



Photo by  
Evan Griffis  
2021

# the Call Note

CAPITAL AREA AUDUBON  
OCTOBER 2021

## Join Us

### AT OUR OCTOBER MEETING!

Join us at our next meeting **Thursday, October 7, 7:00 - 8:30pm on Zoom!**

**A Summer with the USFWS Studying boreal-breeding Shorebirds in Alaska**  
**Presenter: Evan Griffis**

Evan Griffis will share his summer research from Alaska studying Lesser Yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpipers and Upland Sandpipers.

Griffis is a junior at Michigan State University studying Fisheries and Wildlife with a focus on ornithology. He currently works at the Michigan State Bird Observatory, splitting time between the Corey Marsh Ecological Research Center and the Burke Lake Banding Station. Between classes he loves to get out to Corey Marsh to go birding, and can often be found running, fishing, and cross-country skiing.



Please visit our Zoom link - <https://msu.zoom.us/j/94720211954> or open your Zoom app and enter Meeting ID: 947 2021 1954  
Password - CAAS

Social time will take place from 7-7:15 followed by brief announcements and our speaker at 7:20pm.

*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

Fall migration has been a real treat this year! The weather has given us plenty of beautiful mornings and the rain and cold has been few and far between. I know it is only a matter of time before the frost returns and I start wearing more layers, so I am treasuring these last few weeks of seventy degree weather.

My work at the banding station with the Michigan State Bird Observatory has been steady and strong this season and I have been overjoyed to welcome visitors and educational groups out this year. I serve as the Education and Outreach Coordinator for the MSBO and love that I get to connect people of all ages with birds and give station visitors an up close look at wildlife research. This month's speaker, Evan Griffis, is one of the lead bird banders this season and I cannot wait for you all to hear from him.

The wildlife professionals I work with keep me asking questions, and inspire me to keep learning. Each year I get a little better at fall bird identification and remembering a few more bird songs. (I recently was told that the Red-breasted Nuthatch sounds like a tiny car horn, so now all I can think of is a little nuthatch, wearing a scarf, sporting adorable riding glasses, honking the horn of a tiny car....)

One of my favorite birds so far this fall was the Hooded Warbler (pictured)! We also banded a Whip-poor-will! They remind me visits to my grandparents house, where they would sing just outside the windows when we would visit in the summer. Getting to see one up close has been of the highlights of my fall season.

About this time in the fall, we start seeing fewer warblers, and welcome back the Juncos, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and watch for the White-throated Sparrows and Fox Sparrows stop on their way further south. With luck, we will have another good year of finches!

With the shorter days and longer nights, I start to spend more time with a book than with my binoculars. I just finished *The Overstory*, by Richard Powers, and am looking forward to reading *Braiding Sweetgrass*, by Robin Wall Kimmerer, later this month.

If you have book recommendations, I would love to share them with our membership and hope that this spring we will be able to hold a fundraising book swap when we are again able to meet in person. I was blessed with some great reading this summer and can't wait to share those books with all of you.

I hope this fall finds you safe and healthy and that you are able to enjoy these beautiful nights and changing fall colors.

- Kristy Taylor



# CAAS EVENTS

## Monthly Zoom Meetings -

### November 4 – Native Hawaiian Forest Bird Conservation

Join Reina Galvan and Tucker Grigsby as they share their experience working with Native Hawaiian birds and discuss some of the threats that these birds face. They will also discuss recent work aiming to conserve Hawaii's threatened and endangered bird species.

### December 2 – Christmas Bird Count Speaker - CAAS Members

Join CAAS members to learn more about the Capital Area Christmas Bird Counts. Hear about the history of the count, memorable years, rare birds, and how to get involved with this year's count!

# LOCAL EVENTS

### Fenner Apple Butter Tours October 9 & 10

Led by a Fenner tour guide, you will visit the old apple orchard and sit around our apple peeling table to learn about this farm-to-table product, how it is made and how it is tied to Michigander heritage. Participants will also have the opportunity to participate in hands-on demonstrations of community-centered traditions. Tickets are \$15, and available at [mynaturecenter.org](http://mynaturecenter.org)

### Michigan Nature Association Nature at Home Series -

#### Thursday, October 28

Hear from Michigan Tech Research Professor Dr. Rolf Peterson. In "The Wolves and Moose of Isle Royale," Dr. Peterson will provide viewers an update on the latest research taking place on the island, and share stories from his 40-plus years leading the longest continuously running predator-prey study in the world.

#### Thursday, November 18

Hear stories from the field and get a sneak peek at upcoming work in "Conservation Storytelling with Fauna Creative." Their recent film, "The Fight for Flight" has been officially selected at several local film festivals including the 2018 Fresh Coast Film Festival, and the 2019 Freep Film Festival.

To register, visit [michigannature.org](http://michigannature.org)

# MI BIRDS VOLUNTEERS BREAK RECORDS

- *MI Birds & Michigan DNR*

## Volunteers show up in record-breaking numbers to monitor vulnerable Michigan birds

An overcast sky hangs over Houghton Lake Flats South Flooding State Wildlife Area in north-central Michigan as the early morning rays of sunlight sparsely pierce through the clouds. Underneath the pockets of sunshine, Theresa Celusta has already kayaked 2.5 miles through the marshes of the state wildlife area in search of black tern nests.

This spring and summer, a record-setting 689 volunteers spanned across Michigan to find vulnerable bird species, like the black tern, as part of three MI Birds community science programs that track how well birds are responding to local conservation efforts.

"Our volunteers blew us away showing up in record numbers despite the many challenges that the pandemic brought this year," said Erin Rowan, conservation associate for Audubon Great Lakes. "We want to thank each and every one of our volunteers, from the early-morning risers who got up at the crack of dawn to count marsh birds, to the families that made multiple osprey nest visits throughout the summer. Thanks to these volunteers, we will have a better understanding of how Michigan's birds are faring in our region."

## Volunteers help inform Michigan's black Tern Conservation

Audubon Great Lakes, Detroit Audubon, the Michigan DNR and several other partners have been working toward understanding the underlying cause of black tern declines since 2013 and are developing conservation strategies that can help bring these birds back to Michigan's coastal and inland marshes.

This year, 35 volunteers across 13 counties in Michigan volunteered to conduct black tern surveys. Their efforts are helping to identify priority areas for black tern conservation and inform conservation action plans that will guide wetland management at key sites.

Black tern survey volunteer Mark Harder scouted Dingman Marsh Flooding State Wildlife Management Area to mark the location of active colonies and count breeding pairs and newly hatched young.

"Before volunteering, I'd only ever seen a few black terns. While out on the water, I was able to see black terns rest on snags and tree stumps in open water, allowing incredible views as I floated by with the current – often times as close as 20 feet away," said Harder.

## Volunteers Advocate for Birds and the Places They Need

Some of our bird survey volunteers also volunteer their time advocating for birds and the places they need to thrive. Beth Miller, a Marsh Bird Survey and Black Tern Survey volunteer, participated in Audubon's 2021 Seabird Week of Action, where she met with her members of congress to advocate for sustainable fishery practices that would benefit Great Lakes birds like the Black Tern, which spend their winters out at sea. Take action today and urge your Member of Congress to protect America's seabirds and forage fish. Beth also wrote a Letter to the Editor advocating for the passage of the Growing Climate Solutions Act, which will support landowners in adopting sustainable practices like cover cropping, prescribed grazing, and reforestation to help stave off the worst effects of climate change.

"As an Audubon Great Lakes volunteer in nearby Grand Haven, Michigan I know that common-sense solutions like these are necessary to protect our environment for the benefit of birds and people," Miller said.

To learn more about the ways volunteers helped to visit osprey nests and monitor secretive marsh birds, read the full article at -

<https://gl.audubon.org/news/volunteers-show-record-breaking-numbers->



# CAAS MEMBERSHIP

Support community programs with your CAAS Membership. Your membership supports programs in our community and monthly meetings Sept. through June.

**Your membership is more important than ever!** It's time to join or renew your membership! Memberships run the length of the program year, September to August.

## SEPTEMBER 2021 - AUGUST 2022

### Membership Categories

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

To sign up and pay online, visit -  
[capitalareaaudubon.org](http://capitalareaaudubon.org)

If you would like to mail your membership form and payment, please mail to -  
CAAS, PO Box 22065, Lansing, MI 48910

## 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.*

### 2021-2022 CAAS Officers

President	Kristy Taylor
Vice President	Julia Spalding
Secretary	Mike Moquin
Treasurer	Michael Caterino
Membership	Richard Yarsevich

Editor & Facebook	Kristy Taylor
Publicity & Hospitality	Sandra Conn
Field Trip Coordinator	Mike Moquin
Program Coordinator	Julia Spalding
<b>Historian</b>	<b>Open</b>
Website	Roger Wolf

### 2021-2022 CAAS Board of Directors

John Baumgartner  
Michael Caterino  
Sandra Conn  
Patricia Deventer  
Mike Moquin  
Julia Spalding  
Kristy Taylor  
Richard Yarsevich

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

## RUFFED GROUSE WEST NILE SURVEY

*WEST NILE VIRUS SURVEY IN  
RUFFED GROUSE BEGINS THIRD  
STUDY YEAR - MI DNR*

The study of West Nile virus in ruffed grouse will resume this fall in Michigan, after a one-year pause due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In partnership with Minnesota and Wisconsin natural resources departments, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources began this multiyear study in 2018 to better understand the prevalence and distribution of the virus in ruffed grouse in the Upper Great Lakes region.

Results from previous study years [4] suggest that while the virus is present in the Great Lakes region, grouse exposed to the virus can survive and develop antibodies as an immune response. In 2019, 20 of the 281 samples collected tested positive for exposure to the virus. Viral antibodies were confirmed in seven birds and likely in 13 additional birds. Only one juvenile male tested positive for the virus. In 2018, 28 of 213 samples were positive for exposure to the virus, with viral antibodies confirmed in nine birds and likely in 19. Four samples were positive for the virus.

"Though the virus can impact the ruffed grouse population, the impact appears to be minimal in Michigan," said Julie Melotti, a laboratory technician at the DNR Wildlife Disease Laboratory. "In the Upper Peninsula, the overall health of the grouse population is more dependent on high-quality habitat, such as areas of regenerating aspen stands near stands of mature timber. In these areas, grouse are more likely to be healthier and have stronger immune responses to disease, inclement weather and other limiting factors." Sample kits have been distributed to



grouse hunters in key West Nile virus surveillance areas to collect samples for viral analysis. The samples will be analyzed for antibodies, which indicate exposure to the virus, and heart tissue will be examined to screen for current presence of it. Sample kits were not distributed in 2020 due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, but recently have been distributed to Michigan hunters for data collection during the 2021 season. Hunters who have kits remaining from past seasons are welcome to use them and submit additional samples. Hunters who provide email contact information with their samples will be notified of their results next fall.

West Nile virus was first detected in ruffed grouse in Michigan in 2002. Transmitted by mosquitoes, the virus can cause inflammation of the brain, brain lining, and spinal cord and heart lesions in infected birds. Grouse that have contracted the virus may fly erratically, act abnormally, or appear sick, thin and in poor condition. However, these symptoms are not always present in infected grouse. If you find a bird that appears thin or sick, please report your observations to the Wildlife Disease Lab at 517-336-5030 or through the online reporting system Eyes in the Field. [5]

While most humans that contract West Nile virus are generally symptom-free, about one in five will develop a fever with other flu-like symptoms. While spending time outdoors during periods when mosquitoes are active, the DNR recommends using an insect repellent or keeping exposed skin covered. To learn more about the West Nile virus study in ruffed grouse or about the virus in Michigan, see the West Nile Virus and Ruffed Grouse FAQ. [6]

For the full article, visit -  
<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/MIDNR/bulletins/2eda682>