

Habitat Happenings

SAVING BIRDS THRU HABITAT NEWSLETTER

December, 2017, Volume 16, Number 2



Leelanau Goes Native

One third of North America's birds are currently at risk of extinction. Native bees and butterflies are similarly at risk. Although tragic, this is not reason to descend into gloom and doom. Rather the situation is a call to action for those who care about the future for all of our wildlife.


"Leelanau Goes Native" is a new program to educate and raise awareness among Leelanau County landowners of this serious decline in birds, pollinators and other wildlife. The majority of these declines can be traced to habitat loss – either directly through development or indirectly through the spread of introduced floral and faunal species. Healthy habitats are comprised of native plants, which we are losing to displacement by invasive species or replacement by horticultural plants. Birds depend heavily on native insects, especially when

feeding their young. Those insects, including our essential pollinators, depend on native plantings to reproduce.

The components of this program are to:

- Certify all Leelanau County-owned properties
- Certify at least 5% of private lands as bird habitat.
- Certify State and National Parks.
- Certify U. S. Forest
- Certify Leelanau Conservancy lands.
- Involve at least three Leelanau County schools in the project.
- Persuade at least five Leelanau County townships to adopt native plant ordinances for commercial developments.

- Include the fact that the Leelanau Conservation District only sells native plants
- Create a digital map showing all certified properties in Leelanau County.
- Create pollinator "islands" on the hillside at the Leelanau County building.
- Create electronic "pin" mapping of certified properties (no addresses).
- Present programs for the public throughout Leelanau County in conjunction with our partnering organizations.

Partners for this program include: Saving Birds Thru Habitat, Leelanau County, Leelanau Conservation District, Master Gardeners, Leelanau Parks and Recreation, and Invasive Species Network. 

Website: www.savingbirds.org

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Kay Charter

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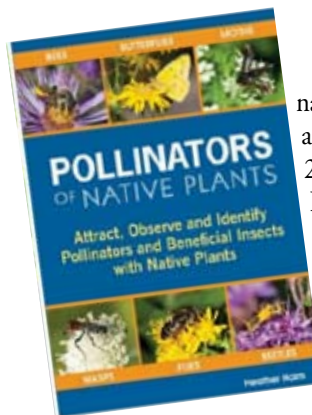
Honorary Board Member: Doug Tallamy


Advisor to the Board: Dr. Greg Butcher

Technical Advisor: David Dister

Edited by: Kathie Snedeker,
Kay Charter

Check Out Our Experts for Next Year's Conservation Workshop



Dawn Vezina from Organization for Bat Conservation, and native bee expert and author Heather Holm, will join us for our all day workshop on Saturday, June 23, 2018. Dawn will bring live bats, and Heather will sign copies of her books about attracting and providing for native bees. We expect this workshop to fill early, so please mark your calendars now and reserve your spot as soon as you can after the middle of March. 



Ronald Brown Academy Program – Fourth Year

Praise for our program from Ronald Brown Academy principal, Tina Brown:

“The SBTH field trip program at RBA provides our urban students a chance to see and explore the outdoors in a positive way. This program aligns with our state science standards and touches on the other core subject areas as well as this is an across the curriculum program. The field trips and classroom presentations are very beneficial especially for our kinesthetic (hands on learners) students as this provides them an active hands-on learning environment. Our students are exposed to meaningful learning that they would never be able to receive if it were not for this program. I cannot thank the SBTH organization enough for the support they have given our school over the years and the positive impact they have made with our 4th grade students.”

Every spring for the past four years, we have “adopted” a fourth grade class from Ronald Brown Academy. Previously we took them to



spring birding hotspot, Magee Marsh in Ohio, and then included at least two other field trips. This year storms prevented the Ohio trip, but they still got their other two trips.

Their first trip was to Kensington Metropark near Detroit. In the photo above, RBA teacher Ms. Edwards took along a portable solar oven for students to have s'mores for the trip to Kensington Metropark near Detroit. It was a great practical demonstration on the use of solar energy. According to project manager, Dave Watkins, the birding was good, and they had a great leader from Kensington working with the kids on using binoculars, learning bird songs, using field guides and overall basic identification tips. Dave said that in future years, we will definitely take the kids back to Kensington as it was a great experience for them.

Here the group is zooming in on a yellow warbler. Also notice the charter bus driver (*pictured to left with the hat on*). He has driven the charter bus for three years, but this is the first time he has joined the birding activities.



Dragonflies for Kids



Two youngsters hunting dragonflies on their own.



Our Technical Advisor (and dragonfly/damselfly expert) Dave Dister shows one of his young charges a dragonfly he netted near a pond on Charter Sanctuary during our Dragonflies for Kids event. We will repeat this next year.



From the Executive Director's Desk

by Kay Charter



Dear Members,

As you may remember, earlier this year Saving Birds honored Pima County, Arizona (Tucson) with an Award of Exceptional Merit for its excellent Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan. As it should, the work of this plan continues. This year an overpass across Ina Road in the northern part of the city is being replaced. The old overpass provided roosting sites for an estimated one thousand Mexican Free-tailed Bats. In order to maintain habitat for these engaging little flying mammals, engineers have included bat roosting boxes in construction plans for the new overpass. In order to help the bats find their new home, a construction team sprays bat urine on the new roosting boxes.

Pima County's conservation plan is important not only to its bats and other wildlife; it has also served as both inspiration and a general blueprint for our own efforts in Leelanau County. Saving Birds, along with a number of conservation partners, is embarking on a program called "Leelanau Goes Native". See more about this program on Page 1.

You will see on the last page of this newsletter that our goal is to improve habitat for migrating birds one backyard at a time. For the next year, we are kicking that goal up to improving habitat for migrating birds in an entire county. If you live in Leelanau County and would like to participate, go to our website, print out the certification, fill it out and mail it to us. Most properties in the county will qualify – if yours does, you will receive a beautiful little sign. If it doesn't, we can make recommendations on how to come into compliance.



Letter From Our Board President

by Linda Ketterer

As I look through the various articles in the newsletter today, I am reminded of the often-used quote by Margaret Mead:

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

As you all know, Saving Birds Thru Habitat is a small organization by any comparison with other environmental organizations. But the accomplishments and reach of this small group far outpace what one might expect. If you review the work of SBTH in just the past couple of newsletters you see impacts with local citizens and environmental groups; inner-city school children in Detroit; farmers and ranchers as far as Texas; governmental units in the Grand Traverse Bay region and as far as Arizona; leaders in conservation and environmental causes across the US and internationally; and the list goes on. I hope that you take pride in being involved with this powerful group, as do I.

This fall we are launching a crowdfunding campaign -- new type of effort for us, to help underwrite our work with the Ronald Brown Academy in inner-city Detroit. This program has been immensely successful in helping open opportunities, minds, and understanding of groups of children who might otherwise never have a chance to experience the natural world in ways we may take for granted. The campaign goal is to create a fund that will better insure the ongoing possibility for this program. I hope that you will look into it and support the campaign heartily.

Small though we may be, SBTH continues to change the world. Thank you for your part in it!!

Linda Ketterer



Linda Ketterer
SBTH Board of Directors President

Thank You!

- **Manpower** in Traverse City for underwriting the cost of logo tee shirts for our Ronald Brown Academy kids.
- **Michigan Tree Farm Committee** for providing funds for buses for two of our Ronald Brown Academy field trips.
- **Van Dusen Landscaping** for taking care of our gardens at a reduced rate.
- **Morsels** in Traverse City for selecting Saving Birds for their non-profit for the month of November.
- **Thomas Wosachlo** for accounting assistance.
- **David Muer** for catering our June workshop lunch.

My New Garden

by Saving Birds Member Karen Mulvahill



Karen's Garden.

The sun streamed in through the kitchen window, illuminating the purples of the Swamp Milkweed and Marsh Blazing Star and the yellows of the Rosinweed and Cup Plant. Blue berries hung like ornaments from the Arrowwood Viburnum. Monarchs and bees flitted back and forth. Where once grew an expanse of grass bordered by a line of spruce trees, now native plants thrive.

It began small. I saw a presentation at Saving Birds on planting natives, and over a few years converted patches of grass in the back of the house to native plant gardens. Another event at Saving Birds included a tour of the gardens there, led by Brian Zimmerman, a native plants specialist.

My partner and I had finally decided to remove the half-dead spruce trees the year before and were amazed by the morning light gracing our yard. I wanted to go native but it was not a space



In a couple of years, Karen's garden will look like this.

(80x80) that I could do alone. So I called Brian and we roughed out a plan in the Fall of 2016. I could hardly wait for Spring and pored over Doug Tallamy's book *Bringing Nature Home*, and Lynn M. Steiner's guide, *Landscaping with Native Plants of Michigan*.

Finally, June arrived and our project began. Once Brian's crew had scraped off the old grass, we realized the soil was much wetter than we had thought. He quickly assessed the situation and changed our plant list to accommodate the site. In little more than a week, our yard was transformed from a boring expanse of grass to a diverse and beautiful collection of plants. I walk through almost every day enjoying the show. Now that fall has arrived, birds have begun to visit. And when winter is here, the American Hazelnuts, the red berries on the Cranberry Viburnum, the Dogwood and other plants will continue to attract birds and create an inspiring tableau. 🦋

A Wonderful New Addition



In the fall of 2010, at the urging of our Executive Director, Saving Birds member Ellen Weinacht made the five hour trip from her ranch in west Texas to Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge in New Mexico. Weinacht, who lives on a large ranch in Balmorhea, traces her interest in birds to her acquaintance with our Director, Kay Charter, more than a decade earlier. As Weinacht's fascination with birds grew, so did her interest in bird conservation. She returned from her trip to Bosque inspired by

what she saw and was determined to replicate the wetlands, albeit on a smaller scale.

She and her husband Don (along with members of Tierra Grande Master Naturalists and several other volunteers) began work soon after and today their project, Sandia Wetlands, plays host to hundreds of birds every year, including wintering Snow Geese, White-faced Ibis and migrating Wilson's Phalarope.

But Ellen Weinacht is not one to rest on her laurels. A visit to a nature center in

El Paso in 2016 which featured a dragonfly pond inspired her to do more. Soon thereafter work began on another pond; this one would be built specifically to support dragonflies and damselflies. Project leader (also a Saving Birds member) Dave Mainz researched dragonfly and damselfly requirements. To date, host plants for butterflies have been installed with plants for the target insects to be added soon.

The Weinachts provided us with a great example showing that much can be done by private citizens who care. It's also a terrific example of the way that some ranchers are excellent conservationists.

Few possess the kind of land assets the Weinachts have, but we can all do something to help our declining bird populations.

Saving Birds has been a partner in the development of Sandia Wetlands from the beginning. Let us know if we can help with questions about YOUR project! 🦋

Conservation Honorees for 2017



Shirley and Gary Voogt

In late July, Saving Birds presented three Conservation Partner of the Year Awards.

Shirley and Gary Voogt were honored as the owners of Voogt Farm, where altering their mowing area allowed at least seven Bobolink nests to survive to fledging.

Chip Francke was honored as the organizer and one of the participants for bird and nest monitoring.

Judy and Carl Manning were honored as two additional expert bird and nest monitors.



Judy and Carl Manning



Chip Francke

Ann Hoopfer was honored as our Volunteer of the Year. Ann has donated so much of her time in so many ways over the years, that she deserves much more than this simple award. At her request, we have mounted a long branch bluebird house. An engraving honoring her efforts was burned onto the top of the box.

All photos include our Executive Director, Kay Charter.



Ann Hoopfer

Warblers on the Water

May 25-27, 2018



Join Us for “Warblers on the Water” on Beaver Island

Next year, 2018, Saving Birds will host a group birding trip to Beaver Island during the island’s popular “Warblers on the Water” event, held during Memorial Day Weekend (May 25 - 27, 2018).

We have reserved ten rooms at the Beaver Island Lodge, located on the waterfront overlooking Garden Island.

Participants should arrive on Friday afternoon and stay through Sunday, although you may opt to stay over until Monday as activities

continue through Sunday afternoon.

Please contact our office (231-271-3738) to snag one of the rooms. Let us know at that time whether you want to leave on Sunday or Monday. Then go on the website and sign up for the trips you are interested in. Be aware that the field trips for this weekend can fill up by March, so register early so you don’t miss out on your preferred field trips.

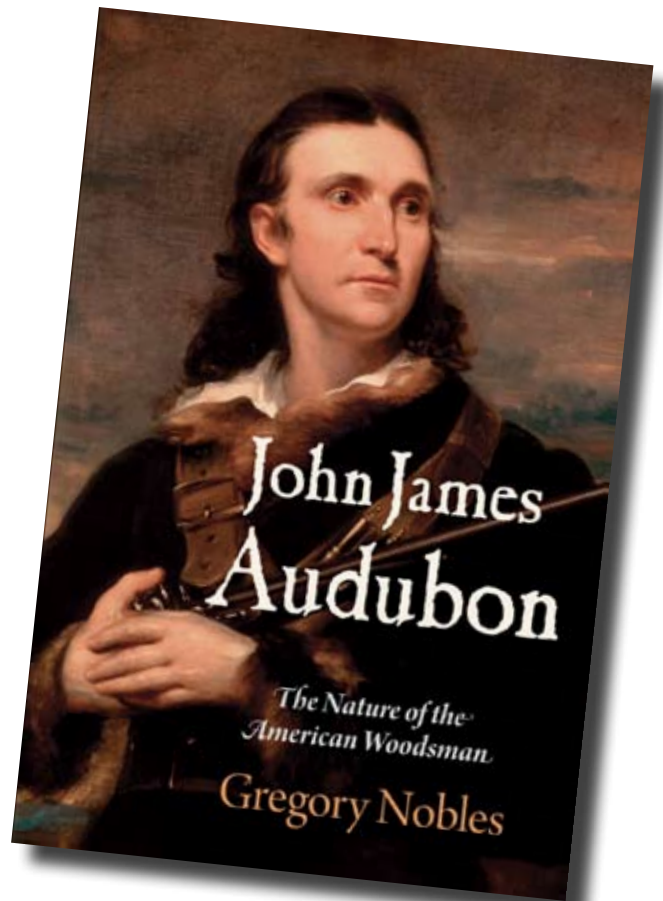


A Fascinating Look at Audubon the Man

A review by Kay Charter

Because non-fiction is my favorite literary genre, with biographies of important historical figures at the top of that list, I was particularly interested in Gregory Nobles' new book, *John James Audubon* (University of Pennsylvania, 2017, \$34.95.) As he notes in his introduction, Nobles approached this work topically rather than chronologically, a unique approach that provides us insight into the man who, as the author points out, "...didn't just live his life, he performed it." He also sometimes created it from thin air. The lore he spun about his life helped to sell that art.

Indeed, this was true. From details of the date and place of his birth to his age at various points in his life, and including encounters with well known men of his time, Audubon provided differing details at different times about nearly every aspect of his life. He tended to exaggerations, and even prevarications as a way of elevating his stature. That was particularly true as it related to his self proclaimed role as the "American Woodsman." To be sure, he spent a great deal of time in uninhabited areas of the New World so he would easily qualify as an American woodsman, but there were many other men out there as well. However, Audubon promoted himself as THE American Woodsman as a way of promoting his magnum opus, the Double Elephant Folio – an enormous book (39.5 inches tall by 28.5 inches wide) of 435 exquisitely created birds of North America. At \$1000 a copy, only the very wealthy and well-heeled institutions



could afford to purchase it. The lore he spun about his life helped to sell his art.

Even though Audubon's productive period was nearly two hundred years ago, he saw the possibility of extinction for at least some bird species. He said of the Passenger Pigeon "such dreadful havoc (sic) would soon put an end to the species." But then he added that because the birds reproduced so quickly, extinction was unlikely. (As we know, he was mistaken about that.)

And although he saw the potentially devastating long term damage done by unbridled shooting of birds and collecting of their eggs (he said during a visit to Labrador that "Nature herself seems perishing here"), he was no less guilty of adding to that destruction. He did not just shoot a few birds for models for his art, he – like so many others of the time – enjoyed shooting as many birds as he could.

Audubon was, to be sure, a brilliant artist and an able field scientist. He was also a very complicated and contradictory man. Readers of this book will learn about those fascinating, and sometimes difficult aspects of a man whose very name has come to represent "all things birds". 🇺🇸



Summer Fundraiser



U.S. Forest Service International Migratory Species Coordinator Dr. Gregory Butcher was our special guest for this year's summer fund raiser. Greg presented a program about his work, which takes him all over the world, especially to North and South America. His area of concern includes birds, butterflies, dragonflies and bats. It was pretty exciting to hear him say that he uses the work of Saving Birds in his presentations. In photo above, Greg stands on the right next to Ed Ketterer (husband of our President, Linda Ketterer).



Thank You

We Appreciate the Following Memorial and Honorary Gifts:

Paul Hayner and Karen Thomson in honor of **Dave Watkins**

Jane and Ian Clarke in honor of **Dan Sifferlin**

Kathy Brewer and David Leece in honor of **Judie Leece's** birthday

Kathy Brewer and David Leece in honor of **Mary Ann and Tom Knowles'** birthdays

Vicki Flier in honor of **Bobbie Poor**

John and Judy Smart in memory of **Judy Knorp**

Nancy Beights in memory of **Roy Alton Craik**

Kay Charter in memory of **Shelley Snedeker**

In this season of giving, please consider a donation to help us continue and strengthen our educational efforts.

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 Membership _____ Renewal at the following level:**
- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chickadee (\$25) | <input type="checkbox"/> Bluebird (\$50) |
| <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"/> Bald Eagle (\$5000) | Other (\$ _____) |

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

In memory / honor (please circle one) of:

Acknowledgment card to go to: _____

Would you prefer your membership/gift to be anonymous?

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____
(payable to **Saving Birds thru Habitat**)

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Summer Address (if different)

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Thank you for your donation. We are a 501(c)(3) organization; your tax-deductible gift is very important to us.

Questions? Please call (231) 271-3738 or email: bobolink2000@gmail.com

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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.



Flower Power

Although widespread use of neonicotinoid insecticides is at least partly to blame for the declining bee and butterfly populations, loss of habitat is the most serious issue for virtually every declining species on the planet. The good news is that we can all be part of the solution for our pollinators by simply adding native plants to our landscapes. There are numerous online sites that sell “wildflower” seeds that are purported to help pollinators. Unfortunately most of these wildflowers are not native, and some are even invasive (like baby’s breath). Our new Pollinator Packet includes seeds of only native wildflowers from The Great Lakes area. Planting instructions are on the back of the packet.

The enclosed seeds will cover a 60 square foot area. These seeds should be used **ONLY** in Great Lakes States. The packets are \$9.95 each. Check the SBTH web site for ordering information.