



BIRDTRACKS

Pollinators & Native Plants

Courtney Bailey ~ Summit Garden & Landscape Center



Gardeners who include plants for bees, butterflies, hummingbirds and other pollinators not only offer important habitat for these species, they often enjoy a greater fruit and vegetable bounty come harvest-time. Bees, in particular, are master pollinators of many of our fruits and vegetables. In fact, we rely on pollinators for one-third of our food supply, but pollinators are facing many challenges including habitat loss, disease, and harmful pesticides.

Planting native plants is one of the best ways to help pollinators and create a sustainable landscape right where you live. Planting them can also increase your food plant yields. Native plants are those that naturally grow in your region. They are important because they have co-evolved and have an interdependence with local wildlife, especially pollinators. If you grow your own fruits and vegetables, including native plants can help ensure a bountiful harvest because natives will attract more pollinators to your food plants.



Red Admiral

Try bio controls instead of harmful chemicals like planting chives near plants that attract aphids. Using mint and sage to keep small rodents from enjoying your harvest, and introducing lady bugs to your garden periodically throughout the season. Lady bugs can be ordered through services like amazon.com and are very affordable!

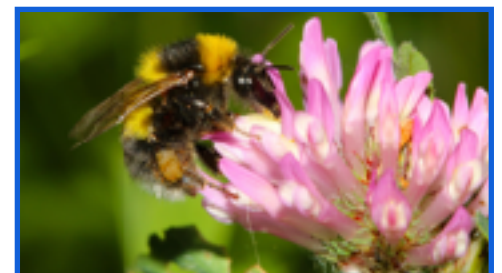


Painted Lady

Hope everyone has a bountiful Spring/Summer season. Enjoy!



Monarchs



Wildlife Recovery Program

January 2018

Photos by Doug Leffler & Becky Mehall

Wildlife Recovery presented a program on raptors and owls of Michigan to a record number of Jackson Audubon members and guests in January, 2018. They brought rescued birds that could not be returned to the wild due to the nature of their injuries and are now ambassadors. Joe and Barb Rogers gave a very interesting program. Wildlife Recovery is dedicated to promoting the understanding, appreciation and protection of raptors and their connection to nature.



Saw Whet Owl in special apron with a "cavity"



American Kestrel



Eastern Screech Owl



Merlin

Kate Palmer Sanctuary In The Deep Freeze of Winter

Allan King

Rarely does Sandstone Creek, flowing through our Kate Palmer Sanctuary, freeze over, but it did this year! With winter behind us the best time of year to explore "The Kate" is upon us. Mid-April through mid-May will fill this woodland with possibly the best display of wildflowers in Jackson County. Over 90 years of protection has allowed the establishment of dozens of species. If you visit in early May, walk carefully to avoid stepping on beautiful flora. If you want to erase this past winter from your memory, be sure to pay a visit to this Spring Arbor Township, O'Brien Road sanctuary! Visit our web site for more information.



Snow covered trails and frozen Sandstone Creek

HAEHNLE HAPPENINGS

Haehnle Crane Count ~ Fall 2018

Steve Jerant

Over the years, we've seen some ups and downs in the Haehnle crane counts: from our huge counts peaking at over 8000 cranes in 2012 to a total season count of just 200 in 2016. While these swings may seem extreme, the overall trend is up. From the nadir of the crane population in the 1940's to the present, the survey numbers have increased. (see chart Peak Weekly Crane Count 1940-2018). These numbers are just for the Haehnle Sanctuary cranes but the overall survey numbers for the state are also high. So, while the Haehnle counts go up and down over the years, the overall Michigan counts, as reported by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, have kept above 10,000 since 2004.

The cranes are out there, they just don't always visit our Sanctuary. To be included in our Monday count the crane must land in the marsh and stay there. We have had many Monday counts in the past years in which we observed thousands of cranes in the distance, sometimes flying over the marsh, but not roosting in the Sanctuary.

There are many factors in play affecting the number of cranes we observe: the hydrology of Mud Lake Marsh, crop harvesting schedule of nearby farmers, rainfall, new habitat that is on nearby private land, and variations in fall temperature. With all these things affecting the number cranes coming into Haehnle, it is very difficult to supervise the property for maximum crane visitation.

Some things are out of our control like local harvest schedule and rainfall. So, one of the management challenges for the property is deciding and acting on elements that we can change. After the start of the decade, we noticed that the cranes were not always roosting on what was a popular part of the marsh. It was nicknamed "buttonbush island" due to the prevalence of buttonbush growing on the section.

Cranes like to have a flat, wet space to roost at night. They like water that is not so low that predators can get to them but not too deep. Good visibility is also needed so they can see predators approach. For years this area worked well for them if the water was a bit high. But with the island getting overgrown with the buttonbush, the visibility was impaired and its use by the cranes dwindled.

To make the island more amenable to the cranes, in 2015 we began managing the island's vegetation. A tractor was driven over the ice in March to mow the buttonbush shrubs, in September of 2016 a helicopter sprayed the island with herbicide to kill the remaining growth. It has taken a few years, but it looks like the island has once again become a favorite spot for the cranes. Starting in 2017 and continuing in 2018, we have seen an increasing number of cranes roosting on the island.

While the fall crane migration is certainly the highlight of any visit to Haehnle, especially when we get a "fly-by" above the overlook, the Sanctuary is open all year. We have shrikes and woodpeckers in the winter, tree swallows and bluebirds in the spring, and wildflowers in the summer. So, don't wait for the fall to visit, come over anytime!



Jackson Audubon Celebrates 50th years of CBC's

Gary Siegrist



Bald Eagle

Hard to believe that JAS has been contributing to the National Audubon's Christmas Bird Count continuously for fifty years. It's a great achievement for our members and shows the dedication we have had to citizen science and the importance of monitoring birds in our area.

With little snow and a gray day one can imagine how hard it is to see birds, but surprisingly overall bird number were good for 2018 CBC with 9,982 total birds counted on the Waterloo State Recreation Area count. The 65 different bird species found on December 15th is a very good number.

We had 28 observers participating this year plus two feeder watchers. Total hours in the field was recorded at 71 hours and we had a total of 446.25 miles driven. Nocturnal birding had 9.80 hours and 82.60 miles logged. Owls noted were Eastern Screech (14), Great Horned (9), and Barred (1).

Good numbers of raptors were seen this year including Bald Eagle (8), Golden Eagle (1), Northern Harrier (1), Sharp-shinned Hawk (2), Cooper's Hawk (3), Red-shouldered Hawk (1), Red-tailed Hawk (41), Rough-legged Hawk (2), and American Kestrel (7). Wow, what a great group list!

High numbers were chronicled for Trumpeter Swans (8), Red-headed Woodpecker (16), Bald Eagle (8), Brown Creeper (10), and Brown-headed Cowbird (211). Lower than average numbers were Wild Turkey (21), American Tree Sparrow (108), Dark-eyed Junco (209), American Goldfinch (108), and House Sparrow (263). We did have one unusual species with Golden Eagle (1), this is the 7th time a GOEA has been spotted on the Waterloo CBC. Other bird species of note seen this year include Sandhill Crane (1212), Northern Shrike (1), Northern Mockingbird (3), and Eastern Towhee (1).

This also marks the last time Don & Robyn Henise will be volunteering for our CBC. They are planning on moving to another part of the USA this summer as Don is retiring. Please wish them well and thank them for their many hours of service to Jackson Audubon. Don's upgrading the way the CBC is compiled and recorded has been invaluable. Their hours spent leading trips, and finding great birds for the rest of us is just a small part of how important they have been to birding in Jackson and Michigan. Don and Robyn, you will be missed!

I want to thank everyone that participated in the 50th Jackson Audubon CBC and please save the date for next year's count, on December 21st, 2019. If you would like to join us next year for the fun, please contact me at gwsiegrist@gmail.com. For more information on the Waterloo count or national information, www.christmasbirdcount.org, and select Waterloo State Recreation Area, MIWA is the code.



Tom Turkey



Red-shouldered Hawk



Trumpeter Swan

Plastic Straws are Little, but are part of a Huge Problem

Rachel Feltman, Washington Post September 9, 2018

The next time you buy a soda in a to-go cup, you might be surprised to find your straw is made of paper. That's because more and more restaurants are trying to stop using plastic straws, and some cities are even banning them. How could something as little as a straw cause such a big fuss? It's actually the small size of straws that makes them bad for the environment.

It's important to limit your use of plastic for a few reasons. First, it takes energy and resources to make any object, which means to make plastic, we must create pollution and sacrifice dwindling resources such as water and fossil fuels. Many items made out of thin plastic, such as straws and grocery bags, are meant to be used once. In most cases, it's better for the environment to make and buy products that last a long time. But the trouble doesn't end there. Most plastics don't decompose, or biodegrade, when we toss them. Plastics can stay in landfills for hundreds of years. And plastic in the ocean floats around as small pieces (called microplastics) that can poison animals and hurt the environment.

Straws probably make up a very, very small percentage of our trash worldwide. But they've recently gotten a lot of attention because of how difficult they are to recycle.

"The best way to keep plastic straws out of landfills is not to use them — whether you're at home or in a restaurant," says Jonathan Kuhl, Dept of D.C. Public Works. "If you'd like to use a straw, there are paper and other nonplastic alternatives."



2018 Jackson County Fall Sandhill Crane Survey

Ron Hoffman

Crane in Jackson County this past autumn participated in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Sandhill Crane population survey. This count has been used to monitor crane numbers in the eastern United States since 1979. It was conducted this past year between October 29 and November 2, 2018

During the 2018 survey, 3,130 cranes were counted at 10 locations in the county. None were found at five other traditional roosting areas. Most of the cranes, 69%, were at Phyllis Haehnle Sanctuary and two nearby wetlands. One of those wetlands just north of the sanctuary attracted 1,380 cranes while 617 were counted at Haehnle and 150 at Big Portage Lake. Large numbers of cranes were also counted at two other areas: Stony Lake 604 and 204 in Springport Township. About 15% of the 21,375+ cranes reported in Michigan this past fall were in Jackson County.

Below normal rainfall during the summer and the early count date affected the crane distribution. Last year, more than 2,200 cranes were counted at flooded pastures along the Portage River near Dalton and Wooster Roads. This year those areas were dry and no cranes roosted there until after the count period when water levels rose. It appears that many of the cranes remained further north and did not migrate until after the survey so the Jackson County count was lower than in many years past.



Tuesday Tours

Jackson Audubon is sponsoring nature walks, tours, and trips throughout the area. We are hoping that many of the folks who were involved in Dahlem's Tuesday Group will join us. The trips will depart from a meeting place and carpool to the destination, generally around 9 AM and go until about noon. Lunch is an option after the event.

We do walks in our local area like Haehnle, Dahlem, Watkins Lake SP, and Nan Weston. In addition, we run trips to some out of county areas like the Muskegon Wastewater Treatment plant, Binder Park Zoo, Dowagiac Woods, and Kellogg Bird Sanctuary. Since we have access to some great institutions in the area, we visit Hidden Lake Gardens, the Natural History museums at Michigan and Michigan State Universities. We also visit some great "south of the border" locations in Ohio including Goll Woods, Oak Openings, and of course, Magee Marsh.

Tours scheduled as of 02/2019

Trip Name	Date	Time	Leader
Early Waterfowl-JAS Saturday trip	04/13/19	9:00 AM	Ross Green
Trillium Ravine & Dowagiac Woods	04/23/19	10:00 AM	Rachel Maranto - Michigan Nature Assoc.
Nan Weston Preserve	04/30/19	10:00 AM	Joann Balbach
Magee Marsh	05/07/19	5:45 AM	
Oak Openings Preserve, Ohio	05/14/19	9:00 AM	Chuck Mekbel
Kate Palmer Sanctuary	05/21/19	9:00 AM	Alan King
Falling Waters Trail	05/28/19	9:00 AM	Gary Mason
Watkins Lake SP-Grasslands birds	06/18/19	9:00 AM	Chuck Mekbel
Goose Creek Preserve	09/17/19	10:00 AM	Rachel Maranto - Michigan Nature Assoc.

Check the EVENTS page at <http://jacksonaudubon.org/events> for the most up to date events schedule. If you are a member of Jackson Audubon and have an email registered in our system, you will receive email announcements and reminders automatically.

Events and schedule are subject to change. If you would like more information, want to register your email, or would like to lead or organize a trip, contact Steve Jerant at jacksonaudubon@gmail.com.

2019 Fieldtrips/Activities/Workbees

Saturday, April 13: Jackson area Waterfowl Trip. Meet at 8:00am at Eastside Meijer or at Gillette Lake Park-east side at 8:30. Call Ross Green at 517-392-3053 for more info.

Saturday, April 27: Earth Day at the Cascades Park. 1:00-4:00 ~ for more info call Connie Spotts 517.230-2707.

Saturday, June 22: Martin/Audubon Potluck at Connie Spotts house located at Shady Acres 2023 Crispell Rd south of Jackson. The party starts at 11:00. Bring a passing dish and an item to raffle. Call Connie at 517-230-2707 for more info.

Saturday, August 24: Birds Blooms and Butterflies Festival, at the Dahlem Center from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Registration is on the Dahlem website or call 517-782-3453.

Saturday, September 14: Haehnle Work Bee, 9-12:00. Call Gary Siegrist at 517 522-5990 for more information.

Saturday, Oct. 12: Kate Palmer Workbee. 9:00-12:00. Call Allen King 517-936-1535 for more information.

Saturday, December 21: Waterloo Recreation Area Christmas Bird Count. Contact Gary Siegrist at 517-522-5990 for more information.

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

Tuesday, April 9: 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.

Tuesday, Sept 10: Heidi Trudell, biologist turned architectural consultant will present "Window Pain: Helping Birds Survive in a Human World" Millions of healthy birds are killed each year in the US when they collide with home and office windows. Join us to learn some quick and simple ways you can save birds.

Tuesday, Oct. 8: Doug Leffler will present "Birding in the Lone State" This will include birding on the gulf from Rio Grande Valley and west to Big Ben. Pictures of the green jay and the rare Colima warbler are just a few of the colorful birds Doug will show us.

Tuesday, November 12: Annual Meeting and program on "Exploring Jackson Audubon's Christmas Bird Count over the Years" There has been many species changes over the years in the Waterloo Recreation Area Christmas Bird Count. Join local compiler Gary Siegrist as he explores those changes and what to expect in the near future.

2020

Tuesday, January 14: ReLeaf Michigan Presents "Basic Tree Care and Maintenance" Get your many questions answered by the expert. How to care for all trees in all seasons.

Friday, February 7: Andy Walz will present "Glacier National Park and The Canadian Rockies" Join us at Vista Grand Villa to view the fantastic mountains, wildlife, and beautiful waterfalls. Please bring a dessert to share that does not require table service.

Tuesday, March 10: Holly Vaughn of Michigan DNR presents "Michigan Waterfowl". She will discuss field marks, biology, behavior and range of all our species.

Tuesday, April 14: Dr. Curtis Blankespoor presents "A Rare Glimpse into the Unknown world of the Common Merganser." Curtis will share amazing photos and videos of his research involving over 500 ducks and their relationship to the Swimmers itch.

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



Michigan Audubon - Connecting Birds and People for the Benefit of Both