



FAI CHAN 2015

the Call Note

CAPITAL AREA AUDUBON
APRIL 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 APRIL MEETING!

April 4 – Birds and Soundscapes
Presenter : Dr. Sharon Gill, WMU

Based at Western Michigan University, Dr. Sharon Gill studies behavioral ecology, ornithology and sound ecology.

Soundscapes, reflecting the combined sounds of the environment, can connect us to nature and help build memories of time and place. As humans change the sound environment, we risk degrading not only our experiences in nature but those of animals that rely on natural areas.

Dr. Gill will give an overview of current scientific thinking about soundscapes and soundscape ecology, and discuss her lab's ongoing research on soundscapes and animal communication in our increasingly noisy world.

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.

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 really here folks, spring has officially arrived complete with more daylight, thawing snow and ice and the first migrants passing through. I have been talking a lot recently about how amazing migration is. Migrating birds make incredible journeys covering huge distances in order to claim nest sites and access to food resources. There are great tools available for visualizing this journey, including Birdcast (birdcast.info) from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, also status and trends (<https://ebird.org/science/status-and-trends>) from eBird shows the

trends of migration from years past. But these both show the trends and general migration. Sometimes when I see a bird in the spring I imagine the individual journey it has undertaken, possibly a flight across the gulf, avoiding windows and predators, and ending up in front of my binoculars. It makes me marvel at the natural world, I hope you all find a way to enjoy this time of year and find your own wonder at each birds incredible migration.

- Parks Marion

SPRING BIRD WALKS

If you are ready to dust off the binoculars and head out to welcome our spring migrants, we have many opportunities coming up right here in the Lansing Area! Capital Area Audubon will again host spring bird walks at Fenner Nature Center each Saturday in April and May. Walks will begin at 9am in April and 8am in May. We will meet near the parking lot and birders of all experience levels are welcome.

A few CAAS members will also be leading walks at Harris Nature Center, and Corey Marsh Ecological Research Center in April. Walk times and locations are listed on Page 3 in our Area Events announcements. Michigan Audubon will offer spring migration walks every Wednesday, from April 24-May 15, beginning at 7am. Groups will meet at the sanctuary volunteer entrance, approximately 1/2 mile east of the Hawk Meadows parking lot.

All spring walks recommend bringing binoculars and dressing for the weather. The ground can be pretty wet this time of year.

For more information, visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/capitalareaaudubon



© FAI Chan 2015

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.

Spring Migration Bird Walks at Fenner Saturday Mornings -

April 6, 13, 20, 27 - 9am

May 4, 11, 18, 25 - 8am

Walks will begin near the parking lot and last about 2 hours. All experience levels are welcome.

If you would like to help lead a walk this spring, please email caascallnote@gmail.com or let a board member know at our next meeting.

May 2 – 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

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.

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 capitalareaadubon.org or pick one up at our next meeting.

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

In addition to our monthly meetings, our memberships help support area organizations including Fenner Nature Center, Michigan State Bird Observatory, Burke Lake Banding Station, Corey Ecological Research Station, Capital City Bird Sanctuary and the Whitefish Point Bird Observatory.

CONSIDER COUNTY BIRDING

-by Kristy Taylor

How do you keep your birding journey new and exciting? Many birders around the country keep lists of the bird species they have spotted over their lifetime, commonly called a life list. Other birders compile a yearly species list, ABA area lists, world lists, lists of birds photographed, even birds spotted on Google Earth Street View! (You can find the Google Street View Birding group on Facebook.) One list in particular has given birders a new thrill and more ways to be involved at a local level. It is called County Birding.

Sande LaFaut, a Michigan County birder said, "I like county birding because I am pretty average in birding skills. Getting high numbers of life birds is unlikely so I was starting to get a little bored with the whole thing. With county birding every time I cross a new county line I can hit the reset button on my lists and start a new one. I live very close to the Ohio line so I am working on both Ohio and Michigan county lists. It keeps the whole thing fresher for me."

Birding by county can be tracked on eBird and is one of the reasons that lead county birder Daryl Bernard to start setting goals for each county. "I started focusing on county birding shortly after I started using eBird to enter all my sightings. eBird automatically keeps track of your county bird lists, and also generates lists of county target birds, so it's very easy and convenient."

Bernard is the administrator for the Michigan County Birding Facebook page and Executive Director at Seven Ponds Nature Center. He explained that county birding means every single bird – from Robins and Cardinals to Mallards and Canada Geese – are new birds. "Tracking down a Red-breasted Nuthatch or a Swamp Sparrow in a new county is always a good time. It's fun to pick a county, look at my target needs for that county, and devise a plan of attack," Bernard said. "Of course, even the best plan needs to allow for improvising, because you'll run into habitat you didn't expect, or a certain spot will require more time than you had planned, so you have to be flexible."

"County birding has pushed me to explore every nook and cranny of this wonderful state rather than just birding locally or going to the same

great hotspots over and over. In my county birding trips, I have explored the nooks and crannies of every county in Pure Michigan," Bernard said.

One of his most memorable county birding experiences was in the counties of Branch, St. Joseph, and Cass in late August. His group had a couple wastewater facilities on their planned route. "At both Kinderhook Sewage Lagoons (Branch County) and Centreville Wastewater (St. Joseph County) we found the county first records of Ruddy Turnstones," Bernard noted. "We contacted local birders in each county so they could get on these new county birds. It was fun – as visiting county birders – to find good birds for the locals to enjoy!"

Another county birder, John Porath, was encouraged by Bernard to start county birding and now has goals of his own. "I now look for my year birds and life birds in counties that I may be trying to bump up my county birding numbers. So when I am travelling to a county to get a bird I am after, I will bring up my county birding list and see what else I need," Porath said.

Bernard's goal is to eventually see 100+ birds in each of Michigan's 83 counties. "But before that happens, my next goal is to average 100 birds per county – by taking my total county ticks and dividing by 83, I get my birds per county (bpc) average," he said. "Currently my bpc is just about 74."

If you are an eBird user, it is simple to view your current county numbers on eBird. Click on My eBird for lists by Major Regions, Country, State/Province and County, or you can click on your profile for a beautiful graphic of your county sightings.

If you would like more information about birding by county or would like to join the county birders community in Michigan, please check out their facebook page at facebook.com/groups/MichiganCountyBirding/.



RIGHT BIRD, RIGHT HOUSE

If you are looking to help provide nest boxes for the breeding birds in your area, check out the amazing free resources from nestwatch.org.

Nestwatch offers a tool called Right Bird, Right House with free plans for a variety of different birds. Each plan is given a difficulty rating based on the skill and tools it will take to build the house. Many are kid friendly and can be built using only a single piece of lumber.

Nestwatch also provides tips and trouble-shooting guides to help with nest box placement, how to manage invasive species and nest box competitors and more.

To find out which houses will work best in your yard, visit nestwatch.org/learn/all-about-birdhouses/right-bird-right-house/

CALL NOTE

Published monthly
September through June by the
Capital Area Audubon Society
PO Box 22065, Lansing MI 48909.
Deadline for submissions:
20th of the month.

2018-2019 CAAS Officers

| | |
|----------------|------------------|
| President | Parks Marion |
| Vice President | Kristy Taylor |
| Secretary | Alexia Witcombe |
| Treasurer | Michael Caterino |

| | |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| Membership | Michael Caterino |
| Editor & Facebook | Kristy Taylor |
| Publicity & Hospitality | Eileen Houston |
| Field Trip Coordinator | Mike Moquin |
| Program Coordinator | Julia Spalding |
| Historian | Open |

2018-19 CAAS Board of Directors

Michael Caterino
Eileen Houston
Parks Marion
Mike Moquin
Julia Spalding
Kristy Taylor
Alexia Witcombe

We have two open seats on our board. If you are interested in serving, please email the board.

caaudubon@gmail.com
capitalareaaudubon.org
[facebook.com/capitalareaaudubon](https://www.facebook.com/capitalareaaudubon)

FEATURES OF A GOOD BIRDHOUSE
BUILD A SAFE AND SUCCESSFUL HOME

- IT'S WELL CONSTRUCTED**
 - UNTREATED WOOD**: The untreated, unpainted wood, preferably cedar, pine, cypress, or the larger birch (which) nongers use treated CCA-treated grade plywood.
 - GALVANIZED SCREWS**: Use galvanized screws for the best seal. Nails can loosen over time, allowing cats into the nest box. Screws are also easier to remove for inspection. Do not use staples.
- IT KEEPS BIRDS DRY**
 - SLOPED ROOF**: A sloped roof that overhangs the nest by 2-4" and the sides by 2" will help keep out driving rain, while allowing predators. Add 1/4" deep cuts under the roof on all three edges to serve as gutters that channel rain away from the nest.
 - RECESSED FLOOR**: A recessed floor keeps the nest from getting wet and helps the box last longer. Recess the floor at least 1/4" up from the bottom.
 - DRAINAGE HOLES**: Add at least a drainage hole (1/2" to 5/8" diameter) to the floor to allow any water that enters the box to drain away. Alternatively, you can cut away the corners of the floor board to create drainage holes.
- IT HELPS REGULATE TEMPERATURE**
 - THICK WALLS**: Walls should be at least 1/2" thick to insulate the nest properly. (Thick walls are 1/2" or actually 3/4" thick.)
 - VENTILATION HOLES**: For adequate ventilation, there should be two 1/2" diameter holes on each of the side walls, near the top (1/2 inch).
- IT KEEPS OUT PREDATORS**
 - NO PERCHES**: A perch is unnecessary for the bird and can actually help predators gain access to the box.
 - TYPES OF PREDATOR GUARDS**: Although perches are a natural part of the environment, bird houses are typically not as well-camouflaged as natural nests and some predators can make a habit of visiting your house. Adding a barrier helps keep predators and adult birds from climbing predators. Below are some more tested options.
 - COLLAR**: A metal collar of wire mesh surrounding the hole prevents the predator from entering the nest box.
 - STOVEPIPE**: The stove pipe, which is attached to the hole of the nest box. The hole guard is constructed from wire mesh with a mesh or mesh with a mesh.
 - NOEL GUARD**: A wire mesh tube attached to the hole of the nest box. The hole guard is constructed from wire mesh with a mesh or mesh with a mesh.
 - COMMON NEST BOX PREDATORS**
 - SNAKES**: Many snakes are excellent climbers and can easily squeeze an unperched pole. Snakes most likely to climb into birdhouses are generally non-venomous such as raccoons and copperheads or helpful or non-threatening snakes. Avoid installing and leave snakes to their prey.
 - RACCOONS**: Raccoons are intelligent and can remember nest box locations from year to year. They can be deterred in populated areas. Avoid installing and leave snakes to their prey.
 - CHIPMUNKS**: Chipmunks are both a pest predator and a competitor for nest boxes. To keep chipmunks out, mount them away from trees on a metal pole equipped with a barrier, avoid mounting them on trees or fence posts.
 - CATS**: Cats are excellent jumpers and can leap to the top of a nest box from a nearby tree or fence post. They can be deterred in populated areas. Avoid installing and leave snakes to their prey.
- IT HAS THE RIGHT ENTRANCE SIZE FOR THE RIGHT BIRD**
By providing a properly sized entrance hole, you can attract desirable species to your birdhouse while excluding predators and unwanted occupants. Below are the requirements for some common species that nest in boxes.
- DON'T WANT TO GIVE A HOME TO AN UNDESIRABLE SPECIES?**
1/2" to the smallest hole size that the bird can enter, or select a smaller hole size.
- DON'T WANT TO GIVE A HOME TO AN UNDESIRABLE SPECIES?**
1/2" to the smallest hole size that the bird can enter, or select a smaller hole size.
- IT HELPS FLEDGLINGS LEAVE THE NEST**
 - ROUGH INTERIOR WALLS**: The interior wall below the entrance hole should be rough to help fledglings climb out of the hole. For small holes (worms and chickadees), plain wood is usually rough enough, but you can roughen smooth boards with coarse sandpaper.
 - INTERIOR GROOVES**: A series of shallow horizontal cuts, like a small ladder, works well in smooth-sanded boards for woodpeckers and bluebirds. Swallows, in particular, need a more long-lasting one of them.
 - FOR DUCK BOXES**: For duck boxes, create a step or notch in the backboard that allows the ducklings to escape deep holes.
- IT MAKES PLACEMENT & MAINTENANCE EASY**
 - EXTENDED BACK**: A few extra inches at the top and bottom of your birdhouse can make it easier to mount on a metal pole. Alternatively, you can pre-drill mounting holes in the back panel before assembly and use a screw-headed screwdriver to install the hole.
 - HINGED DOOR WITH A STURDY CLOSING MECHANISM**: A hinged door gives you access for cleaning and monitoring your nest box, but birds of prey are prepared for a successful spring season. A backstop will keep the door securely closed until you are ready to open it.

DON'T FORGET TO MONITOR YOUR NEST BOX AND ENTER THE DATA INTO NESTWATCH!

LOCAL EVENTS

Harris Nature Center Bird Walks
April 14 - 9am at Eastgate Park
4203 S Meridian Rd.
with leader Kristy Reske

April 28th - 8am at Nancy Moore Park
1960 Gaylord C. Smith Court
with leader Clara Bratton

May 5th - 8am at HNC and Legg Park
3998 Van Atta Road
with leader Bruce Cohen

Michigan Audubon Seminar Series
2310 Science Parkway, Okemos, MI
Birding 101 with Kristy Taylor
April 8 - 7-8pm

Intermediate Birding with Linnea Rowse
May 13 - 7-8pm

Monarch Butterflies and Other Pollinators with Erin Oswald
June 10 - 7-8pm

Spring Bird Walks at Corey Marsh

March 30 - 9-11am
April 5, 18, 29 - 9-11am
May 14, 23 - 8-10am
9422 Herbison Rd., Laingsburg, MI
Walks will be led by experienced birders for approximately 2 hours around CMERC. Binoculars will be available to borrow and all experience levels are welcome.

Fenner Earth Day Extravaganza
April 13 - 9am - 3pm
Volunteer to help celebrate Earth Day with the largest civic-focused days of action in the world. Join Fenner for a day of identifying and removing invasive species, removing downed trees, mulching trails, or picking up trash. Sign up for a shift today at mynaturecenter.org/earthdayvolunteer

Ecology Extravaganza
April 13 - 9am-1pm
Corey Marsh Ecological Research Center - 9422 Herbison Rd., Laingsburg, MI
Come take a self-guided tour of the facility and get outdoors for presentations on bird banding, avian health monitoring, bats, insects, marsh ecology, and more. This is also a chance to learn more about citizen science and how you can be a scientist in your own backyard! This is an official event of the MSU Science Festival.

*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)*

FANTASY BIRDING IS REAL

Birders and Fantasy Sports may not seem like they go together until you find out that Fantasy Birding competitions are now underway using real time eBird data and if you have not signed up yet, you are missing out!

Recently in a deadspin.com article (deadspin.com/fantasy-birding-is-real-and-its-spectacular-1833374916) writer Ryan F. Mandelbaum joined in the fantasy birding online and shared a bit about his experience.

Mandelbaum explained in his article a bit more about the process than is noted on the Fantasy Birding website.

He shared that participants in the main game compete to record the most species in the American Birding Association "area," functionally the

United States and Canada. Fantasy birders don't have to spot the species themselves. Using eBird, players select single locations on a map each day, and get credit for a bird if a real-life birder spots that species within a 10-kilometer radius that day. There's also a global game for intrepid fantasy players hoping to spot birds around the world.

Creator Matt Smith also runs a twitter page, for Fantasy Birding and a Facebook support page for players.

To learn more, or start your fantasy team, visit www.fantasybirding.com.

EXCITING SIGHTINGS

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

- A Snowy Owl was spotted near the Alameda Township hall again a number of times in March.
- A group of 16 Trumpeter Swans were reported flying over the Sander Farm Natural Area in Okemos on March 20th.
- A Snow Goose was reported with a group of Canada Geese on March 1st at McArthur River Park in Eaton County.

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

PARK LAKE PATH UPDATE

In March, members of the Park Lake Advisory Council approached CAAS regarding birding possibilities on a 40 acre wooded parcel owned by Bath Township on the southwest side of Park Lake. CAAS members Grace Menzel and JB McCombs, who live on the lake, are working to clarify access, parking, and boundary issues in support of spring birding opportunities. Look for more information in the May newsletter.

Thank You!

Thanks to our March Speaker, Erin Rowan, Michigan Audubon Great Lakes and MI Birds Associate for sharing with us and to our wonderful members who provided the snacks in March!

AREA EVENTS

MSU Science Fest

Friday, April 5 - Saturday, April 20

Events will be held around the Lansing area and around the state.

Science Fest Expo Day is April 6th

For locations and full details, visit sciencefestival.msu.edu

How Birds Use the Night Sky to Navigate During Migration with Dr. Jen Owen

April 6 - 10-11am

Abrams Planetarium

755 Science Rd., East Lansing, MI

Each fall and spring, many species of birds migrate thousands of miles - but how do they know where to go? This talk, held in the Abrams Planetarium, will describe bird migration and how birds use the stars to navigate throughout their journeys.

Earth Day Free Admission -

Enjoy free admission to Kellogg Bird Sanctuary on Saturday, April 22, in celebration of Earth Day.

WPBO's Spring Fling

April 28-29th

Whitefish Point, Paradise, MI

Tickets are now on sale for the 31st Annual Spring Fling: WPBO's Celebration of Bird Migration!

Questions may be directed to events@michiganaudubon.org

wpbo.org/events/spring-fling/

Tawas Point Birding Festival

May 16-18th

Registration and more information available online at www.michiganaudubon.org
Tawas Point Bay Beach Resort
300 E Bay St., East Tawas, MI

*Do you have an event to share?
Email us at - caasCallNote@gmail.com
or share it on our Facebook page -
facebook.com/capitalareaaudubon*

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Capital Area Audubon is looking for volunteers to help with Spring Bird Walks and for youth presentations. If you would like to help, please email us at caascallnote@gmail.com

We are also seeking applicants for the open positions on our Board. You can help the Capital Area Audubon plan our monthly seminars and help continue the mission of CAAS!