



KRISTY TAYLOR 2015

# The Call Note

CAPITAL AREA AUDUBON  
MAY 2020

## Join Us

### AT OUR JUNE MEETING!

#### June 4 - Member Photos and Annual Meeting

The meeting will begin at 7:00p.m. followed by the program at 7:30.

**This meeting will be held in the Michigan Nature Association Education Room. 2310 Science Parkway, Okemos, MI**

#### CAAS is seeking new Board Members

If you have considered serving on the CAAS Board, we are looking for two new applicants. Board members help to organize monthly meetings, produce our Call Note Newsletter, pursue and educate members on local birding issues and provide walks and field trips throughout the program year.

If you are interested in serving, please email [caascallnote@gmail.com](mailto:caascallnote@gmail.com) or [caaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:caaudubon@gmail.com) for more information. Member bios will be published in our June Call Note, and a vote to approve new Board members will be held at the June meeting or online and via phone.

## MEMBERSHIP

Support community programs with your CAAS Membership.

#### SEPTEMBER 2020 - AUGUST 2021

##### Membership Categories

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

For a membership form, or to sign up online, visit - [capitalareaaudubon.org](http://capitalareaaudubon.org)

*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 OUR PRESIDENT

During the 'Stay Home, Stay Safe' order, our kids and I have taken the time to explore a nature center or natural area near our home each week. Many of these areas are not new to us, but this spring feels so much different than many others because we have a bit more time, and our options for travel are limited.

Last week at Fenner, my son (a sixth-grader) took some time during a walk to photograph an Eastern Bluebird near the Fenner Maple Sugar Shack.

On that walk we found blooming Spring Beauties and delicate Yellow Trout Lilies. We broke the end off a Wild Ramp leaf and tasted the delicious onion and garlic flavor. We found a couple of garter snakes, turtles, an Eastern Comma butterfly and even scared up a couple of moths.

By the end of the walk we had recorded about 20 bird species and received a much needed dose of sunshine.

We are hopeful that as the quarantine is lifted, and life resumes its normal patterns, we are still able to enjoy some extra time at our nearby parks and try to use the very different end of the school year to our advantage.

Birding this season may look a lot different, but we will be putting out the hummingbird and oriole feeders this week anticipating the return of our summer friends and witnessing the normal cycles of nature at work.

Stay healthy and hopeful!  
Kristy Taylor

*-pictures by Austin Taylor (12)*



# UPCOMING CAAS EVENTS

Our May meeting and organized spring bird walks are cancelled due to the COVID-19 safety precautions.

Please watch for website and email updates about our June meeting.

## LOCAL EVENTS

Most community events for the spring have been cancelled. Please check with any event organizer to see if the event will still be held. The CDC has recommended the suspension of any and all large gatherings, and that those at greater risk to COVID-19 avoid all public and social gatherings.

### Cancelled Events -

**Biggest Week in American Birding**  
[www.biggestweekinamericanbirding.com](http://www.biggestweekinamericanbirding.com)

**Mackinaw Raptor Fest - Cancelled**  
[www.mackinawraptorfest.org](http://www.mackinawraptorfest.org)

**Tawas Point Migration 2020 - Cancelled**  
[ausablevalleyaudubon.org](http://ausablevalleyaudubon.org)

Many events are making the switch to online and Zoom meetings. If you would like to be a part of an online discussion, let us know on our Facebook page. We could offer a weekly bird chat with CAAS members via Zoom or Microsoft meetings. Please email [caascallnote@gmail.com](mailto:caascallnote@gmail.com) for more information.

*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://facebook.com/capitalareaaudubon)*

## FREE SOFTWARE

Thayer Birding has offered his birding software for free to any and all birders.

Use this software to learn about the amazing birds in your yard and in your country. Watch videos of bird behavior, hear their songs and take hundreds of fun quizzes on the birds of North America. Use the ID Wizard to help identify a bird!

Use the promo code **PeteThayerFree** to change the price from \$49.95 to \$0.00 for the download. Visit - [thayerbirding.com](http://thayerbirding.com)

# ABA GUIDELINES ON BIRDING AND SOCIAL DISTANCING

During the COVID-19 recommendations to stay close to home while birding, the American Birding Association has put together some additional guidelines in their code of ethics for quarantine birding.

- From ABA.org -

The basic principles of quarantine birding are already well covered in the ABA Code of Birding Ethics:

### **3. Respect and promote the law and the rights of others.**

and **3(b) <in part>** Familiarize yourself with and follow all laws, rules, and regulations governing activities at your birding location.

Even so, there are gray areas and places where reasonable, caring birders will differ. Here are a few thoughts to help guide your birding as we all get through these challenging, rapidly changing times together:

1. Birding is a GREAT thing to do right now, whether you're a lifelong birder or someone who has just started noticing birds out your window. Keeping a connection with birds and nature is a valuable way to improve mood, lower stress, and gain perspective on our current troubles. As such, birding should be strongly supported and encouraged.

2. Some types of birding and birding locales are specifically to be avoided now, particularly any situation or location that would encourage or require people to violate physical distancing guidelines or travel away from one's local area. These should be scrupulously avoided.

3. There is no "one size fits all" prescription for how to accomplish this. People are in many different types of living situations, from high-density urban dwellings to very lightly populated, rural landscapes. Exactly what is appropriate will vary significantly from place to place.

4. Please remember that every time you hike into the wilds or get on the road to drive to go birding, you have the potential to require emergency services. This could put pressure on an already strained group of

emergency personnel at this challenging time. As such, work to stay as close to home as possible.

5. People's judgment of what is safe will vary. There is little to be gained from birders attacking each other on social media and elsewhere about perceived lapses in physical distancing. However, thoughtful discussion, promotion, and modeling of one's own "quarantine" birding practices are welcome and appropriate.

In short, bird as much as you are able, close to home, and without exposing yourself or anyone else to risk. We look forward to seeing you in person in the field once these difficult times have passed!

### **The American Birding Association Recording Standards and Ethics Committee -**

Nick Block, Secretary  
Matt Fraker, Chair  
Ashli Gorbet, Laura Keene  
Greg Miller, Jeffrey Gordon\*  
Greg Neise\*

\*non-voting ABA staff liaisons

## 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.

### **2019-2020 CAAS Officers**

President	Kristy Taylor
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Secretary	Alexia Witcombe
Treasurer	Michael Caterino
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Field Trip Coordinator	Mike Moquin
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### **2019-20 CAAS Board of Directors**

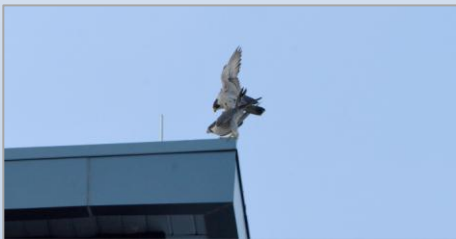
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# EXCITING SIGHTINGS

This April a few exciting sightings were reported in the area.

- Chimney Swifts have returned! One was reported in Eaton County on April 19th.
- A female Harlequin Duck and Surf Scoter were spotted at the Olivet Sewage Ponds in Eaton County on April 18th.
- A Northern Mockingbird was reported at the Ingham Conservation Center on April 18th.
- A Northern Goshawk was reported by Jim Keller from Fenner Nature Center on April 12th. It was soaring with three Turkey Vultures.
- A Forster's Tern was reported at Motz County Park on April 21st.
- Hummingbirds are back! A Ruby-throated hummingbird was reported in East Lansing on April 22nd.
- Maple River SGA has few exciting sightings! On April 26th, a Forster's Tern, Peregrine Falcon, LeConte's Sparrow and Yellow Rail were reported.
- A Red-necked Grebe and White-winged Scoter were reported on Lake Lansing on the 26th as well.
- A Western Meadowlark was spotted on Power Line Drive at MSU at the end of April.
- Peregrine Falcons may be nesting on the MSU Stadium. Valerie Gunchick sent images of two Peregrines mating and eating on the side of the stadium. They may even have taken up a home on the signage! Here are a couple of images she sent our way.



These sightings were reported on eBird.com.

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)

# BIRDS VS. THE EMERALD ASH BORER

## Meet the woodpecker that's going after the emerald ash borer

by Tom Dennis

Special to Port Huron Times Herald  
USA TODAY NETWORK - MICHIGAN

Early spring is a noisy time in the bird world, especially early in the morning. Pay attention when you're up early, possibly awakened by hammering sounds that, unless your neighbor is rudely installing a new roof in the pre-dawn hours, is more likely the "drumming" call of one of several woodpecker species found in the Blue Water Area.

The red-bellied woodpecker, like other members of the Picidae family, has a drumming call as well as vocalization calls that are unique to the species.



The red-bellied woodpecker. - LAURIE DENNIS

The name is rather misleading since the red-belly is nearly invisible and the prominent red plumage is on the head, however, the red-headed name is appropriately given to another stunning (and local) species of woodpecker. Personally, I think this bird would more aptly be named the red-necked Woodpecker but alas, I wasn't consulted, nor born yet at naming time for that matter!

These birds are found in the central and eastern United States from the lower Great Lakes and south to the Gulf of Mexico. Northernmost birds sometimes migrate south but most occupy their range year round. They prefer open and swampy woodlands and are common in parks and at feeders in winter.

Although they are not globally threatened, they require large trees for nesting and therefore they aren't found in numbers in areas that are extensively deforested. It is also beneficial that large, dead hardwood trees be left standing since they prefer them for nesting cavities. They will also use living trees with softer wood, such as elms, maples, and willows. Most feeding is on the trunks where they search out arthropods and visit the wells of sapsuckers for trapped insects.

They are omnivores and will catch insects in flight and also feed on fruits, nuts and seeds. They benefit nature and mankind locally as a major predator many insects including the invasive emerald ash borer, removing up to 85 percent of borer larvae in a single tree.

They are noisy birds whose sounds include the drumming mentioned above. They are highly attracted to resonating sounds and this activity is largely made by males to attract females and is therefore most prevalent in early spring. They tap on hollow trees and in urban environments they also utilize metal gutters, metal roofs, and transformer boxes. They also drum during conflict encounters and tap to communicate with their mate and maintain pair bonding. The drumming is unique to the species and with red-bellied woodpeckers it sounds like six rapid taps. Both sexes are vocal throughout the year making rattle calls with a "churr" or "kwirr" that is again, unique to the species and more prevalent with males.

It's evident to me that these highly specialized creatures are the product of intelligent design. Their pecking behavior results in deceleration forces ranging from 1,200 to 6,000 times the force of gravity. In contrast, just a single 300 g experience will leave a human concussed or result in serious brain injury. They repeat this head bashing from 18 to 22 times per second. Scientists have studied woodpecker anatomy and are attempting to use it in micro-devices for the "advanced shock-absorbing" ability as well as for use in design of more effective protective headgear and helmets. The woodpecker design has been found to utilize a beak made of elastic material, special hyoid structures (muscles and tendons for support and reinforcement), a unique spongy bone located behind the beak, and a special skull bone containing spinal fluid as a dampener! My studies provide strong evidence that this didn't happen by chance!

If you wish to learn more about birds you are welcome to attend Blue Water Audubon meetings held at The Point, 5085 Lakeshore Road, in Fort Gratiot. Please visit our Facebook page, "Blue Water Audubon Society", for meeting details and be sure to friend us.

Tom Dennis is a free-lance writer, passionate birder, zoologist, creation scientist. and naturalist.