



# the Call Note

CAPITAL AREA AUDUBON  
JANUARY 2018

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## Join Us

### AT OUR JANUARY MEETING!

**Thursday, January 4th, join us at our January meeting to hear from Jon Allan, the Director of the Office of the Great Lakes in the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality about his experiences as a Life Long Birder.**

He will share stories of his extensive travels in the U.S. and Europe.

The meeting will begin with refreshments at 7:00p.m. The program will begin at 7:30p.m. Our meetings are free and open to the public.

## SNOWY OWL IRRUPTION YEAR

Mlive.com has reported that Snowy Owls are back visiting Michigan for the winter. Ebird.com has backed up those predictions with sightings of Snowy Owls spotted in Ingham and Eaton Counties.

Remember when viewing and photographing snowy owls during their winter stay here in Michigan to avoid causing unnecessary disturbance or stress to the bird.

To learn more about ethical bird photography and making the most of viewing our northern visitors, please check out the Audubon Ethical Bird Photography Guide at - <http://www.audubon.org/get-outside/audubons-guide-ethical-bird-photography>

*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.*

## A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Happy New Year!  
As we kick off the start of 2018, I wish everyone a fantastic year of birding, whether you're launching a big year or plan to intensely bird a small patch or

wherever your avian pursuits may take you. Hope to see you at a CAAS meeting this year!  
Good birding,  
Barb Hosler

## WINTER BIRDING INDOORS

If warm weather travel isn't part of your winter plans, there are still ways to enjoy all that winter has to offer with great opportunities online.

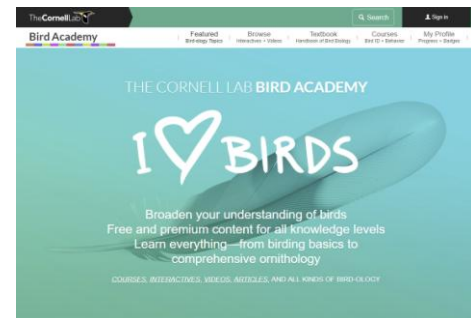
The Cornell Lab hosts seminars throughout the year featuring Cornell Lab staff, book authors and distinguished scientists from around the world. The videos are about an hour long and can be viewed online at [www.allaboutbirds.org/our-free-viewable-archive-of-livestreamed-seminars/](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/our-free-viewable-archive-of-livestreamed-seminars/)

Cornell Lab bird cams can also bring birds from faraway places right to your home. Boreal birds are now visiting feeders in northern Ontario. The list of current featured feeders includes Bermuda, Montana, Los Padres, and New York.

Visit - [cams.allaboutbirds.org/](http://cams.allaboutbirds.org/) for more information and to check out all the additional locations.

If one of your goals in 2018 is to become a better birder, there are many resources to help with that

as well. The Cornell Lab Bird Academy offers free and premium content including birding by ear, identification and behavior courses. [academy.allaboutbirds.org](http://academy.allaboutbirds.org).



Take time this winter to enter past trip checklists, find bird sightings near your home, set up a new account or learn to use Ebird in 2018. [www.ebird.com](http://www.ebird.com).

If you have winter birding or article suggestions for CAAS members, please share them via email or on our facebook page, [facebook.com/capitalareaaudubon](https://facebook.com/capitalareaaudubon)

# UPCOMING CAAS EVENTS

## CAAS Monthly Meetings

Talks are held the first Thursday of each month at Fenner Nature Center. Refreshments at 7:00 p.m. Meetings begin at 7:30p.m. with announcements and bird sightings followed by the program.

### January 4 – Experiences of a Life Long Birder

**Presenter: Jon Allan,**  
**Director of the Office of the Great Lakes in the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality**

A life-long birder, he will share stories of his extensive travels in the U.S. and Europe.

### February 1 - Native Bees

**Presenter: Kelsey Graham, MSU**  
Explore the diversity and natural history of Michigan's bee species.

### March 1 - Kestrels in Cherry Orchards

**Presenter : Dr. Catherine Lindell, MSU**  
Lindell will discuss her research on American Kestrels effects on cherry orchard pests.

### April 5 - Birds of a Feather

**Presenter : Bob Tarte**  
Tarte is a birder and author of numerous books about birds and other animals. He writes with humor about his experiences caring for animals and his journey to becoming a birder.

### May 3 - Birds and Soundscapes

**Presenter : Dr. Sharon Gill, WMU**  
Based at Western Michigan University, Dr. Sharon Gill studies behavioral ecology, ornithology and sound ecology. She will speak on the topic of soundscapes and how they affect bird populations.

### June 7 - Member Photo Show and Ice Cream Social

Enjoy time with the CAAS while members share their favorite photos from the year. Please submit an image to the newsletter for publication as well.

*Do you have an event to share?*  
Email us at - [caasCallNote@gmail.com](mailto:caasCallNote@gmail.com)  
or share it on our facebook page - [facebook.com/capitalareaaudubon](https://www.facebook.com/capitalareaaudubon)

# CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT REVIEW

On Saturday, December 16, 2017, the Capital Area Audubon Society deployed groups of birders to the East Lansing Count circle to see what they could find. The weather was nice, and the ground was covered with a couple of inches of snow. Most of the water in the area was frozen over, but the rivers were open in a few areas. The total species number was one of the lowest reported for the area, and full details will be provided in 2018.

A big thank you to **Sam and Liz Febba** for hosting the wonderful compilation dinner.



# MI DNR HIGHLIGHTS GRASSLAND HABITAT

Some avian species head to grasslands in the winter for excellent hunting opportunities. Birds – like one of Michigan's endangered species, the short-eared owl, as well as rough-legged hawks and even snowy owls – find grasslands, with their plentiful mouse and vole populations, irresistible. The open country makes hunting a breeze for these large raptors, and tall, thick grasses provide important roosting cover, especially for short-eared owls.

Small songbirds called snow buntings come to Michigan from their breeding grounds in the Arctic to spend the winter feeding on small grains and seeds in grasslands and fields. Their graceful flight and white plumage has earned them the nickname "snowflakes."

Grasslands also provide important wintering habitat for some of Michigan's most prized game species. White-tailed deer and cottontail rabbits like the thick grasses for bedding, hiding from predators and getting out of the harsh winter winds. Ring-necked pheasants use grassland habitat in every season of the year. Wetlands, windbreaks and dense covers of cattails or switchgrass protect the birds from heavy snow and cold winds. This thick cover also protects pheasants from predators, and fields of grain and weeds provide a consistent winter food supply.

Some of the state's most imperiled species are grassland species. This habitat type has declined drastically over the last 150 years due to the conversion of grasslands to agriculture, residential and commercial development, and the succession of grasslands into forestlands. This decline in habitat has directly led to declines in short-eared owl populations, among other species.

The Michigan Pheasant Restoration Initiative is working to improve and enhance remaining grasslands on private and public lands in southern Michigan.

This includes planting diverse mixes of grasses and wildflowers for birds, insects and other wildlife. Extensive grassland restoration work is in progress at Lake Hudson State Recreation Area in Lenawee County, Verona State Game Area in Huron County, Sharonville State Game Area in Jackson and Washtenaw counties, and Maple River State Game Area in Gratiot County as well as other public and private lands in southern Michigan. To learn

more, visit [www.mi.gov./pheasant](http://www.mi.gov./pheasant).  
*Article provided by the MI DNR*

# MICHIGAN WINTER EVENTS

**January 20-21 or February 10-11, 2018**  
**Michigan Audubon Winter UP Trip**

Are you anxious to see a Gray Jay? Hoping to check the Northern Hawk Owl off your list? Then join Michigan Audubon on a birding tour of the Eastern Upper Peninsula. This caravan adventure will start at Sault Ste. Marie and then progress through Chippewa and Mackinac Counties.

The trip is limited to 12 and the fee is \$100 for Michigan Audubon Members, \$125 for non members. For more information or to register, visit the Michigan Audubon website at [www.michiganaudubon.org/calendarr/winter-birding-trip/](http://www.michiganaudubon.org/calendarr/winter-birding-trip/)

The majority of the travel is by car caravan. It is rated easy with foot travel on gravel or paved roadways. Duration of foot travel is less than a mile at a time, though there may be snow covered or slippery conditions. Fee does not include food or lodging.

## CALL NOTE

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September through June by the  
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PO Box 22065, Lansing MI 48909.  
Deadline for submissions:  
20th of the month.

### 2017-2018 CAAS Officers

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Publicity & Hospitality	Eileen Houston
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Program Coordinator	Don Dickmann
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### 2017-18 CAAS Board of Directors

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## EXCITING SIGHTINGS

In December a few exciting sightings were reported in the area.

- December 8th Caleb Putnam reported a Snowy Owl on Grand Ledge Highway near Mulliken. Snowy Owls were also spotted in Ingham county near Holt Rd. and Meridian Rd. on the 16th.

- A Short-eared Owl was recorded at the Dansville Rd. fields on December 12th.

- A Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was recorded by Kirby Adams in Eaton County on December 10th.

- A roost of around 6,200 Crows was reported during the East Lansing CBC.

*These sightings were reported at our meeting or on Ebird.com or with the Ebird App.*

*Do you have an exciting sighting to share?  
Email us at - [caasCallNote@gmail.com](mailto:caasCallNote@gmail.com)*

*or share it on our facebook page - [facebook.com/capitalareaaudubon](https://www.facebook.com/capitalareaaudubon)*

# Thank You!

A huge thank you to **Alexia Witcombe, Parks Marion and Lee Laylin** for supplying the wonderful snacks at our December meeting and to **Tom Wheeler** for compiling the East Lansing CBC.

Big thanks to Fai Chan for allowing the CAAS to use his beautiful images on our header, website and Facebook page. To submit an image for publication, please email Kristy Taylor at [caasCallNote@gmail.com](mailto:caasCallNote@gmail.com)

# Have a Wonderful Holiday!

## KIRTLAND'S WARBLER

At our December meeting, Dave Ewert summarized some of the remaining conservation issues facing this endangered species and how conservationists are working to ensure the future of this conservation reliant species. To learn more about the next phase for this iconic Michigan species, here are some resources to review.

The site [huronpines.org/alliance/](http://huronpines.org/alliance/) offers much of the population and habitat data shared at the December meeting in addition to new ways to stay involved. You can even sign up for the Kirtland's Warbler Network - an electronic newsletter providing information on the Kirtland's Warbler and similar conservation stories.



## MEMBERSHIP

Members of CAAS enjoy 10 monthly programs per year on a variety of natural history topics, guided field trips, a monthly newsletter, and the satisfaction of supporting initiatives to interest young people in birds and nature.

### Membership Categories

Individual	\$15.00
Family	\$20.00
Contributing	\$30.00
Sustaining	\$50.00
Donor	\$100.00

For a membership form, please visit our website at [capitalareaaudubon.org](http://capitalareaaudubon.org) or pick one up at our next meeting.

**Online registration and payment is now available at [capitalareaaudubon.org/membership](http://capitalareaaudubon.org/membership)**