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The Call Note

June 2016

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.

President's Corner

2015-16 year winds down

I hope everyone has been having a birdy spring! Although migration season is winding down, there's still another bird-related occasion to look forward to – International Migratory Bird Day. This event will be held at Potter Park Zoo on Saturday, **June 4** as part of the “Be a Tourist in Your Own Town” celebration. International Migratory Bird Day will include fun activities for families of all ages, so be sure to check it out! [see related article on page 2]

As we near the end of the CAAS year, a big thank you goes out to all the volunteers that contributed to another successful year of programs and field trips. I would like to express my appreciation to the CAAS Board of Directors, especially retiring members, **Susan Schuur** and **Cindi Martineau**. As a reminder, we'll be holding our annual meeting and Board elections at the June 2 meeting – just in case ice cream isn't enough of an enticement.

Enjoy your summer and we'll see you in September!

Good birding,
Barb Hosler

Inside...

- *June 4 – volunteers needed*
- *Trumpeter swan populations thriving*
- *Latest news on Puerto Rico's Vieques NWR*
- *Kirtland's warbler activities this summer*
- *Journal Review Corner*
- *Nonnative plant: Honeysuckle*
- *More!*

June 2 Meeting & Program

Ice cream social and member photos mark end of year

Please join us at 7:00 p.m. for our last meeting of the year on **Thursday, June 2** as we share ice cream and member photos.

A quick election will take place during our brief business meeting. **Michael Caterino**, **Ed Merz**, and incumbent **Eileen Houston** are running for the three open board positions. These three candidates were profiled in the May *Call Note*.

Do YOU have photos to share?



If you have bird or nature photos to share with the group, put them on a flash drive, bring them to the meeting, and be ready to use the computer and projector that will be set up to show your photos.

If you do plan on showing photos, please see Barb when you arrive and she will let you know how much time you are allotted. Time will vary depending on how many members bring photos, but historically it's been about five minutes per person.

Why not bring a friend and introduce them to CAAS?

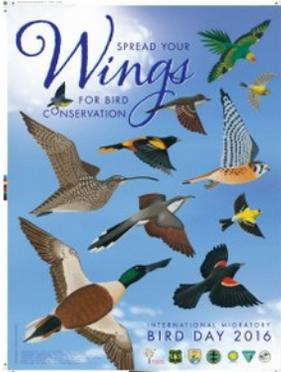
Thank you to **Betty Seagull** and **Barb Hosler** for the delicious snacks at the May meeting.

Welcome new member **Mark Rudd**.

International Migratory Bird Day celebrated locally June 4

Helpers needed for CAAS table at Potter Park

CAAS will use the occasion of *Lansing's Be a Tourist in Your Own Town* on June 4 to observe International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) by participating in events held at Potter Park Zoo.



“Spread Your Wings for Bird Conservation” is the theme for IMBD 2016. IMBD celebrations throughout the country will explore how birds have inspired some of the most significant environmental conservation actions. For generations, migratory birds have connected communities across continents, providing unique opportunities for

international collaboration and inspiring people to improve conditions for birds, for all wildlife, and for ourselves.

Although IMBD is traditionally celebrated in Canada and the U.S. on the second Saturday in May, in reality every day is bird day, and programs, festivals, and other events occur throughout the year, when it works best for the organizers – and the birds. Ultimately, the goal of IMBD is to connect people to nature through birds, no matter when that is, and to help people understand the importance of bird conservation.

Volunteers are still needed to staff the CAAS table at Potter Park on June 4 who can help visitors with bird identification, answer questions, and generally serve as the face of CAAS at this event. There will be props to help with bird ID and fliers to hand out. The event runs from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., but volunteers can choose a shift that works for them. Please contact **Barb Hosler** (birdingbarb@yahoo.com or 281-6595) if you can help in any way.

Be A Tourist In Your Own Town is a popular way for area residents to become better acquainted with their community. Event participants can visit over 80 local attractions and one-day only special tours that include: Impression 5 Science Center, Potter Park Zoo, the State Capitol Building, the Michigan Historical Museum, and much more.

Participants can purchase a “passport” for \$1.00 at various locations throughout the community throughout the month of May. This passport allows the user into all participating attractions throughout the region for free on June 4. An estimated 15,000 residents and visitors come out to enjoy the day. More info at <http://www.lansing.org/events/be-a-tourist/>

Kudos to our bird walk and field trip leaders!

Part of our club's mission is to create greater awareness, appreciation, and understanding of Michigan's wildlife and nothing does this better than guiding folks on a bird or nature walk.

Without the help of volunteers who are willing to share their knowledge and time with those who are eager to learn and appreciate more fully the world around them, our mission would be impossible.

So we would like to formally recognize and thank all those who have stepped up and kept our club activities going this past year through their volunteer service:

- **Bob Kingsbury** for leading each of the four Saturday morning bird walks last September, plus two bird walks this spring
- **Jim Hewitt** for leading four weekday nature walks at local parks in April and May, pointing out flora and fauna of interest
- **Bruce Cohen** for leading a spring bird walk and the field trip to Maple River SGA in April
- **Susan Schuur & Jack Plotkin** for leading two bird walks this spring, and **Jennifer Olson, Barb Hosler, and Ioana Sonea & Chris Brown** for each leading one spring bird walk
- **Rick Brigham** for faithfully leading the annual field trip to Allegan SGA and environs
- **Jeff Pavlik** for coordinating our county's North American Migratory Count in May
- **Tom Wheeler** for tirelessly coordinating our annual Christmas Bird Counts for both Ingham and Eaton counties

Sincerest thanks to each and every one of you!

We would also like to thank everyone who contributed articles and/or photos to the *Call Note* this past year: **Jennifer Olson, Dave Marvin, Sam Febba, Carolyn White, Eileen Houston, and Tom Wheeler.**



Our newsletter is a community effort, so please consider sharing newsworthy items with our readership in future issues.

We resume publication with the September issue. Deadline for submissions is August 20.

Journal Review Corner

How to better manage coastal marshes for wetland birds

by Jennifer Olson

Editor's Note: *This section of the Call Note features a summary of a professional journal article about an environmental issue that may be of interest to Capital Area Audubon members. If you have a journal article you would like to share with the CAAS readership, please contact Jennifer Olson (hawthorn071@hotmail.com).*

Article title: Breeding Bird use and Wetland Characteristics of Diked and Undiked Coastal Marshes in Michigan

Authors: *Michael J. Monfils and Patrick W. Brown.* Michigan Natural Features Inventory, MSU Extension
Daniel B. Hayes. Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, Michigan State University. *Gregory J. Soulliere.* U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Upper Mississippi River and Great Lakes Region Joint Venture. *Ernest N. Kafcas.* Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Division.

Journal: Journal of Wildlife Management, Volume 78, Issue 1, January 2014, pp. 79-92.

Introduction: Dikes were built on Great Lakes coastal wetlands to enable water level management for wetland wildlife, particularly waterfowl, but few studies have compared bird use of these areas to undiked sites. Although diked wetlands allow manipulation of water levels and associated emergent vegetation for target bird species, hydrologic alteration can negatively affect flood storage, sediment movement, nutrient cycling, plant diversity and habitat for invertebrates, fish, and other wildlife. *The goal of this study was to compare breeding bird use, vegetation composition and structure, and physical attributes of diked and undiked coastal marshes to evaluate current management for wetland birds.*

Study Area: Sixteen (16) coastal wetlands (9 diked, 7 undiked) at St. Clair Flats of Lake St. Clair and Saginaw Bay of Lake Huron. These are two of Michigan's largest and most intact wetland complexes. Diked wetlands were dominated by emergent marsh, which was compared to proximate undiked emergent marshes.

Methods: Two survey methods were used to compare bird abundance indices and community composition between diked and undiked coastal wetlands from 2005-2007. Point counts (10-minutes) were conducted to assess secretive marsh bird and passerine use of emergent vegetation zones between 0.5 hour before sunrise and 10:00 a.m. (Point counts of birds involve

an observer recording birds from a single point for a standardized time.) Timed-area surveys (45 minutes) were conducted to evaluate bird use of open water-aquatic bed zones, which allowed detection of species potentially missed during point counts such as waterfowl, herons and shorebirds. Because some species were rare at diked and undiked locations, only those detected at ≥ 5 points in each wetland type were analyzed (18 species total). Vegetation data was collected at three randomly selected 0.25-m² quadrants surrounding point count stations.

Pied-billed grebe in summer plumage (Wiki)



Results: Emergent zone estimates of detection probability were similar between diked and undiked wetlands for 16 of 18 species analyzed. Both pied-billed grebe and American coot had greater detection probabilities in undiked

compared to diked wetlands. All indicators of bird community composition showed a high degree of similarity between diked and undiked wetlands. In the emergent zone, observed bird species richness (number of species) was similar between wetland types, with 57 species seen or heard in diked and 53 species in undiked marshes. Forty-four species (67%) were common to both wetland types. More differences in the bird communities were observed in the open water than in the emergent zone between wetland types. In the open water zone, observed bird species richness was 32 for both diked and undiked wetlands, with 25 species (64%) common to both wetland types. Wood duck was the most common species observed in the open water zone of diked wetlands. Mallard was most abundant at undiked sites.

Open water-aquatic bed cover type vegetation was the most common in both wetland types. Diked wetlands had greater mean cover of floating vegetation, persistent deep-water vegetation, and cattail. More shallow-water vegetation was found in undiked wetlands.

Discussion: Despite mixed results in bird community comparisons, clear differences in the vegetation and physical characteristics of diked and undiked coastal wetlands were found. Diked sites had deeper water, more organic sediments, and greater percent cover of open water, floating plants, and cattail. Undiked sites had greater percent cover and density of common reed and bulrush. A greater abundance of American bittern, least bittern, and common gallinule was found in the deeper waters in diked wetlands. American coot and Forster's tern abundances were greater in undiked wetlands, which are likely related to nesting and foraging habitat provided by the shallower, more open wetlands and connecting lakes. (see *Wetland birds* on page 4)

Trumpeter swan population soaring in Wisconsin

The number of trumpeter swans in Wisconsin has soared from zero to nearly 4,700 since reintroduction efforts began in the 1980s, according to national survey results.

Population estimates from aerial surveys of interior North America peg Wisconsin's number of adult and "sub-adult" trumpeters at 4,695 birds in 2015, more than six times as many as the 672 estimated during the last survey five years ago, and up from a mere 24 in 1990.

Market hunting and demand for the feathers of trumpeter swans brought these birds, one of North America's largest, to near elimination from Wisconsin and other upper Midwest states (including Michigan) by the 1880s.

Wisconsin removed trumpeters from the endangered species list in 2009. They remain protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty, which celebrates its centennial this year.

Trumpeter swan (*Cygnus buccinator*)
Photo courtesy Sasata, Wikipedia



Annual Wisconsin DNR surveys to monitor trumpeter swan nests and to band new hatchlings ended in 2012. The national aerial survey, conducted once every

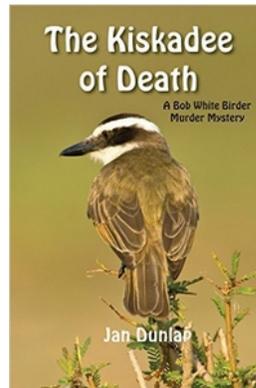
five years, is now the main way the state keeps tabs on trumpeters. The survey counts all the white trumpeter swans seen along transect routes, not just the number of adults actively sitting on nests, so the numbers are much higher in the aerial surveys than the nesting surveys.

Other states' recovery efforts have been working well, particularly in Minnesota, which launched the first Midwestern efforts, and where the 2015 surveys estimated 17,021 birds. Together, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan (3,021 birds) comprise most of the 27,000 birds in what is known as the Interior Trumpeter Swan Population, comprised largely of restoration flocks. For management purposes, there are considered to be two other trumpeter swan populations: the Pacific Coast Population and the Rocky Mountain Population.

Source: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, March 29, 2016.

Book Corner

Bob White is hero of latest birder-mystery



Birders of a certain age might remember *The Case of the Hook-billed Kites* by J.S. Borthwick (pen name of Jean Scott Creighton), a murder-mystery that took place in South Texas (St. Martin's Paperbacks, 1991). It was full of birding activities mixed within a classic mystery situation.

Now, we have Jan Dunlop's latest entry in the genre of birding mystery stories centered on the same region of the country: *The*

Kiskadee of Death, a birder-mystery featuring her fictional hero, Bob White. This mystery (North Star Press, 2015) is a quick and easy read, full of Lower Rio Grande Valley birds and locales: Estero Llano Grande, Fat Daddy's, Valley Nature Center, and the Alamo Inn.

In each of Dunlop's mysteries White stumbles on a dead body and this latest volume is no exception. When White discovers the body of a birder at Estero Llano Grande, the suspects and references to valley scenes and valley birds fly thick and fast. Indeed, the suspect list ebbs and flows as much as the cutesy banter between Bob White and his wife Luce.

At 200 pages, the book is a light read for a long airline flight or a dedicated evening. This whodunnit moves quickly, and it is certain to produce at least a few smiles and chuckles. Regular fans of Dunlop should be pleased.

Adapted from *Birding Community E-Bulletin*, April 2016, Wayne R. Petersen and Paul J. Baicich, editors. Archives at <http://refugeassociation.org/news/birding-bulletin/>.

National Park Service turns 100

The National Park Service is turning 100 this year on August 25. Festivities have been ongoing through 2016 but by its official birthday in August, park sites across the country will have a fresh list of celebratory programs. Discover more about these centennial events at [www.http://findyourpark.com/find#centennial_events](http://findyourpark.com/find#centennial_events).

Wetland birds (cont. from page 3)

Conducting periodic late-season complete drawdowns in diked wetlands coupled with other disturbances (fire, mowing, disking) could improve habitat for bird species by stimulating plant growth and increasing vegetation and structural diversity. Managing diked wetlands for shallower water depths during non-drawdown years could also increase preferred foraging habitat and availability of invertebrate and plant foods for mallards and other marsh birds.

Kirtland's warbler events this summer

Several northern Michigan communities will celebrate their most famous avian resident – the Kirtland's warbler – with upcoming events this summer.

Kirtland's warbler
(*Dendroica kirtlandii*) Wikipedia



The Kirtland's warbler is among the rarest wood warblers in North America, nesting mainly in young jack pine forests in northern Michigan and wintering in the Bahamas. In 1974 and 1987, the lowest survey numbers in

Kirtland's warblers were recorded, with only 167 singing males found. In 2015, biologists, researchers and volunteers observed 2,365 singing males during the official survey period. Because of the hard work, long-term partnerships and continued habitat management, 2016 has brought official recovery to this warbler.

On June 3, from 6:30 to 9 p.m., the Kirtland's Warbler Alliance will host the Kirtland's Warbler Home Opener at the Ralph A. MacMullan Conference Center in Roscommon. This event will include a silent auction, a presentation by Dr. Nathan Cooper of the Smithsonian Institution on migration routes of the Kirtland's warbler and more, with proceeds supporting Kirtland's warbler conservation programs.

On June 4, from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., the Kirtland's Warbler Festival – featuring a wide array of nature-based activities, such as Kirtland's warbler tours, wildlife presentations and a kayak trip – will take place in downtown Roscommon.

Kirtland's warbler tours also will be available at the following locations throughout May, June and July:

- **Grayling:** May 15 to July 4, tours led by the Michigan Audubon Society are held Monday through Friday starting at 7 a.m., and Saturday and Sunday at 7 and 11 a.m. The tour will start at Hartwick Pines State Park. For more information visit www.michiganaudubon.org
- **Mio:** May 15 to 31, tours led by the U.S. Forest Service will be held daily at 7:30 a.m. Tours will start at the Mio Ranger Station. For more information email mioKWtours@fs.fed.us
- **Oscoda:** June 3 to July 3, tours will take place beginning at 8 a.m. Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, starting at Camp Inn Lodge. More information is available at www.CampInnLodge.com

To learn more about the Kirtland's warbler and how to help, visit www.michigan.gov/wildlife

Source: Michigan Department of Natural Resources, May 2016.

Threat to Puerto Rico wildlife refuge averted

A threat to the very popular and critically important Vieques National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) has just been averted.

A debt relief bill for the financially troubled Commonwealth of Puerto Rico included a provision for the giveaway of 3,100 acres of the refuge to the government to sell off to private interests. This provision was recently stripped from the bill after strong opposition from conservation groups and the public.

Currently the wildlife refuge is protected by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, but in the hands of private interests, it could have ended up being sold and developed, a scenario that could have threatened the species that call the refuge home.

Vieques is the largest and one of the most ecologically diverse refuges in the Caribbean, comprising 17,771 acres. It has been designated an Important Bird Area (IBA) and is home to at least 14 endangered animals and plants and many other endemic species, and provides important habitat for 190 species of migratory and resident birds.

The area that now comprises the Vieques NWR was a U.S. Navy live munitions bombing range for more than 60 years. In 2001, following opposition from local residents to the Navy's use of the island, the Navy halted all bombing. Congress agreed to clean up the land, and the refuge was established. Today, Vieques attracts nearly a quarter million visitors each year.

Call Note

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America's Most Unwanted

Honeysuckles are ubiquitous but innutritious for birds

by Ann Hancock

It seems that everywhere I look these days I see masses of invasive alien honeysuckles (*Lonicera*): along roadsides, in people's yards, along the shore here in Maine, all through (or completely covering) old fields, in the woods ... they are everywhere. Their habit of leafing out early in the season ahead of native plants makes them stand out in the spring landscape.

This is yet another in the endless list of invasive plant species brought here from overseas and planted deliberately. There are many species as well as hybrids. When I was taking woody plant ID classes, we had to be able to identify eight species, all of which were aliens. Ironically there were NO native honeysuckles (that I saw, anyway) planted on the MSU campus at that time. The native plant garden in the Clancy Lewis Arboretum, which did not exist in the eighties, may have native honeysuckle now.

Lonicera tatarica, *L. morrowii*, *L. maackii*, *L. fragrantissima*, *L. japonica* are the most frequent escapes from cultivation. However, I counted 17 additional *Lonicera* species in *Dirr's Manual of Woody Landscape Plants*. That's a lot of honeysuckles; no wonder our landscape is drowning in these plants.



Lonicera morrowii (Photo: Erica Asai, Wikipedia)

As with other invasives, alien honeysuckles offer nothing to support native birds rearing their chicks; it hosts no insects other than aphids, and these aphids often transmit a pathogen which causes unsightly witches' brooms on the shrubs. The open structure of the plant offers little protection from predators seeking nests and nestlings, further lowering our native birds' chances of reproduction.

The flower display is pleasant and it is easy to see why gardeners like it so much. The real trouble starts in late summer and fall when the bushes bear a

prodigious crop of fruit. Birds are very attracted to this fruit, and as with so many other invasives, the plant is spread far and wide into all the habitats mentioned at the start of my story. This fruit, while tasty to birds, offers marginal nutrition when compared with native plant fruit.

When Jim and I lived in East Lansing our backyard was choked with honeysuckle and other invasive plants. We worked on removing them for years but there were still two enormous tree-like specimens in the yard when we left, and they have undoubtedly been busy re-colonizing the landscape since we sold the house.

Lonicera diervilla bloom (USFWS photo)



The native honeysuckle, *Lonicera diervilla* (formerly known as *Diervilla lonicera*), offers much more in terms of manners, flowering period, and fall color. Whereas exotic honeysuckles quickly grow into large twiggy and untidy masses, *L. diervilla* remains fairly low, from 2-4 feet. It also continues to flower sporadically during the summer. The fall color can range from yellow through orange and sometimes burgundy, whereas exotic honeysuckle leaves simply remain green until they fall off the bush. (Booooring!)

Native honeysuckle is found in mixed deciduous and coniferous woods from Newfoundland south to Virginia and Tennessee in the Appalachians and west to Minnesota. The *Field Manual of Michigan Flora* shows it as being present in all but 10 Lower Peninsula counties (it is absent in Clinton county, but present in all surrounding counties), all U.P. counties, Drummond Island, Mackinac Island, and Isle Royale. This species recolonizes burn areas quickly, and is very adaptable to different light levels. It is normally found in well-drained to dry sites and is an ideal shrub for dry shade. *Diervilla* fruit is a dry capsule, not a berry. According to the Xerces Society, this plant is of special value to bumblebees.

Other plants which can serve as a substitute for alien honeysuckles are *Fothergilla major*, *Fothergilla gardenii*, *Lonicera involucrata* ("twinberry"), *Lonicera canadensis* ("fly honeysuckle"), *Cornus sericea*, and *Aronia* (see *Honeysuckle on page 7*)

Honeysuckle (cont. from page 6)

melanocarpa. An excellent reference book on native alternative plantings is *Native Alternatives to Invasive Plants* edited by C. Colston Burrell, one of the Brooklyn Botanical Garden Guides. (Thanks, JB!)

For a chance to learn how to recognize invasive honeysuckles, please consider volunteering at the work parties being held at the Capital Area Bird Sanctuary this summer (see opposite article). You'll hone your plant ID skills, get some exercise, and perform a valuable service for our native birds.

Enjoy your summer!

Please have a safe and bird-filled summer! Our regular meeting/program schedule for 2016-2017 begins on Thursday, September 1.

Volunteers needed at local Audubon sanctuary this summer

Volunteers are needed to help remove woody invasives from The Capital City Bird Sanctuary this summer. Work days will be held on the **second and fourth Saturdays of June, July, and August from 9 a.m. to noon.**

Please contact **Sam Febba** (sfebba@att.net) for additional information, or **Rachelle Roake** at Michigan Audubon (rroake@michiganaudubon.org).

