions about the work. Thanks in advance to any volunteers.

*(Note: Contact information for Don and all board members is on page 10)*

# LISTERS: WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN and WHY!?

by Don Burlett

I've admitted many times that I'm a "dreaded lister." But what do I mean? Well, let's consider the admission. *Who* – Listers can be almost anyone that keeps a list of something: Places visited, birds seen, calories counted, whatever. *What* – As I just mentioned, it can be anything. If you've ever had a chance to read through the American Birding Association (ABA) Yearly list issue, you see that people keep track of birds seen in every country, state, county, day, etc. We heard about Don Chalfant's lists at a meeting a couple of years ago and we learned that anything goes. *Where* – This can be done anywhere and by anyone. *When* – Anytime you want. The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is an example of listing. It's used for scientific endeavors but it's nothing more than a complicated list of data gathered by citizen scientists. Same for Breeding Bird Surveys, Backyard Bird Counts, and more.

The big question is *WHY*? I'm certain that a good portion of listing is to document accomplishment. Anytime a birder gives you his "number," I'm sure that he/she is proud of that number. It represents an accomplishment featuring knowledge, persistence, etc. Who has the record for most birds seen in Michigan? That person is very proud of that accomplishment. So what does this compulsion say about the lister? They are driven to accomplish goals. They focus energy, time, and money toward whatever it is they wish to accomplish. Now, driven can be good and "driven" can be pretty tough to take.

Now I respect those who bird for the joy of it and never keep track of the birds they have seen. Many people travel far and wide (like listers) without ever raising a pen to note anything along the way. Terrific! Sheer enjoyment of being in nature is a wonderful thing. Peace and solitude in the outdoors is a reward in itself. At the same time, I think that a person who keeps a list isn't missing all the "good stuff" being outside unless they allow this drive to see the next bird interfere with that enjoyment. If the goal is just to see that bird and quickly move on to the next before it gets away, then the listing has spoiled the true enjoyment of birding and nature observation.

Now, I am a lister. I keep records of world birds, ABA birds, and state birds. But I limit it to that so that I don't get too carried away. We have county listers in Michigan and that's not so bad as long as the lists are done with some enjoyment of the places visited to see birds. Just try to keep the obsession from becoming all-consuming to the exclusion of studying bird behavior or connecting the habitat to the birds and their needs. Spend some time with friends, enjoy a group outing, contribute your time helping less-experienced birders and youth learn the ropes. All these side activities will prove just as rewarding as tracking down the next bird for your list.

I won't stop my listing and marching toward self-set goals. However, I have always tried to include time for friends, other birders, and family as part of my exploration of the natural world. A balance of this sort seems healthy and rewarding. So, think about the lists that you keep, whether written down or just in your head. You may be surprised to learn that you, too, are a "LISTER"!!



Photo by Marie Rust ([www.marierust.blogspot.com](http://www.marierust.blogspot.com))

# OAKLAND AUDUBON SUPPORTS SAFE PASSAGE



by Doris Applebaum

Detroit Audubon Society and Michigan Audubon have been cooperating for several years in a project titled Safe Passage Great Lakes. This is an effort to encourage owners and managers of tall buildings to turn out the lights above the 5<sup>th</sup> floor from 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. during the spring and fall bird-migration seasons.

Night-migrating birds use the stars as a navigation aid but are easily confused by the lights in tall buildings, especially on foggy or cloudy nights when the stars can't be seen. Across North America, hundreds of millions of birds die every year from crashing into tall lighted buildings or by being so confused that they simply fly around and around until they die from exhaustion.

Also extremely dangerous to birds, year round, are clear glass windows and doors during the daytime. Glass is invisible to birds, and all too often a bird will fly right into glass that reflects vegetation or sky, or when there is vegetation on the other side of the glass that looks like a good landing spot. The Safe Passage Great Lakes Committee works to educate people about the danger birds face from clear glass.

To increase the impact and visibility of the project, the committee is looking for partners in the effort to reduce the death toll of birds, and they are reaching out to various organizations. The OAS Board of Directors has answered the call and has enlisted OAS as a partner in the Safe Passage Great Lakes project.

You can learn more about this project on the Web at [detroitaudubon.org](http://detroitaudubon.org). And if you are interested in volunteering to help, contact Rob Duchene, the committee coordinator, at [248-549-6328](tel:248-549-6328).

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## UPCOMING MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS AND PROGRAMS

Date	Time	Program	Location
Tues., Jan. 13, 2015	7:30 p.m.	The Highs & Lows of Birding the Tropics (Peru)	First United Methodist Church (see below)
Tues., Feb. 10, 2015	7:30 p.m.	Antarctica 101	First United Methodist Church (see below)
Tues., Mar. 10, 2015	7:30 p.m.	Attracting Bluebirds in Michigan	First United Methodist Church (see below)

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, Children's Center (Room 132). 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. 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.



*I used to see Red-headed Woodpeckers at my feeders every year. Now they are very rare. Why is that?*

It is not clear if the Red-headed Woodpeckers in your area were breeding birds coming to your feeders in summer, or migrants at your feeders in spring and fall. In either case, Red-headed Woodpecker numbers have declined nearly throughout its range in eastern North America. In Michigan, Barrows (1912) wrote that the Red-headed Woodpecker was “abundant in most places and apparently not entirely absent from any section of the state.” Forty years later, Wood (1951) described it as “common in the Lower Peninsula, uncommon in the Upper.” So even by the middle of the last century, the species was retracting from the northern parts of its breeding range. Around that time, Dutch Elm disease had become a huge problem, and the loss of most of Michigan’s elm trees is considered a major factor in furthering the decline of Red-headed Woodpecker populations. In addition, their preferred habitat of natural oak savannas and open oak woodlands was disappearing due to the suppression of fire, the use of DDT, and human development, as well as competition for nest sites with the introduced European Starling (Brewer et al. 1991, McPeck and Adams 1994).

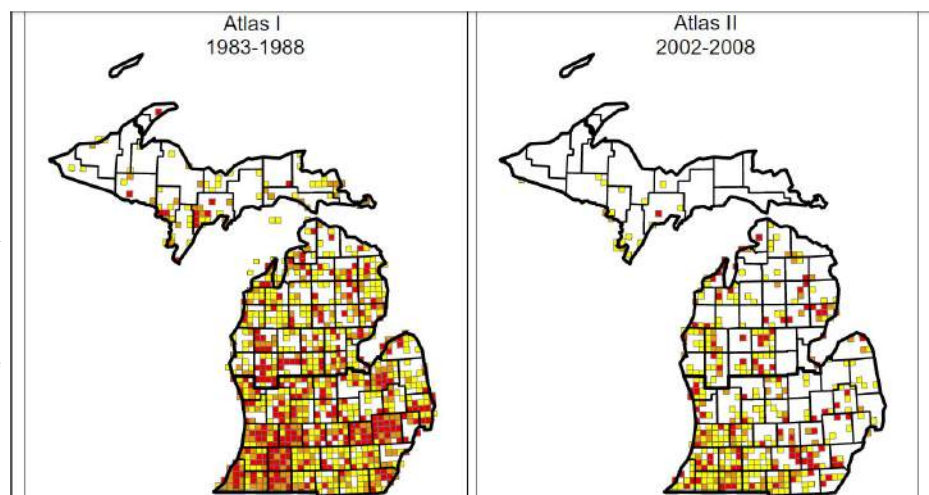


*Red-headed Woodpecker*  
by Joan Tisdale

By the time the first Breeding Bird Atlas was conducted across the state in 1983-1988 (Brewer et al. 1991), Red-headed Woodpeckers were still widely distributed across the Lower Peninsula though less common in the northern parts, but very sparsely distributed in the Upper Peninsula. Overall numbers from that Atlas showed that only 12.3% of Upper Peninsula townships were occupied, with 51.5% of northern Lower Peninsula townships, and 74.1% of southern Lower Peninsula townships with some level of breeding. A total of 47.2% of townships statewide had breeding Red-headed Woodpeckers. Some additional causes of declines noted at that time were increased mortalities due to collisions with automobiles, and changes in farming practices that removed hedgerows.

In 2002-2008, a second Breeding Bird Atlas was conducted in Michigan (Chartier et al. 2013). Overall numbers from this Atlas showed that only 21.1% of townships in the state had breeding Red-headed Woodpeckers, with continuing drastic declines in the northern portions (3.2% in the Upper Peninsula, 27.8% in the northern Lower Peninsula, and 59.4% in the southern Lower Peninsula). The information in this second Atlas was made available free, online, in 2011, and can be accessed at: <http://www.mibirdatlas.org/MichiganBreedingBirdAtlasII.aspx>. An interesting side-by-side comparison of maps from the first and second Atlas projects is available only in the online version, and is reproduced below. In addition to the statewide declines in only 20 years, I’m struck by the change in Oakland County, which had breeding Red-headed Woodpeckers in 23 (all but 2) townships in the first Atlas, but in only 5 townships in the second Atlas. Some additional reasons cited in the second Atlas for continuing declines include greater competition with Red-bellied Woodpeckers for nesting sites, which are more aggressive against European Starlings and thus have become more widespread across the state in the last 50 years, and surely continuing human development (including Oakland County) has contributed to declines in the southern Lower Peninsula, but doesn’t really explain the even greater declines in the northern parts of the state.

*Editor’s Note: References are found on page 10 of this issue.*



## OAS BOARD MEMBERS

### Elected Officers

President	Don Burlett	(248) 236-9486	baikalteal13@netzero.net
Secretary	Doris Applebaum	(248) 542-2506	ibis4247@sbcglobal.net
Treasurer	Elaine Ferguson	(248) 470-2212	elaine127.ef@gmail.com
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Field Trip Officer	Jeff Stacey	(248)798-0508	jdstacey@ameritech.net
Program Officer	Carolyn Beauvais	(248) 644-4989	carolyn.beauvais@gmail.com

### Appointed Officers

Young Birders Club Rep.	Lisa Badgero	(248) 765-4848	mcarthurl2001@yahoo.com
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Publicity/Fundraising	Phil Bugosh	(248) 763-3163	peb729@gmail.com
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Nuthatch Editor	Kim Smith	(248) 420-6105	kimsmith79@gmail.com
Seven Ponds Rep.	Don Burlett	(248) 236-9486	baikalteal13@netzero.net

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## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

November 13, 2014

Membership Officer Dave Frye reported that the number of members signed up for 2015 is slightly ahead of our 2014 pace, and we have 14 new members so far.

Jeff Stacey, our new Field Trip Officer, is quickly getting involved in his new duties.

Preparations for the Christmas Bird Count are moving along.

Our used-book sale brought in \$159.

The Nuthatch Open had 6 teams this year and brought in \$195, which included some much-appreciated donations over and above the entrance fees.

OAS has entered into a partnership with Detroit Audubon Society and Michigan Audubon in the Safe Passage Great Lakes project (see article on page 8 of this newsletter).

OAS has partnered with Oakland County Parks in a number of events on an informal basis in the past several years. A formal partnership agreement is currently under consideration.

Doris Applebaum  
Secretary

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### References for Nature Notes column (see page 9)

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McPeck, G.A., and R.J. Adams Jr. (eds.). 1994. *The Birds of Michigan*. Indiana University Press. Bloomington, IN.

Wood, N.A. 1951. *The Birds of Michigan*. Miscellaneous Publications, Museum of Zoology, University of Michigan No. 75. Ann Arbor, MI.

## BIRD ID QUIZ

Who am I?



(A) \_\_\_\_\_



(B) \_\_\_\_\_



(C) \_\_\_\_\_

*Photo credits: (A) & (B) by Joan Tisdale, (C) by Robert Epstein*

### **Nov/Dec Answers**

(A) Pine Grosbeak; (B) White-winged Crossbill; (C) Purple Finch



# OAKLAND AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate with an (X) in the box 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 if you can!**

Check if you have the skills to help:

\_\_\_\_ Become a board member

\_\_\_\_ Lead a field trip or present a program

\_\_\_\_ Fill an open position (Position: \_\_\_\_\_)

Please check appropriate line:

\_\_\_\_ Member renewal

\_\_\_\_ New member

\_\_\_\_ Change of address

## *OAS Membership Fees*

- Individual      \$15
- Family          \$20
- 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

Mail to:  
OAS MEMBERSHIP  
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ORTONVILLE, MICHIGAN 48462

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