



BIRDTRACKS

Newsletter of the Jackson Audubon Society

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www.jacksonaudubon.org

Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge - Florida February 2017

Fai Chan

Fai and Jean Chan spent time last winter in Florida. Fai photographed numerous birds he found at Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. Enjoy his magnificent photos below.



Florida Scrub Jay



Black Skimmer



Tricolored Heron



White Pelicans



Purple Gallinule



Roseate Spoonbill



Reddish Egret



Snowy Egret



Little Blue Heron

The Elusive Swainson's Warbler

Doug Leffler

Perhaps one of the most elusive warblers for the bird watcher to add to their life list is the Swainson's warbler. This somewhat bland looking warbler is found in the southern states in the Spring and Summer, but is a skulker and is difficult to observe while walking trails.

One guaranteed location to see these birds is North Carolina's Chimney Rock State Park which lies about 26 miles east of Asheville, North Carolina on state route Alt 74. The birds begin nesting in late May and they can be readily seen on the Great Woodland Adventure Trail in the park (link: http://www.chimneyrockpark.com/view_trail/great-woodland-adventure-trail/).

The trail is easy to negotiate and the birds can be heard singing within 100 yards after entering the trail. Since the bird is a skulker, some folks may elect to try a recording of the warbler's song on an iPhone or iPod to draw the bird out from where they hide in the under story, this should be done minimally, so as not to stress the bird. Interestingly, hooded warblers are also seen on this trail, though the two birds seem to stay in their own territories.



Swainson's Warbler & Chimney Rock

Whooping Crane 14-12 Returns to Michigan

Ron Hoffmann - photo by Chuck Mekbel



Whooping Crane 14-12 has been seen again in Michigan. A combination of colored leg bands (see photo) identifies this as male number 14 released during 2012. He was costume-reared at the International Crane Foundation before being released at the Horicon National Wildlife Refuge, Wisconsin as part of a program to establish a migratory Whooping Crane population in eastern North America. Shortly after being released, he joined some Sandhill Cranes and migrated with them to Florida. So-far things were going as planned.

However when spring 2013 came, instead of returning to Wisconsin, he went to Berrien County, Michigan and then moved to Allegan County. In September '13 Chuck Mekbel found him at the Schoonover

Waterfowl Production Area, Lenawee County and then he moved to Spring Arbor Township, Jackson County during October where Joyce Peterson saw him. In 2015, he made his way to the Grand Rapids area. In 2016 he was seen again near Grand Rapids before moving down to the Schoonover WPA. This year Ross Green, along with many birders, found him at the Lenawee Co. site. It will be interesting to see if he is spotted this fall in Michigan.

Although this magnificent bird has thrilled many Michigan birders, it is unfortunate that he will not find a mate here. Every year it is hoped he will find a female whooper in Florida and follow her back to Wisconsin, or better yet, bring her back to Michigan.

HAEHNLE HAPPENINGS

Gary Siegrist

As I sit down to write my first article as chair of the Haehnle Sanctuary Committee, I can't help but be reminded of all the hard work both Ron Hoffman and Lathe Claflin have given Jackson Audubon in steering Haehnle. Not always an easy part time volunteer job. The friendly respectful way they both openly worked with the committee and all others they encountered will be an inspiration to me on how to react to all the situations one has in running Michigan Audubon's largest sanctuary. Thank you both for your years of service.

We have lots going on at the sanctuary including pollinator habitat improvement, wildflower enhancement below the observation hill in memory of long time JAS and Haehnle Committee Member Stew Robinovitz. There is continued work on glossy buckthorn removal and general monthly maintenance. We have put in a gravel driveway up to observation hill to better serve the bus tours that frequent Haehnle in the fall.

Fall is always a busy time and this year is no exception. With the workbee scheduled for Saturday September 30th, CCC&C Festival on October 21st, and crane counting on Sundays in September and Mondays in both October/November there are always ample opportunities to volunteer (see schedule and contact information below and on next page). We will be starting a weekly work crew on Wednesday mornings from 9 to 12. If interested please contact me a gwsiegrist@gmail.com . I look forward to seeing you at the sanctuary!



Working on the trail near Eagle Lake

Saturday, September 30: Workbee at Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Meet at the Wing Overlook kiosk on Seymour Road. Call Gary Siegrist (517-522-5990) for more information.

Saturday, October 21: Cranes, Colors, Cabernet and Cider Festival at and around Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary. Call Gary Siegrist (517-522-5990) or go to the Jackson Audubon website: <http://Jacksonaudubon.org> for more information.

JAX-Birds Subscription

Don Henise

The folks at Great-Lakes.net have been providing their email list services at no charge to the JAX-birds email list. In mid-July the list was moved from Great-Lakes.net to Google Groups. Because this change was made quickly with little advanced warning, some of the subscribers may not have been switched over properly.

To subscribe to jax-birds: send an email to jax-birds+subscribe@great-lakes.net from the email address that you want to use.

To post to this group, send email to jax-birds@great-lakes.net.

You can also view this group online at <https://groups.google.com/a/great-lakes.net/group/jax-birds/>. All of the archives from the old list have been moved over to the google groups location.

If you still have problems subscribing, I can subscribe your address manually. Send me an email at kiskadee3@att.net from the address you want to use for the list.

Calling All Greeters!

Do you enjoy meeting new people and like birdwatching? Here is your chance! Please sign up to be a greeter at Haehnle Sanctuary this fall, on a Saturday or Sunday, in October or November. We always work in pairs, either with someone you choose, or with someone we match you with. We arrive about 3:30-4pm and stay until dusk, welcoming visitors to the sanctuary, asking them to sign in at the visitors' log, encouraging them to fill out the email cards for the Haehnle Newsletter, and trying to answer questions they might have about Haehnle and cranes.



No need to be an expert. Every greeter is given a fact sheet about cranes and Haehnle ahead of time. There are two brochures on these subjects that are also available for all visitors.

Please contact Helena Robinovitz - helena@robinovitz.com or 734-475-7751

Rare Sighting ~ Wood Stork

We don't know who originally spotted this Wood Stork, not usually seen in Michigan. It had been hanging around the Oak Creek subdivision north of Jackson for a couple days but birders didn't learn of it until Saturday, July 15. Several birders spent most of the day looking for him, but he was not seen again.



Point Mouillee Field Trip August 15, 2017

Nine Jackson Audubon members traveled to southeast Michigan to the [Point Mouillee State Game Area](#) on Tuesday to observe migrating shorebirds. We were not disappointed. We observed, or heard, 68 species.

There was a bit of rain at our gathering spot and for most of the drive, but the storm went to the north of us and we had only a small sprinkle. JAS garnered a permit from the DNR to drive three vehicles along the dikes at the Pt. Moo facility. This enabled us to move about fairly quickly to hotspots of reported activity. In addition to the usual finds, we had some unusual/rare sightings, including a juvenile Little Blue Heron, Willet, and Long & Short-billed Dowitcher. This trip was organized and led by Robyn & Don Henise. Thanks to them for their work on this as well as to Don for the checklist and Ross Green for his recon and photos in the checklist.

Complete eBird checklist available at: <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S38661273>

Michigan Audubon Gala

Bird lovers and conservation enthusiasts will gather for Michigan Audubon's 2017 Gala at Sandhill Crane Vineyards in Jackson on September 16, 2017. The evening will feature fancy hors d'oeuvres, wine, entertainment by Jen Sygit and Sam Corbin, a silent auction, and more!

Funds raised from Michigan Audubon's Gala will benefit the Bird-friendly Communities program, a new suite of urban bird conservation projects focused on reconnecting urban communities with birds and the environment for the benefit of all. Now more than ever, urban environments must be reimagined as safe, functional wildlife habitat.

To find out more or purchase tickets visit: www.michiganaudubon.org/michigan-audubon-gala

JAS Tuesday Birding & Nature Trips

Starting this fall, Jackson Audubon will be sponsoring nature walks, tours, and trips throughout the area. We are hoping that many of the folks who were involved in Dahlem's Tuesday Morning Group will join us. The trips will depart from a meeting place and carpool to the destination, generally around 9 AM and go to about noon. Lunch is an option after the event.

We will do walks in local areas like Haehnle, Dahlem, Watkins Lake SP, and Nan Weston. In addition, we are planning trips to some out of the county areas like the Muskegon Wastewater Treatment plant, Binder Park Zoo, and Kellogg Bird Sanctuary. Since we have access to some great institutions in the area, we will look to visit Hidden Lake Gardens, and the Natural History museums at Michigan and Michigan State Universities.

Check the JAS website <http://jacksonaudubon.org/> for the up to date schedule of events. If you are a member of Jackson Audubon and have an email registered in our system, you will receive email announcements and reminders automatically from the website.

If you would like more information, want to register your email, or would like to lead or organize a trip, contact Steve Jerant at jacksonaudubon@gmail.com.

Michigan Audubon Opposed to Sandhill Crane and Mourning Dove Hunt Proposals

Since its inception in 1904, the Michigan Audubon community has consistently supported and fought for the protection of native bird species. In response to a measure recently passed by hunters attending the Michigan United Conservation Clubs convention in early June 2017, Michigan Audubon opposes both the proposed Sandhill Crane and Mourning Dove hunts in the state of Michigan.

A hundred years ago, the Sandhill Crane population in Michigan hit an all-time low – they were hunted nearly to extinction and suffered greatly from loss of suitable wetland habitat throughout the state. While the bird's eastern population has recovered, and they are now abundant throughout the Mississippi flyway, we should celebrate this conservation success story rather than risk repeating past mistakes. While we recognize that Sandhill Cranes inflict minor crop damage, an open hunting season is not a viable solution. Michigan has already established a successful management tool for agricultural stakeholders experiencing issues with this particular bird.

For over 20 years, Michigan Audubon has held an annual celebration of Sandhill Crane migration in October, called CraneFest. The sole purpose of this event is to offer the public a free, family-friendly opportunity to witness these birds fly in at dusk as they migrate through southwest Michigan. Appreciating, understanding, and protecting these birds while ensuring their welfare into the future is work significant to Michigan Audubon's history and mission. We believe Sandhill Cranes should continue to be protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Michigan Audubon also believes the Mourning Dove is unsuitable as a game species. This bird does not pose a nuisance to crops, homes, or the environment. In fact, as a common seed-eating ground feeder, Mourning Doves consume impressive amounts of weed seeds and waste grain which would otherwise attract rodents, earning the species the oft-used moniker of "the farmer's friend." This bird can very easily be misidentified in flight, posing a threat to other birds and the environment if hunted. Additionally, there is no evidence to suggest that the species requires any kind of population control. A fall hunting season would also overlap with nesting season, which could result in orphaned chicks who would struggle for survival if parent birds are shot while still feeding late-brood nestlings.

What can you do? Join us and support our work to ensure the Sandhill Crane and Mourning Dove populations remain protected in our state.

- Share the rationale behind protecting these birds with others in your community, on social media, etc.
- Write to or call your representative and make your voice heard.
- Become a member of Michigan Audubon and stay informed of issues facing birds and wildlife in our state.
- Donate to support our work on behalf of these and other native birds and the habitats they rely on.

We hope for another successful stop to the proposed hunting of these two species and will keep our community informed via our social media channels, website, eNews, and our member magazine, the Jack Pine Warbler. Thank you for caring about Michigan birds and for your contributions to conservation!

visit michiganaudubon.org for more information

2117-18 MEETINGS/ACTIVITIES SCHEDULE

Meetings and programs are held at Ella Sharp Museum, 3225 S Fourth St, Jackson, except where otherwise noted. Regular meetings will begin with a social time at 6:30 p.m. with a short meeting and program at 7:00 p.m. Bring "recyclables" (magazines, feeders, etc.) to the program.

Please note - Meetings are cancelled in the event JPS schools are closed due to inclement weather.

Meetings ~ Programs

- Sept. 12:** Donald Drife presents, *The Monarch Community: More Than Monarchs* (but Monarchs are cool!) Everyone knows about the Monarch Butterfly and its need for milkweed plants in order to survive. But many other insects and some non-insects also make their home in the Milkweed community. Join naturalist and photographer Don Drife as he presents a program on the many organisms which feed on and among the different species of milkweeds, and those that make passing visits.
- October 10:** Doug Leffler presents, "Wonders of Australia and New Zealand." There will be many scenic views of the two countries, along with birds and other wildlife.
- November 14:** Annual Meeting and Program. Meet Heather Good, Executive Director of Michigan Audubon, who will share information about their programs in conservation, education, and research in Michigan. She will also present components of Bird-Friendly Communities and how we can help our birds. (There will be a brief membership meeting prior to the program for the purpose of electing our board.)
- January 9:** Hummingbird expert Allen Chartier presents, "Great Lakes Hummer Net." Allen will discuss his hummingbird research involving Michigan, Ohio, and Northern Indiana. He will give us hints on how to attract hummingbirds in the garden.
- February 9:** Gary Mason of JAS presents, "Israel, Land of Wonder." Gary will share pictures and anecdotes of spring migration, including his experiences at the Eilat International Bird Festival. Israel is one of the best places on the globe to witness the spectacle of spring migration. **This annual program venue is on a Friday at Vista Grand Villa. Bring a dessert to share that does not require table service .**
- March 13:** Lathe Claflin presents, "Birding Eastern Panama." The program will include Harpy Eagles and Sapphire-throated Hummingbirds, along with many more birds of the area.
- April 10:** James O'Brien of the Department of Natural Resources presents, "Watkins Lake State Park and County Preserve." James will share information on our new and exciting park, along with the news on its designation as a waterfowl refuge. A question and answer session will follow the program.

Activities

Saturday, December 16: Christmas Bird Count. Contact Gary Siegrist (517-522-5990) for more information.

Field Trips

September 19 —Regular Tuesday morning field trips begin with Hawkwatch at Lake Erie Metropark, Rockwood. Call Steve Jerant (734-883-9514), email him at jacksonaudubon@gmail.com, or go to our website: <http://jacksonaudubon.org> .

September 26 (Rain date October 3)—Field trip to MSU's Burke Lake Banding Station near Bath, north of Lansing. Email Doug Leffler (dougleffler@yahoo.com) for more information.

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Jackson Audubon Society is a chapter of Michigan Audubon Society

Jackson Audubon Society Mission:

To promote among the people of the Jackson Area an interest, knowledge and appreciation of birds, wildlife and the environment.



Michigan Audubon - Connecting Birds and People for the Benefit of Both