

Habitat Happenings

SAVING BIRDS THRU HABITAT NEWSLETTER

November 2010, Volume 9, Number 2



Website: www.savingbirds.org

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Kay Charter

From the Director's Desk

by Kay Charter

It was another great year for this organization. Our membership is up, and our outreach has continued to spread, as we are now working with Beaver Island on bird conservation issues. Our first summer day camp went exceedingly well and we added two more superb individuals to our Board of Directors. Our Earth Window was completed in late spring, and native prairie plants have been installed behind it to show off their deep, massive root systems. Our "Grow a Bird Feeder" poster, inspired by Douglas Tallamy, was finished and printed last month thanks to the generosity of artist Susan Fawcett, the Little Garden Club of Leland and the Jimmy F. New Foundation of Walkerton, Indiana. Susan trimmed her fee for the project, while the Little Garden Club and the Jimmy F. New Foundation underwrote the major share of the costs for producing and printing the poster.

For the fourth year in a row, SBTH will once again facilitate the placement of thousands of native trees and shrubs around northern Michigan to improve habitat for birds and other wildlife. The plants will be purchased by Fairmount Minerals subsidiaries in Michigan as part of the company's ongoing carbon mitigation program. Next year we will also partner with the Leelanau Peninsula Chamber of Commerce, Fountain Point Resort, David Barrons, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, Leelanau Conservancy, Leelanau County Parks and Recreation, Leelanau State Park and Inland Seas Educational Association for the first ever Leelanau Peninsula BirdFest. Dates for this event are June 1 through June 5, 2011. 🇺🇸

MEET OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Nick Schroeck is the Executive Director of the Great Lakes Environmental Law Center. Nick is also an adjunct professor at Wayne State University Law School teaching the Environmental Law Clinic. Most



recently, Nick worked for the National Wildlife Federation, America's largest conservation organization, out of their Great Lakes Natural Resources Center in Ann Arbor. Prior to joining NWF, Nick was a Sea Grant Fellow with the Great Lakes Commission. Nick is a licensed Michigan attorney and a graduate of Wayne State University Law School. He also holds a B.A. in Urban Studies and Political Science from Elmhurst College in Illinois.

Nick joined the SBTH board because he is a dedicated conservationist who

understands the critical role that habitat plays in ensuring that species thrive and survive. He has said that he is consistently impressed by the on-the-ground work carried out by SBTH and that he can't think of a better organization to support and serve.

Linda Ketterer got hooked on



birding soon after she moved to Michigan in 1976. Living at that time, near a nature center in southwest Michigan helped feed that passion. She and her husband Ed are rarely without binoculars and a bird book nearby. Linda joined the Board of Saving Birds Thru Habitat in June, 2010 and is glad to serve with a group dedicated to helping educate others about habitat creation and preservation.

Linda has been a certified Dale Carnegie Instructor and has worked as a training consultant since 1989 teaching classes, workshops and seminars designed to help individuals and organizations

improve their communication, leadership, and human relations skills. Prior to joining the Dale Carnegie organization, Linda worked for Whirlpool Corporation in Benton Harbor for 13 years where she held various managerial positions in the customer assurance and corporate quality areas. She and her husband Ed live in Northport. 🇺🇸



Common Yellowthroat with insects for nestlings. Photo by Doug Tallamy

SBTH Educates and Inspires

By Glen Chown, Executive Director for the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy

Saving Birds Thru Habitat is forward-looking! You educate landowners, children, and the general public on the importance of native plants and the insect biomass they support, and why we need to protect and restore critical habitat for our bird species. Your organization has proven that installing native plants and winning the war on invasive species is not an insurmountable task. It can be done, and the joy of seeing bird populations thrive as a result of your work is inspiring.

Here is a great example that SBTH members should be proud of. Your organization provided inspiration for the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy to embark on a 300-acre grassland restoration effort on a fallow farmland, located within Arcadia Dunes: The C.S. Mott Nature Preserve. In 2005, active local birders brought the area to the Conservancy's attention. Their monitoring efforts revealed a number of declining bird species that are dependant on quality grassland habitat for survival. However, with invasive species like spotted knapweed beginning to move aggressively into the area there was considerable urgency to act before the area became a "biological desert" rather than an oasis for our feathered friends.

As we were laying the groundwork for this large-scale and rather daunting project, Kay Charter was kind enough to present information to our staff on not only why we should consider a restoration using native grassland species, but also how we could be successful. This certainly fired up our team as we prepared to take on this significant challenge. Thanks to the efforts of the community, volunteers, and many partners,

we have actively restored the first 137 acres with amazing results. The bobolinks, grasshopper sparrows, and many other birds are benefiting.

SBTH continues to support our restoration efforts and recently presented at the Conservancy Open House, where volunteers, staff, and interested parties could learn about several topics.

Kay's positive, can-do message came through loud and clear and we are now seeing on-the-ground results of successful resource restoration partnerships across the region. It is these kinds of forward-thinking actions that are now helping to inform the "big picture" such as the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, which features federal and state agencies working together with the non-profit organizations like SBTH and your local conservancies on solutions that will protect and rebuild the resiliency of this immense freshwater resource.

I was thrilled to be invited as a guest speaker at the recent SBTH Annual Nest Builders' Appreciation Reception in July 2010. It was a great opportunity for me to personally thank the supporters of SBTH for their gifts of time and resources that help sustain a great organization that many in our community count on for assistance.

The Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy has been fortunate to partner with SBTH on many occasions.

To learn more about the Arcadia Dunes Grassland and the work of the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, please visit www.gtrlc.org, or call 231-929-7911. 🇺🇸



Glen Chown with GTRLC volunteers at Preserve.

SBTH Volunteer of the Year

SBTH founder and dedicated habitat protector and caretaker, Jim Charter was chosen as our Volunteer of the Year. When VOY Committee Chair Bobbie Poor presented Jim with the award, she did so, in part, with words she had written:

"This small but mighty organization is blessed with great volunteers, but none are more dedicated, hard working and unassuming than this year's recipient of our Volunteer of the Year Award. He has shared a dream and, working with quiet assurance, has made that dream a reality.

"The prairies, the garden, the ponds and pathways, and our nature center, all bear the hallmark of his dedication, skills and cheerfully offered labor."

Many thanks to Jim, and all the work he has done on behalf of the birds this organization strives to help! 🇺🇸



Our Volunteer of the Year in a rare moment of leisure.

A Natural Partnership

By Karen Schmidt



Have you ever noticed certain friendships and partnerships in life that are a perfect match – perfect because both parties share the same values and the same goals? That certainly is the case with SBTH and the Botanical Garden Society of Northwest Michigan (BGSNM).

Both organizations were formed around the same time, and both hold the preservation of native plants and environmental sustainability as a cornerstone of their missions. Both recognize the importance of education in raising the public’s awareness of environmental threats and environmental solutions. Both are focused on developing sites that model the beauty and life-sustaining attributes of native plants.

Is it any wonder that these two organizations have shared a decade-long friendship that is evolving into a partnership as well? There are so many ways we can support each other – collaborating on speaker programs, advertising each other’s events and publications, sharing information and ideas – allowing both groups to be even more successful in their missions.

What better way to seal this partnership than to plan and plant a native garden together? BGSNM is in the first stages of constructing a 25-acre botanic garden at the Historic Barns Park on the grounds of the old Traverse City State Hospital. Working with two other groups on the site, SEEDS and Little Artshram, we have cleared over an acre of land for a picnic grove, including the removal of hundreds of invasive Autumn Olives. It is

at that site where BGSNM and SBTH will construct the park’s first native plant garden. Collaborating with Master Gardeners and Brian Zimmerman of Four Seasons Nursery, native shrubs, trees and perennials will be selected and planted, based on their capacity to support the indigenous insect and bird population of our region.

The initial friendship between Saving Birds Thru Habitat and the Botanical Garden Society has grown into a partnership of shared missions. We celebrate the fact that the very first plantings on the new botanic garden site will be a collaborative native garden. Partners? Naturally! 🐦

Karen Schmidt is Chair of the Botanical Garden Society of Northwest Michigan Board of Directors.



Botanic Garden Society Board of Directors visit Saving Birds Thru Habitat.



*Lincoln's Sparrow.
Photo by Jeff Kingery*

Charter Sanctuary Prairie Installation

International birder and naturalist Jeff Kingery said about this prairie, “I’ve led tours across North America and I’ve not seen higher density of birds anywhere else. For this location in the world, it doesn’t get any better than the prairie at my parents’ (Charter) sanctuary. The most amazing thing about my visit during the last weekend of September was the number of migrants in the prairie grasses. Both the density and diversity of birds was the highest of any grassland area I have visited across the country.”

Included in the birds Jeff observed in the prairie were large numbers of Lincoln’s, Swamp, White-crowned, White-throated, Savannah, Vespers, Song and Chipping Sparrows. He said that while Vesper and Savannah Sparrows might occur in degraded habitat that was there before the prairie installation, Lincoln’s and Swamp Sparrows are birds found only in healthy habitat. He added that this prairie clearly demonstrates the effectiveness of providing native plants for migrating birds. 🐦

GROW A BIRD FEEDER

Birth of a Poster

By Rick Simek

A few years ago, I sent an email inquiry to a bird conservation listserv in search of a backyard habitat poster inspired by a remarkable book for home gardeners: *Bringing Nature Home* by Dr. Douglas Tallamy. I was surprised to find that nothing like it existed. Saving Birds Thru Habitat recognized immediately how such a poster would be extremely helpful in creating public awareness of how we, as backyard gardeners, can help increase and sustain declining populations of native bird species in North America. Dr. Tallamy's revolutionary gardening insight is that when we plant native trees and shrubs in our gardens, we reconnect a critical food web link—one that involves leaf-eating insects and the native bird species that depend on them. Insects provide virtually all (97%) of North American land birds with the essential animal protein needed for the proper development of their young. Equally important, many songbirds—including a host of Neotropical migrants that are experiencing population declines—greatly benefit from an abundance of leaf-eating caterpillars in refueling their long migrations. *Bringing Nature Home* includes solid data, statistics, and plant selection tips on the relationship between native plants and a healthy insect biomass. Making a positive difference to these birds requires nothing more than for each of us who garden to incorporate native plants into our personal landscapes.

I was delighted at the opportunity to contribute to an organization of such value in getting out the message of bird conservation through habitat. I was also happy to hear that the title for the poster I had suggested —“Grow a Bird Feeder” — was chosen for it. The poster includes a pair of Baltimore orioles feeding insects to their nestlings, a nesting gray catbird feeding young and a migrating warbler snagging an aerial insect. Dr. Tallamy has generously written a couple of paragraphs to reinforce the message inherent in the picture. His comments are featured on the back of the poster, along with details about how to find information on plants specific to each area of the country.

Preserving bird biodiversity is close to my heart. As a child who grew up in the 1960s, I remember hearing and seeing a wonderful



Tree Swallow with insects for nestlings.
Photo by Rob Bowen



Pileated Woodpecker feeding young.
Photo by Dave Brunnel

variety of birds in my little Detroit backyard that had been set up as a backyard habitat by my parents. Looking back, I'm amazed by all the songbirds that stopped there, many of which are not nearly as numerous now as then. That's why Tallamy's book resonated so strongly with me in that something simple like planting just the right tree or shrub can help to restore bird diversity to our living spaces. I know it will work, if enough people do it. Getting involved in the Saving Birds poster project is my way of contributing to that effort. Let's get going on getting out the message about “Growing a Bird Feeder” in our living spaces! 🐦

Rick Simek is the Naturalist at University of Michigan-Dearborn Environmental Interpretive Center

“Grow A Bird Feeder” can be purchased by sending a check for \$5.00 to

SBTH Poster

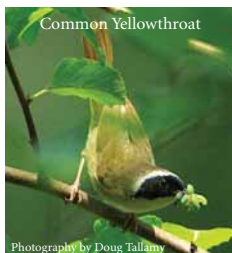
P.O. Box 288, Omena, MI 49674

Grow a Bird Feeder



Painting by Susan Fawcett

Availability of insects is crucial to migrating and nesting birds. Only native plants support insect biomass. Grow a Bird Feeder by planting native trees, shrubs, flowers and grasses.



Common Yellowthroat

Photography by Doug Tallamy



Hummingbird Sphynx Moth Larvae

Photography by Doug Tallamy



Black-capped Chickadee

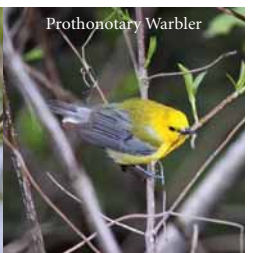
Photography by Robert Epstein



Black-throated Blue Warbler



Chestnut-sided Warbler



Prothonotary Warbler

Photography by Jeff Kingery

Insects Insect biomass is essential to healthy bird populations. Virtually all terrestrial nestlings are raised on insects. This Common Yellowthroat and Black-capped Chickadee have captured food for their young. To provide birds with this most important food source, use insect-hosting native plants in your landscape.

Birds Birds, especially warblers, depend heavily on moth and butterfly larvae during migration. According to Douglas Tallamy (*Bringing Nature Home*; Timber Press, 2009) the top three larval hosts are oaks (*Quercus* species), native cherries (*Prunus* species) and willows (*Salix* species). Plant those native to your region in your home garden.



Grey Hairstreak

Photography by Jeff Kingery



Tiger Swallowtail

Photography by Douglas Tallamy



Luna Moth

Butterflies For butterflies, incorporate larval host plants in your landscape. For Gray Hairstreak – native legumes; for Luna Moths – native cherries, oaks and walnuts.

For more information on butterfly larval host plants, see Kenn Kaufman's *Field Guide to Butterflies of North America*. 2003. Houghton Mifflin.



Baltimore Checkerspot



Great Southern White

Photography by Robert Epstein

Saving Birds Thru Habitat Membership List 2010

*Many thanks to all
who support us!*

SBTH Donors \$250 and above:

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David and Patricia Barrons
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Jim and Kay Charter
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Fairmount Minerals Quest Team Volunteers at SBTH



Fairmount Minerals Quest (environmental and safety) Team members spent a day at SBTH in June. The morning began with a PowerPoint program about habitat development and improvement, which was followed by an informative hike through Charter Sanctuary, led by SBTH Technical Advisor David Dister. Team members devoted the afternoon to work at the Discovery Center as part of

their Day of Caring efforts. One of the things they did was to stabilize the banks along our new Earth Window with field rocks and native plantings. Fairmount Minerals, Ltd. is an international sand mining company; SBTH has worked with the company on environmental issues since 2005.

The Earth Window is our newest educational tool, which allows for viewing extensive root systems of native prairie plants. Vern Stephens of Designs by Nature suggested we add this feature to our Discovery Center. Norcross Foundation generously provided funding for the Earth Window.

Our thanks to all who made this fascinating feature possible. 🐦

Formalizing a Partnership

Leelanau Conservancy Board President John Erb and Executive Director Brian Price join SBTH Executive Director Kay Charter and Board President Gina Erb for a photo outside the Conservancy office. The photo was taken immediately after Brian and Kay signed a Memorandum of Understanding between SBTH and the Conservancy. This document formalizes a valuable, long-standing partnership between our organizations. 🐦



Here's an idea for a holiday gift:
 Make a donation to SBTH in Honor of a loved one, special coworker or colleague.
 We will send a holiday greeting card to inform the honoree of your gift.

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"/> 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?

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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:
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Thank You!



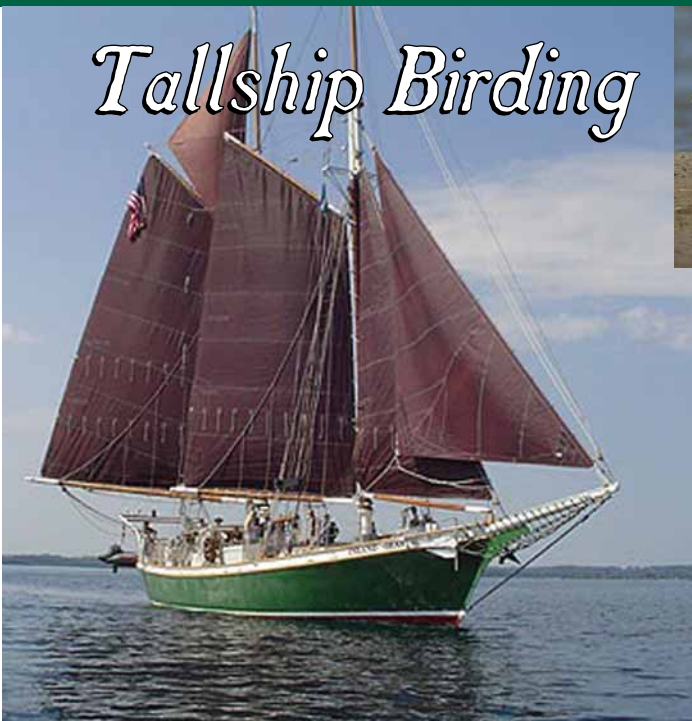
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*Check Out Our
Web Site!!*

www.SavingBirds.org

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.

Tallship Birding



LEELANAU PENINSULA BIRDFEST

The first annual Leelanau Peninsula BirdFest will feature, along with field trips to SBTH and other county birding areas, a trip to Gull Island aboard Inland Seas Educational Association's two masted schooner to view nesting Caspian Terns.

Visit www.leelanauchamber.com after Feb. 1, 2011, for more details.