

Habitat Happenings

SAVING BIRDS THRU HABITAT NEWSLETTER

April, 2012, Volume 11, Number 1

From the Director's Desk

by Kay Charter



Tufted Titmouse

Photo by Kristie Moore Strange

Dear supporters,

This spring saw the second annual gift of 50,000 jack pine trees for the Kirtland's warbler recovery effort in West Branch, Michigan, by Fairmount Minerals, an international sand mining company. This year, for the sixth time, Fairmount also provided funds for thousands of native trees and shrubs for local habitat improvements. The plant purchases are part of the company's carbon mitigation project. Conservation Resource Alliance biologist, Eric Ellis, selected and ordered the plants. In July, we will recognize Fairmount and its subsidiaries as our Conservation Partner of the Year. We are proud to be a part of this ongoing effort.

Be sure to check out our upcoming five-part Speakers Series, held on the third Thursday of each month beginning in May, ending in September. Plan to attend at least one, if not all in this terrific series. Also, mark your calendars to join us at Gallery 22 in Suttons Bay, on August 9th for an art show and reception benefiting Saving Birds Thru Habitat.

Our partnering efforts continue to grow. This year's efforts include a butterfly garden at Westwoods School in Traverse City, a significant role in the second Leelanau Peninsula BirdFest, and the development of Sandia Wetlands in West Texas – in many ways my personal favorite. You'll find the article about this great private gift to migrating birds by ranchers Don and Ellen Weinacht at the top of page 3. When I visited the new wetlands in February, Ellen looked at me and said, "This is all your fault, you know."

If anyone else out there would like to develop bird-friendly habitat of any kind, and blame it on this organization, we'll be only too happy to take that responsibility.



Letter from our President:

Greetings fellow members,

What an exciting winter we had up here in Leelanau County. The irruption of snowy owls had everyone a-twitter. The largest group seen was six near Woolsey Airport by Howell and Otis Roads. It seemed as though no matter

where you were there was a snowy sitting on a fence post or in a field. We're lucky to be here where the fields resemble their nesting areas in the tundra.

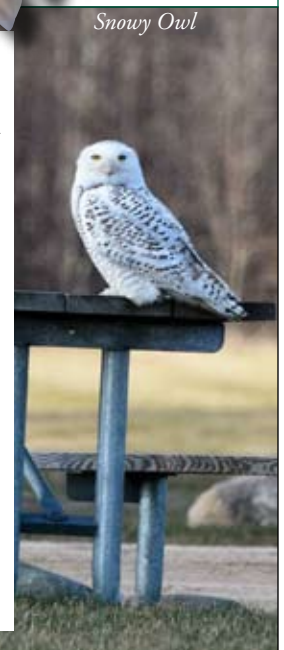
Leelanau County and our neighboring counties are not just good for the snowy owl but many beautiful birds. We have a variety of habitat for the passerines to make it a perfect stopping off spot to fuel up for their travels to northern nesting areas, Canada and the Arctic. Lucky we are that so many stay and make this their nest area of choice.

Gina Erb



Snowy Owl

The massive influx of snowies into the lower 48 states (and even Hawaii) is believed to be the result of an historically successful nesting season in the arctic due to a lemming population boom. Lemmings are a prime food source for the owls. After the young fledged, mature birds claimed the best hunting grounds, forcing the youngsters to move further south. From January through March, there were many reports of snowy owls in Leelanau County, Michigan. The bird on the picnic table was photographed at Northport's Woolsey Airport by Ed Ketterer.



Saving Birds Thru Habitat: North and South

By Greg Butcher



Greg Butcher birding at Brigantine National Wildlife Refuge in New Jersey.

In December of last year, I took a new position as the Migratory Species Coordinator for Forest Service International Programs. I love my new job because I am asked to promote programs and partnerships for conservation.

And one of the best aspects of my job is that I get to partner with Saving Birds Thru Habitat in a brand new way. I know that the Bobolink is the organization's logo, and that SBTH is doing a lot of work to improve Michigan habitats for Bobolinks. We partner with the organization by supporting the Southern Cone Grassland Alliance in South America because that alliance is working to save the habitat where the bobolink spends the nonbreeding season – in Argentina and Paraguay.

We all know that bobolinks are losing breeding habitat in Michigan because there just aren't that many native grasslands left – and the hayfields they have moved to are often cut too frequently to allow for successful reproduction.

But bobolinks face problems on the wintering grounds as well. The Pampas and other native grasslands in Argentina and Paraguay are being replaced by tree plantations and soybean fields. The Grasslands Alliance is working with landowners to improve the profitability of traditional

grass-fed beef to resist the loss of traditional pastures to more intensive uses.

By working on both the breeding grounds and the wintering grounds, we have a chance to save the bobolink throughout its range – although we will have to be on the look-out for problems during migration as well.

In my previous jobs, I focused mostly on birds, but now I get to work on other migratory species as well. Monarch butterflies breed in the United States and Canada – including in Michigan – and winter in California and Mexico. So, to preserve the Monarch and its migration, we need to work in all three countries. We have a Monarch Joint Venture to help

do just that.

What I didn't realize before I started my job was that some species of dragonflies migrate too. So, to address them, we started a Migratory Dragonfly Partnership. One of the first projects of the partnership will be Dragonfly Pond Watch, a volunteer-based program to investigate the annual movements of two major migratory dragonfly species in North America: common green darner (*Anax junius*) and black saddlebags (*Tamea lacerata*). By visiting the same wetland or pond site on a regular basis, participants will be placed to note the arrival of

migrant dragonflies moving south in the fall or north in the spring, as well as to record when the first resident adults of these species emerge in the spring. To learn more about how to participate, visit www.xerces.org/dragonfly-migration/pondwatch.

Greg Butcher is past Director of Bird Conservation for National Audubon, and he has been a member of Saving Birds Thru Habitat for eight years. He will be the keynote speaker for the upcoming Leelanau Peninsula BirdFest. He will also be the leader on a several field trips; check the website to see which ones he will be leading (www.mibirdfest.com). Greg's favorite North American bird is the Baltimore oriole.



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Kay Charter

A New Oasis for Birds in West Texas

by Kay Charter



Sandia Wetlands in Texas

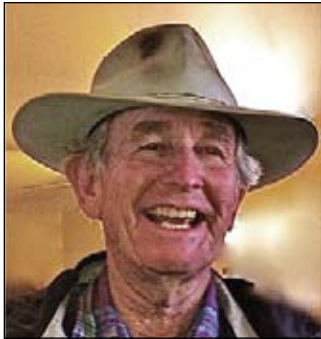
Ellen Weinacht and I first met while I was on assignment for “Texas Parks and Wildlife Magazine.” My article was to be about birding opportunities in Ellen’s small town of Balmorhea in the far western part of the state. The contract had come with a suggestion by my editor that I contact her. “She is a local booster,” he had said. “She might be able to help you.”

She invited me into her office, offered me a seat, leaned back in her swivel chair and asked in a rich Texas drawl, “Now, what can I do for you?”

The editor was mistaken in his belief that Ellen might offer assistance for my article; she knew little about the birds in her area. But that was about to change. Ellen and I became good friends, and over time, my passion became her interest. Then it became her passion, too.

Ellen and her husband, Don, live on a large cattle ranch homesteaded by his family in the 1800’s. Like most people who spend

their lives on the land, Don was familiar with the many species that occurred there. One morning he drove me to the historical family homestead in the foothills of the Davis Mountains. The roof was gone, but the walls still stood. Roosting on an exposed beam was a long-eared owl.



Don Weinacht

Two years ago, Don and Ellen visited Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge in New Mexico. They were inspired by the network of wetlands supporting tens of thousands of sandhill cranes, snow geese, and hundreds of ducks and waders.

During a phone call after their visit, she said, “I want one of those!”

Last year work began on the Weinachts’ Sandia Wetlands, a three-pond wetland complex, where water levels can be controlled in each to maintain the proper depth for shorebirds. We stopped to visit the Weinachts in February. What had once been a stretch of flat, bone-dry desert had been excavated to create the ponds, which were full of water

from nearby Sandia Springs. A single greater yellowlegs, a shorebird rare in those parts, waded across the back of the pond furthest from the parking area. Although on private land, this wonderful project will be open to the public. A parking lot has already been added, along with a picnic table. An informational kiosk is planned for the site.

Saving Birds Thru Habitat is proud to be a consulting partner in the project. Tierra Grande Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists are working partners. Don and Ellen Weinacht, whose stated mission is to provide a place that will serve to “educate and demonstrate the ability to create and enhance habitat for the benefit of wildlife through private resources,” are the crucial link in an effort to provide for birds and other wildlife.

The past few decades have brought drought to west Texas; with the development of Sandia Wetlands, many migrating birds will now have a much needed avian stopover site in the middle of this arid part of the country. Kudos to the Weinachts for their great gift to our birds and our natural environment.



Thank You to the Following Donors for Their Honorary or Memorial Gifts:

Kathy and Gene Garthe in honor of **Gina and John Erb Porter and Anita Abbot** in honor of **Barbara Abbott and Larry Hauser**

Tom and Judy Oetinger in honor of **Kay Charter**

Grossman, Cohen and Diamond in of honor **John and Gina Erb**

Kathie and Jack Snedeker in honor of **Gina and John Erb**

One Eleven Group at Smith Barney in honor of **John and Gina Erb**

Barbara Enders in memory of **Larry James Enders**

Cherryll and Bud Frick in memory of **Bertha Oliva Villalon**

David and Judith Pohlod in memory of **Mary Woolford**

Jan Wander in memory of **Keith Wander**

Elaine Fredrickson in memory of **George Fredrickson**

Berthica Fitzsimons honoring **Cherryll Frick’s** birthday

Photo Credit Kristie Moore Strange

SBTH 2012 Calendar of Events

All programs will be held at SBTH Habitat Discovery Center, 5020 North Putnam, unless otherwise noted.
Call 231-271-3738 for further details or questions.

May 12th, Saturday, 2 PM:

Presentation: "Birds and Bugs and Blossoms."

As part of the area wide Plant Heritage Week, SBTH Executive Director Kay Charter will present a PowerPoint program about the crucial relationship between native plants, insects and birds. Following the presentation there will be a hike on adjacent Charter Sanctuary, which has been managed for 19 years to optimize habitat for at-risk migratory and nesting birds. During the hike, we will check out which migratory birds have arrived from the Tropics for nesting, and will explore the relationships discussed in Charter's program.



Beaver Island, Michigan

May 17th, Thursday, 7 PM

First in Annual Speakers Series: Pam Grassmick, "Aliens Are Coming. No - It's Not ET!"

When fourth generation Beaver Islander Pam Grassmick became aware that Phragmites australis was seriously invading her beloved island, she took action immediately. Mobilizing other concerned islanders, she spearheaded a movement to manage this invasive alien plant. Join her for an informative program on how Beaver Island residents are dealing with "Phrag" and other noxious plants. SBTH has worked with Beaver Island on its invasive species efforts. Sixty dollars per person for all five events or \$15.00 for each event.

May 17th - 26th
Native Plant Sale

Four Season Nursery, 7557 E. Harry's Road, Traverse City. Improve your backyard habitat for birds by incorporating native trees, shrubs, grasses and wildflowers. Saturday, May 19th, SBTH will participate as an exhibitor in an all day event.

May 19th, Saturday, 9 AM

Bird Hike:

Lighthouse West/State Park bird hike with Leelanau Conservancy trail stewards, Ed and Linda Ketterer and SBTH Executive Director, Kay Charter. We may see a few late migrants, but most species will be on territory for nesting, singing their little hearts out to attract mates and discourage competitors.

May 21st, Monday, 10 AM

Docent Training: "Where Do Birds Nest?"

The public is invited to join this program by SBTH Executive Director, Kay Charter, about where birds choose to build their nests and how they construct them. A hike on Charter Sanctuary follows. Please be aware that, for the protection of our breeding birds, we will not approach nests closely, but will rather watch through binoculars.

May 26th, Saturday, 10 AM

Bird Hike

Join SBTH Executive Director and Charter Sanctuary owner, Kay Charter for a hike through the sanctuary.

May 30th - June 3rd

Leelanau Peninsula Bird Fest

(website: www.mibirdfest.com) Festival begins in May.



June 9th, 23rd, 30th, Saturdays at 10 AM

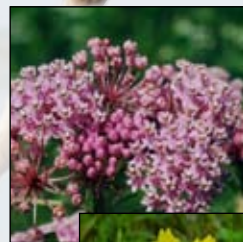
Bird Hikes

Join SBTH Executive Director and Charter Sanctuary owner, Kay Charter for a hike through the sanctuary on each of these mornings.

June 21st, Thursday, 7 PM

Second in SBTH Speakers Series: "Design Your Garden With Native Plants"

with Gail Ingraham. Gail Ingraham started Bellwether Gardens in 1984 with her husband, Bart. A Master Gardener and Garden Designer, she has taught gardening classes at Northwestern Michigan College and at Bellwether for 27 years. She also teaches the flower gardening section of the Master Gardener Program in Leelanau County. Gail has received the Garden Design Award from the National Perennial Plant Association. Tickets \$15.00 per person.



Tree Swallows



June 30th, Saturday, 2 PM

Presentation: "Flying Cigars and Helicopters."

Meet the bodacious and the pugnacious, the apodous (without feet) and the vicious avian citizens you might see in your own backyard. Though closely related, chimney swifts and ruby-throated hummingbirds are not two peas in a pod. Join SBTH Executive Director, Kay Charter, and Bobbie Poor, Leelanau Conservancy Docent, as we peek into the lifestyles of these two amazing birds.



Showy Lady Slipper

July 19th, Thursday, 7 PM

Third in SBTH Speakers Series: "The Orchids of Leelanau."

Orchid enthusiast Chuck Dickerson and his wife, Janet, have been observing, photographing and nurturing native orchids in Leelanau County for more than 20 years. Of the more than 30,000 orchids in the world, at least 35 call the Grand Traverse Area home. Chuck will discuss which orchids can be found in our area, which are decreasing in numbers and which are increasing. One species, not previously reported here before 2010, is now present in good numbers near the shore of Lake Leelanau. Join us to find out which one. Tickets \$15.00 per person.

July 27th, Friday, 9 - 11 AM

Native Plant Sale at SBTH

Vern Stephens and Sue Tangora, owners of Designs by Nature in Laingsburg, Michigan, return to offer a wide selection of native plants from their outstanding nursery. Sue and Vern will answer questions about which conditions are best for each plant. Vern will also answer any questions about prairie installations or small native meadows.

August 9th, Thursday, 5 - 7 PM

Art Show Fundraiser for Saving Birds Thru Habitat

Art Show hosted by Gallery 22, 5046 S. West Bayshore Drive, Suite 1A, Suttons Bay, MI.

August 16th, Thursday, 7 PM

Fourth in SBTH Speaker's Series: "Conservation on the Other Side of the World: Working for the Environment in Mongolia."

Conservation Resource Alliance Biologist Eric Ellis spent three years living in Mongolia working as a Peace Corps Volunteer, translator, and fly fishing/horse riding guide. Eric will present an overview of the many fascinating ecosystems and species of Mongolia, current threats to the integrity of these systems, and the local people who are working to protect them. Eric will also have articles of traditional Mongolian clothing and other items of interest for his presentation. Tickets \$15.00 per person.

September 8th, Saturday, 10 AM

Prairie Walk at Charter Sanctuary.

Come along on a walk through the 30-acre prairie installed by sanctuary owners Jim and Kay Charter. The Charters will share what steps they have taken to install their prairie, and how their avian visitor population has improved as it has developed.



Lighthouse West Natural Area at the Tip of Leelanau Peninsula

September 20th, Thursday, 7 PM

Fifth in our Speaker's Series. "Leelanau's Changing Landscape."

Join Leelanau Conservancy Executive Director Brian Price to learn how much our county's landscape has changed over time in response to post-glacial conditions. Brian will examine the establishment of native communities of plants and animals, as well as the changes brought by intensive settlement after 1850. Tickets \$15.00 per person.



Damaoisele Crane



Hoopoe



PLANT SALE AND SEMINAR

SBTH is a participant in the May 19th event at Four Season Nursery.



Plant Michigan Plant Native™



Prairie Smoke & Beardstongue



Big Bluestem & Indian Grass

Prairie Rose blooming in July



NW Michigan Wildflower & Native Plant Sale

May 17 thru May 26

Four Season Nursery will be hosting the second annual **Native Plant Sale**. All potted native plants will be on sale. Our selection is extensive.

On Saturday, May 19th, we celebrate natives with Speakers, Exhibitors & lunch: Programs start at 11:00am

Our Speakers:

- ◆ Tom Ford: talking about butterflies and their host plant connections.
 - ◆ Jim Gardzulis & Tom Ford: will be sharing their knowledge of shade-loving woodland plants, including spring ephemerals and ferns.
-
- ◆ Lunch prepared by: Fieldstone Deli
 - ◆ Fresh Brewed Tea by: Light of Day Organics

A \$20 Registration fee for the Saturday 19th event covers lunch. Deadline to register is May 12th
Call 231.932.7400 for reservations



Gray-headed Cone Flower

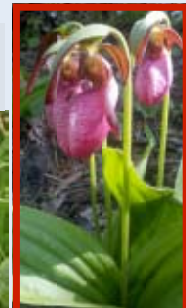


The long blooming False Sunflower



Serviceberry blooming in April...spring must be here!

The elusive Pink Lady Slipper



Four Season Nursery supports the following Organizations



Go to www.fourseasonnursery.biz

Click on '[Calendar Link](#)' for more information on seminars and sales for the 2012 season.



Designs by Nature Native Plant Sale

Friday, July 27, 2012
9:00 AM to 11:00 AM
SBTH Discovery Center



2012 Plant List

Grasses:

Little Bluestem
Big Bluestem
Indian Grass
Switch Grass
Prairie Dropseed
Sideoats Grama
June Grass



Wildflowers

Bergamot
Black-Eyed Susan
Blue Vervain
Boneset
Butterfly Weed
Cardinal Flower
Columbine
Compass Plant
Culver's Root
Cup Plant
False Boneset
False Dragonhead
Foxglove Beard Tongue
Gray Headed Coneflower
Golden Alexanders
Great Blue Lobelia
Hairy Beard Tongue
Hoary Vervain

Horsemint
Ironweed
Joe Pye Weed
Lead Plant
New Jersey Tea
Nodding Wild Onion
New England Aster
Marsh Blazing Star
Prairie Coreopsis
Prairie Dock
Prairie Smoke
Pale Purple Coneflower
Purple Coneflower
Queen of the Prairie
Rattlesnake Master
Rosin Weed
Rough Blazing Star
Round Leaf Ragwort
Sand Tickseed

Showy Goldenrod
Sky Blue Aster
Spiderwort
Stiff Goldenrod
Swamp Milkweed
Sweet Black-Eyed Susan
Thimbleweed
Turtlehead
Western Sunflower
White Wild Indigo
Wild Lupine
Wild Senna
Woodland Sunflower
Zig Zag Goldenrod
Blue Eyed Grass
*Pollinator Gardens for Bees
and Butterflies*

**Saving Birds Thru Habitat gratefully accepts gifts in honor or in memory of others.
When making such a donation, please let us know who should be informed of your gift.**

**Yes! I want to support Saving Birds Thru Habitat with a
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Common Yellowthroat (\$100) | <input type="checkbox"/> Bobolink (\$250) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Piping Plover (\$500) | <input type="checkbox"/> Loon (\$1000) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (\$ _____) | |

Nest Builders: Those who make an annual pledge at the Bobolink level (\$250) or higher

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Questions? Please call (231) 271-3738 or email:
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Thank You!



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Saving-Birds-Thru-Habitat

If you would like to receive your newsletter as a PDF via email, please let us know at: bobolink3@prodigy.net. Be sure to include your email address. Electronic versions will reduce paper consumption and will save the organization printing and mailing costs.

The mission of Saving Birds Thru Habitat is to protect, enhance, and restore habitat for North American birds, and to educate people of all ages about this important mission and how to achieve it. Our goal is to improve habitat for migrating birds one backyard at a time.



SBTH Member Opposes Use of Invasive Trees

SBTH member Mike Davis was one of those who raised a voice against the Traverse City Downtown Development Authority's plan to replace diseased ash trees with potentially invasive Bradford pear trees. The DDA heard Mike and the others, and opted for reducing the number of a potentially invasive species and adding twenty-five native trees, including chokecherry and hophornbeam.

Leave a Legacy for Migrating Birds.



Please help us continue our work on behalf of warblers, orioles, buntings and other at-risk species by joining those who have included Saving Birds Thru Habitat in their estate planning. Bequests of any amount will be gratefully accepted.