



capitalareaaudubon.org

The Call Note

September 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.

CAAS's new year begins

I welcome you all to the start of Capital Area Audubon Society's 2016-17 season with mixed emotions. The sudden passing of CAAS Board member **Tom Conner** in June deeply saddened all who knew him. We will sorely miss his contributions to the board, but are thankful for his support of CAAS. We are also very grateful to **Connie Page**, Tom's widow, for graciously agreeing to join the Board in his stead. [see related *Memoriam* on page 4]

The Board has put together a great lineup of programs and field trips for 2016-17, as you will see from the brochure sent out with this newsletter.

Importantly, 2016 marks the 100th anniversary of the Convention between the United States and Great Britain for the Protection of Migratory Birds, also known as the Migratory Bird Treaty. Signed by the U.S. and Great Britain (on behalf of Canada) on August 16, 1916, the treaty was the first to distinguish between game and non-game birds. The treaty adopted a system to protect migratory birds by setting closed dates for hunting game birds, eliminating the season on non-game birds, and prohibiting the export of birds and eggs except for scientific and propagation purposes, among other measures.

So while you are out birding this year, take a moment to reflect upon those protections put in place 100 years ago to ensure that we still have birds to enjoy today. **And don't forget to renew your CAAS membership.** I look forward to seeing everyone at this year's programs and field trips!

~ Barb Hosler

Editor's note: Your 2016-17 membership renewal form was mailed with this newsletter.

September 1 meeting & program

Our own Great Lakes gem

Our first meeting of the year is entitled ***Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge – the Gem in your Backyard.***



Learn more about the only international wildlife refuge in North America from **Jennie Braatz**, a park ranger with the U.S.

Fish and Wildlife Service, which oversees operation of the refuge.

Social time with snacks begins at 7:00 p.m., Thursday, **September 1** at Fenner Nature Center. A brief meeting begins at 7:30, followed immediately by the program. Bring a friend!

Fall migration bird walks fill September

Identifying Fall migrants can be tricky

Bob Kingsbury will once again be leading a bird walk at Fenner Nature Center **each Saturday morning in September (3, 10, 17, & 24)**. This includes Labor Day weekend.

Migrating fall warblers, in particular, can be challenging to identify due to the starkly different appearance from their more familiar breeding plumage. Bob's experience will help you sort through these ID conundrums. ►

Saturday morning bird walks (from page 1)

For example, see if you can identify the two warblers below. Very experienced birders may be able to do it, but less experienced birders may find it quite difficult (answers immediately below).

Photo #1 by Bruce Steger



Photo #2 by Ryan Brady



Answers:

First is bay-breasted warbler, second one is blackpoll warbler

Practice in the field will help you sharpen your ID skills, even with tricky warblers like these.

Meet Bob at 9:00 a.m. in the parking lot near the nature center building.

Meet CAAS's new Board members

Elections at the June meeting confirmed **Eileen Houston, Ed Merz, and Michael Caterino** as Board members for the next three years.

The sudden passing of **Tom Conner** in June left a vacant Board position. The bylaws specify that the Board may appoint someone to fill a vacancy until the next election. **Connie Page**, Tom's widow, has graciously agreed to serve on the Board in Tom's stead.

Thank you, all, for your willingness to serve!

Burke Lake Banding Station open to visitors

Burke Lake Banding Station (BLBS) in Bath is open to visitors, as of August 15.

Local and fall migrating songbirds will be captured and banded at the station until October 15. But before heading out on any given day, please check their website (<http://www.burkelakebanding.com/>) for the days/hours of operation (mornings are generally best), directions, parking, how to dress, and what to expect. They would love to see see you!

NAMC results from May

Results of last May's North American Migration Count (NAMC) were posted to the mid-Michigan birding listserv on May 30 by coordinator **Jeff Pavlik**:

Results from this year's NAMC have been compiled. Not surprisingly, few birders participated. As a result, fewer birds were seen. A total of 118 species were seen with 2446 individuals counted. (Breakdown of results shown on spreadsheet with that post.)

A huge thank you to Jeff for coordinating and to those who participated in the count.

Members' year-end photos offer diversity

Many thanks to members who shared their gorgeous photos at the June meeting: **Bob Kingsbury, Eileen Houston, Ron Eggleston, Sam Febba, Gary & Gwen Spinks, Tom Conner, Jim Hewitt, and Sherrill Nott.**

Stunning photos ranged from the local to the exotic. And grateful thanks to **Lee Laylin** for providing (and serving) the ice cream!

Call Note

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Summer news recap:

Local falcon dies

LANSING – Viper, a female peregrine falcon that has nested at the Lansing Board of Water & Light's (BWL) Eckert Power Station for the past three years, was found dead in late June.



Falcon photos by Lansing Board of Water & Light

The falcon's remains were discovered on MLK Blvd at Moore's River Drive by a passing motorist who notified the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Cause of death was a motor vehicle, although falcon-watchers suspect another female falcon seen in the area days prior may have been involved in Viper's death.

BWL officials are optimistic about the prospects for Viper's mate, Eckert, and their offspring hatched this year: Diamond, Luke, Bolt, and Reo. The four chicks were banded by experts from the DNR, Michigan State University, and Potter Park Zoo on May 25 and have since fledged.

Tick alert

A Washtenaw County resident is being treated for Lyme disease, according to a late July news story by the Detroit Free Press.

Black-legged tick (photo: USDA)



It is significant because this is the first evidence of a human Lyme disease infection believed to have originated in Washtenaw County itself that is unrelated to travel in known tick-infested areas of the state or elsewhere.

Take precautions to reduce your chances of getting a tick-borne disease by using repellents, checking for ticks, and showering after being outdoors. If you have a tick bite followed by a fever or rash, seek medical attention.

New Duck Stamp released

Buy yours through the ABA

The new Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation (Duck) Stamp was released at the end of June. The artwork on the 2016-17 Stamp shows a pair of flying trumpeter swans painted by Joseph Hautman of Plymouth, Minn.

Since the inception of the Duck Stamp in 1934, over six million acres of wetland and grassland habitat have been protected. Ninety-eight cents out of every dollar generated by the sale of the Duck Stamps goes directly to purchase or lease habitat for protection in the National Wildlife Refuge System.

The federal Duck Stamp costs \$25 and may be purchased from select local post offices or through the American Birding Association at www.aba.org/stamp/

Michigan getting a new state park

Jackson county site is popular waterfowl stopover in fall and spring

Michigan is getting a new state park: Watkins Lake State Park and County Preserve. It will be the first of Michigan's 103 state parks to be managed jointly with a county recreation agency.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources purchased 717 acres in Jackson county's Norvell Township. That land, combined with 405 contiguous acres in Manchester Township owned by the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission (WCPRC), brings the park's total size to 1,122 acres. The Jackson-Washtenaw county line separates the ownership of the parcels.

Due to its proximity to Hayes State Park near Brooklyn, the maintenance and operations of the state side of the park will fall under Hayes' operations.

The DNR and WCPRC are working collaboratively to come up with a management plan for the co-managed site, which will include public meetings over the next several months.

The state portion of the park does not yet have the official "state park designation" but officials are working on it.

Officials say recreational opportunities will include hiking, birdwatching, upland hunting, and mountain biking.

The park will feature open meadows, mixed hardwoods, low wetlands, and Watkins Lake, which is popular with waterfowl during fall and spring migration. It is reported to be one of the best inland lakes to observe canvasback ducks.

A real Mother Goose story

CINCINNATI, Ohio – Two police officers responded to a rather unusual emergency call recently.

Officer Givens was sitting in his patrol car in a parking lot when he was accosted by one very unexpected visitor who seemed dead set on getting his attention.



“This goose came up and started pecking on the side of the car,” Givens said. “I threw some food out for her, but she didn’t take it. She just kept pecking and quacking. Then she walked away, stopped and looked

back. Then came over again and pecked some more.”

When the goose walked away a second time, and again looked back, Givens decided to follow her. “She led me about 100 yards away to a grassy area near a creek. That’s when I saw one of her babies all tangled up in some string from a balloon. His little feet were kicking,” Givens said. “She led me straight to him.”

Though stunned by what just happened, Givens was wary of approaching the trapped gosling, fearing that the goose might attack if he did. So instead he radioed the SPCA, but no wildlife rescuers were immediately available.

Givens’ colleague, Officer Cecilia Charron, heard the call and volunteered to help. “She showed up on her own,” he said. “I told her to be careful, but she just walked over and untangled the baby. The mother goose just watched, like she knew. It was amazing.”

Once the baby was untangled, Givens and Charron looked on as he rejoined his mom and swam away safely. Not surprisingly, the officers were in disbelief about how it all played out from start to finish.

Charron even started to tear up, telling Givens it was the highlight of her 24 years on the force. “It seems like something made up. It was just incredible,” said Givens. “I honestly don’t know why I decided to follow her, but I did. It makes me wonder – do they know to turn to humans when they need help?”

Though we’ll never be sure if the desperate mother goose did indeed approach the officer knowing he would help, what is certain is that he did – and that’s what made the difference.

“I don’t know what it all means,” Givens said, “but I hope it might inspire more compassion in other people.”

Originally reported by Stephen Messenger of The Dodo.com. Adapted here with permission.

September is membership renewal time

The beginning of our 2016-17 membership year, is the time to renew your membership to CAAS.



A separate membership form was included with this newsletter mailing for your convenience. You can mail your dues or bring it to the September meeting.

Please remember that your CAAS membership is independent of National Audubon and Michigan Audubon, so if you are also members of National and the Michigan chapter (and we hope you are), dues to our own local chapter are separate.

We don’t want to lose a single one of you! Please renew today. Thank you for your continued support.

IN MEMORIAM – TOM CONNER

by Ann Hancock

I never had the privilege of knowing **Tom Conner**; I had moved to Maine when he joined the board of CAAS. I missed a lot. I learned that his willingness to help was characteristic of Tom.



Looking at the wonderful slide show assembled by his family I saw a man who lived a rich, full life surrounded by a loving family and many friends. He fished (enthusiastically – his license plate was CARPLY, because he loved to fly fish for carp), camped in many places, and spent a lot of time on the water kayaking, windsurfing, and fishing as well as UNDER the water scuba diving! He loved music. He and **Connie** square danced, went spelunking, climbed glaciers, and cross-country skied. And he went to lots and lots of parties! Many photos showed him and Connie in various hilarious party costumes; clearly he was a man with a rich sense of humor who did not take himself too seriously.

Tom’s deep love of cats led him to volunteer at the Ingham County Animal Control (ICAC) facility, where he worked many hours, and was known as “The Cat Guy.” He also fostered cats for ICAC and saved many in that way.

We extend our deepest sympathy to Connie and his family, and are very grateful that she has agreed to serve the rest of his board term for him. We are sure he is deeply missed by all who knew him, as well as CAAS and ICAC. To read an account of Tom’s life, go to:

<http://obits.dignitymemorial.com/dignity-memorial/obituary.aspx?n=Thomas-Conner&lc=7224&pid=180435606&mid=6981816>

Project launched to combat invasive species in mid-Michigan

Field training in identification offered August 27

The Mid-Michigan Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (MM-CISMA) was formed in April to combat the spread of invasive species in the mid-Michigan area.

MM-CISMA was established by the Ingham Conservation District through funding from the Michigan Invasive Species Grant Program. The area covers Ingham, Clinton, Eaton, and Ionia counties and creates a partnership between the four conservation districts and over 25 local organizations.

The coalition's goal is to increase the cooperation across jurisdictional lines to coordinate the prevention, early detection, and rapid response to invasive species both on land and in lakes and streams.

Its activities will include outreach and education, identification and reporting, and treatment of invasive species on public lands.

You can help MM-CISMA by reporting invasive species in your area. Learn more about MM-CISMA and volunteer opportunities at www.inghamconservation.com/mm-cisma



Flowering black swallow-wort (left) and pale swallow-wort (right). These invasives have spread across the Northeast U.S. and Southeast Canada and are appearing further west. (Photo USDA)

A training session on field identification will be held on Saturday, **August 27** from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Crego Park in Lansing. Learn to recognize black swallow-wort and other invasive species. Dress appropriately, lunch provided. See the above website to register.

For more information on swallow-worts, refer to <https://mnfi.anr.msu.edu/invasive-species/Swallow-wortBCP.pdf>

Editor's note: Ann Hancock's Native Plants column will return next month.

Access Matters: Handling a rare feeder-visitor

Editor's Note: Sean Williams is a former mid-Michigan birder and program presenter at CAAS meetings.

We've mentioned rare birds at feeders and in backyards before, but here is an interesting experience that happened in Massachusetts last May.

Golden-crowned sparrow is a rare bird in the East, and there are only about a dozen records for Massachusetts. When a Golden-crowned Sparrow appeared on May 1 at a backyard feeder in Hingham, Mass., not surprisingly there was great interest. The homeowner was at first reluctant to let the news out because of concerns about crowds of birders visiting the neighborhood.

Fortunately, local birder **Sean Williams** was able to negotiate access to the area with the homeowners and their neighbors on the street. Sean and others posted on the local birding listserv that birders interested in seeing the sparrow could sign up through an online Google doc. Every birder who signed up on the Google doc was then sent directions and a list of expectations that they had to follow if they intended to visit the neighborhood.

Ultimately, everyone stayed on the sidewalk, no one shouted, and people parked in appropriate areas. Birders were also given the option to make a voluntary donation to The Trustees of the Reservation (TTOR), an organization which manages and cares for more than 100 special places across Massachusetts. This optional donation provided an outlet for birders to express their appreciation, and the neighborhood was thrilled that the benefits of granting access to birders extended beyond birders making an addition to their state and/or life lists.

The hosts were ultimately delighted with the novelty of the event, and the neighbors got as big of a kick out of seeing a bunch of obsessed birders as the birders got out of seeing the rarity. No fewer than 100-150 people were able to see the sparrow during its stay in Hingham until 6 May.

Kudos to Sean and his helpers for their willingness to negotiate with the homeowners and outline the standards for visitation. They took it upon themselves to clarify how and when the site was available for birding visitors.

Because this approach worked so well, local bird clubs and state organizations should really consider the possibility of creating "access committees" for these very occasions.

Such situations in the future won't always be fortunate enough to have a Sean Williams to expedite and negotiate such potentially delicate situations as transpired in Massachusetts.

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