



capitalareaaudubon.org

The Call Note

March 2017

Dedicated to creating a greater awareness, appreciation, and understanding of the interrelatedness of all Michigan's wild places and wildlife and the need for stewardship.

Start your spring planning now

The groundhog may have predicted six more weeks of winter, but as I write this, I am looking at a weather forecast for temperatures in the mid- to high 50s for several days.

As a general rule, I look forward to winter – I enjoy snow and don't mind the cold. But these mid-winter warm-ups always get me anxious to see spring arrive – and of course, the migratory birds that come with it.

While it's still too early for spring warblers to appear in our area, it's not too soon to start making birding plans for the coming weeks and months. If you're looking for some fresh ideas about birding locales, you won't want to miss our March meeting. **Kirby Adams** will be offering a great program about little known birding spots around the country (see details, opposite).

Hope to see you there!
Good birding (and good planning),

Barb Hosler,
CAAS Board President

Facebook a useful tool for birders

by Kristy Taylor, CAAS Facebook Liaison



Looking for more news and updates from the Capital Area Audubon Society? Follow us on now on Facebook at www.facebook.com/capitalareaaudubon and get up-to-date information about our

meetings, programs, field trips, and community opportunities.

March 2 meeting & program

Spice up your birding with some new places



Please join us at Fenner on Thursday, **March 2**, when local birder and freelance writer **Kirby Adams** joins us to present his intriguing program *Birding Spots You've Never Heard Of*.

Beyond birding, Kirby is an amateur ecologist, avid traveler, and past editor of *Michigan Birds and Natural History*.

Kirby's quest to see 100 birds in each of the 50 states has led him to discover some incredible, under-birded areas that he will share with us. Enjoy his superb photographs, but you might want to take notes too.

Snacks and social time begin at 7:00, followed by a brief business meeting at 7:30 and program immediately following. Why not bring a friend?

Thank you Madeline Merz and Vee Bjornson for our February meeting snacks!

It is a great place to share your bird sightings, ask questions, give advice, and connect with other birders in the area. Use our page to invite friends and family to come and see what Capital Area Audubon is all about!



Thank you Lee and Roger Laylin for 40 years of CBC tally parties

by Ann Hancock

Capital Area Audubon has enjoyed an incredible 40-year run of hospitality by **Lee and Roger Laylin**.

For 40 years they have opened their home for the annual East Lansing Christmas Bird Count (CBC) tally party. Two dozen or so hungry, cold, often wet (and always ravenous) birders descended on their home every year to feast and share the results of their CBC day in the field. I was one of those birders for 32 years, and I miss it... a lot! The following are a few recollections of my first Christmas Count and Tally Party at the Laylins' home.

I joined CAAS in the spring of 1982 at the urging of **Al Ravenscroft**, who worked with me in the MSU Plant Pathology Department. That same year I volunteered for my first Christmas Bird Count. I was assigned to Rose Lake to count with **Tom Arter**. We started really early to count owls; I can't remember the exact time because I was pretty much in a fog until the first screech owl replied to our tape with its quavering tremolo. We also were able to call in a barred owl along Vermilion Creek. I was definitely awake after that.

Being a newbie, I wore the wrong footgear. My feet got wet the first hour, and they stayed wet the rest of the day. I was very cold and tired at the end of the day, but Tom insisted that I couldn't miss the "Tally party," so that night I attended my first CBC gathering at the Laylins' (having first changed my shoes and socks). I'll never forget the warm welcome I got, and how great that bowl of hot chili tasted! Lee's dining room table was full of all kinds of food, from cheese and crackers, nuts, salads (several kinds, always), trail mix, rolls, spiced punch, and a generous selection of cookies.

After the meal, the atmosphere was charged as our CBC Coordinator **Sam Febba** read the species list; folks often kept their "best bird" a secret until it was called off. Even more fun were the unexpected species, those rarely or never seen previously. I was hooked!

I need to mention the faithful band of friends who helped Lee over the years. **Stevie Staples, Phyllis Bogle, Clara Bratton, Leona Good, and Jennifer Good** did a fantastic job of helping with cooking, keeping a stack of clean bowls and plates ready, ladling out the chili, filling cups of hot cider, and making sure the table stayed stocked with goodies.

Another fun tradition they started was Christmas tree bird ornaments for all participants, with the year marked on the back of the bird. I have almost every

*Bird ornaments from E.L. Christmas Bird Counts
(photo courtesy of Ann Hancock)*



one I ever received in my ornament box (our cats and dogs destroyed a few over the years) – blue jays, goldfinches, turkeys, titmice, cardinals, wrens... I can't list them all.

Sitting around with friends, some of whom I saw only once a year, swapping stories of our adventures, patting whichever cats were brave

enough to come out and visit, and eating a wonderful meal is a memory that is very dear to me. Lee and Roger, thank you so much for your unceasing hospitality and generosity over the years. I'll never forget how much fun it was!

From Sam Febba: I remember the warmth and welcoming feeling when we walked in the door of our first Christmas Count in 1979 or 80.

I remember all the nights I sat on the steps and called out the species names and area numbers. I remember the excitement of tallying species not on the checklist.

I remember chili.

I remember all the different species of birds that have graced the paper ornaments over the years.

Mostly, going to the Laylins' might be the best part of the CBC.

Calling all photographers!

Many of you are not only birders, but photographers as well. Please consider sharing your work on our CAAS website.

If you have photos of Michigan birds or rare visitors that you would like posted, please contact our webmaster, **Roger Wolf** at rcwolf48@yahoo.com or 402-9737.

Full photo credit will accompany your work, of course. Thank you!

Wildflower conference will feature birdscaping expert

Mariette Nowak, author of *Birdscaping in the Midwest* will be a featured speaker of the **2017 Wildflower Association of Michigan (WAM)** conference on Monday, **March 6**, at Kellogg Conference Center on the MSU campus.

“We are lucky this is local. It's a terrific conference about sustainable, environmentally-friendly landscaping aimed at the homeowner. Lots of wonderful speakers, and quite inexpensive, I think,” noted CAAS member and WAM board member **Betty Seagull**.

Talks at the conference will cover a wide range of topics related to Michigan native plants and their habitats given by noted authors, academics, scientists, and business owners.

This is a two-day conference (March 5-6), but one-day registration is an option. Online registration is preferred but hard-copy registration forms are available. **The early-bird registration deadline is February 23, 2017.** ►



Learn how to attract birds and more at WAM's 2017 conference held this year in East Lansing at Michigan State University's Kellogg Center.

For details about the conference and registration, go to the Wildflower Association of Michigan website:

<http://wildflowersmich.org/>

Get started using eBird!

At the February 2 meeting, **Caleb Putnam** of National Audubon Society (NAS) talked about eBird and answered many questions from the audience during his talk.

For any who are still unaware of this program, eBird is the revolutionary online citizen-science project to collect data on wild birds. It was begun by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and NAS in 2002 and has since provided a wealth of information on bird abundance and distribution.

Fifteen years on, there are still many birders who do not report bird sightings via eBird. If you are among them, here are some steps to get started.

1. Go to www.eBird.org and create a new account. Privacy settings at <http://ebird.org/ebird/prefs> allow you to submit reports anonymously, if desired.

2. Enter your data by clicking on the **Submit Observations** tab at the top of the page.

3. Enter your State in the **Find It On A Map** search option.

4. On the map that opens, type the **address of the sighting**.

5. Next they will ask you: (a) the **date**, (b) **method of birding** (walking a trail, watching out the window, etc.), (c) the **time of the observation**, (d) **length of observation**, and (e) the **number of people watching**.

6. On the checklist page, you can use the **JumpTo Species** box to type in the bird name or scroll down until you find the birds you want to report and enter the number you saw. Write down only the highest number of each species you see at any one time to avoid counting the same birds more than once. For example, if you see eight cardinals as you start your count period, then later you see 12, and later still you see three, you'll only report 12 – the highest number you saw together at once. You do not add the numbers together.

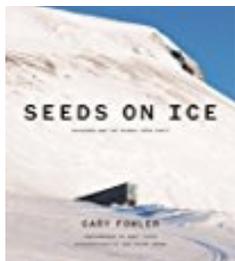
7. At the bottom right, there is a very important question: **Are you submitting a complete checklist of the birds you were able to identify?** It is best if you try to give a full picture of what you see. By submitting a complete checklist of birds they can learn more about where a species occurs with regularity but, equally important, they can begin to say with certainty where it does not occur.

8. Click **Submit**. You have done your bit to help with bird conservation. Easy!



Seeds for the future stored on ice

The Svalbard Global Seed Vault inside an icy mountain in Norway safeguards millions of agricultural seeds gathered from around the globe.



A new book, *Seeds on Ice*, by vault founder Cary Fowler tells the story of the seed vault's founding and its purpose. Basically, it's an insurance policy against future catastrophes that might wipe out particular crops or plants. These disasters could be either natural or human-made.

Extreme northern Norway was the ideal physical location for the vault due to its constantly low natural temperatures. Seeds should ideally remain at a temperature of three or four degrees below zero Fahrenheit.

Stored seeds represent more than 850,000 different crop varieties, the results of agricultural evolution over the last 15,000 years. Most of the 500 million seeds in storage will stay viable for several thousand years.

The mission to preserve seeds is an ongoing one. Genetic diversity pops up all the time so seed collection will never really end, according to Fowler.

Ivory-billed still extant?

Male ivory-billed woodpecker (original photo by Arthur A. Allen, colored version by Jerry A. Payne, Wikimedia Commons)



Is there a glimmer of hope that the ivory-billed woodpecker is not extinct after all?

U.S. Navy researcher Michael Collins has video footage of a bird

he believes to be this mysterious bird.

In a study published in January 2017 in the open-access journal *Heliyon*, Dr. Collins presents three videos of a bird he identifies as the ivory-billed woodpecker, a species widely believed to be extinct, although sightings have reported over the years.

The images may be too blurry to be indisputable. But after 1,500 hours of searching swamps in Louisiana and Florida between 2005 and 2013, Collins says, that the videos show birds with flights, behaviors, field marks, and other characteristics that are consistent▶



Ivory-billed (cont.)

with the ivory-billed woodpecker, and for no other bird living in the region. He says that he has glimpsed the bird on 10 occasions in solo expeditions dating back to 2005.

The previous reported sighting of an ivory-billed was in 2005, by *Living Bird* magazine editor Timothy Gallagher in a remote part of northeastern Arkansas. It was the first such sighting in 60 years.

Adapted from Christian Science Monitor Weekly (Feb. 13, 2017) article by David Iaconangelo

Rusty bumblebee protection delayed

FEB 9, 2017 – What would be the first endangered designation for a bee species in the U.S. has been delayed, one day before it was to take effect.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service adopted a rule on Jan. 11 that would extend federal protection to the rusty patched bumblebee, one of the many types of bees that play a vital role in pollinating crops and wild plants. But in a Federal Register notice, the service announced a postponement until March 21, in keeping with a Trump administration order issued Jan. 20. It imposed a 60-day freeze on regulations that had been published in the register but hadn't taken effect.

The rusty patched bumblebee has disappeared from about 90 percent of its range in the past 20 years. It's among a number of bee species that have suffered steep population declines, along with monarch butterflies.

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Burke Lake Banding Station thanks you

Your Board has made ongoing support of Burke Lake Banding Station (BLBS) a priority in recent years. This facility, located in nearby Bath, is an avian research station that welcomes visitors of all ages to experience bird banding up close and personal.

The Station is currently closed but will reopen for the spring migration. Watch future issues of the *Call Note*, our website or BLBS website, or Facebook for opening date, schedule of operations, and other pertinent info before you go.

After receiving CAAS's 2017 donation for \$1,000, CAAS received the following thank you from station director **Jen Owen** and crew:



THANK YOU



We would like to thank you for your generous contribution to the Burke Lake Banding Station. Your support made it possible for us to continue to collect data on the health of migratory birds, provide people of all ages the opportunity to learn about and see birds up close, and train student interns.

Our 2016 migration field season would not be possible without you.

Thank you from the 2016 BULA Crew!

Jen, Kaitlyn, Kaitlin, Richard, Aya, Nick, Quinton, Audrey, Bill, Kim, and Bonnie

Thank you for your continued support!
-Jen