



# BIRDTRACKS

Newsletter of the Jackson Audubon Society

517.787.3453

[www.jacksonaudubon.org](http://www.jacksonaudubon.org)

## Undocumented Osprey Nest Found in Summit Township

article & photos by Don & Robyn Henise

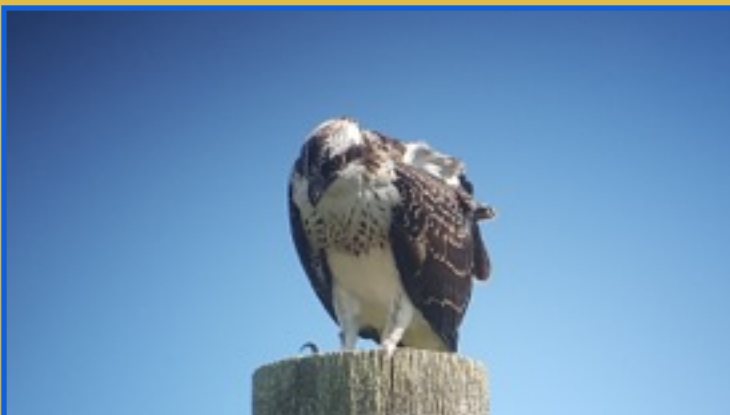
Robyn and I stumbled onto an Osprey nest on the afternoon of August 6th, 2016. We were out looking for dragonfly habitat and had stopped near the bridge over the Grand River on Hague Avenue in Summit Township southeast of Vandercook Lake. As soon as we stepped out of the car we heard an Osprey calling. Two young Osprey were observed perched on a utility pole to the east of the bridge. These two could be identified as young recently fledged Osprey by pale feather fringes on their backs and wings giving the upper side of the birds a scaled appearance. An adult was perched on a lower tier of a cell tower nearby. Adult Ospreys have solid black upperparts without the pale feather edges. What appeared to be a stick nest could be observed on the upper platform of the tower. The young birds were calling continuously during our time in the area. One of the young birds was flying around a bit and eventually flew over to the cell tower on the opposite side of the adult.

As the Osprey flies, this location is less than a half mile from Vandercook Lake and it appears that the adults have had no problem finding enough food for the growing nestlings and now fledglings. Ospreys feed almost completely on fish. After I posted this sighting to the jax-birds email list, several people commented that they had regularly observed Ospreys around Vandercook and Browns Lakes and suspected there was a nest in the area.

We submitted this discovery to Barb Jenson of [MichiganOsprey.org](http://MichiganOsprey.org) and were surprised to learn that this nest had not been reported to them. Barb will inform the owners of the cell tower of the presence of an Osprey nest so that any maintenance on the tower equipment needs to be scheduled for before, or after future nesting seasons.

This is the second Osprey nest found within Jackson County. Ospreys have been nesting on a cell tower south of Ann Arbor Road and east of East Jackson High School in Leoni Township for several years now. Another nest is near the Michigan International Speedway just a few hundred yards south of the Jackson County line in Lenawee County. There are two other known Osprey nests in the Jackson Audubon region, one near Onsted and another in northern Hillsdale County.

Anyone who observes a nesting pair of ospreys in southeast Michigan is asked to contact Michigan Osprey on the web at [www.michiganosprey.org](http://www.michiganosprey.org).



Young Osprey from Cell Tower in Summit Township.  
Note the pale feather fringes on back and wings giving a scaled appearance.

## Dragonfly and Butterfly Walk at MacCready Preserve - July 23<sup>rd</sup>

Article and photos by Don & Robyn Henise

On one of the hottest days of the summer, twelve participants came out to MacCready Preserve for the dragonfly and butterfly walk. The field trip lasted around 1 ½ hours and participants were rewarded for their efforts.

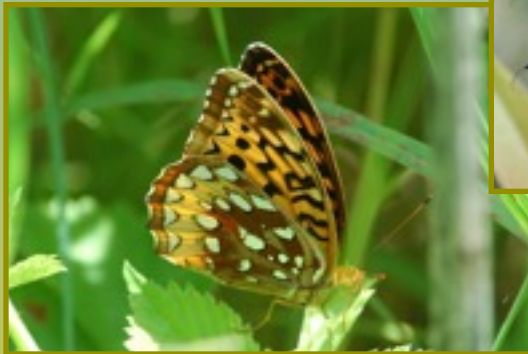
Dragonflies and damselflies seen by the group included:

Violet Dancer, Common Green Darner, Eastern Pondhawk, Blue Dasher, Widow Skimmer, Common Whitetail, Slaty Skimmer, Prince Baskettail, Wandering Glider, Calico Pennant and Eastern Amberwing.

The butterflies were not abundant but we did see:

Spicebush Swallowtail, Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, Giant Swallowtail, Summer Azure, Great Spangled Fritillary, Pearl Crescent and Silver-spotted Skipper.

Thanks to all who braved the warm weather to come out for the field trip.



Great Spangled Fritillary



Widow Skimmer



Eastern Tiger Swallowtail

### MacCready Reserve Field Trip

Robyn Henise

On Saturday, May 28, twelve participants birded the MacCready Reserve in Liberty Township, Jackson County. We were in search of local nesting birds such as Hooded Warblers, Pine Warblers and Ovenbirds. There was a chance of rain so we kept an eye to the sky as we hiked in on the blue trail. Not too far into the woods, two Ovenbirds were heard and after some prompting, one of them jumped up on a branch and sat and sang for the group. Good views of this bird were had by all. We then continued further along and had several more Ovenbirds along with Pine Warblers and Hooded Warblers. On the short-cut connector for the red trail, the group was treated to a singing Mourning Warbler. It was an immature male and he circled the group several times singing and every so often, would pop up on a branch for the group to view. At the same time we were watching and listening to the Mourning warbler, a Hooded and Blue-winged Warbler were also singing. A total of 39 species were seen and/or heard on the two and a half hour walk.

# HAEHNLE HAPPENINGS

Lathe Claflin

In cooperation with Michigan Audubon, members of the Haehnle Sanctuary Committee, Jackson Audubon Society, and volunteers planted milkweed seedlings in restored areas at the Sanctuary. This planting project was part of a Monarch Watch program to increase host plants for the monarch butterfly throughout the United States; monarch butterflies have suffered serious decline nationwide in recent years. While we can do little to offset chemical destruction of monarchs or winter kill in Mexico, we can help improve their habitat by providing an abundance of host plants for them. Monarch Watch donated more than 300 seedlings of three different species - common, whorled, and swamp milkweed. They were planted in the Overlook grassland below the kiosk, the Transition Zone between this grassland and Mud Lake Marsh, and the eastern side of the Wooster Rd grassland. The whorled milkweed blooms later in the growing season and is a new species for the Sanctuary. The common milkweed seedlings suffered from the June drought, however the whorled and swamp milkweed are doing well. Now we can hope that the "if you build it, they will come" plan works.

On a depressing note, we had some significant vandalism at Haehnle in late July, much more than we have ever had before. Someone or a few individuals tore the registration box at the kiosk off its post, defaced the plexiglass window of a display case, broke four rails in the rail fence, and spray painted and defaced the handmade, historic Haehnle sign in the main parking area off Seymour Rd. Even more important, they ripped four bluebird nest boxes in the overlook grassland off their posts. Two of these boxes had baby birds in them, meaning that the individuals violated the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. One statute of this federal law in effect makes it illegal to kill any birds or destroy their nests without a permit. These malicious acts are senseless and pointless, and therefore difficult to understand. Law enforcement agencies have been contacted, "Report Vandalism" signs have been posted at the Sanctuary, and news outlets (see WILX TV story on the Jackson Audubon Society and Haehnle Sanctuary websites) and list serves were notified. The response has been impressive and heartwarming. The publicity was originally designed to help us increase surveillance at Haehnle, but a number of people have also supported us financially and with offers to help monitor activity at the Sanctuary. The committee is extremely thankful for the positive responses. We have already begun the repairs, which we will complete in the next few weeks.

As we approach Fall, two major items appear on the calendar. One is our work bee which is **September 24 from 9-12** at the main entrance. This is the time when we work on on-going projects and spruce up the Sanctuary for the fall crane migration season. The second is the **Cranes, Color, and Cabernet Festival** that occurs on October 15 from 12-dusk. There will be birding walks, a talk on the natural history of Sandhill Cranes, tours to neighboring fields to see cranes up close and personal (great photo opportunities), and chances to see fall colors and the late afternoon flight of cranes into the Sanctuary. Please check the Jackson Audubon Society and Haehnle websites for further details.



## Mr. Genthner and Trinity Lutheran School Grow Outside the Classroom

Pegg Clevenger, Kate Palmer Sanctuary Steward

Clint Genthner received a Partner in Education award from Jackson Audubon Society on June 24, 2016. JAS recognized the outstanding effort of Trinity Lutheran School teacher Mr. Genthner in furthering the mission of the the Michigan Audubon Kate Palmer Sanctuary.

The award from Jackson Audubon read: He envisioned and created an amphitheater for use as an Outdoor Classroom in the sanctuary thereby ensuring that his students experience nature; he hewed the amphitheater seats from trees he cleared with care; he led his students in the completion of a marked trail through the woods and identified, recorded and posted tree and plant species.

Clint also secured funding for the project from the Jackson County Community Foundation. Gary Siegrist past President of Michigan Audubon and current Stewardship Director at Dahlem walked the trail and checked the plant i.d. postings and said, "Clint did a fine job with the trail project, particularly while having to instruct his student volunteers."

The "red ribbon" vine-cutting ceremony was attended by many of Clint's students who trotted down the trails and bounded over rocks. A couple students emerged from the woods with their faces painted and took us back to a previously unknown mound of what they discovered was red, white, yellow, and black clay which they mixed with water to create the face-paint.

The Jackson Citizen Patriot covered the event with an article and photos. Clint utilized technology with his students as well as outdoor classroom time. He recorded their progress at: <https://sites.google.com/a/tlsjackson.com/growing-outside-the-classroom/>

Clint fashioned plant i.d. markers with a QR code that can be accessed with a smartphone for plant information using Plantsmap. You can find a report of the project and list of identified plants by going to Plantsmap at <http://www.plantsmap.com/tls-katepalmer>. The easy to learn [My Plants Map](#) tools have wide appeal among a diversity of users from those that manage public landscapes to avid plant collectors, professionals, and community groups.



Mr. Clint Genthner and students at entrance to trail, students with found clay and outdoor classroom

**MBS Fall Bluebird Festival**

**October 15, 2016**

**10 a.m. ~ 3 p.m.**

**Calvin College, Grand Rapids, MI**

**[www.Michiganbluebirds.org/fallfestival](http://www.Michiganbluebirds.org/fallfestival)**

**or**

**Michigan Bluebird Society facebook page for more information**

## A Cooper's Story

article & photo by Don & Robyn Henise

We live on the edge of Loomis Park in Jackson. This past spring we witnessed a pair of Cooper's Hawks flying around in the park and the male was displaying. We thought, could this be the start of something good? Well it was. The Cooper's Hawks nested and we could watch their nest building from our backyard, until the leaves came out. Two to three times a week we would see and/or hear one or both of the adults in Loomis Park. Then suddenly in June all got quiet. We didn't see or hear the adults and we assumed that they were now feeding young.

We anxiously awaited the fledging of the young, which happened mid-July. We could hear and see the young calling from trees in the park and watched them flying around the neighborhood. There were 4 young birds. The large tear-dropped streaks on the underparts were noticeable. During the first week of August we saw one of young birds sitting on the sidewalk across the street from our home. We walked over to check on it. Don put out his foot and the hawk jumped up on his shoe and sat there. We got the hawk off his shoe and placed a stick in front of it and the hawk walked up on the stick. We lifted the hawk up on to a low branch of a tree and the hawk walked off the stick and onto the branch. Now what should we do? We called Connie Spotts and she connected us with Mary Baird. Mary and her crew came out that evening but by the time they got to our place the hawk had moved higher in the tree, out of reach for a rescue. Mary said to call if the bird came back down to the ground. She told us that she had received calls about this hawk earlier in the day from a staff family at New Tribes. The hawk had been seen in the school's parking lot spinning in circles, then it tried to roost on the side of the school building and one of the children saw the bird hanging upside down from a tree branch. By 9:30 that night the hawk was back down on the ground by our place. Don walked over to the hawk and managed to get it to walk into a storage tub and we took it out to Mary. She then transferred the hawk to Joe and Barb at the Wildlife Recovery Association. The initial diagnosis for the hawk was head trauma – most likely a concussion and there was concern about possible poisoning.

The prognosis for the Cooper's hawk as of the writing of this article is good – the hawk is eating and will not be released back into the wild until it is capable of catching food and can roost.



## **Watkins Lake State Park & Preserve Michigan's Newest State Park**

Following decades of interest in the idea, and several stalled attempts, a deal has been struck ushering in the creation of Michigan's newest State Park. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) closed on the \$2.9 million purchase of 726 acres of land in Norvell Township in Jackson County. Combined with 405 acres of contiguous land in Manchester Township purchased in late 2015 by Washtenaw Country Parks and Recreation Commission (WCPARC), this property straddling the Washtenaw County/Jackson County border will be managed and maintained as the Watkins Lake State Park and Preserve. Watkins Lake State Park and Preserve will be the first such park to be owned and managed jointly by the state and a county recreation agency.

The site is significant for its wildlife habitat and its role in the historic Underground Railroad. According to Dr. William Moritz, Interim Director of MDNR, Watkins Lake has the potential to become an excellent waterfowl refuge and birding location.

The property features rolling land covered in a mixture of open meadow, mixed hardwoods, low wet areas, and open water. The diverse habitat attracts numerous birds of state importance, including trumpeter swans, bald eagles and grassland birds such as dickcissel, Henslow's sparrow, and grassland sparrows. The property is also considered important Indiana bat habitat. Listed as a federal and state endangered species, less than 400,000 of these bats are estimated to survive in the US.

Eastern massasauga rattlesnakes, Michigan's only venomous snake, listed as a "species of special concern" by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, are found in the open shallow wetlands and shrub swamps or during the summer sunning in open fields, grassy meadows or farm fields.

The property also supports white-tailed deer, wild turkey, cottontail rabbit, and an abundance of non-game bird species. Ring-necked pheasants are also present, and the potential for pheasant habitat management has been speculated.

"Watkins Lake provides critical habitat and refuge and is a significant stop-over for migratory birds, including waterfowl and other water birds. It currently draws large numbers of watchable- wildlife enthusiasts," stated Gary Siegrist, Stewardship Coordinator for the Dahlem Conservancy. Gary Mason, Vice President of the Jackson Audubon Society said that "Watkins Lake is visible in its entirety from an existing road that bisects the lake and provides easy accessibility for bird-watching for families, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities."

In addition to Watkins Lake, the property features an abandoned rail corridor traversing the expanse of the property from east to west. The rail corridor, and an historic train depot situated on the site, once served as an important link on the Underground Railroad in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and may provide an interesting opportunity for historical interpretation.

Because this property represented one of the final opportunities to add significantly to the public land holdings in eastern Jackson/western Washtenaw country, we and our conservation partners have been working for more than a decade to help this project come to fruition," said Susan Lackey, Executive Director of Legacy Land Conservancy. "The purchase of these properties helps to create a nearly contiguous swath of publicly accessible lands from Hayes State Park to northern Oakland County. This emerald arc of land provides varied and extensive recreational land easily accessible to the nearly 5,000,000 Michigan residents living within 90 minutes of the location, and bolsters our ability to promote southern Michigan as the world class recreation destination that it is" Lackey said.

Funds for the 726 acres purchased by MDNR came from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, and the River Raisin Recreation Fund under the authority of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act. Grants from the Enbridge 6B Mitigation Fund were also used. The new park is anticipated to open to the public in 2016 and residents are encouraged to stay tuned for more information and opportunities to contribute their ideas for the development of the park.



## 2115-16 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

**Tuesday, September 13:** 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.

**Tuesday, October 11:** Julia Brokaw, a research specialist in the Department of Entomology at Michigan State University, will present, "Protecting Pollinators in Michigan." Her laboratory helps manage the Bee Hotel Wall at the MSU Gardens. We will learn about helping bees by making bee hotels and planting the necessary flowers to help promote their populations.

**Tuesday, November 8:** David Mifsud will present "Michigan Turtles: Why are they declining and how can you help?" David is a certified Wildlife Biologist, Professional Ecologist, and a Wetland Scientist. His expertise is Michigan amphibians and reptiles.

**Tuesday, January 10:** Dale Kennedy, Professor of Biology at Albion College, and Douglas White, Associate Director of Sustainability and Environment at Albion will present, "Dawn Activity of Male and Female House Wrens." Their work includes 22 years of wren studies at the Whitehouse Nature Center in Albion.

**Friday, February 17:** Jerry Jourdan will show us images of over 10 years of "Celebrating Birds through Digiscoping." You will be amazed at the photos taken by a camera through a spotting scope! Please bring a dessert that doesn't require tableware to eat, and join us at Vista Grande Villa at 6:30 p.m.

**Tuesday, March 14:** Doug Leffler will present "Birding in Southeast Arizona." There will be beautiful photos of many hummingbirds and Arizona scenery.

**Tuesday, April 11:** Bob Tarte, author of the Wall Street Journal best seller, "Enslaved by Ducks," will share stories from his humorous memoir about Michigan birding. Tarte's latest book, "Feather Brained," tells of his quest to become a birder and find a rare bird on his own. The book will be available for purchase that evening for \$24.95.

### Activities

**Tuesday, September 6:** Field Trip in conjunction with the Dahlem Center to Burke Lake Banding Station at Bath, Michigan. (Rain day, September 20) Contact Doug Leffler at [dougneffler@comcast.net](mailto:dougneffler@comcast.net) for details.

**Saturday, September 24:** Workbee at Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary, 9:00 - 12:00 a.m. Meet at the Wing Overlook kiosk on Seymour Road.

**Saturday, October 15:** Cranes, Colors and Cabernet Festival at Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary, beginning at 12:00 noon. Meet at the Wing Overlook kiosk on Seymour Road. There will be bird walks and talks on the natural history of cranes, followed by a viewing tour in search of cranes in the area.

**Saturday, December 17:** Christmas Bird Count. Call Brian Johnson (248.752.6000) to sign up for this very important survey.

**Saturday, March 25:** Early Waterfowl field trip around the Jackson Area. Meet at east side Meijer parking lot at 9:00 a.m. Call Connie Spotts (517.230.2707) for more information.

Jackson Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 6453  
Jackson, MI 49204

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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