



capitalareaaudubon.org

The Call Note

December 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

One of my favorite things

The holidays are just around the corner, and that also means another time-honored tradition is close at hand – the Christmas Bird Count. This annual event involves teams of birders combing the countryside within designated 7.5-mile-radius circles during a specific day to tally every bird encountered.

I participated in my first Christmas Bird Count 30 years ago this year. I had become interested in birding only a year or so prior to that and had never heard of this “bird count” thing before. But I thought spending a day chasing birds sounded like fun. And was it ever! But then to find out that everyone involved got together at the end of the day to share food and libations and compile their results into one master list? I knew I had found my people.



I've missed only a couple years since that time, and the Christmas Bird Count has now become firmly ensconced as one of my favorite, not-to-be-missed holiday traditions. If you've never participated in a Christmas Bird Count, I encourage you to consider joining us this year. The East Lansing Count will be on December 17, and the Eaton Rapids Count on December 28. Please see details on page 2.

Barb Hosler

December 1 meeting & program

Experience the best from a photographic Big Year

Come early and browse the Nature Sale

At our monthly meeting on December 1, local avid birder and environmental biologist **Dave Pavlik** will present a photo-documentary of his *photographic Big Year* – his quest to photograph as many bird species as possible in a single calendar year, from the Florida Keys to the coast of Alaska – while raising money for Hawaiian bird conservation. It promises to be an impressive presentation.

Join us at Fenner for snacks and social time beginning at 7:00 p.m., followed at 7:30 by a brief meeting and the program.



Evening Sale. Prior to the meeting, **Lee Laylin** will have a selection of gently used jigsaw puzzles, bird houses, and other nature-related surprises for sale. All proceeds benefit our Capital Area Audubon chapter. Come

early and do a little Christmas shopping.

Thank you!

We are grateful to **Pat Roth**, **Liz Febba**, and **Clara Bratton** for all the delicious snacks at the November meeting.

2016 East Lansing Christmas Bird Count set for December 17

by Tom Wheeker

On Saturday, December 17, 2016, the Capital Area Audubon Society will sponsor its 70th consecutive Christmas Bird Count. This is one of the oldest Christmas Counts in Michigan. We need all the eyes that we can get out into the field. A few hours in the morning is all that is necessary (although you can go longer if you wish.)

Participation is open to people of **all skill levels**. Anyone who wants to help is welcome. **You do not have to be a member of Capital Area Audubon.**

The count circle is divided into 11 different areas, each with its own leader. A map of the areas can be found on the CAAS website www.capitalareaudubon.org.

A list of area leaders is shown below. Pick an area and give the leader a call. If you can't access the map, if you can't decide, or if you just want to help where it's needed most, call **Tom Wheeker** at 517-628-3843.

AREA 1 **Jim Hewitt:** 517-337-8409

AREA 2 **Tom Wheeker:** 517-628-3843

AREA 3 **Barb Hosler:** 517- 281-6595

AREA 4 **Doug McWhirter:** 517-646-8151

AREA 5 **Ron Eggleston:** 517-394-1372

AREA 6 **John Baumgartner:** 517-627-5211

AREA 7 **Jim McGrath:** 517-655-5349

AREA 8 **TBA** – check our website for latest info

AREA 9 **Clara Bratton:** 517-339-0271

AREA 10 **Lee and Roger Laylin:** 517-349-3249

AREA 11 **JB McCombs:** 517-641-8049

Lee and Roger Laylin will open their home once again this year and host a post-count supper. All participants are welcome. Lee and Roger live at 1770 Sandhill Rd., off Okemos Rd south of I-96. Food at 6:00 p.m. and numbers at 7:00 p.m.

Q: Which animal is the only creature that has legs but can't walk on them?

A: The hummingbird.

2016 Eaton Rapids Christmas Bird Count set for December 28

by Tom Wheeker

The 2016 Eaton Rapids Christmas Bird Count will be conducted on **Wednesday, December 28, 2016.**

I know that many of you will be working that day, but if you are not, consider taking part in this count.

The Eaton Rapids count circle actually bumps up to the East Lansing circle. The circle includes Eaton Rapids and Dimondale, as well as and the State Secondary Complex and large portions of both Eaton and Ingham counties. The center of the circle is the intersection of Canal Rd. and Columbia Rd. There is a lot more farmland and open area than in the East Lansing count circle, which means that there is the potential for a different species mix.

This Count has been conducted for several years now by a dedicated group of CAAS members. There is plenty of room for more counters, especially since it's on a weekday, so come on board. Anyone who wants to participate is welcome. Contact **Tom Wheeker** at 517-628-3843.

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| Call Note | |
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Allegan a no-go

The annual field trip scheduled for November 13 ended up not happening. Leader **Rick Brigham** had not heard from any potential attendees by the day before the event, so decided to alter plans and head to the U.P. for a chance at the sagebrush sparrow seen at Whitefish Point Bird Observatory. It was the first recorded sighting of this bird species in Michigan.

Sincere apologies to those members who were planning to go on this trip. Although there was a late post to our website (www.capitalareaaudubon.org) on November 12, instructions should have emphasized contacting Rick to let him know you were going. This is generally true for all field trips.

In addition to the sagebrush sparrow, the U.P. has had its fair share of exotic visitors this fall. A *crested caracara* arrived in Munising in early July and was still being reported as late as November 12, a *tropical kingbird* paid a short visit south of The Soo in October, and a *fork-tailed flycatcher* thrilled birders near Menominee for nearly 10 days in November. Even one of our own native ruby-throated hummingbirds was still being reported in Marquette as late as November 16.

Fenner offers family activities in December

Looking for some nature-related activities to do with for your children or grandchildren this holiday season? Look no further than Fenner, *Your Nature Center*.

Saturday, Dec. 3 – Nature Story Hour (ages 4-6). Fenner's volunteer librarian will lead a nature story hour in the Visitor Center, followed by a children's craft. 1-2 p.m. FREE

Saturday, Dec. 10 – Decorate a Tree for Wildlife (ages 5-12). Learn how animals find their food in the winter, then make a selection of tasty treats and ornaments that they can take home, or hang on the trees to help Fenner's furry and feathered friends get through the cold months ahead. 11 a.m. - noon. \$7/child with parent or \$15/family.

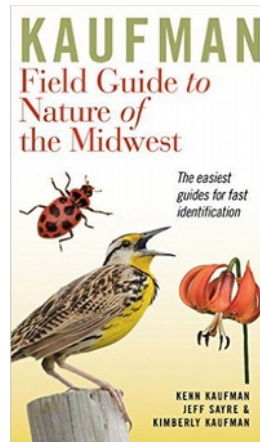


Saturday, Dec. 17 – Decorate a Tree for Wildlife. Same as above.

Sunday, Dec. 18 – Nature's Trading Post. (all ages). Inspires interest in the natural world through the trading of natural items. Fenner staff provides "expert" identification assistance to help visitors learn more about the world around them. Bring your photos, items, and questions about nature to the trading post. Noon-4 p.m. FREE

New Kaufman field guide might be worth a look

Kaufman Field Guide to Nature of the Midwest by Kenn Kaufman, Jeff Sayre, and Kimberly Kaufman



The only field guide to identify the birds, mammals, trees, wildflowers, insects, reptiles, amphibians, fish, spiders, mushrooms, ferns, grasses, rocks, and constellations of the Midwest. Whew! This guide is packed.

Even if you focus on birds, you are probably curious about the other things you observe. This is a quick reference to the world around you. What kind of nut is that squirrel burying in my grass? What is the name of that

mushroom popping up in my yard? What's the name of that early spring pink wildflower across the street?

With lively language and over 2,000 full-color photographs, this is the essential guide for the inquiring nature lover. This is the book you've needed all along but didn't realize it – until now.

Adapted from Wild Birds Unlimited News, Nov. 3, 2016

Local wildlife rehab center seeks assistance

Nottingham Nature Nook (NNN) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) wildlife rehabilitation center located in East Lansing. The Nook raises and releases orphaned wildlife, and cares for injured adult animals and birds that are brought in by the public. Cheryl Connell-Marsh is NNN's director.

NNN has successfully raised, rehabilitated, and released hundreds of birds and animals at the Nook and surrounding areas. Squirrels, rabbits, chipmunks, foxes, woodchucks, moles, raccoons, and songbirds of all varieties are welcome. However, due to Chronic Wasting Disease, rehab centers are no longer permitted to accept deer.

During the winter months the wildlife released require food in order to survive the cold weather. They spend an average of \$300 per week on food for both indoor and outdoor wildlife.

The Nook is looking for nest boxes for orphaned squirrels. Monetary donations to help support animals that must overwinter at the Nook can be sent to Nottingham Nature Nook (NNN), 16848 Towar Ave, East Lansing MI 48823, or dropped off at the counter of Wild Birds Unlimited in East Lansing (2200 Coolidge Rd).

LAST CALL

Last call for membership renewals

CAAS needs each of you

One of the perks of being a dues-paying member of Capital Area Audubon is delivery of your monthly newsletter right to your inbox, or mailbox if you have no email. You receive it directly, hot off the press, so to speak.

To those of you who have already renewed your membership for 2016-17, we are grateful and thank you for taking care of business and supporting your local Audubon chapter. To those of you who have delayed, please hurry! If you are unsure whether you renewed or not, contact our membership coordinator **Ed Merz** (edmerz7@yahoo.com or 517-230-7527) who will be glad to help you.

Members not renewing by December 31 will no longer receive the newsletter directly.

All aboard!

Ceruleans in steep decline

Cerulean warblers are more selective than many other bird species in choosing a habitat in which to mate, nest, and raise young. They prefer mature trees with openings in the canopy cover nearby. Coupled with other threats during migration – storms, collisions with man-made structures, attacks by free-ranging cats – these birds confront many challenges. In the past 40 years, the cerulean warbler's population has declined by 70 percent, making it one of North America's most threatened migratory songbirds.

Source: Bird Conservation, Fall 2016, published by the American Bird Conservancy

No more yellow-rumped warblers?

The **yellow-rumped warbler** may actually be three separate species, according to a study published in the October 2016 issue of *The Auk*.

Before 1973, the **myrtle warbler** of the East and North and the **Audubon's warbler** of the West were considered separate species. In 1973 scientists lumped them together based on evidence that the two species routinely hybridize in a narrow zone in

Warblers ▼

western Canada. Now evidence from more than 37,000 regions of the birds' DNA suggests that myrtle and Audubon's forms really *are* separate species – and so is a third, isolated form known as Goldman's warbler that lives in Guatemala. A fourth form known as the black-fronted warbler lives in Mexico, but its species status is still up for debate.



Myrtle warbler (photo Wikimedia Commons, Cephas)



Audubon's warbler (photo Wikimedia Commons, www.naturespicsonline.com)

There will be no immediate change to birding lists: formally splitting the species requires a decision by the North American Classification Committee of the American Ornithologists' Union, which publishes updates to the official checklist each year in July.

News source: Cornell Lab of Ornithology

Swifts are aptly named

Scientists have now confirmed that the common swift (*Apus apus*) can spend up to 10 months in the air without landing. Only when it makes a nest does it need to come to Earth. The common swift is a wide-ranging Afro-Eurasian species.

Common swifts, which weigh about one and a half ounces, were outfitted with micro data loggers that weighed less than four hundredths of an ounce. The study was recently reported in *Current Biology*.