



BIRDTRACKS

Newsletter of the Jackson Audubon Society

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www.jacksonaudubon.org

Klee Tract Dedication At Haehnle

Lathe Claflin ~ photos by Tom Hodgson and Mike Seftonby

On a chilly October 18

Edward and Jennie Klee Track at Haehnle Sanctuary. Around eighty people, including 23 Klee descendants, attended this fun event near the Tobin Childs Kiosk.



Gary Siegrist as our master of ceremonies welcomed the attendees. Lathe Claflin, representing the Jackson Audubon Society and the Haehnle Sanctuary Committee, thanked those who had contributed to the capital campaign and described the important aspects of this new addition, the most important being the complete protection of Mud Lake Marsh.

Short talks were given by Jonathan Lutz, Executive Director of Michigan Audubon (below left) and Susan Lackey, Executive Director of Legacy Land Conservancy (below middle), both of whom emphasized the importance of preserving critical habitats. In a heartfelt talk Kerry Klee, speaking for the Klee family (below right) said how much this piece of land had meant to her parents and how



happy she was that the land was going to be a part of Haehnle Sanctuary. During and after the ceremony Kerry and her siblings gave out attractively wrapped packets of cookies that she and her family had made from special recipes of their mother, a real treat for all who came. Following the ceremony, the Klee descendants sat for a group picture. Those who wished were shuttled to the Klee Tract where they had a grand view of Mud Lake Marsh from new benches



Nancy Lapinski Memorial Grove

Pegg Clevenger ~ photo Gary Mason



Jack Lapinski and
Connie Spotts watch as the
trees are planted

Two red maples and one black oak have been planted in Ella Sharp Park near the rose garden in remembrance of Nancy Lapinski. Her husband, Jack, daughter, Maria, with husband, Andrew LaFaive, joined us. The trees were watered, mulched and the trunks wrapped.

Barb Anderson and Jann Krupa assisted with planning for this lovely grove with large maples and tulip trees as back-drops and a convenient bench nearby. Thanks go to Connie Spotts for her attendance and attention to details, to Lathe Claflin for fencing installation, and to Travis Fojtasek for purchasing the handsome boulder along with overseeing the plaque installation by Tau Uhila of Maka Walls.

A dedication will take place in May, all are invited to attend and share your memories of Nancy. Details will be posted in the March newsletter.

KATE SAYS, "Thanks for the Update!"

Pegg Clevenger ~ Volunteer Steward

Welcome improvements at the Kate Palmer Sanctuary have been provided by Paul Rice and Jim Rossman. Volunteering over three weeks of their time, they completed work on a trail with the Michigan Nature Association. A boardwalk was constructed at the Kate by these retired Commonwealth engineers to span a mud-filled area on the new trail they had just blazed. The project was topped off by spreading gravel in the very muddy parking area. Jim and Paul also sawed down and eliminated non-native problem trees marked by Bill Sonnet.

Our friends from the Grand River Environmental Action Team, Jim Seitz and Jack Ripstra, spent an afternoon with chainsaws in the waters of Sandstone Creek to cut and clear large fallen trees. Gary Siegrist led two groups through the Kate and identified birds, ferns and plants of interest. Lorraine Hampton found rare Goldenseal habitation and regularly updates Kate's plant database.

New volunteers are welcome to do historical research and for contacting neighbors to be Jackson Audubon's eyes and ears to insure that the Kate remains a protected site. Visit the Sanctuary soon to enjoy the improvements!



New boardwalk installed at
Kate Palmer Sanctuary.

2014 Crane Count

Ron Hoffman

This year 19 people in Jackson County participated in a U.S. Fish and Wildlife fall survey of sandhill cranes throughout eastern North America. This annual survey of the Eastern Population has been conducted since 1979. Two counts were made this year; 1st period was October 29 - November 3 and a later 2nd period November 10 -14.

During the 1st period 3,289 cranes were counted and 4,410 during the 2nd period. More than 60% of the cranes were found at a privately owned Wetland Reserve Program marsh in Henrietta Township. Not far away, less than 40 cranes roosted at the Haehnle Sanctuary, but many more could be seen flying to other nearby roosts. About 75% of the reported cranes in the county roosted at 7 marshes in the Portage River Watershed which extends from east of Waterloo southwest to Jackson. Most of these cranes flew north to feed in fields near Munith. Smaller numbers were seen in the Norvell/Napoleon Township area, especially Stony Lake; and in Spring Arbor and Tompkins Townships.

Limited conclusions can be made from comparing the 2014 survey with previous years because no count was made at Stony Lake during the 1st survey period. Based on the 2nd period count, there probably were around 700 cranes at Stony Lake late in October. If 700 cranes are added to the 1st survey period ($3,289 + 700 =$ about 4,000 adjusted count), then it appears about 9% more cranes were present during the 2nd survey. This raises the question, are the additional cranes that arrive in November in Jackson County counted elsewhere in October? Once results are in for the rest of eastern North America, it will be decided if the survey should be moved to a later date.



Using the "adjusted" 4,000 crane numbers for the 1st survey period, the number of cranes counted this fall in Jackson County was 13% lower than the previous three-year average of 4,500 cranes and 5% higher than the previous 10-year average of 3,800. Surveys of the Eastern Population have not shown a decline in numbers. What is apparent is that huge fluctuations in crane numbers at Haehnle are, to a lesser extent, reflected in the number of cranes staging in the county. In the October 2012 survey, more than 5,000 cranes roosted at the sanctuary and nearly 6,500 were counted at the same time in the county. When less than 800 cranes were counted in 2011 and 2013 at the sanctuary during the survey, the county tally was 4,100 and 2,900 respectively. High water levels and encroachment of cattails have coincided with low crane numbers at Haehnle. The question remains as to what can be done to improve crane roosting habitat at Haehnle.

Locating Survivor Ash Trees

<http://michiganradio.org/post/scientists-are-looking-survivor-trees-michigan-and-they-want-your-help>

Rebecca Williams ~ Michigan Radio 10/23/14

The Northern Research Station has launched a new online reporting tool. They want people in 10 counties in southeast Michigan and 7 counties in northwest Ohio to report the location of ash trees that have survived the infestation.

Jennifer Koch is a research biologist with the U.S. Forest Service. She explains where to look for the trees and why: "What we're most interested in are trees that are in natural wooded areas, we really want people to go look outside of their homes and their streets and into the woods and the forests."

Not all ash trees qualify for study

She says trees that are planted in your yard and street trees are most likely from local nurseries and are horticultural cultivars. She says these trees have limited genetic diversity and are probably already in the researchers' collection of trees to be tested. Ash trees in forests, though, are more likely to have survived on their own.

"What we're really focusing in on is trees that have maintained a healthy crown, so very few branches with any dying leaves or anything like that, in an area where most of the other ash trees are dead," she says.

The researchers also want you to keep an eye out for big ash trees: trees with a minimum of a 10-inch diameter at 4.5 feet high. This measurement, known as diameter at breast height or DBH, assures researchers that the tree was big enough when the ash borer infestation was at its peak. That's because the insects like to attack bigger trees.

Koch says researchers will use the information from the reporting tool to try to understand what mechanisms allows these survivor trees to flourish while their counterparts succumbed to the invasive insects.

"We want to determine if that is a genetically heritable trait, because if it is a genetic trait, we can then breed for it. Our ultimate goal is to be able to breed for resistance," Koch says. "And to do that, we have to be able to identify trees that have this rare combination of genes that may allow them to tolerate emerald ash borers longer than their counterparts."

Koch adds that resistance to the ash borer is critical to maintaining ash in Midwestern forests.

If you want to help find survivor trees, first: take a walk in the woods and try to spot a healthy ash tree. And if you think you've found one, you can enter information about the tree using the survivor tree reporting tool.

<http://www.nrs.fs.fed.us/SurvivorAsh>

A Warm Welcome to New Audubon Board Members

Ellen Rathbone:

Ellen has been in Michigan for nearly four years, having moved here from the Adirondack Mountains of northern New York, where she'd worked for over ten years for the State of New York. Ellen grew up in central New York with a keen love of the outdoors thanks to her grandparents and family spending time outdoors exploring, fishing, paddling and hiking. She received her BS and MS at the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry, and has worked in the field of environmental education in one form or another since 1988. She is currently the education director at the Dahlem Conservancy.

Steve Jerant:

Steve joined Jackson Audubon Society in 2010 and has been active on the Haehnle Sanctuary Board since August, 2012; he currently manages the nest-box program. Steve and his wife, Callie, live in Chelsea. He became a birder in 2008 and figures he has about 30 years of catch up to do; much of it in his favorite birding spots of Watkins/Thorn Lake, West Lake Preserve, and Tuttle March which is near Tawas City.

Thank you to Retiring Board Members



Tom Hodgson & Ron Hoffman

Your years of service to JAS are much appreciated!

Ron Hoffman receiving gift of
appreciation from Connie Spotts
photo credit - Roy Dane

Follow the Journey of MIS Osprey "Corie"

August 28: It appears Corie executed a flawless first flight on August 2. She stuck pretty close to home for the first few days but eventually curiosity got the better of her and she flapped her way across Brooklyn Rd. to see what all the fuss was about. Her parents had built their nest only a few yards from Michigan International Speedway so she checked out the grandstand, the track and likely many of the cars zooming around the perimeter. Pretty exciting stuff for a young Osprey chick! Once things settled down she expanded her movements directly north from her nest to downtown Brooklyn, northwest to Lake Columbia and northeast to Vineyard Lake.

September 24: Brooklyn Corie launched her trip south on the 11th. After a short stop off point to investigate a local racehorse farm near Adrian she continued on and drew the most direct flight path south of any of our migrating Ospreys. Nine days later she arrived in the Sunshine State but quickly made an unexpected detour sending her to the western shoreline. She flew a considerable distance into the Gulf before she changed her mind (female's prerogative), altered her course and flapped quickly back to shore. Possibly she was avoiding a storm brewing in the Gulf. After a brief visit to the Disney area she arrived in the Everglades and is currently exploring the southern most tip of the peninsula. Interestingly, the data shows her in close proximity to DTE Ozzie.

As of October, the map shows Corie in South America. Follow her travels at: <http://michiganosprey.org/>

Winter Finch Forecast 2014-2015

Cornell Lab of Ornithology

As days shorten and cooler temperatures descend, we are pleased to welcome one of our Autumn highlights: Ron Pittaway's Winter Finch Forecast. While 2012-2013 was an epic finch flight, last winter (2013-2014) was the winter of no finch movements. Fortunately, this winter will be better than last! Here's the forecast:

This winter's theme is a "mixed bag" of finch movements. For example, some species such as Purple Finch will go south while White-winged Crossbills will likely stay in the boreal forest in widely separated areas where spruces are laden with cones. Common Redpolls should move into southern Canada and the northern states because birch seed crops are thin to average across the north.

Pine Siskins have been seen in Jackson County since October.



Maintaining Winter Bird Habitat

Michigan Audubon ~ michiganaudubon.org

Tips and links for information about maintaining a bird-friendly winter landscape.

Leaves

Have you raked your leaves yet? If you haven't, leave your leaves for the wildlife! If you do need to rake, consider composting your leaves for use as mulch or dropping them off at a municipal recycling center. Many butterfly and moth species spend the winter months as pupae in leaf litter. In the spring, these butterfly and moth caterpillars provide a critical food source for birds feeding their young. For more information and ideas, visit blog.nwf.org.

Brush Piles

Use loosely-stacked piles of brush near your feeders to help cut down on wind and to provide a safe place for birds to hide from predators. If your feeder is out in the open, this is an especially good idea to keep feeder birds safe from hawks. Ground-dwelling birds will also appreciate the cover and warmth the brush piles can provide. For more information about brush piles and protecting birds from ill-weather, check out this article from [Bird Watcher's Digest](http://birdwatchersdigest.com). birdwatchersdigest.com

Feeder Stations

Bird feeders and feeding stations can help birds survive in harsh winter conditions when food is otherwise scarce. There are many types of feeders to choose from, including, tray/platform feeders, hopper, window feeders, tube feeders, nyjer feeders, and suet feeders. For an explanation of each, see allaboutbirds.org

2014/15 ACTIVITIES SCHEDULE

Field Trips

Saturday March 28—Early Waterfowl trip around the Jackson Area. Meet at the Eastside Meijer parking lot at 8:00 am. Call Connie Spotts (517-529-9031) for more information.

Meetings/Programs

Regular meetings begin with a social time at 6 30 p.m. followed by a short meeting and program at 7 00 p.m
Bring "recyclables" (magazines, feeders, etc.) to the program.

Thursday January 8 -

Tom Funke will present "Birding for Conservation" and award a prize to the winner of the Kate Palmer birding contest.

Friday February 13 at Vista Grande Villa—DESSERT TIME—

Ellen Rathbone, Education Director of the Dahlem Conservancy, will present "The Lure of the Mountains". Ellen, along with 11 folks from Jackson took an eco-tour of the Adirondacks in upstate New York. She will delight us with their discoveries and adventures.

Thursday—March 12 -

Don Henise will lead us on a "Birding in Southwest Oregon" trip. We will visit the south coast and a large nesting seabird colony. We will also travel to the Cascades in search of many western species such as the white-headed woodpecker, red-breasted sapsucker, and a nesting Gray Owl.

Thursday—April - 9

Brenda Dziedzic of Westland, author of "Learn About Butterflies in the Garden", will present a program on raising butterflies from a small city yard. She has an indoor butterfly house at Barson's Greenhouse where she educates many people about saving butterflies. She will have her book available for \$20.00.

Other Events

Saturday December 20—Christmas Bird Count

If you would like to help on this important count, please call:

Don Henise at 517-817-0309 or 517-795-7752.

Join the group at Steaks Eatery in VCL at 6:30 p.m. to hear the count results.

Needed: Christmas Bird Count Coordinator 2015

contact Connie Spotts for more information ~ 517-529-9031

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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