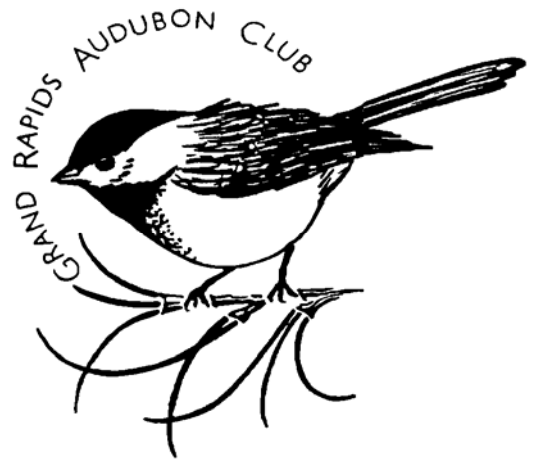


the Caller



March, 2010 Volume 48, No. 8

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March Meeting Notes

Bringing Nature Home

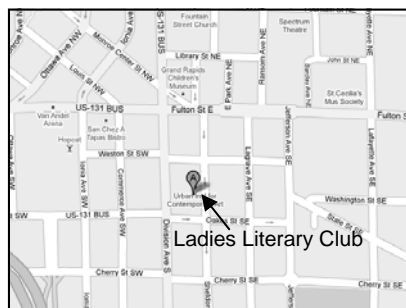
- Date:** Monday, March 29, 2010
Time: 6:30 PM social; 7:30 PM program
Location: Ladies Literary Club
61 Sheldon Blvd. SE (see map below)
Speaker: Douglas Tallamy
Topic: Bringing Nature Home

With as many as 33,000 species imperiled in the U.S., it is clear that we must change our approach to gardening and landscaping if we hope to share the spaces in which we live and work with other living things. The first thing we must do is put more plants into our denuded landscapes, because plants provide the food that drives all food webs. Native plants will play a key role in the restoration of our landscapes because only natives provide the coevolved relationships required by most animals. By supporting a diversity of insect herbivores, native plants provide food for a large and healthy community of natural enemies that keep herbivores in balance and our gardens aesthetically pleasing. Gardening in this crowded world carries both moral and ecological responsibilities that we can no longer ignore.

Doug Tallamy is Professor and Chair of the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology and director of the Center for Managed Ecosystems at the University of Delaware in Newark, Delaware, where he has authored 69 research articles and has taught Insect Taxonomy, Behavioral Ecology and other courses for 28 years. Chief among his research goals is to better understand the many ways insects interact with plants and how such interactions determine the diversity of animal communities. His book *Bringing Nature Home; How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in Our Gardens* was published by Timber Press in 2007 and was awarded the 2008 silver medal by the Garden Writer's Association.

GRAC's partners in sponsoring this program are the Calvin College Ecosystem Preserve and Biology Department, the Land Conservancy of West Michigan, River City Wild Ones and West Michigan Cluster of the Stewardship Network.

A detailed map can be found on the GRAC website.



President's Corner

by Melanie Good

It is that time of year...budget time. Sitting around the table to determine next year's GRAC budget is not necessarily as fun as birding in Texas, but is necessary. We are lucky to have a generous group of members that allow us to carry out our mission and strategic goals. I want to take this opportunity to put an end of the fiscal year request to all of you to help support some of GRAC's great programs. (Our fiscal year ends June 30, 2010.)

Audubon Adventures - As budgets get tight and standards stricter, field trips are becoming an endangered school activity. Luckily, GRAC has a program to offer teachers to learn more about birds and natural history in their classroom. Each year GRAC donates hundreds of Audubon Adventure magazines to schools around Kent County to support their natural history education. This is made possible through donations from members like you. To date we have collected \$145 of the \$350 budgeted for this year.

Maher Sanctuary - This approximately 80-acre sanctuary is hope to over 67 different types of plants and many species of birds. Trails that transect the sanctuary's forest, meadows and creek are open to the public. The sanctuary has many different needs including removal of invasive species and boardwalk repair. At \$220 we need to raise significantly more to achieve our goal of \$500 for the 2009/2010 fiscal year.

Junior Audubon - This unique club offers the experience of an adult Audubon club adapted for a younger generation. Hikes, workshops and field trips are an important component of this educational program. Of the \$300 budgeted for this year, GRAC has raised \$105.

We all know the financial pressures all around us. But, if you have a few quarters in the couch, a little extra tax return or a good night at the casino (ha!), please consider helping support your favorite GRAC program!

Special March Board Meeting

Because of our special program at the Ladies Literary Club on March 29, we will not hold a Board meeting that night. The March Board meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, March 25, 2010 from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at the Land Conservancy of West Michigan office, located in the Cooper's Landing Building, 1345 Monroe Ave. NW, Suite 324.** Please park in the lot at the rear of the building. Please see map in last month's *Caller* or contact Melanie Good for directions.

We will be finalizing the 2010-11 GRAC budget, so if you have input, please plan to attend this important meeting.

Deadline for April *Caller* articles: April 5th.

(send to Fred and Carol VanOeveren)

For membership information contact assistant treasurer Mary Austin at the address, phone number or E-mail on the back of the *Caller* or see website www.glsqa.org/grac.

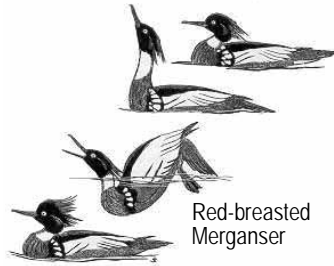
February Bird Reports

by Tom Holt

Location Abbreviations

GHP	- Grand Haven Pier, Ottawa Co.
HT	- Hastings Township, Barry Co.
MP	- Muskegon Pier, Muskegon Co.
NWGR	- Northwest Grand Rapids, Kent Co.

Mute Swan 12 at the MP on Feb 3 (TC). **Redhead** 6 (5 female, 1 male) at the MP on Feb 3 (TC); 4 at the GHP on Feb 3 (TC). **Lesser Scaup** 10-20 at the MP on Feb 3 (TC). **Bufflehead** 20+ at the GHP on Feb 3 (TC). **Red-breasted Merganser** 20 at MP on Feb 3 (TC). **Turkey Vulture** 1 in HT on Feb 12 (AK). **Cooper's Hawk** 1 in NWGR on Feb 21 and 25 (CV). **Red-tailed Hawk** 1 eating a squirrel in Grandville on Feb 22 (EF). **Eastern Screech Owl** 1 calling in NWGR on Feb 6 and 8 (CV). **Horned Lark** 1 in Alpine Twp, Kent Co. on Feb 18 (CV); 2 on Feb 25 in HT (AK). **Red-breasted Nuthatch** in NWGR on Feb 17-25 (CV,FV). **Brown Creeper** 1 in NWGR on Feb 6 (CV). **Carolina Wren** 1 daily in Grandville (EF). **American Robin** 2 at Covenant Christian High School in Walker on Feb 12 (TB). **Snow Bunting** 30 in HT on Feb 25 in HT (AK).



Red-breasted Merganser

Observers

TB	- Tom Bergman	AK	- Anne Klein
TC	- Tom Carnegie	CV	- Carol VanOeveren
EF	- Elaine Faber	FV	- Fred VanOeveren

Historical Archives

20 Years Ago this Spring in the *Caller*
by Chris Baer

The March 1990 program with Jim Granlund got us ready to enjoy the spring migration.

Carol VanOeveren and Steve Minard encouraged birders to send in their Saugatuck Dunes State Park bird sightings for an eventual check list.

Bird Reports, February 1990. Some interesting birds seen: (early blackbirds were being seen and waterfowl are soon to follow) tundra swan 7-10 Feb Muskegon, 3 golden eagles 17 Feb Todd Farm, red-winged blackbird 12 Feb Courtland Twp, Eastern meadowlark 17 Feb Saugatuck Twp, 2 brown-headed cowbirds 14 Feb Vergennes Twp, 3 common redpolls 15 Feb Courtland Twp.

Clean air was on the U.S. Senate agenda. Our Senators Levin and Reigle vote to weaken the auto efficiency standards. We are encouraged to oppose them and write letters.

Anne Copps goes 'Marching into Spring' while a blizzard rages outside her window. She observes a number of birds taking advantage of food put out for them.

Anne is looking forward to when the frogs start to chorus and blackbirds call from the cattails. Other winter birds will be returning to join resident birds to nest and all the activity that brings.

Field trips Spring 1990: (lots of field trips) Bluebird house cleanout with Jim Ponshair, Kalamazoo NC with Madeline Heibel, Allegan State Game Area with Frank Schermers and

On Bringing Nature Home

by Ed Bolt

In anticipation of our March 29 speaker, Doug Tallamy, I have been reading his book, *Bringing Nature Home*. Every so often in our lives we read a book that is profound and changes the framework of our thinking. For environmentalists, two of those books are *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson and *A Sand County Almanac* by Aldo Leopold. Each of these books leads us step-by-step into a new framework of thinking about our environment—what has been going wrong, and what we can do to fix it.

For me, *Bringing Nature Home* is a similar book, of profound insight. Simply put, our native birds are declining because we have been methodically removing native insects from our environment, both purposefully ("I hate bugs.") and benignly ("This plant is pest-resistant."). From our unchecked development sprawl, to our naïve use of pesticides, to our well-meaning importation of exotic plant species for landscaping, Mr. Tallamy describes how we have severely reduced habitat of native insects—the food our birds need to thrive.

How can we stop the decline? More use of native plants in your own back yard! The beauty here is that is something each of us can do, at our own pace, on our own budget. You don't need to own 10 acres, you don't need a lot of money, you don't need to plow up your yard and start over—just start planting native plants and enjoy watching nature regain a foothold. The insects don't care how small your yard is—you can make a difference!

Besides the central message, another benefit of the book is that it depicts clearly the commonly found native insects and native plants and trees. For trees, the book can be a guide to "what to plant," as some species support a wider variety of insects (and birds) than others. The photographs are excellent and, whether intended or not, can be used as a field guide.

Even if you are unable to attend Mr. Tallamy's presentation March 29, do pick up a copy of the book (available through GRAC) and read it. It will fundamentally change your thinking!

John Will, Muskegon State Game Area with Char Runnells, lakeshore with Steve Minard, GVSU Nature Trail with Kay Dodge, Muskegon Wastewater area with George Wickstrom, Reeds Lake with Steve Minard and Jason Hoeksema, Reeds Lake with Bill Sweetman, Bass/Grand River with Cal Pomarius, Whitefish Point with Steve Minard, Maher Sanctuary with Helen Spore, Newaygo prairie/bog with Jan Skeberdis.

Doug Klein reported on an Eastern U.P. field trip on Friday, February 9. Doug and his group of nine departed late and snagged a great horned owl on the way to their first night's rest. Saturday, their first bird was a bohemian waxwing. North of the bridge they found evening grosbeaks, common redpolls and pine siskins. Sunday, bald eagles, Northern shrikes, snow buntings and a boreal chickadee were seen among other birds. At one location they observed more than twelve sharp-tailed grouse.

Junior Audubon, with leaders Bill and Birdene Amundson, Steve Mueller, Jim McMaster and Ruth Lavigne, explored the world of the loon through a slide program loaned by the Michigan Loon Association. The young people learned about loon identification, habits, habitats, migration and persona. The most entertaining part of the presentation was the menu from the "Echo Lake Loon Cafe." Menu items included raw leech marinated in mud, whole crayfish (down the hatch!) and nymphs of caddisfly, dragonfly and damselfly (yum!) The Auduboners went home with pictures, a coloring book and the menu.

GRAC Field Trips

March through May



Remember: A complete list of all scheduled field trips can be found on the GRAC website: (www.glsa.org/grac).

March 27, 2010, Saturday, 9:00 AM

Leader: Jim Ponshair

Bluebird Box Cleaning At the Muskegon Wastewater

One way we can help our local nesting birds is by providing places for them to nest. Jim has aided the birds for years with a number of bluebird box trails at the Muskegon Wastewater. This adds up to a large number of boxes and we need a good sized group to clean out all these boxes every year. The annual bluebird box cleaning is a great way to learn your way around the Muskegon Wastewater. It's also a good way to learn about bluebird boxes, how to clean them out and see how the type of box and habitat affects who uses the box. Since we're at the Wastewater, we usually see some good birds while we work. You may even get to meet mice or flying squirrels up close and personal. And, you get to help the bluebirds, swallows, chickadees, wrens and other birds that use the boxes. Meet at the Maple Island Road entrance to the Muskegon Wastewater System just north of White Road. There, the group will split up to clean out boxes in different areas. We'll plan a group lunch at nearby Morrow's Restaurant on the corner of Apple Ave. and Maple Island Rd. Following lunch, a birding extension is planned to the nearby Muskegon State Game Area to look for early migrants. This can be an all day trip, or you can head out before or after lunch. For all the carpenters and builders out there, Jim needs more bluebird boxes. Boxes suffer damage over the years and new boxes are always needed. Call Jim Ponshair (616-895-7691) if you have new boxes to donate.

Essentials: Come dressed for the weather. Bring your spotting scope, if you have one, and bring some tools (screwdrivers, pliers, hammer and nails) and gloves for cleaning out the bluebird houses.

Safety Hazards: Driving in a caravan can be hazardous. Get directions from the leader for travel to the next stop. Please exercise caution on the roads at all times, and watch the car ahead of you when driving in a caravan.

April 17, 2010, Saturday, 7:00 AM

Leader: Steve Minard

Spring Marsh Birds and Hawks

Join us to look for marsh birds at the Hofma Preserve near Grand Haven. Swamp Sparrows should be on territory in the marsh, and rails should be in the area by this date. Early warblers are also possible. Mid-morning we'll move into Grand Haven to check out Harbor Island and hawk watch locations if we see any hawks moving. Caspian Terns on Lake Michigan and Peregrine Falcons at the power plant are also possible. Birders of all skills are welcome.

Essentials: Meet at the Boy Scout Headquarters west off Walker Road just north of I-96 at 7:00 AM. We plan to bird until noon; you may want to bring a snack to hold you over until lunch.

Safety Hazards: Driving in a caravan can be hazardous. Get directions from the leader for travel to the next stop. Please exercise caution on the roads at all times, and watch the car ahead of you when driving in a caravan.

April 24, 2010, Saturday, 8:00 AM

Leader: Tom Leggett

Millennium Park

Join Tom for a new field trip to explore Millennium Park on the west side of Grand Rapids. This is a new park, and we're still figuring out how to bird the park. But, we have the right person leading the trip. Tom is relatively new to our group, but he has participated in the spring migration count and has found an incredible number and variety of birds on that count. For this trip, we will look for waterfowl on the ponds and along the river at Millennium Park. Other early migrants can also be expected.

Essentials: Meet at the south parking lot in Johnson Park off Butterworth Drive just north of 28th Street at 8:00 AM. This is on the west/north side of the Grand River. This is planned as a morning trip, but lunch and extensions are possible. You may want to bring a snack and a drink to keep you going for the morning.

Safety Hazards: Driving in a caravan can be hazardous. Get directions from the leader for travel to the next stop. Please exercise caution on the roads at all times, and watch the car ahead of you when driving in a caravan.

May 4, 2010, Tuesday, 6:30 PM

Leader: Steve Minard

Tuesday Evening At Reeds Lake

This trip is an evening walk to the Hodenpyl Woods area at the west end of Reeds Lake. Varied woodland, marsh and lake habitat provides a variety of birds right in town. On this trip, we will concentrate on waterbirds, early warblers and possibly Great Horned Owls. Birders of all skills are welcome.

Essentials: Meet at the East Grand Rapids Utility Building parking lot, on Reeds Lake Blvd., north of Gaslight Village, at 6:30 PM. Waterproof footwear and insect repellent may be useful.

Safety Hazards: Watch out for traffic on the road and the bicycle path. Poison ivy is abundant in places, and some of the trails are muddy most springs.

May 8, 2010, Saturday, Spring Migration Count

Coordinator: Steve Minard

Join us counting birds on the second Saturday of May for the Spring Migration Count. In Michigan, we count birds and tabulate results by county for this worldwide event. Locally, we focus on Kent County, but counters are needed across the state. This is a 24-hour count period, but every 1 or 2 hour count helps. Plan to bird your favorite place for the Spring Migration Count. Watch the *Caller* in the spring for details on this count.

May 11, 2010, Tuesday, 8:00 AM

Leader: Bill Sweetman

Tuesday Morning At Reeds Lake

This trip is a morning walk to the Hodenpyl Woods area at the west end of Reeds Lake. Varied woodland, marsh and lake habitat produces a good variety of birds for this location. The second week of May should be the peak of spring migration, and just about anything is possible here.

Essentials: Meet at the East Grand Rapids Utility Building parking lot, on Reeds Lake Blvd., north of Gaslight Village, at 8:00 AM. Waterproof footwear and insect repellent may be useful.

Safety Hazards: Watch out for traffic on the road and the bicycle path. Poison ivy is abundant in places, and some of the trails are muddy most springs.

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Essentials: Meet at the East Grand Rapids Utility Building parking lot, on Reeds Lake Blvd., north of Gaslight Village, at 6:30 PM. Waterproof footwear and insect repellent may be useful.

Safety Hazards: Watch out for traffic on the road and the bicycle path. Poison ivy is abundant in places, and some of the trails are muddy most springs.

(Continued on page 4)

GRAC Field Trips

(Continued from page 3)

May 13, 2010, Thursday, 8:00 AM

Leader: Bill Sweetman

Thursday Morning At Roselle Park

This trip is a morning walk at Roselle Park. This wonderful area has a combination of marsh, wet meadow, grassland, ponds and river habitat. Yellow Rails and LeConte's Sparrows have been found here in migration. More likely are Virginia Rail, Sora, snipe, Swamp Sparrow and Common Yellowthroat. Bill plans to concentrate on rails and sparrows for this trip, although there may be warblers in the woods and swallows in the air to distract you. This relatively new park has paved trails and your feet should stay dry if you stay on trails.

Essentials: Meet at the Roselle Park parking lot, on Grand River Drive just east of Michigan. This is west of Ada and north-west of Carl Drive. The best way to get there would be Fulton (east or west) to Carl. Turn north on Carl, and then left on Grand River Drive to Roselle Park by the silos. Waterproof footwear will be helpful if you go off the trails, and insect repellent may be useful.

Safety Hazards: Please exercise caution on the road to and from the park. Bugs will be the main hazard at the park.

Winter Field Birding Field Trip

February 20, 2010

by Steve Minard

We enjoyed a wonderfully mild and sunny morning for our Winter Field Birding trip. With sunrise at 7:30 AM and our start at 8:00 AM, we started seeing birds at the Boy Scout Headquarters. Three American Goldfinch, two Black-capped Chickadee, three Mourning Dove and a singing Northern Cardinal got us going. Our plan this time around was to head straight to the South Muskegon Wastewater for field birds likely to be present. We were delayed in Ottawa County by a Rough-legged Hawk on I-96 at Coopersville and an American Kestrel on State Road west of Coopersville. When we hit Muskegon County, Moorland Road added another American Kestrel, another Rough-legged Hawk, plus three Horned Lark starting their courtship, five starling, 20 Rock Pigeon and an American Crow.

When we arrived at the South Muskegon Wastewater, it did not disappoint. As we traveled back south, Horned Larks were here and there. Well out on the field to the west were a few Snow Buntings, and the ditch to the east erupted with Mallards as we drove past. The Bald Eagle that flew by from the west was a life bird for many of the Junior Audubon members with us, and one in a tree gave us a target. Our pursuit of a closer eagle sighting was delayed as we turned the corner near the model airplane field. A large flock of Snow Buntings was right in front of us, and in the binoculars, one of them was a Lapland Longspur. We hopped out, mid-corner, and set up our scopes and tried to get everyone a look at a longspur. The close one in the open flew, and we picked up another one. I think there were at least five present. The Snow Buntings drifted off the other way, and we headed that way getting a good look at the sitting Bald Eagle.

By the old shed, a small flock of eight American Tree Sparrows flitted around the small trees. We continued all the way to the pump house at the end of the road. In the ditch, the closest

May 15, 2010, Saturday, 7:00 AM

Leader: Phil Willemstein

Berrien County Specialties Trip

Phil is checking out some additional areas for this year's trip. Southern specialties that just make it into Michigan remain a focus, as well as an expected wealth of warblers and other spring migrants. Likely spots to visit are the South Branch of the Galien River and the Kesling Nature Preserve for Yellow-throated Warbler, Cerulean Warbler and White-eyed Vireo. Expect to stop at Floral Lane in the north end of Warren Dunes State Park, unless the area is flooded again. There are several trails here, and this is one of the premier birding locations in Michigan. Migrant warblers can be found along with rare breeding birds like Prairie Warbler and possibly Worm-eating Warbler. It will be a little early for migrating Mourning Warbler and Connecticut Warbler, but in another week, this will be an excellent place to find them. Phil is tracking down Yellow-breasted Chats near Sarett Nature Center and a stop there is likely. Bring your CB or family radio if you have one and we'll try to keep in touch between cars. Birders of all skills are welcome.

Essentials: Meet at the McDonald's in Hudsonville, and car pool from there. Be ready to head out at 7:00 AM. This is a longer trip than most since it is a two hour drive. Plan on the better part of the day for the trip. Bring snacks and drinks to keep you going. A lunch stop is planned.

Safety Hazards: Driving in a caravan can be hazardous. Get directions from the leader for travel to the next stop. Please exercise caution on the roads at all times, and watch the car ahead of you when driving in a caravan. Bugs and poison ivy are likely; take appropriate precautions.

ducks were Gadwall, that quickly flew off, and the further ducks were Mallards. On our way back, we spotted an American Kestrel on the wire by the road. Since kestrels are known to chase Northern Shrikes in their territory, we figured our chances for finding the reported Northern Shrike had dropped, but just then, someone spotted a bird atop a tree to the south. It was the Northern Shrike, and we got out the scopes as it dropped down to the ground, flew to another tree and then flew further east.

We wrapped up our South Muskegon Wastewater visit with a Red-tailed Hawk and a flock of Canada Goose overhead. We headed north to the main Muskegon Wastewater picking up more raptors: two Red-tailed Hawk, two Rough-legged Hawk and one Bald Eagle. We could not locate the hoped for Golden Eagle. We did have a pair of Common Goldeneye fly up out of the ditch by White Road.

At the headquarters feeder, we added four Dark-eyed Junco and another American Tree Sparrow. We scanned the large ice covered lagoons and the center dike. Way down the center dike were a number of gulls that looked ready to find nest sites. On the aeration cells, we could identify a number of Ring-billed Gulls and a few Herring Gulls. We swung through the grassy cells adding a Mute Swan. By now, it was late morning and we headed for a quick stop in different habitat. Although we were supposed to be field birding, I couldn't resist heading to the Muskegon State Game Area Headquarters. Here, we found five of the reported Yellow-rumped Warblers right at our parking area. Other woodland birds for our trip list were a Blue Jay, Black-capped Chickadee and Red-Bellied Woodpecker. We finished the morning with good year's birds for many of our Senior Audubon members and several life birds for Junior Audubon members.

Program Help Needed for 2010-11

by Madeline Heibel

You are all asked to give the vice president help by giving your ideas for programs for the 2010-11 season. If you know of a person who has something you think our group would like to be informed about, please call or E-mail Ed Bolt, Madeline Heibel or Lucile Radick.

Finding speakers is essential. You can be a very important part of our club just by giving us information regarding suitable programs. We hope to hear from you so we can start getting programs ready for next year. Thank you.

Lucile Radick: 616-866-4824

Madeline Heibel: 616-363-8382; madeline1962h@gmail.com

Ed Bolt: 616-453-3822; kbolt@iserv.net

MIBCI Ornithological Congress 2010

April 7 – 10, 2010

North Central Michigan College
Petoskey, MI

Registration is now open for the 2010 joint MiBCI Ornithological Congress and Michigan Chapter of The Wildlife Society Annual Meeting.

This year's meeting will be held April 7-10 on the campus of North Central Michigan College in Petoskey, Michigan.

Michigan Audubon will be hosting a *Bird Monitoring Orientation* on Saturday, April 10 for birders interested in helping monitor birds and/or coordinate volunteers regionally to help conduct surveillance/monitoring for birds such as Peregrine Falcons, Piping Plovers, Kirtland's Warblers, Cerulean Warblers, Trumpeter Swans and many more. MAS is working very hard to offer this orientation at no cost (of course, we encourage you to register and attend the congress!)

More information about the conference, including a full schedule and registration information, can be found online at <http://www.mibci.org/index.php?id=199>

Registration costs are relatively low with the option of a single day registration for \$30 or \$75 for a full registration, both of which include lunch and dinner on-site.

Cottage and Lakefront Living Show

GRAC is again planning to participate in the Cottage and Lakefront Living Show at DeVos Place. The dates are April 16 – 18, 2010. We will need volunteers to man our booth all three days to answer questions, give information about GRAC and sell items. We will also need a couple of large, lightweight display tables. If you would like to help chair our part in the event, volunteer to work a time slot at our booth or provide items for sale (birdhouses, feeders, etc.), please contact Melanie Good at GRAC.president@glsga.org or 443-6323. This is a great way to promote GRAC to the public and was a great success last year.

Garlic Mustard Pull at Aman Park

A garlic mustard pull at Aman Park is planned for Saturday, May 15, 2010 from 10:00 AM – Noon. More information will be available in the April *Caller*. Flyers will be available on the GRAC website in April and at the April membership meeting. Please contact Melanie Good for more information.

Maher Sanctuary Workday

Saturday, May 1, 2010, 9:00 AM

Jim Bradley and Ed Bolt are planning a workday at Maher Sanctuary on Saturday, May 1 starting at 9:00 AM. Please note the date change. The work to be done includes repairing the boardwalk, clearing trails and other miscellaneous maintenance. Please bring work gloves and suitable tools for the repair work. The early spring flowers should be beautiful by then. Directions to the sanctuary are available on the GRAC website at www.glsga.org/graud/maher/maher_sanctuary.htm. For more information or to volunteer, contact Conservation Chair Jim Bradley, E-mail braj@calvin.edu or phone 949-8667.

Thank You

We hit the jackpot for door prizes at the February membership meeting! Many thanks goes to the individuals that donated the following: a woodpecker suet cake, packs of low energy light bulbs, an English Gardens coffee table book, a Sierra Club calendar, *King of the Birds* (a book), GRAC's *Favorite Birding Areas* booklet, a welcome sign topped with bird figurines and two garden stakes topped with bird figurines.

Message on Membership

by Mary Austin

Greetings from your membership person. After you receive your copy of the 2009-2010 Membership Roster, check whether your address, phone number or E-mail information is correct. Let me know of any corrections that are needed. Many thanks to Char Chandler, Carol VanOeveren and Cheryl Wisdom for their help in the preparation of the Roster.

Attention Returning Snowbirds: Per your request, you'll receive your March (or April for some) *Caller* at your Michigan address. Keep me posted if you plan to leave earlier or later when you head back "down South" next winter. That way you'll receive your *Caller* at the correct address at the right time.

A warm welcome is extended to our newest members, Eileen and Rick VanHorn of Rockford.

A Great Birding Experience for Junior Audubon

by Wendy Tatar

Members of Junior Audubon had a wonderful time birding Muskegon County on February 20 thanks to Steve Minard and other members of GRAC. All members added birds to their "life list." You can see a complete list of the birds that we saw in Steve's trip synopsis on page 4.

This is the first time since I've been leading the club that we've went caravan birding. I think it was a good learning experience for both the kids and their parents. I hope that we'll be able to schedule another trip like this for next season. A big thank you goes out to Steve Minard for creating this trip for us.

Thank you to everyone that had suggestions for me regarding finding a Purple Martin colony to visit. On my CBC route around Murray Lake, I spotted a colony house that looked well maintained. Through a bit of detective work I was able to find the owner. I spoke with him recently, and he has agreed to let us come out to his house in June!



Minutes of the Conservation Committee Meeting

Thursday, February 18, 2010

In attendance: Jim Bradley, Ed Bolt, Linda Damstra

1. Safe Passage Update – Bradley and Bolt represented GRAC at the February 9 City Commission meeting in requesting support of the Safe Passage Program. *GR Press* reporter, Jim Harger, reported to Bradley, “Mayor Heartwell says he is willing to change the city’s practices regarding lighting of city hall, but he is not favorable to the idea of passing a resolution in favor of Safe Passages.” The Committee “agreed that the suggestion of Fred Charbonneaux to put the City of GR on the ‘Honor Roll’ would be premature until we know more about the City’s reluctance to craft a Resolution of Endorsement.” Bolt will contact the mayor for his official statement and report to the Board at the next meeting. At that time the Board will decide if an announcement should be made to the general membership or if an article in the *Caller* is sufficient.

2. Millennium Park – Bradley spoke to Andrea Dunne-Sosa about GRAC’s sponsorship of the park and what that sponsorship might look like. Because the Adopt-a-Park program is new, the options are wide open. They might include installing and monitoring bluebird houses, bat houses, developing a nature trail, monitoring bird population over time.

Bradley and Bolt will meet with Dunne-Sosa to discuss possibilities and come up with a tentative plan to bring to the Board.

3. Izaak Walton League – Bradley was contacted by the president of the league who expressed a willingness to support GRAC in its Safe Passage effort. One possibility suggested was that perhaps IWL would be willing to monitor specific buildings during migration periods to collect data. The committee agreed to invite Georgia Donovan to the meeting on March 10.

4. Gilmore Park – Bolt received an update on the Gilmore Park project. The bids for the project came in higher than planned. A three-sided kiosk is part of Phase I and GRAC will be given one side of the kiosk for Audubon information. There will be a place to hold birding checklists and a larger area for a poster that will be protected from weather. Steve Minard developed a birding checklist for the area and made it available to the committee. At this point a color brochure needs to be developed using the checklist. The committee would like to find someone willing to do the graphic art for the brochure and the poster at a reasonable cost to the club. Perhaps there is a graphic artist in the club or at the Land Conservancy. EGR has agreed to print the brochures and to restock the kiosk as needed.

5. Maher Sanctuary – Trail clearing at Maher was scheduled for April 24. Some committee members have conflicts with that date and requested it take place a week later on May 1. Damstra will contact Jim McMaster and Chris Baer to find out what kinds of things need to be done from their past experience and report at the next meeting.

6. New Business:

Meeting Date – Bradley will not be available to meet on the third Thursday of March. It was agreed to meet Wednesday, March 10 instead.

Grand Rapids Rotary – Bolt spoke for 15-20 minutes at a GR Rotary Club meeting about GRAC and received positive feedback from members. He recommends that the club do more of that.

Minutes submitted by Linda Damstra.

Tawas Point Birding Festival and Michigan Audubon Annual Conference

East Tawas, Michigan

May 13 – 16, 2010

Don’t miss visiting one of Michigan’s most popular birding destinations during the height of migration. Join us to celebrate the Fifth Anniversary of the Tawas Point Birding Festival held in East Tawas, Michigan. This event is a cooperative venture between Michigan Audubon and its local AuSable Valley Audubon chapter and this year will host Michigan Audubon’s Annual Meeting and Conference. There will be numerous birding trips, workshops and programs throughout the schedule.

The 2010 Annual Conference of Michigan Audubon will be held concurrently with the Tawas Point Birding Festival. Participants will enjoy some of the best birding in Michigan; Tawas Point is well known for high concentrations of migrating warblers during the month of May. Recent species highlights include: Kirtland’s Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Golden-winged Warbler, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, White-crowned Sparrow, numerous raptors, shorebirds and more. Over 160 species were recorded during the festival weekend in 2008.

The Michigan Audubon Annual Conference will complement the world-class birding available in Iosco County, home of Tawas Point. Speakers will be presenting on a wide range of topics, from how to improve your recreational bird watching skills to important updates about bird conservation in Michigan. The conference is a great opportunity for birders to learn how they can contribute to greater protection for species like Kirtland’s Warbler, the Cerulean Warbler, Great Lakes Piping Plover and all of Michigan’s threatened and endangered species.

Contact Info:

Wendy Tatar: wendy@michiganaudubon.org or 517-886-9144.
Festival website: www.tawasbirdfest.com

Cerulean Warbler Weekend

June 4 – 6, 2010

Barry County, Michigan

Birders and researchers recognize Barry County as Michigan’s top spot for observing the Cerulean Warbler. Each spring, these songbirds migrate to the vast hardwood forests of the Yankee Springs and Barry State Game Areas. The fans of the Cerulean Warbler are never far behind!

We invite you to join Michigan Audubon for Cerulean Warbler Weekend 2010 at the Otis Farm Bird Sanctuary, near Hastings, Michigan. The weekend will feature guided “specialty tours” all three days, beginning Friday, June 4. These tours will highlight Cerulean Warblers, Henslow’s Sparrows, flycatchers and more. You can also test your bird watching skills from the water: canoe and kayak tours on Glass Creek (accessible from the Otis Farm boardwalk) will take place both Friday and Saturday. The weekend is complete with a banquet dinner and keynote address, a seminar series and a Sunday morning bus tour to great birding sites in Barry County.

Contact Info:

Wendy Tatar: wendy@michiganaudubon.org or 517-886-9144
Festival website: www.ceruleanwarbler.org

Calendar



March through May



March

- 25 GRAC Board Meeting 6:00 – 8:00 PM at LCWM office at the Cooper's Landing Building (please note date and location)
- 27 Field Trip: Bluebird Box Cleaning at the Muskegon Wastewater with Jim Ponshair
- 29 General Membership Meeting – Program: Bringing Nature Home with Dr. Douglas Tallamy (please note: this program will be held at the Ladies Literary Club, 61 Sheldon Blvd. SE)

April

- 5 Deadline for April *Caller* articles
- 16-18 Cottage and Lakefront Living Show at DeVos Place
- 17 Field Trip: Spring Marsh Birds and Hawks with Steve Minard
- 17 Junior Audubon Meeting – Program: Early Migrating Warblers at Aman Park
- 24 Field Trip: Millennium Park with Tom Leggett
- 26 GRAC Board Meeting (preceding our general membership meeting)
- 26 General Membership Meeting – Program: Great Lakes Marsh Monitoring Program with Carolyn Weng and Ric Pedler, Muskegon County Nature Club (meeting location: 100 Bolthouse Hall, Cornerstone University)

May

- 1 Workday at Maher Sanctuary, 9:00 AM
- 4 Field Trip: Tuesday Evening at Reeds Lake with Steve Minard
- 8 Spring Migration Count; Steve Minard, coordinator
- 11 Field Trip: Tuesday Morning at Reeds Lake with Bill Sweetman
- 11 Field Trip: Tuesday Evening at Reeds Lake with Steve Minard
- 13 Field Trip: Thursday Morning at Roselle Park with Bill Sweetman
- 15 Garlic Mustard Pull at Aman Park, 10:00 AM – Noon
- 15 Field Trip: Berrien County Specialties Trip with Phil Willemstein
- 24 GRAC Annual May Meeting at Calvin College Bunker Interpretive Center; Program – Yoopeerland with Mary Jane Dockeray

Grand Rapids Audubon Club Membership Application

Name _____
 Street _____
 City _____
 State/ZIP+4 _____
 Phone _____
 E-mail _____

Individual.....	\$15.00	_____
Family.....	20.00	_____
Senior (65+).....	10.00	_____
Student (14+w/ID).....	10.00	_____
Sustaining	25.00	_____
Patron.....	50.00	_____
Individual Life Membership.....	300.00	_____
Donation (<i>General Fund, Jr. Audubon, Sanctuary, Scholarship, Audubon Adventures, etc.</i>)		_____

Make checks payable to:
Grand Rapids Audubon Club, Inc.
 Send application and check to:
Mary Austin, Assistant Treasurer
2021 Valentine, N.E.
Grand Rapids, MI 49525-2922

Membership dues and contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

March '10 Caller

GRAC Board Meetings are held at 6:00 PM prior to each month's general membership meeting at the Seminary Auditorium at Cornerstone University.

Junior Audubon Meetings are held on Saturdays at various locations. Contact Wendy Tatar at Wendy@MichiganAudubon.org for more information.

General Membership Meetings are held the last Monday of the month (Sept.-May) at 7:30 PM at the Seminary Auditorium at Cornerstone University (enter from Leonard St. seminary entrance). December (Christmas Bird Count) and May (Annual Meeting) are held at different locations and times. Upcoming field trip information is published in each *Caller*. See the GRAC website for the complete field trip list.

Any additions or deletions to the above calendar will be in future *Caller* issues.

Tomatoes, Tomatoes, Tomatoes!

by Chris Baer

Summer is coming and thoughts turn to luscious slices of home grown tomatoes on your BLT or straight off the vine.

Last year at the annual meeting in May tomato plants were offered for sale, but there were few buyers.

Because of the expense and trouble transporting the plants to the meeting, I would like everyone to order their plants before the annual meeting on Monday, May 24.

Tomatoes come in cherry (red, yellow or orange), medium and large sizes (mostly in red). Most of the tomatoes are heirloom and you can request plants by name (Harry, Dora, Max, Jane). All plants are indeterminate, which means they are tall and need staking and produce tomatoes all season versus determinate, which are shorter and produce tomatoes mostly all at once.

The price has not changed and is \$2.00 a plant. All proceeds go to GRAC. To order, please see me at a meeting, or call at 874-9299 or E-mail at cpbaer@iserv.net

Pick up can be at the annual meeting or whenever is convenient.

Go birding, walking, paddling... just get outdoors and enjoy the natural world. Great weather will be here soon to do all these things. Don't let the moment pass you by!

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Grand Rapids Audubon Club

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