

Habitat Happenings

SAVING BIRDS THRU HABITAT NEWSLETTER

November, 2013, Volume 12, Number 2



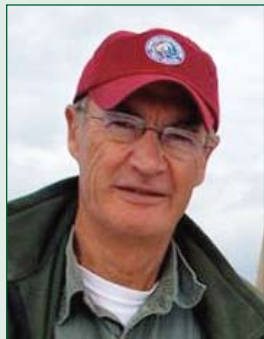
From the Director's Desk

by Kay Charter

Ted Williams was first person I called when we received our non-profit approval from the IRS in the spring of 2002. A dedicated conservation journalist, Ted is the long time writer of Audubon

magazine's Incite column and conservation columnist for Fly Rod & Reel. He and I became acquainted when I wrote a letter to the editor of Audubon years ago about one of his Incite columns.

Over time, Ted and I became friends. He wrote a cover comment for my book, *For the Love of Birds*, and subsequently purchased a dozen of the bluebird nest boxes featured in one of my chapters. He and his wife, Donna, invited me to stay in their home during my 2007 speaking tour of New England.



Ted Williams

One of my presentations, facilitated by Donna, was for Massachusetts Audubon's Broad Meadow Brook where she was advocacy coordinator. Ted and Donna both attended. He then wrote not one, but two articles for our fall newsletter: One was about the program itself and the other was about the issue of herbicide use, which was discussed by attendees.

From the time I made that excited call to Ted telling him that SBTH was a certified, bona fide nonprofit organization, he and Donna have been dedicated and generous supporters. Last week, we received another nice check from him, and when I called to thank him, he said, "Kay your organization is one of our best investments."

We all like to hear praise for the work we do. But Ted's compliment isn't just for your Executive Director; rather it has been earned by everyone who cares about and has supported SBTH. Whether you have served as a Board Member, a volunteer, a supporting member or an in-kind donor, everything you have done has helped us earn this coveted comment from a highly-respected journalist who knows a good thing when he sees it.

Thank you, Ted. And thanks to each of you who have supported us in every way you can.



Letter from our President:

by Gina Erb

I hope you all got out to enjoy the beautiful fall colors this season, they were spectacular! Don't let chilly weather keep you inside, there are plenty of wonderful days ahead so get out and take a nice leisurely walk. Look to see what birds are hanging around through the winter in the woods, along the beach or in a field. Your bird watching is not over just because the hummingbirds and warblers are gone.

While most of our feathered friends have flown south, there are many colorful and fun birds that hang around...cardinals, chickadees, tufted titmice, nuthatches, woodpeckers, buffleheads, ducks, geese, goldeneyes, eagles and many, many more. Hopefully these birds will get you through the winter months. While you're at it, look forward to next migration season...get yourself acquainted with eBird on your mobile device...make plans to attend the 4th annual Leelanau Peninsula Bird Festival...gear up for SBTH's docent-led hikes up at Lighthouse West and Charter Sanctuary and the new Sleeping Bear Birding Trail...watch for our calendar of programs at the "Bird House". We'll have a full schedule of activities for you in our Spring Newsletter.

Let me take this opportunity to thank two of our Board Members for their service, Rick Evans and Gary Siegrist. Both have been valuable members in helping the Board with grants, by-law revisions, bird hikes, and education ideas. Rick also served as Secretary for the past two years and loved being a docent with the school children. Gary, who traveled from downstate to attend meetings and events, shared his expertise from previous Board experience and his work at the Dahlem Conservancy near Jackson, Michigan. Many thanks to you both...we'll see you on the birding trail.

Our 2013 Season was full of wonderful events: the Leelanau Peninsula Bird Festival, partnering with the Dennis Museum for the Birds of Paradise Exhibit, our Speaker Series, bird hikes and our 10th Anniversary Party to name a few... we'll have more exciting programs in 2014. Your support is an investment in helping us teach children and adults about the wonders of our birds and the habitats they depend on to survive. Thank you!

Website: www.savingbirds.org

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Black-billed Cuckoo

This year's Leelanau Peninsula Birding Festival saw roughly the same number of participants as the first two. Maryland resident, Robert Parsons (far right with spotting scope) said during the Kirkland's Warbler bus trip: "As someone who has birded all over the world, I really enjoyed the small town hospitality and friendliness of the individuals involved with this festival. The addition of the Kirkland Warbler experience not only provided excellent opportunities to see this fascinating bird, but to learn and participate more in the successful efforts to expand both its range and numbers. A great experience."



Our Executive Director, Kay Charter, finally got to experience Birding by Tall Ship. The sail on a cold, blustery day was wonderful. Years ago, Kay enjoyed reading sailing stories by seafaring adventurers like Richard Henry Dana (*Two Years Before the Mast*), Joshua Slocum (*Sailing Alone Around the World*) and Sir Francis Chichester (*Gypsy Moth Circles the World*). She told Inland Seas Educational Association Executive Director Tom Kelly that the sail was the closest she would ever come to the kind of excitement those early explorers experienced. "It was on my bucket list," she said, "and I didn't know it until this sail."

Birding by Tall Ship and the Kirkland's Warbler bus trip are both on the agenda for the 2014 festival. The website is up at www.mibirdfest.com. Registration begins in mid-January.



Welcome to SBTH's New Board Members



Sheen Watkins – Sheen is Vice-president, U.S. Operations at Kelly Services, inc. She is looking forward to contributing to the board as she considers it a privilege to be able to give back and protect the sights and sounds of nature that provide so much enjoyment to her and others. There's an audience out there that loves nature; but many in that audience may not realize that they can make a difference with one native planting at a time. It's also about building a network with others, and she sees social media as a way to promote a straightforward message across a diverse, far-reaching audience. Many of the photographs in this edition were taken by Sheen. Check out her nature photography at www.sheensnaturephotography.com.



Dave Watkins – Dave is a retired educator with Detroit Public Schools. He was inspired to action a few years ago after reading the book *For the Love of Birds*. Through reading

this book, he saw a couple putting it all on the line and making a difference. It wasn't until he was on a guided tour at Saving Birds Thru Habitat that he realized he, too, had an opportunity to give back to the birds that have brought him so much joy over the years. Dave will be helping us to further develop our educational outreach.



Mick Seymour – Mick Seymour is the founder and president of Empire Value Advisors in Glen Arbor. He is an avid and able birder, and spends as much time as he can birding the area in and around Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. He is very interested in habitat conservation for birds, and has plans to include a native plants garden for birds and butterflies in his commercial landscaping. He is co-founder of the Sleeping Bear Birding Trail, and somehow manages to keep the eBird data from that trail up to date for the blog on the trail website. Mick is also the Breeding Birds Survey Coordinator for the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.

SBTH's 10th Anniversary Party

September 7th, 2013



Glen Chown, Executive Director of the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, and Greg Butcher, International Migratory Species Coordinator, U.S. Forest Service, were our speakers. Both gave high marks for our efforts and praised our achievements.



John Erb bids on Brian Zimmerman's landscape consult (yes, he won the bid).



Co-founder Jim Charter enjoys messages



Brian Zimmerman and Ed Ketterer put heads together - we are sure they were discussing native plants landscaping.



Dave Barrons was auctioneer – raised \$1475 on our bird hikes/ M-22 sign combos.


Conservation Partners



L-R: Ellen Weinacht, Kay Charter, and Eric Ellis

On Thursday, July 25th, Don and Ellen Weinacht of Balmorhea, Texas were recognized by Saving Birds Thru Habitat as Conservation Partners of the Year for efforts on their West Texas Ranch.

Three years ago, they began work on a five-acre wetland restoration, which would benefit overwintering and migrating waterfowl, waders, shorebirds and songbirds. Ellen Weinacht flew in from El Paso to receive the award and said during the presentation that Saving Birds Thru Habitat was the inspiration for the project. She expressed appreciation to the organization for its role as a consulting partner. Thanks to the Weinachts, many migrating birds now have a much-needed stopover site in the middle of an arid part of the country.

Eric Ellis was also honored as a Conservation Partner of the year. Ellis is a Wildlife Biologist for Conservation Resource Alliance, a Traverse City based nonprofit organization that focuses on habitat restoration and mitigation. He and SBTH Executive Director Kay Charter have worked on numerous conservation projects over the past seven years, including a significant annual native tree and shrub giveaway, which is underwritten by international sand mining company, Fairmount Minerals. 



More News...

Kirtland's Warbler – A Success Story


This summer, population of the endangered Kirtland's Warbler reached an astonishing high of more than 2000 nesting pairs. While that may not seem like such a large number, this is a species that was once believed by some to be headed for certain extinction. Having exceeded the numbers established by the US Fish and Wildlife Service when it was listed, this beautiful bird is now ready to be removed from the Endangered Species list. However, since this is a conservation dependent species (meaning it will always need the care of humans), it won't simply be cut loose to fend for itself. The Kirtland's Warbler Alliance is the nonprofit group that is working to establish the manner in which the bird will continue to receive the protection it deserves. Kay Charter, our Executive Director, is a member of the Alliance.

Beaver Island Birding Trail

For the past several years, SBTH has conducted a spring birding trip on Beaver Island for students of the local school. Islanders are now interested in establishing a birding trail, similar to the Sleeping Bear Birding Trail. SBTH is the lead partner in the development of this trail and will facilitate website development and an informational rack card. With nineteen confirmed or probable nesting warbler species, this beautiful island will soon become a top birding spot in the state.

The Beaver Island Birding Trail website will be launched after the first of the year, and a weekend of birding and speakers over Memorial Day will celebrate its development. Speakers from around the state will share their views on island birding and conservation, and outstanding field trip leaders will be brought in to lead birding trips. Saving Birds is pleased to play a major role in the development of this great new birding trail.

New Optics for Visiting Students

With the help of three different grants (from the Feather Foundation, the Midwest Birding Symposium and the French Foundation), we were able to purchase 30 new pairs of binoculars for visiting students. Not only will these new binoculars replace damaged pairs of those we currently use, the optics are much improved since the time we purchased our original supply. And that will enhance our young visitors' field trip experiences at Saving Birds. 

We believe the most important thing we do to carry our mission forward into the future is educate children about birds and bird conservation. This year, more than 350 youngsters participated in field trips and other experiences both at our nature center and off site.



More than seventy Glen Lake fifth graders came to Omena in May to learn about birds, and to join guided field trips on Charter Sanctuary. Here they follow their leader into the building for an interactive program, beginning with "What Makes a Bird a Bird?"



This year we had the privilege of partnering with Dennon's Museum for their Birds of Paradise Exhibition. We hosted two family day events. Here a family "flies through" our Great Migration game on the grounds next to the building.



One of the most rewarding aspects of our habitat work with international sand mining company, Fairmount Minerals, has been the response of many workers to our educational efforts. During the eight years we have been involved with this company, we have certified nine of their sites for good bird habitat, mostly in Great Lakes States. A friendly competition has grown up between the sites as to which hosts the most birds. For some, that competition has led to efforts to snap bird photos that would make it into the pages of our newsletter. Here are just a few:



Nestling Bank Swallows at Best Sand in Chardon Ohio. Photo by Joe Dalhausen.



All other photos were selected from a raft of shots taken by Chris Blakely at Wexford Sand in Wexford County, Michigan: Singing Eastern Meadowlark (meadowlarks nest on the site).



Migrating Trumpeter Swan. Photo by Chris Blakely.



Migrating Greater Yellowlegs. Photo by Chris Blakely.

Saving Birds Thru Habitat

Membership List 2013

SBTH Fields, photo by Suzanne Sudekum

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Donors \$250 and up:

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Northern Cardinal

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 When making such a donation, please let us know who should be informed of your gift.**

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We Appreciate the Following Memorial and Honorary Gifts:

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Barb and Ed Reinert In honor of **Gina Erb**
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Cedar Waxwing

In memory of **Bo:**
Gina Erb
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Many thanks to our in-kind donors:

Cook Enterprises	Ann Hoopfer – building cleaning
Kent Holton	Let a Story Be Told, Jennifer Strauss
Enerdyne	Brian Zimmerman & Associates
Four Season Nursery	Designs by Nature

Photographers:

Ken Scott	Sheen Watkins Nature Photography
Jim Stevenson	

Thanks to the following for volunteering much time and effort on our database:

Ann Davey
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 Jeff Kingery



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Questions? Please call (231) 271-3738 or email: bobolink3@prodigy.net

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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.

What's in a Name?

Ten years ago, more than 70 people pitched in to help erect the building that has served us so well as a nature center. Our helpers from Omena tagged the building "the bird house." For ten years, it has been known as the Habitat Discovery Center. Now, we have decided it's time to honor those men, and their work, by adopting the name they affectionately bestowed. So from here on, when you read about one of our events in the local press, you will be invited to join us not at the Habitat Discovery Center, but at The Bird House.

