



BIRDTRACKS

Newsletter of the Jackson Audubon Society

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www.jacksonaudubon.org

"DO NOT FEED THE CRANES"

Gary Mason & Connie Spotts



On Wednesday, July 22, members of Jackson Audubon Society joined civic and business leaders to install new signs in the commercial district of Boardman Road in Jackson. For several years, there has been a pair of Sandhill Cranes that have nested in the area near the Cracker Barrel restaurant, the birds (and their adorable offspring) have been regular visitors at several area businesses, including Culver's and Sam's Club. In order to help maintain the health of the cranes, signs have been installed that read "Don't Feed The Cranes".

Concerned citizen, Krissy Kerwin (pictured, center) was shocked to see the Sandhill Cranes being fed junk food and harassed. This pair of cranes have been returning to the North side of Jackson for years. They nest in the wetland near Sam's and bring their young out to meet the public every year. Karen Richard, Owner of Culver's Restaurant said "In the Spring the male crane (when the female is pregnant) is very aggressive and pecks the heck out of black cars in which he can see his reflection and thinks it is another male. They have been known to come to the front door and drive thru windows and peck constantly on the glass. They seem to be on a schedule for I know what days they will appear at Culvers." The group walks in the street from Sams Club up to the busy Buddy's Gas Station, visiting all of the restaurants in between.

Krissy jumped into action and contacted Jackson Audubon. With combined donations from Krissy, Assistant Mayor Derek Dobie and Jackson Audubon, six "Do Not Feed The Cranes" signs were ordered. The signs were placed at Sam's, Sav-A-Lot Foods, Culvers, Cracker Barrel, and Buddy's Gas Station. Eleven people showing up to help including two men from the Army, Blackman Township Supervisor Pete Sancek and several Audubon members.

Thank you to all that helped and Culver's for providing a free lunch to the volunteers. Thank you Krissy for caring and organizing this project. One person can make a difference! The project garnered news coverage educating the public about why we shouldn't be feeding wildlife. It is hoped the new signs will solve the issue.



Kate Palmer Sanctuary Upgrade

Pegg Clevenger, Volunteer Steward

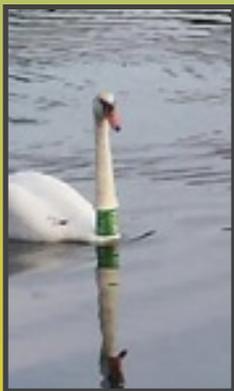
Audubon's Kate Palmer Sanctuary became more accessible thanks to Paul Rice and Jim Rossman. The retired engineers designed and constructed a handsome new parking lot that has perked up the entrance, and provided space for off-road parking. Sandy's Landscape donated their delivery charges for loads of new gravel.

These two valuable volunteers have also trimmed the new trails they blazed for wildflower investigation and birding. Since clearing, Great Lobelia now blooms freely. Jim also built and installed a brochure holder that is being replenished weekly with information about the Kate and a Wood Duck nesting box for that species which has been recorded regularly at the sanctuary. The county installed a "No Dumping" sign.

The Kate now welcomes visitors from urban and suburban confines to enjoy the peace of this space filled with an extensive variety of flora and fauna.



Jim & Paul in the new parking lot and entrance to the Kate



Collared Swan

This swan, along with two others, appeared on Crispell Lake for about a week in mid July. As you can see from the photo, this swan had a green collar with white letters MO24. The collared bird was reported to the USGS Patuxet Wildlife Research Center Bird Banding Lab. Don Avers of the DNR-Wildlife Division in Michigan answered an inquiry email stating that this was a Mute swan, one of 30 that was collared in Michigan last year to track their movement throughout the year.

Randall Knapki, a Ph.D. student at Michigan State University researching the movement and survival of mute swans in partnership with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services reported that this research is being conducted in Michigan to understand where mute swans breed during the summer, where they move in the winter, how many young they have each year, where the young swans go after hatching, and how long they live. The outcomes of this research will inform management strategies for mute swans in Michigan and across the United States.

Neck bands were placed on mute swans in several areas of the state late last summer and the work will continue across the state for the next few years. A neck band was placed on the swan M024 last August (2014) on Coldwater Lake in Branch County (~33 miles from Crispell Lake). This was the first sighting of M024, on July 18th 2015.

Members of the Jackson Audubon Society are encouraged to continue reporting sightings of the neck banded mute swans (and all banded wildlife) to the Federal Bird Banding Laboratory (www.reportband.gov). Further information about mute swan management in Michigan can be found online (www.michigan.gov/muteswans).

HAEHNLE HAPPENINGS

Lathe Claflin

A Native Wildflower Walk at the Sanctuary

On Saturday July 25, the Jackson Audubon Society sponsored a native wildflower walk at the Wing Overlook grassland at Haehnle Sanctuary led by yours truly. Although I am more of a birder than a botanist, I am infatuated by our native prairie wildflowers and enjoy showing them to others. The Haehnle Sanctuary Committee created this grassland planting and two others at the sanctuary to provide habitat for rare and declining grassland sparrows and other bird species. This type of habitat is disappearing from Michigan as more fallow fields shrink in size and are planted with crops and houses. An additional goal of the committee was to create a diverse wildflower garden that would host a variety of butterflies, dragonflies, and other insects.

Scattered in the Wing Overlook grassland are more than 40 prairie-type wildflowers. Many of these are considered unusual or rare in Michigan, and therefore have a high floristic quality. We saw many of them as we walked the central trail and meandered in the grassland. Easily found were recently flowered leadplant (*Amorpha canescens*) and false indigo (*Baptisia* sp), sessile-leaved tick-trefoil (*Desmodium sessifolium*) whose lavender flowers were being gobbled up by Japanese beetles, the unusual looking rattlesnake master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*) with its light green ball-like flower heads, small communities of western sunflower (*Helianthus occidentalis*), and rosinweed (*Silphium intergrifolium*), a tall sunflower with clusters of flowers at the top. Two monarda species were in bloom, wild bergamot (*M. fistulosa*) and horsemint (*M. punctata*), as were several other showy flowers - purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*), rough blazing star (*Liatris aspera*), yellow coneflower (*Ratibida pinnata*), butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), black-eyed susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*), and both hoary and blue vervain (*Verbena stricta* and *V. hastata*, respectively). We were able to find one partridge pea flower (*Chamaecrista fasciculata*) (many flowers were late this year because of the cool early summer) and some late flowering wild lupine (*Lupinus perennis*). Among numerous goldenrods and asters at the sanctuary only early goldenrod (*Solidago juncea*), as expected, was in bloom. By my count we saw at least 23 prairie wildflowers.

Rounding out the morning were some good birds that Robyn and Don Henise had found before we arrived. They pointed out a Sedge Wren that was easily seen singing and flying around in the middle of the grassland, a rare treat for us. Also present were both Willow and Alder Flycatchers near the edge of Mud Lake Marsh and a Pileated Woodpecker calling near Eagle Lake.



JAS ~ Kate Palmer ~ Trinity Lutheran School Partnership

Pegg Clevenger ~ Kate Palmer Steward

The Trinity Lutheran K – 8th school sits beside the Kate Palmer Sanctuary and has agreed to support the sanctuary. In recognition of this educational arrangement, Jackson Audubon will present a program to their students, parents, and the surrounding neighborhood residents.

“**Kate Palmer and Your Backyard**” will be given by Audubon board member and Dahlem Education Director, Ellen Rathbone. The program will include information about the history of the Kate, and the birds, blooms, and wildlife currently residing there. In addition, Ellen will share tips for backyard bird feeding. The school will then host a hands-on pinecone bird feeder creation.

Audubon would like to give away bird feeders to these young potential birders, if you have any used, new feeders or houses to donate, please contact Pegg Clevenger, 750-4299. In addition one or two lucky families will receive a complete bird-feeding set-up donated by The Hobbit, located on Spring Arbor Road.

Big Tree ~ Summer of 2015

Bob Venners

Lose Two, Win Three

It was one of those “two steps back, three steps forward” kind of summers for the Big Trees of Jackson County. Here’s the run-down.....

*City Engineers and/or Consumers Energy decided the champion **Siberian Elm** on West Avenue posed a danger to the general public and/or to the electrical and cable lines that run the gamut of this street, one of Jackson’s busiest thoroughfares. Down it went. No appeals on this decision, and considering the state of Jackson’s elms, it was probably the correct one. Luckily, two other Siberians close by immediately took up the slack and by fiat one will become the new champ. Measurements will determine who succeeds the 176” specimen that was the previous record holder.*

*Storm clouds gathered, winds picked up and down went our champion **European Birch** in July at Cascades Park near the skating pond. Luckily, the second place birch at Sharp Park had its back at 77” in girth.*

*To add a positive note to the summer, a beautiful **Black Walnut** was discovered growing on Second Street just off Prospect. This tree beat out the former champion by just three inches. The previous champion held it’s title for over thirty years and sits waiting in Sharp Park, perhaps anticipating another nomination for the chain saw. Let’s hope not - Mother Nature alone is taking her toll of Audubon’s cham-peens.*



JACKSON TOWER PEREGRINE FALCONS

Big Red and Chayton hatched and fledged four chicks this year. The pair have been nesting on the Jackson County Tower Building since 2010. In those five years the pair have raised and fledged 21 chicks.

Department of Natural Resources officials banded one female and three males on June 5th. The young were named Roxy, Walt, Bisbee and Comet.



Unlike most Peregrine Falcons, Big Red and Chayton don't seem to migrate, so they will be seen around the area throughout the year.

ANOTHER 9 YEAR OLD HUMMINGBIRD IN WATERLOO

ALLEN T. CHARTIER

On June 15th I recaptured a female Ruby-throated Hummingbird that I banded in August 2007 as an adult at the residence of Bill and Charity Steere, making her 9 years 0 months old. She was also recaptured last year. Nine years of age means 18 trips across the treacherous Gulf of Mexico ~ truly amazing.

This was in my "Waterloo cluster" of sites in south-central Michigan where I've banded hummers for more than 15 years, and which last year had a 9 year 1 month old Ruby-throat at the Laux/Taylor residence two miles away.



MICHIGAN BLUEBIRD SOCIETY ~ 2014 FALL FESTIVAL



The Fall Festival will be held on **Sunday, September 13th** at the Dahlem Center in Jackson from 10:00 AM until 2:30 PM. The day starts with a Bluebird Panel Discussion with several MBS (Michigan Bluebird Society) Bluebird experts - so bring your toughest questions! Main program: well-known bat expert Dr. Allen Kurta of Eastern Michigan University will present "**Hibernation of Bats in Michigan - Who, When, Where?**". Finally, MBS County Coordinator John Harville will give a short program on how to use nest box cameras.

There will be a number of interesting educational displays and Bluebird merchandise for sale (to help raise money for Bluebird conservation). In addition, this year we "cleaned out the garage" and will be bringing a bunch of new and gently used Bluebird gear to give away to people who can give it good homes. These items are free, but any modest donations would be gladly accepted. Finally, while you're there, Dahlem is a great place to stroll through the beautiful butterfly gardens and nature trails.

Lunch is free to members ~ \$5 for non-members/guests

JAS ACTIVITIES AND OTHER EVENTS

Saturday, September 26—Workbee at Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary, 9:00 a.m.—noon. Meet at the Wing Overlook Kiosk on Seymour Road.

Monday, October 5—Ellen Rathbone, Dahlem Center Director of Education, will present "Kate Palmer and Your Backyard" to students, parents, and neighbors at Trinity Lutheran School. The school is located adjacent to Kate Palmer on McCain Road. Come and enjoy the program with those who will help us protect the sanctuary.

Saturday, October 17—Cranes, Colors, and Cabernet Festival and celebration of Haehnle's 60th Anniversary. Meet at 2:00 p.m. at the Haehnle Sanctuary kiosk on the Wing Overlook.

Saturday, December 19 — Christmas Bird Count

Call Brian Johnson (248- 752-6000) to sign up to help with this very important survey.

2115-16 MEETINGS 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 short meeting and program at 7:00 p.m. Bring "recyclables" (magazines, feeders, etc.) to the program. In case of inclement weather, JAS programs and activities will be cancelled if Jackson College closes.

Please note that meetings are now held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month

Tuesday, September 8—Don Chalfant, past president of Washtenaw Audubon, will present "Ladies and Gentlemen: A look at gender differences in many plants and animals." Don is a retired teacher who now devotes almost full time to birding and photography.

Tuesday, October 13—David Mifsud will present "Michigan Turtles: Why Are They Declining and How Can You Help?" David is a Certified Wildlife Biologist, Professional Ecologist and Wetland Scientist. His expertise is Michigan amphibians and reptiles.

Tuesday, November 10—Doug Leffler will present "A Face in the Crowd," showing many close-up bird portraits. He will help us sharpen our skills on identifying fall warblers.

Tuesday, January 12—Gary Siegrist will present "My Big Life." He will share travels down memory lane of fifty years of birding. Gary is a Naturalist at the Dahlem Center and he will have many photographs and humorous stories to share.

Friday, February 12—Jerry Jourdan will present "Birding the Great Migration of Africa," at Vista Grande Villa. Jerry spent two weeks in Kenya in July 2013 witnessing the great migration of Zebra and Wildebeest, along with birds and other wildlife from Tanzania into Kenya across the Mara River.
PLEASE BRING A DESSERT to share that does not require table service.

Tuesday, March 8—Ellen Rathbone, Naturalist and Education Director at Dahlem will present the study of "Ethnobotany, 101 Uses for Plants," a hands-on look at the many ways we use plants.

Tuesday, April 12—Fai Chan presents "The Little Things I Learned While Photographing Birds." He will discuss the little observations of bird behavior and his photography techniques.



Yellow-eyed Junco &
Stellar's Jay
(Tucson, AZ)

Doug Leffler



Blue Bird and
Fledgeling

Fai Chan



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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