



The Call Note

CAPITAL AREA AUDUBON

FEBRUARY 2019

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.

Join Us

AT OUR FEBRUARY MEETING!

February 7 – Mi Bird Friendly Communities: The why, how and what you can do for urban bird conservation

Presenter - Linnea Rowse, Conservation Program Coordinator for Michigan Audubon.

Michigan Audubon's Bird-friendly Communities program is a suite of urban bird conservation projects focused on reconnecting urban communities with birds and the environment for the benefit of all. Now more than ever, urban environments must be re-imagined as safe, functional wildlife habitat. The Bird-friendly Communities program seeks to inspire environmental wonder and stewardship among city residents, community members, and local businesses through four programmatic elements: urban conservation education, species-specific conservation, native landscaping, and hazard reduction for migratory birds.

In the Greater Lansing area, all four components of the Bird-friendly Communities program were successfully implemented in 2018, and Linnea will provide a summary of ongoing projects. Volunteers are needed in 2019 to continue the bird-window collision monitoring program in Lansing, to help with Chimney Swift and Purple Martin conservation, and are especially needed to help with continued outreach and forging new connections within our community. Come and learn what you can do!

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.

A NOTE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Well it's the cold dark time of the year, and for many people that means a pause in their birding schedules. It's hard for me to get motivated when it's frigid out to go and numb my fingers watching birds, however winter birding can be rewarding and fun. There have already been some exciting winter sightings in the area including a Snowy Owl and a Snow Goose and if you're willing to go farther afield you can find many amazing birds like a Northern Hawk Owl in the Upper Peninsula, or a Harlequin Duck in Holland. So I encourage you to get out and find those exciting winter visitors. But if braving the cold and snow is just not for you there are many other ways to indulge your love of birds.

through all your photos from last year for a photo to submit to the National Audubon Society's Photo Contest, or just take a look back at past winners (they are easy to find from the NAS website). Or perhaps prefer to plot your next year's birding adventure. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology has a great list of staff picks of the best bird watching spots you can find it at

www.birds.cornell.edu/Page.aspx?pid=1097.

Or maybe the way you get your bird fix is by joining us for our monthly meetings. Whatever you choose I hope you stay warm and safe through these winter months, and I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting, or better yet, out birding!

- Parks Marion

WINDOW COLLISION VOLUNTEERS

The Spring of 2018 had me doing a different type of birding. Instead of looking for movement in the air, I found myself scanning for feathers on the ground. Michigan Audubon started a window collision study for Downtown Lansing and buildings around the MSU campus to determine the impact some buildings were having on migrating birds.

After a training session conducted by Michigan Audubon, I started scanning a few sidewalks in the downtown area a couple of times a week to locate window strike victims or any injured birds.

The birds I found were reported, collected and submitted to the MSU Museum for their collection and to use in student training. Over the

course of the spring and fall migration I collected 46 individual birds covering 32 different species. Only one, the Red-eyed Vireo pictured below, was alive and able to recuperate and fly away.



Michigan Audubon will begin the next stage of the project which Linnea Rowse will share at our next meeting. I encourage you to get involved in any way you can and help our birds survive their amazing migrations.

- Kristy Taylor

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.

March 7 – Hope for Black Terns

Hear about the Black Tern population at Saint Clair Flats and Wigwam Bay.

Presenter - Erin Rowan,

the Audubon Great Lakes and MI DNR's new MI Birds Program Associate

April 4 – Birds and Soundscapes

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.

April 6, 13, 20, 27 (Saturday mornings) Spring Migration Bird Walks

May 3 – Woodcocks

Based at Western Michigan University, **Al Stewart**, upland game bird specialist with the DNR will share his expertise on the woodcock with a presentation followed by an outing into the field at Fenner to search for mating woodcocks to witness their display.

June 6 – Member Slideshow and Ice Cream Social

MEMBERSHIP

Support community programs with your CAAS Membership.

SEPTEMBER 2018 - AUGUST 2019

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 or pick one up at our next meeting.

Online registration and payment is now available at capitalareaaudubon.org/membership

For members who have not renewed your membership, this will be your last emailed newsletter. The Call Note will still be available for free online. Please help us support area programs connecting our community and nature ~ Renew today!

EATON RAPIDS COUNT REVIEW

The 2018 Eaton Rapids Christmas Bird Count was conducted on December 29, 2018. It was the eleventh time that this count has been conducted since it became a "national" count reported to the National Audubon Society.

The temperature hovered right around 30 degrees. There was no precipitation and no snow cover on the ground. Moving water and even some still water was open for a change, which led to a few uncommon species being present.

40 species were tallied. That was the same total achieved in 2017 and is above the count average of 38. The total number of birds observed, however, was only 3066, which is well below the count average of 4796. The only species new to the count was a lone Snow Goose seen along the Grand River in Dimondale. Seen on the count for only the second time, a Trumpeter Swan was tallied at the State Secondary Complex .

The only new high species count was for Wood Duck with 9 birds seen. Previous highs were tied for Great Blue Heron (3), Bald Eagle (3) and White-throated Sparrow (1). On the other end of the spectrum, the 7 Red-tailed Hawks seen marked an all-time low.

Here is a list of the species seen:

Snow Goose—1
Canada Goose--955
Mute Swan—2
Trumpeter Swan—1
Wood Duck—9
Mallard—588
Wild Turkey—1
Great Blue Heron—3
Cooper's Hawk—4
Bald Eagle—3
Red-tailed Hawk—7
Rock Pigeon—58
Mourning Dove—69
Red-bellied Woodpecker—30
Downy Woodpecker—27
Hairy Woodpecker—4
Northern Flicker—6
Pileated Woodpecker—1
American Kestrel--2
Blue Jay—43
American Crow—282
Black-capped Chickadee—60
Tufted Titmouse—37
Red-breasted Nuthatch—3

White-breasted Nuthatch—32
Brown Creeper—1
Carolina Wren—2
Eastern Bluebird—17
American Robin—1
European Starling—385
Cedar Waxwing—4
American Tree Sparrow—14
Dark-eyed Junco—64
White-throated Sparrow—1
Song Sparrow—1
Northern Cardinal—46
House Finch—47
Pine Siskin—5
American Goldfinch—111
House Sparrow-- 138

Review provided by Tom Wecker.

CALL NOTE

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CBC HISTORICAL REVIEW

We have consistent data from the East Lansing Christmas Bird Counts starting in 1971. From this we can identify notable changes in local bird populations over the last nearly 50 years.

For instance, the average number of Canada Geese counted in the five years from 1971 to 1975 was 34. In the five previous years, 2014 – 2018, the average counted was 4,557.

Other notable comparisons for the same five year periods:

Mallard – 226 / 1, 125;
American Black Duck – 15 / 3;
Ring-necked Pheasant – 78 / 0;
Wild Turkey – 0 / 93;
Red-bellied Woodpecker – 12 / 95;
House Finch – 0 / 224;
Evening Grosbeak – 39 / 0;
House Sparrow – 1075 / 832.

On the other hand, data prior to 1971 is spotty. I have found very few records from the 1950s in our historical material. It may still exist somewhere. There is evidence that counts were held, based on announcements, clippings, or meeting minutes but no write-ups on species or numbers. In the Fifties, well before newsletters were sent out, communication about meetings and field trips was printed on a postcard

and mailed to all members of Lansing Audubon Society, as it was then known.

The Christmas bird count for 1955-56 was announced on a 2 cent postcard as a “BIRD CENSUS” to be held on Monday, January 2, 1956. This is how it read:

“Meet at south steps of Union Building, Michigan State University, East Lansing, at 8:00 a.m. Morning and afternoon trips are planned – MSU campus & surrounding area – Park Lake – Lake Lansing – Rose Lake area. Field trip planned to end well before Rose Bowl Game.”

Because January 1 fell on a Sunday in 1956 the Rose Bowl was played on Monday. Michigan State, representing the Big 10 Conference, played UCLA, the Pacific Coast Conference champions. Duffy Daugherty’s Spartans with Earl Morrall at quarterback defeated the Bruins 17-14 on a last second field goal.

So for the birders, a nice ending to what must have been a long and hopefully productive day, 63 years ago.

- Jim Hewitt, CAAS Historian

SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN BIRDING

This month the Mi Birds Facebook page highlighted an article featuring Detroit Audubon and the Michigan DNR for the varied winter birding opportunities found in Southeast Michigan.

The Detroit News encouraged people to get outside and experience the waterfowl birding opportunities available in the Detroit River, Lake St. Clair and western Lake Erie.

The article noted many opportunities for birding including guided walks in the greater Detroit area and the opportunity to feed wild birds by hand at Kensington Metropark.

They also recommended some important suggestions for winter birding including wearing proper layers and winter clothing, bringing along water and warm gloves.

For the full article and event information, visit the link on our Facebook page, [facebook.com/capitalareaudubon](https://www.facebook.com/capitalareaudubon)



LOCAL EVENTS

Bird Walk at Fenner with the Feminist Bird Club of Michigan

February 3, 10am-12pm

Join an inclusive group of birders for a winter walk at Fenner Nature Center with Kristy Taylor. Walk will start at the parking lot. Dress warm!

Michigan Audubon Seminar Series - Kirtland Warbler Reivew and Conservation Efforts with Dr. Dave Ewert February 11, 7-8pm

This presentation will give an overview of the biology of the Kirtland's Warblers and how successful conservation efforts have brought the species from near extinction to recovery, including potential delisting as a U.S. endangered species.

Seminars take place on the second Monday of each month from 7 - 8 p.m. at the Michigan Audubon office located at 2310 Science Parkway, Suite 200, Okemos, MI 48864

For a full list of seminars and dates, visit www.michiganaudubon.org

Nest Box Workshop with Gene Wasserman March 9th - 9am-12pm

Learn about cavity-dwelling birds such as Eastern Bluebird, Tree Swallow, House Wren, and Black-capped Chickadee in this hands-on workshop! Gene Wasserman will present the basics of being a responsible bird "landlord" and how to provide a safe nesting situation, through activities such as regular nest checks, maintenance, and predator guards. Learn how to record monitoring data and participate as a citizen scientist! Registered participants will each build one nest box, sized for Eastern Bluebirds, and will take this home along with a pole and mounting system to install the box, and a House Sparrow deterrent system.

Registration is \$25 for Michigan Audubon members and \$30 for non-members. To join Michigan Audubon or renew your membership, visit: <https://www.michiganaudubon.org/get-involved/membership/>

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

RECOMMENDED READS

Recently Kristy offered some suggestions of birding books to be read during the time you cannot be in the field. In recent years I have found myself to be more of an armchair birder than one who is active locally in the field. Here are some books I have read in the last few years with brief notes. You can find longer reviews on line to help you decide if anything here interests you.

Among Penguins by Noah Stryker details his time as a researcher in Antarctica. Noah is a captivating writer.

On a Wing and a Prayer by Sarah Woods is about a woman spending time in the rainforest with the goal of seeing a Harpy Eagle

Falcon Fever by Tim Gallagher. Gallagher is with the Lab for Ornithology. The title should be enough.

Lost Among the Birds by Neil Hayward tells the tale of his all but accidental Big Year.

One More Warbler by Victor Emanuel is a memoir of a lifetime spent birding and of founding one of the best known bird touring companies.

Returning North With the Spring by John R. Harris and *North on the Wing* by Bruce Beehler are both books telling the authors story of somewhat duplicating Edwin Way Teale's classic *North With the Spring*. Harris does a better job of following Teale's path but I prefer the story told by Beehler. I think I have previously recommend all of Teale's books in The Call Note.

The Rarest Bird in the World by Vernon R. L. Head is a fascinating account of an expedition to Ethiopia to locate a nightjar only known from a wing found on an earlier expedition.

The Life of the Skies by Jonathon Rosen—Google a review.

Mozart's Starling by Lvanda Lvnn Haupt will tell you about both the pet starling the author raised and the one Mozart bought.

Warblers and Woodpeckers by Sneed B. Collard III. A man in mild age takes up birding because his son develops an interest. Then they decide to do a big year.

- *Sam Febba*

AREA COUNTS

Detroit River Important Bird Area Winter Waterfowl Count February 23

The Detroit River is a globally recognized [Important Bird Area](#), known for its outstanding migrant and wintering waterfowl and water bird concentrations. Early winter surveys have recorded high counts of canvasbacks (79,300), over 1,900 tundra swans, 1,000 American black ducks, 10,000 mallards, 3,500 common mergansers, 40 Forster's terns and 275 common tern nests. Bird Studies Canada began conducting winter waterfowl counts for this Important Bird Area, and Detroit Audubon began covering the U.S. side of the river in 2018. Contact Detroit Audubon's research coordinator, Ava Landgraf, at alandgraf@detroitaudubon.org for more information on how you can help with this international Important Bird Area winter waterfowl count.

Climate Watch Thru February 15

This Audubon bird count, which occurs in the winter and the summer provides scientists with data on the current distribution of target species, such as the eastern bluebird, white-breasted nuthatch and red-breasted nuthatch. The data then can be used to validate and refine Audubon's Climate Watch models that help predict species range shifts under the effects of climate change. Contact one of the following Climate Watch coordinators in Michigan to learn how and where you can participate: Becky Kuhn (Grand Rapids Audubon Club) at bexrecky@gmail.com or Brian Merlos (Audubon Great Lakes) at bmerlos@audubon.org.

Project Feederwatch

Watch your backyard birds and record data for Cornell's Project Feederwatch! For more information visit www.feederwatch.org.

eBird

Contributions to citizen science are always welcome on eBird! Find a patch and conduct a count on your own this winter.

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

EXCITING SIGHTINGS

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

- A Snowy Owl was spotted near the Alameda Township Hall near the Okemos and Holt Road intersection a number of times in January.

- A female Brown-headed Cowbird has stuck around Ingham County for the winter as well.

These sightings were reported at our meeting, on eBird.com, or with the eBird App.

Do you have an exciting sighting to share?

Email us at - caasCallNote@gmail.com

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

Thank You!

Thanks to our January Speaker, Chad Krumnaue, Michigan DNR Wildlife Technician, for sharing with us and to our wonderful members who provided the snacks in January!