



BIRDTRACKS

Newsletter of the Jackson Audubon Society

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www.jacksonaudubon.org

MAGEE MARSH FIELD TRIP

Steve Jerant

Twelve birders from Jackson Audubon braved the rain and the cold on May 2 to visit Magee Marsh, east of Toledo. This location is generally a hotspot of warbler activity during the spring, but as I often say, "nature is not Disney." You have good days and not so good days. While the group only saw five warblers, there were, as always, other highlights to the trip. Three vireos were counted and a whip-poor-will was lounging within view of the boardwalk. The high wind and the rain made for some difficult viewing and we stayed off the easternmost exposed portion of the boardwalk.

Some of the group continued to the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge to look for shorebirds. We were treated to a large flock of greater yellowlegs. In among the shorebirds was a group of American Pipits. We tried to council a killdeer against setting up her nest on the path to an observation tower but I don't think she was listening.

Spring is a great time of year for bird watching. On the same day, I saw my first of year purple martins and likely last of season juncos. It reminds me how much I enjoy the change of the seasons and lets me pause to reflect on the past and look forward to the future. Photos below from Fai Chan - Magee Marsh



Blue Winged Warbler



Prothonotary Warbler



American Redstart



Mourning Warbler



Blackburnian Warbler



Veery

Early Spring at the Kate with Mourning Cloaks

Lorraine Hampton, Kate Palmer's hobby-botanist had a surprise along with Skunk Cabbage, Eastern Phoebes, and Golden Crowned Kinglets in early April. She saw newly emerging Mourning Cloak butterflies near the creek on Oxbow Trail. It is one of Michigan's most beautiful harbingers of spring. The Mourning Cloak occupies "watercourses, sunny glades, forest borders, parks, gardens, open woodlands, and groves" (Pyle, 1981). They over-winter (technically known as cryo-preservation) as full-sized adult butterflies, secreting a chemical compound into their bodies that acts as anti-freeze. They may be found "under the eaves of houses, in cellars, crevices and hollows" Mourning Cloaks often emerge, still full-sized, before the snows of winter have melted, making it the first butterfly to take wing in the spring throughout most of its range.

Mourning Cloaks obtain most of their nourishment from tree sap, which is normally readily available when they awaken and need quick food in the early spring. They also consume flower nectar and feed on mushy fruit when they can find it. (MI Wildlife Conservancy blog)

Male Mourning Cloaks exhibit territorial behavior, defending areas that average more than 300 sq. meters. They ward off other butterflies and birds by flying towards them in a menacing manner. They defend their territory from designated perches, which they eventually alternate with other perches to defend the entire area.

Mourning Cloak Butterfly
Photo by Don Henise



Jackson Audubon/Kate Palmer Partner Paddles the Creek

Clint Genthner, teacher at Trinity Lutheran School, adjacent to the Kate Palmer Sanctuary led his students in an outdoor dream. Clint and his nine fifth and sixth grade students built their own canoe. The class had to steam, shape, glue and clamp the ribs and secure them across the boat's gunwales and build the flooring. They carefully applied the skin last. The students traveled downhill to the Kate Palmer Sanctuary's Sandstone Creek to test-paddle their creation and found it to be watertight. Bending Branches paddle company of Wisconsin awarded two wooden canoe paddles after seeing them using kayak paddles to propel the craft.

The students have been learning in and enjoying the Kate's sanctuary waters and the special outdoor classroom Mr. Genthner created for them. They also assist in keeping the sanctuary clean.

"Unless we are willing to encourage our children to reconnect with and appreciate the natural world, we can't expect them to help protect and care for it."- David Suzuki, Ph.D. zoology, science broadcaster and environmental activist

Trinity student in Mr. Genthner's class with the hand-built canoe



HAEHNLE HAPPENINGS

EQIP Project at Haehnle Sanctuary

Steve Jerant

Our native pollinators are currently threatened by loss of habitat and use of pesticides. One of the goals of the Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary is to provide habitat to support native plants and animals, from coneflowers to cranes.

In support of that goal Haehnle is participating in the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP). It provides funding for landowners, both private and public, to increase the amount of native grasses and wildflowers to support a diversity of bees (including honey bees), butterflies, and other pollinators on their land. This program is managed by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and we work locally with Jackson County office of the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

While the Sanctuary already boasts a great diversity of native grasses and wildflowers, we saw this an opportunity to increase the density and variety of plants to support native pollinators. We will be improving the habitat in two locations. The first will be an area in the prairie that is visible to the west from the overlook. This area, which has a low density of wildflowers, will be improved by additional plant diversity. The second location is part of the meadow at the northern end of the Nature Trail. This area has a few wildflowers but is mostly native grasses, so will become a new wildflower viewing area at the Sanctuary.

The program has requirements for providing a great diversity of plants to support native pollinators. This variety requires a long bloom period. By having plants that flower in the spring, summer, and fall a full season of food is provided for the bees and butterflies. There is also a benefit to our visitors: there will always be wildflowers in bloom to view in all these seasons!

The process for building these areas will be performed using three “practices”, or habitat management activity. We will be doing prescribed burning, spraying, and planting. We will start with spraying with herbicides in summer 2017. This will kill the existing plants to enable a fresh start for the site. In early 2018, we will do a prescribed burn, which will remove plant material. This will be followed shortly by another spraying to kill any plants that survived the first spraying and the burn. Finally, in early summer 2018, seed will be sown using a no-till drill. This method will ensure the best seed placement in the soil and appropriate density of seed.

While the EQIP program covers the plant portion of the equation, we are also bringing in some pollinators. We have partnered with a local honey bee keeper and an apiary has been installed within a mile of these sites.

For over 60 years the Haehnle Sanctuary has worked to provide habitat for native species and allow visitors to observe and enjoy that natural beauty of Jackson County. This program of habitat improvement will support those missions.

Go to <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/eqip/> for more information on the EQIP program.



Kate Palmer Has Added a New Trail

When you park at the Kate Palmer Sanctuary to enjoy a walk through the wildflowers or birding opportunity, check out the new **Red Trail**. This trail starts directly across O'Brien Road from the parking lot and offers high and dry hiking. The Red Trail is .9 miles long. Thank you to Paul Rice and Jim Rossman who blazed the new trail.

Trinity Lutheran teacher, Clint Genthner, and students installed and maintain the Upper Woods trail and outdoor classroom. They and seven JAS members did a sanctuary clean-up and garlic pull in May.

The O'Brien Rd. Trail is 1.20 miles long and McCain Road Upper Woods trail is .75 miles.

Tips to Make Your Home & Yard More Bird Friendly

from Audubon

- Identify the non-native invasive plants in your region. Work to remove them from your Yard. Invasives don't provide as much good food or habitat as native species do and can threaten healthy ecosystems.
- Create or protect water sources in your yard - birds need water to drink and bathe in, just like we do. Be sure to keep birdbaths clean and change the water three times per week when mosquitoes are breeding.
- Let your yard get a little messy. Leave snags for nesting places and stack downed tree limbs to create a brush pile, which is a great source of cover for birds during bad weather.
- Close your blinds at night and turn-off any lights you aren't using. Some birds use constellations to guide them on their annual migrations and bright lights from windows and skylights can disrupt their steering senses.
- Plant native plants. Native flora provides birds with food in the form of fruit and seeds, and is home to tasty invertebrates like bugs and spiders.
- Reduce or eliminate pesticide and herbicide use. By using fewer chemicals in and around your home, you will help keep birds, pets, and your family healthy.
- Make your windows visible to birds to prevent collisions. Put up screens, close drapes and blinds when you leave the house, or stick multiple decals on the glass (decals need to be no more than two to four inches apart to be effective.)

Membership Renewals Available Online

All renewals are set for January 1st each year - If you haven't already done so your renewal can be made online.

Our membership management system is now fully functional and is ready to accept online 2017 renewals. For those members who have a valid email in our system you should have already received an email letting you know about your renewal.

You can go to the JAS website at <http://www.jacksonaudubon.org/>. There is a link on the main page for renewals. You can use MasterCard, VISA, American Express, or PayPal.

If you are not registered in our system with an email, you can still renew online by going to the member page and creating an ID and providing an email. By registering in the system you will also get email reminders for programs and events throughout the year.

Your annual membership supports JAS Annual Programs and special projects.

Like us on Facebook!

Welcome New JAS Members

Jan O'Neil

Mary Orlos

Harry Hill

Christina Osowski

Catherine Biddinger

Stephen Fritz

Charles & Nancy Wisman

Brenda Wineman

Jackson Falcons Big Red & Chayton Hatch 5 Chicks

Jackson County Tower Building Falcons Big Red and Chayton have hatched 5 chicks named through voting from MLive readers -

Mountie, Cooper, Dungy, Schlenker and Gramer

A Peregrine Falcon chick from Big Red & Chayton's 2010 season, Ella, has paired with a male who had lost his mate in Lansing. They have a nest at the Otto E. Eckert Power Station of the Lansing Board of Water & Light.

Justice and Freedom, two of four chicks hatched in the 2012 nesting season have paired with females in the Detroit area. Freedom and Isabella, a female from Kentucky, nest atop a building on the campus of Wayne State University. Justice has paired with an unbanded female at the Detroit Zoo.

Go to jacksoncounty.org and click on the falcon report to see a live stream from the nest atop the Jackson County Tower Building.

YOU CAN HELP SAVE THE BEARS EARS NATIONAL MONUMENT!

Call Secretary of Interior Zinke at 202-208-7351 and tell him:

“I support the Bears Ears National Monument. Please honor the tribes and honor the land. Leave Bears Ears alone!”



Sitting squarely within the iconic red rock country of southern Utah the Bears Ears National Monument contains the largest concentration of Native American cultural resources in the entire United States. The wild places have made its northern reaches a part of the National Audubon Society’s “Important Bird Area” in the region.

Despite its glories and the fact that it exists entirely on United States public lands President Trump has ordered Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke to conduct a 45 day review of the National Monument. Zinke is to have his report on his boss’ desk by June 9. We have until then to head-off this desecration of what to Native Americans is a sacred landscape and what for wild life is one of the largest remaining unprotected areas of quality habitat remaining in the lower 48 states.

The Utah politicians want to maximize resource extraction on public lands, privatize those lands if they can. The Tribes want to protect the land and their heritage on it.

A public outcry on behalf of Bears Ears is needed to influence Sec. Zinke’s report. As of this writing he has failed to even respond to the Tribes’ letters much less seriously consider their point of view.

In addition to the phone call above you can also Tweet Sec. Zinke @SecretaryZinke at tell him to save Bears Ears. Apparently he regularly reads Twitter.

For more information on the Bears Ears National Monument you can go to www.bearscoalition.org .

--Clayton Daughenbaugh Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance

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, *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: TBA

November 14: Program TBA, Annual Meeting

Visit to the Butterfly House at Summit Gardens

Doug Leffler

Doug and Sandy Leffler visited the Summit Gardens Butterfly house this spring and Doug took these photos of the butterflies residing inside.

Summit Gardens stocks a wide variety of native plants, host and nectar plants for our native butterflies.



Zebra Longwing



White Peacock
All Southern Species



Julia



Monarchs
Michigan Natives

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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