



BIRDTRACKS

Newsletter of the Jackson Audubon Society

517.787.3453

www.jacksonaudubon.org

A Summer of Butterflies!

Connie Spotts

What a fantastic year to enjoy butterflies, particularly the well known Monarch. One of my passions is raising and recording butterflies and moths. This year I have raised 90 Monarchs (on milkweed) compared to last year in which I only had 18. Monarchs need plants at each stage of their lives. From milkweed (their host plant) to blooming summer flowers (zinnia, lantana, Mexican sunflower) and into their migration (aster, sedum, goldenrod).

Other Michigan butterflies that I have raised this year are Black Swallowtail, host plants bronze fennel and common rue. Giant Swallowtail, wafer and prickly ash, rue, and dictamnus and Spicebush Swallowtail, spicebush.

There were several new surprises this butterfly season. One of the top was that I raised close to 100 Pipevine Swallowtails. This butterfly is generally found farther south. I also had a Wild Indigo Duskywing, host indigo plant. I also had 2 Red Admirals, a Viceroy, and a Red-spotted Purple eat from my bowl of rotten fruit.

If you want to enjoy more butterflies, plant host plants for the caterpillars to eat and nectar flowers for the adults. Plant in full sun and sit back and enjoy the show.

Thanks to Clarence Owens, I now have 44 Cecropia moths in their cocoons, host plant wild cherry.



Monarch



Spicebush Swallowtail Larva (below)



Black Swallowtail

Giant Swallowtail Larva



Pipevine Larva



Cecropia Moth Larva

Purple Martin Season & Party

Connie Spotts

My 2018 Purple Martin season on Crispell Lake began at daybreak on April 6th when two males happily landed on one of my houses. With the spring rain and cold weather going on, the birds were loving the dried mealworms I provided for them. Since this past spring involved snow and rain, I would say the colony was average or slightly below average in adults and young birds that fledged. That being said, I still had 92 adults and 181 fledglings. This put the colony at 82 per cent of eggs laid that fledged. Looking back at my records, I still remember 2012 in which 269 fledged giving me a total, including adults, of 380 birds. My birds leave me in early August for their wintering grounds, but will return in the spring. I hope to see them while I'm in Florida on their way North.

June 23rd was the annual Purple Martin/Audubon potluck. Even though it looked like rain, twenty five brave people came to enjoy the food, prizes, and good company. Several Martin landlords from across the state came to admire all of Connie's Martins along with her new butterfly garden and solitary bee houses. It was a great time.



Burke Lake Banding Station

Doug Lefler

On Friday, September 7, 2018, Sandy and I visited MSU's Burke Lake Bird Banding Station near Bath, Michigan. Friday was one of the busiest days in the station's 8-year history. There were so many birds that they closed down the nets, due to catching about 100 birds in their fourth net run. They ran out of bird bags and boxes which are used to transport the captured birds from the nets back to the banding station.

Bath Township, the area where the station is located, had a huge influx of warblers and Swainson's Thrushes, due to northerly winds overnight. The new species of the season at the station on Friday included the Philadelphia Vireo, Bay-Breasted Warbler and the Black-Throated Green Warbler.

In all, the station captured and banded 188 birds! Along with this short trip report, I've

included some photos of the birds that we saw.

Bird migration is amazing!



Nashville Warbler



Mourning Warbler



Black Throated Blue Warbler



Rose Breasted Grosbeak



Red-eyed Vireo

HAEHNLE HAPPENINGS

SUMMER/FALL 2018

Gary Siegrist, Haehnle Committee Chair

Its that time of year again to see our native *Greater Sandhill Cranes* begin to gather in traditional staging areas. Crane counting is back at Haehnle for the fall months. We will be counting on Mondays from 3 p.m. to dark at observation hill. Even if there are not many cranes, we still see many other bird species.

Volunteers are needed to be stationed at the observation hill on the weekends to greet visitors that come to see the beauty of the sanctuary and the gathering of Sandhill Cranes. It's easy and there is a prepared a greeter's guide to assist you in answering questions. If you are interested in helping please contact either Helena Robinovitz or Gary Siegrist.

Large scale restoration work continues at the sanctuary with twenty acres being affected this summer in Bogus Lake Fen along with selected areas of the WRP units. This acreage which happens to be all glossy buckthorn along with willows in the WRP areas was sprayed with a helicopter July 1st. This was made possible with grants from MDNR and USFW and its our hope that by increasing the numbers of wet meadow in the marsh it will become better useable habitat for cranes.

Prescribed burns were again a tool we used at the sanctuary in 2018 for the reduction and eradication of non-native plant species. We conducted these burns April 28th with a total of 18.7 acres being burned. Plans for burning an area of Bogus Lake Fen had to be cancelled because of high water in Mud Lake Marsh. We are also enrolled in a pollinator project through a grant from USDA/NRCS. This project included cutting, spraying, and seeding selected sites in our grassland areas. Seeding occurred on June 24th to one of these sites, the other two sites were too wet to seed. This seeding was done by a private contractor with a no-till drill, we are getting good germination results despite the lack of rain this summer.

The Wednesday morning stewardship crew will begin again October 3rd and will continue to improve habitat between main parking lot, kiosk at observation hill, and Seymour Road. Crew meets at main parking lot and the hours are 9 to 12. Bring gloves, pruners, chain saws, and water to drink. If more information is needed please contact Gary Siegrist.

The Cranes, Color, and Cabernet & Cider Festival is Saturday, October 27th with a special ceremony to dedicate the newly acquired Smith Property. Dedication begins at 4 p.m. with walking tours before and craning viewing after the celebration. For more information please go to either the JAS or Haehnle website. Volunteers are needed to help with the festival, so if interested contact Gary Siegrist.

I want to end by thanking all the volunteers that give of their time to work at Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary. This has become a large-scale operation and without all of the endless volunteer hours spent keeping the sanctuary pristine, the sanctuary would not be the shining jewel it is today.

Bluebird Nest Box Management

By Steve Jerant

Despite the varied weather at Haehnle Sanctuary this season, we had another good year of fledglings from our nest boxes. Tree Swallows dominated again with total nesting attempts, but we also had Eastern Bluebirds, return of the House Wrens, and one successful Wood Duck nesting attempt.

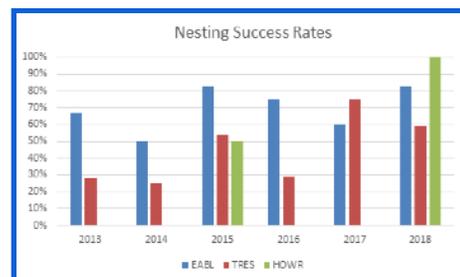
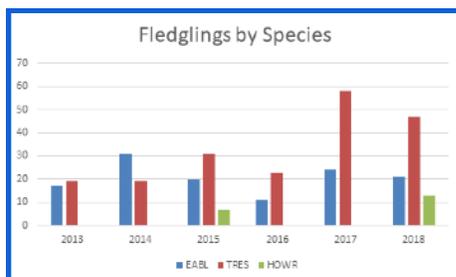
Our House Wrens returned after a two-year hiatus and they came back strong. They had a 100% nesting success rate yielding 13 fledglings. And that was with only 3 nesting attempts!

Tree Swallows were, as always, our most prolific species with 47 fledglings. This, despite a success rate of only 60% and were preyed upon by House Sparrows. After finding no dead adults last year, for the first time since my recording in 2013, I had 11 this year.

We had mixed results for our Eastern Bluebirds. While their nesting success rate went up, their overall count went down from 24 to 21. In addition, I observed a complete nest failure including dead adults. And, like last year I had a very late nesting attempt in August.

We got a year off from House Sparrow visits last year but they were back with a vengeance this year. They occupied 4 separate nest boxes in two of our units, in the prairie below the Harold Wing overlook and the prairie off Wooster Rd. Both these areas are near human habitation. Finding these invasive species even in our 1000+ acre sanctuary reminds us that nest boxes staged in suburban areas will have a much higher chance of use by these very adaptive birds. If you are providing nest boxes to help native species, it is also imperative to monitor the boxes or you will find your well-meaning attempt to provide habitat for desirable species will end up benefiting the very invasives that compete with them.

I have been using Nestwatch (nestwatch.org) since I started tracking this data in 2013 and have evolved the data collection process. This year I used the NestWatch app (for iPhone) in the field for the first time. It has made a huge improvement in the timeliness and completeness of my data entry. The data was entered into the app in the field while I was doing my rounds. This eliminated the normal end of year slog of entering my handwritten data into the Nestwatch site at the end of the season. In addition, I could see, in one small screen, the status of all my nesting attempts for all my boxes. So, if you saw me wandering through one of Haehnle's prairies this year with my head down in my device, I was not checking Facebook, I was working!



Our data for the monitoring has been submitted to NestWatch (<https://nestwatch.org>) and the Michigan Bluebird Society (<http://michiganbluebirds.org/>). These are both excellent organizations that can provide you with information on observing, managing, and monitoring nesting birds in your area.

Congratulations!

To Julie Craves on her recent retirement. She has been the researcher at Rouge River Bird Observatory, which is soon to close. JAS has supported the research Julie has done and she has presented programs for JAS.

Thank you for all of the research you have done that has made a big difference in helping Michigan wildlife.

Kate Palmer Sanctuary

Allen King

Have you visited the Kate Palmer Sanctuary in the past 92 years? This historic 53 acre preserve, located at the south end of O'Brien Road, has been protected for nearly a century! Here, in 1835, coal was first discovered in Michigan during the construction of a mill on Sandstone Creek.

The display of spring wildflowers is considered the best in Jackson County. The dedicated efforts of many have maintained a network of trails that allow visitors ease of exploration.

On Saturday, October 6th, from 9:00 a.m. to Noon, our workbee will clear back woody growth from the trails and tidy up the roadsides. If you've never been to "The Kate" this would be a chance to see this special place and help in its maintenance. Bring your brush clippers (we will have clippers to use), work gloves, and grabbers to pickup roadside litter. To learn more about the sanctuary visit the Jackson Audubon web site. Text or call Allen King for more information: 517-936-1535.



Bloodroot & Trillium are abundant in Spring



Bench along Sandstone Creek & Trail

Become a Citizen Scientist!

Join

Project Feederwatch

Cornell Lab of Ornithology

WHAT IS FEEDERWATCH?

Project FeederWatch is a winter-long survey of birds that visit feeders at backyards, nature centers, community areas, and other locales in North America. FeederWatchers periodically count the birds they see at their feeders from November through early April and send their counts to Project FeederWatch. FeederWatch data help scientists track broadscale movements of winter bird populations and long-term trends in bird distribution and abundance. Anyone interested in birds can participate. FeederWatch is conducted by people of all skill levels and backgrounds, including children, families, individuals, classrooms, retired persons, youth groups, nature centers, and bird clubs. **You can count birds as often as every week, or as infrequently as you like: the schedule is completely flexible.** All you need is a bird feeder, bird bath, or plantings that attract birds.

New participants are sent a [Research Kit](#) with complete instructions for participating, as well as a bird identification poster and more. You provide the feeder(s) and seed. Then each fall participants receive our 16-page, year-end report, [Winter Bird Highlights](#). Participants also receive access to the digital version of *Living Bird*, the Cornell Lab's award-winning, quarterly magazine. There is an \$18 annual participation fee for U.S. residents (\$15 for Cornell Lab members). Canadians can participate by joining Bird Studies Canada for CAN\$35. The participation fee covers materials, staff support, web design, data analysis, and the year-end report (*Winter Bird Highlights*).

Join today!

Project FeederWatch is supported almost entirely by participation fees. Without the support of our participants, this project wouldn't be possible. Project FeederWatch is operated by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Bird Studies Canada.



2118-19 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

October 9: Lathe Claflin presents "Birding Eastern Panama." We will see Harpy Eagles & Sapphire-throated Hummingbirds, along with other birds of the area.

November 13: Holly Vaughn of Michigan DNR presents "Owls of Michigan." Holly will talk about the eleven Michigan species and include their biology, behaviors, and diet. There will be a brief membership meeting prior to the program for the purpose of electing our board.

January 8: Barb & Joe Rogers present "Live Birds of Prey." The Rogers have been involved with rehabilitating raptors for over 35 years and were involved with the Peregrine Falcon reintroduction in the Upper Peninsula. They will have live birds at the program.

February 8: Andy Walz presents "Alaskan Grandeur." Want to go to Alaska or have you already been? Join us as we recall those memories or dream of going. **This annual program venue is on a Friday at Vista Grand Villa. Bring a dessert to share that does not require table service .**

March 12: Courtney Bailey, Master Gardener and co-owner of Summit Landscape and Garden Center, presents "Invasive Plant Removal & Incorporating Native Plants into Your Landscape." Courtney will discuss identification and removal of invasive species and placing native plants into a groomed landscape, focusing on pollinator friendly gardening practices.

April 9: Gary Siegrist presents "Fifty Years of Habitat Restoration at Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary."

Field Trips

Regular Tuesday morning Field Trips continues through the year. For scheduled outings, visit the JAS website: <http://jacksonaudubon.org>, email Steve Jerant - jacksonaudubon@gmail.com or call him at (734) 883-9514.

Sanctuaries

Saturday, September 29: Workbee at Haehnle Sanctuary, 9-12 a.m. Meet at the Wing Overlook kiosk on Seymour Road. Call Gary Siegrist (517) 522-2990 for more information.

Saturday, October 6: Workbee at Kate Palmer 9-12 a.m. Call Allen King (517) 936-1435 or go to the JAS website for more information: <http://Jacksonaudubon.org>

Saturday, October 27: Cranes, Color, & Cabernet & Cider at Haehnle Sanctuary. Visit the JAS website: <http://Jacksonaudubon.org> or call Gary Siegrist at (517) 522-5990.

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