

Habitat Happenings

SAVING BIRDS THRU HABITAT NEWSLETTER

November, 2011, Volume 10, Number 2

From the Director's Desk

by Kay Charter



Cedar Waxwing

In July, we passed the tenth anniversary of our founding. We did not mark the date with a party, but that does not mean we did not celebrate. We did. And we accomplished that by continuing our good work on behalf of our wonderful migrating birds. At the end of a very busy season, we can pause to reflect on all we have accomplished. In those ten short years, we built a nature center where we have spread the word about bird conservation. There we have hosted field trips for thousands of students and adults. We have presented hundreds of programs for people of all ages, both at our center and beyond.

Partnerships have been established with dozens of local and regional organizations, and we have made a solid environmental connection with a large international company. The most recent result of that connection was a gift of 50,000 jack pines for the Kirtland's Warbler Recover Effort.

We have partnered in the installation of five native prairies in the area, and more are coming. We helped move the ball forward on education about, and removal of, invasive alien plants like *Phragmites australis*, autumn olive, spotted knapweed and Japanese knotweed.

We owe much gratitude to a host of people who generously gave their time and money to help us work toward our goals. From the start, we have had an able and dedicated Board of Directors that has served our organization exceedingly well. We have been blessed with a host of fine docents, who have conducted programs and led birding walks. The names of more than seventy men and women grace the honor role plaque recognizing construction volunteers who built our Habitat Discovery Center. And we must not forget those who maintain our property, manage our database and perform a long list of other tasks, both large and small, that help to maintain this organization.

Here's a hearty thanks to all who assisted in our success. Every minute of volunteer time is deeply appreciated. Now, take a minute to imagine what our list of accomplishments will look like at the end of another ten years!



Letter from our President:

As I reflect on the past year I am amazed at all that has been accomplished by our small organization. This was our busiest season ever. The list is long so I will name only a few of the highlights: our Speakers' Series, our partnership with the Leelanau Chamber of Commerce for the First Annual Birdfest at Fountain Point, our partnership with the Botanical Garden Society of Northwestern Michigan, and our partnership with 17 other non-profits to bring back Dr. Douglas Tallamy to present his program at the Milliken Auditorium in Traverse City.

How did we do it? We could only accomplish these events and more with a staff that is dedicated, passionate, and goes beyond the typical expectation of working just 8 hours, 5 days a week.

Guess what? We have a staff of one: Kay Charter. Kay's love of birds and their survival has flown this organization to success. She's the one who snags the partners, she's the one who networks with people, organizations, industries and the public in general. Whether it's fighting invasive species, educating children and adults about native plants and their benefits, helping raise the bar for the environment or conservation, Kay is there. She is devoted, optimistic and will not take "no" for an answer. Kay will find a way to get things done. Yes, she is a staff of one, but she has the full support of a great Board of Directors, dedicated docents and selfless volunteers. It is the community that we all serve.

The work of SBTH is vital for the birds, the ecosystems, and the planet. Your continued support through your memberships, your donations, and your time, is necessary, and appreciated, for us to advance our commitment to you and to the environment.

Thanks,

Gina Erb 

Website: www.savingbirds.org

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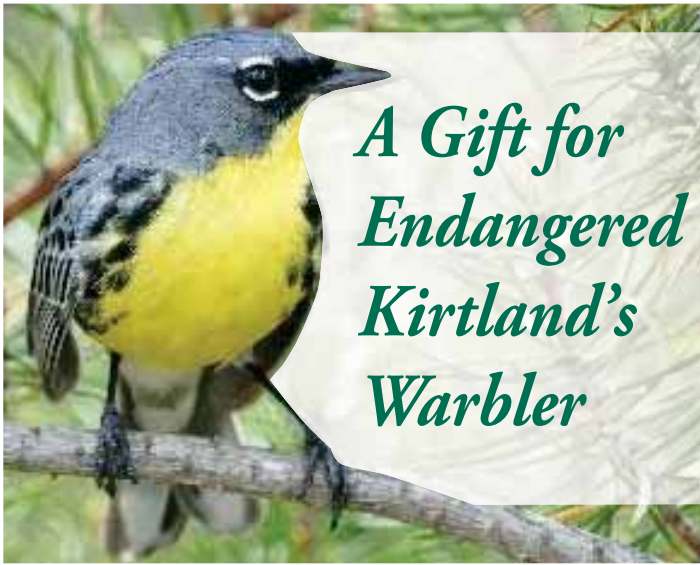


Leave a Legacy for Migrating Birds



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.

Chestnut-sided Warbler by Jim Stevenson



Male Kirtland's Warbler

For the past six years, SBTH has had a strong relationship with the international sand mining company, Fairmount Minerals. Fairmount is a sustainable development company and, as such, is committed to doing good things for the planet. One of those things is reducing and/or sequestering atmospheric carbon generated by its mining activities. Since 2006, the company has worked to reduce its carbon output by becoming more efficient, and it has made strides to sequester carbon through the planting of hundreds of thousands of trees. SBTH has a position on the company's Quest (environmental) Team. Last fall, the Quest Team elected to purchase jack pine seedlings as part of its carbon sequestration efforts. The trees were to be donated to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources for the Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Area near Grayling, Michigan.

The Kirtland's Warbler was one of the first species listed under the 1973 Endangered Species Act. Within a decade after listing, the entire world population had fallen to just over 300 individuals, largely a result of habitat loss.

This beautiful bird breeds almost exclusively in Michigan, placing its nest in stands of jack pines that are between five and twenty years old. Once the trees reach a certain height, the birds abandon

those areas in favor of more suitable sites. Historically, jack pine habitat for the warbler was maintained by naturally occurring fires, but with the suppression of fires, the birds lost preferred breeding sites and their numbers took a steep dive.

Under recovery efforts for the warbler, large areas of the trees are cut at about 45 years of age and seedlings planted in their place. Since this project began in the seventies, tens of millions of jack pines have been planted. This year, Fairmount provided 50,000 of those trees.

On May 2, Quest Team members met DNR Senior Wildlife Technicians Keith Fisher and Vern Stephens in Roscommon to deliver the trees. SBTH member and Fairmount retiree, Alan Slater, hauled the trees from two Michigan nurseries on the state's west coast and delivered them to Roscommon. Team members, who came from three states, learned how to do the planting properly and then worked several hours installing hundreds of trees.

Saving Birds Thru Habitat, Conservation Resource Alliance (CRA), and several Michigan DNR staff members, facilitated this project. The cost was entirely underwritten by Fairmount Minerals. It is a wonderful example of a way in which partners can work together to benefit the planet (improving habitat), the company (sequestering carbon), the state (reducing costs for conservation work) and NGO's (fulfilling their missions). Both SBTH and CRA look forward to an ongoing partnership with Fairmount on this project.



Fairmount Minerals Quest Team planting jack pines



Becky Alsup-Kingery and Jim Charter install native prairie flowers in the big bluestem portion of the Charter Sanctuary prairie.

Grassland Improvement Grant for SBTH and Charter Sanctuary

In July, SBTH received a \$30,000 Landowner Incentive Grant from the State of Michigan for grassland improvement on both SBTH and Charter Sanctuary properties.

The grant provided for removal of a host of invasive plants, including spotted knapweed, European poplar, autumn olive, black locust, and wild grape. Also removed were non-native trees to extend grassland area.

Hundreds of native prairie forbs (wildflowers) were planted in the installed prairie on Charter Sanctuary, and thousands of seeds have been added to increase diversity. A 2-acre sedge meadow, and a similarly sized pollinator garden have also been added.

The funds had to be matched with \$11,500 in volunteer hours. At roughly \$20.00 for each volunteer hour, we needed nearly 600 hours of donated time. Many SBTH members answered the call to help. Included in our volunteer list were two Wexford Sand Company employees. Wexford is a local subsidiary of Fairmount Minerals, the company that donated 50,000 trees to the Kirtland's Warbler recovery effort. Fair-

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SBTH is Major Partner for First Annual Leelanau Peninsula BirdFest

The First Annual Leelanau Peninsula BirdFest, June 1-5, was successful by any measure. In spite of a few “startup” glitches, there was a greater than hoped for attendance, with participants coming from four states and all over Michigan. All who joined professed having stellar experiences. The birding was excellent, with one group spotting nearly 60 species.

Plans for the 2012 festival were underway within a week of this year’s event. Additional boat trips down the Cedar River were added and there will be two bus trips to the Arcadia Dunes prairie instead of one. The prairie trips will be longer, allowing more time to explore the prairie. Lunch will be included. Inland Seas Educational Association generously agreed to add a second trip to Gull Island aboard the schooner Inland Seas. A “Bird and Bug Safari” for kids at the Suttons Bay wetland has been added on Saturday morning, and Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore’s Family Day will be repeated that afternoon.

The Second Annual Leelanau Peninsula BirdFest will be sponsored by the Leelanau Peninsula Chamber of Commerce and hosted by Fountain Point Inn in Lake Leelanau. It is scheduled for Wednesday, May 30 and will run through Sunday, June 3.

Our Friday evening speaker in 2012 will be Jerry Weinrich, often referred to as “the godfather of the Kirtland’s Warbler.” Jerry was a Michigan DNR biologist; he worked on the Kirtland’s Warbler Recovery Effort during virtually his entire career. He will discuss recovery efforts for the bird.

Greg Butcher, Director of Bird Conservation for The National Audubon Society, will be our keynote speaker on Saturday evening. Greg will talk about the state of the birds in North America.

Check out the new BirdFest website at: www.mibirdfest.com



BirdFest attendees at the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy's Arcadia Dunes prairie

Grassland Improvement, continued from previous page

mount offers its employees forty hours of paid annual leave to work for a charity of their choosing.

SBTH members Alan and Cheryl Slater spent hours with chain saw, loppers and gloves, taking down more than a hundred trees and shrubs and hauling the brush to create habitat-improving brush piles around the property. Intern Shelby Sawallich spent the last month of her employment on the project. Volunteers, led by Jim Charter, put in more than the needed hours for the match. Also volunteering were: Gina Erb, Mary Tonneberger, Alison Heins, Ryan Luhrs, Roger Evens, Jeff Kingery, Becky Alsup-Kingery, Eric Ellis, Kathy Turner, Judy Jensen Fowler, Amy Heilman, Bobby Poor, Ann Davey, John Davey, Ed Ketterer, Linda Ketterer, Barbara Olson, Cindy Miller, Jacky Cuson, Jan Kerr, and Kay Charter.

It’s going to be very exciting to watch the grasslands begin to show color as the flowers take root and blossom over the summer. The seeds may take several years to fully develop, but when they do, this prairie should be spectacular.



SBTH member Alan Slater fires up his chain saw to take down a European larch. Alan and his wife Cheryl traveled up from Grand Haven to work for nearly a week on our project.



Ann McInnis points a bird out to youngsters during the 2011 BirdFest. Ann led the “Bird and Bug Safari” at the Suttons Bay wetland.

SBTH 2011 Speakers' Series

Our Speakers' Series was very well received, and will be repeated in 2012 with different individuals addressing new topics. Included in this year's five presentations over the summer was a program by Hank Bailey, Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians Tribal Elder and Traditional Dancer. Hank explored Pow Wow etiquette, dance styles, and general activities. On the right is Hank in his traditional dress. During his talk he demonstrated the Men's Traditional Dance, and he explained the personal meaning of each item of his regalia.

Next year, beginning on Thursday, May 17, Beaver Islander Pam Grassmick will talk about



Hank Bailey

controlling invasive plants on the island. On June 21, Gail Ingraham, owner of Bellweather Gardens, will tell us how to design a garden using native plants. Chuck Dickerson will teach us about northern Michigan's native orchids on July 19, Conservation Resource Alliance biologist Eric Ellis will discuss conservation in Mongolia on August 16 and Leelanau Conservancy Executive Director, Brian Price will talk about the geological history of our area on September 20. Join us for these informative sessions. Tickets are \$15.00 each or \$60.00 for all five programs.



Part of the area at Hope Village slated for bird habitat improvement.

SBTH Creates Habitat Improvement Plan for Hope Village

Early this year, John DeMarsh, acting director of Hope Village in Williamsburg, Michigan contacted us to request a site visit and habitat improvement plan for that property. Hope Village is a retirement community built on 10 acres of land. Much of that land is open, and can be improved for our migrating and nesting birds. SBTH Technical Advisor Dave Dister visited the site in June and subsequently put a four-part habitat improvement plan together. Bluebird boxes will be mounted this year, and next year efforts to remove invasive plants will begin. Once that is completed, native grasses and herbs will be added.

With current development rate around the village, when the project is complete, this new habitat will offer an important ecological island for the migrating and nesting birds we serve. SBTH is delighted to be a partner in this project. Thanks to Hope Village for expanding local bird habitat!



The Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp: *Old Vision, New Vision*

By Paul J. Baicich

"I'm learning one thing the hard way... you have to re-educate the public mind about every 15 or 20 years or it forgets everything learned a while back." - J. Norwood "Ding" Darling – popular artist, conservationist, hunter, birder, head of the U.S. Biological Survey (1934-35).

Every year, June 24th marks the "First Day of Sale" for the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation [Duck] Stamp, an opportunity to help us connect a refuge past with a refuge future.

When the stamp was launched, in the mid-1930s through the visionary activities of "Ding" Darling and his colleagues, the country was in a deep eco-crisis, a crisis of combined economic and ecological distress. It didn't prevent Darling and others to make big-vision plans to confront the challenge.

All conservationists and outdoor recreationists who enjoy wildlife and protected natural places – small and large – can thank those who have regularly purchased these stamps over the decades, since these men and women have contributed over \$750 million to secure 5.3 million acres of habitat for wildlife and for future generations of Americans.

Still – and as "Ding" Darling indicated so many years ago – occasionally we have to be reminded of some of the basics. And the "First Day of Sale" should remind us about three essentials in this regard:

The first is that waterfowl hunters have been the foundation for securing some of the most important wetland and grassland habitats within the Refuge System. It's that simple.

The second is that no one group can do it alone. The Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp may rely on essential



waterfowl hunter support, but these days it cannot succeed in saving significant habitat for the Refuge System unless others, as a wildlife conservation community, pitch in. For example, friend's groups, birders, wildlife photographers, general conservationists, and environmental educators all have very important roles to play.

And third is that the purchase of a stamp is not something that only benefits ducks. Among bird species, there are shorebirds, long-legged waders, and wetland and grassland songbirds

that are increasingly dependent on habitat secured from migratory bird stamp purchases. (One might say the same about other wildlife – mammals, amphibians, reptiles, fish, butterflies, – that flourish through stamp investments.)

This is where the old vision and the new vision connect, in a vibrant and broad conservation community working in cooperation to protect habitat for our birds and other wildlife, the foundation for future stamp success. *For more details on the sale of the stamp, see: www.fws.gov/duckstamps*



Paul Baicich, a well-known writer, conservationist and birder, was the keynote speaker at this year's BirdFest. Duck stamps are available at major post offices and sporting goods stores across the country. They are currently only \$15.00 each, and 98 % of every purchase goes directly to the purchase of National Wildlife Refuge lands. Currently, more than 150 million acres of precious bird habitat is protected in 555 refuges. Stamp holders benefit by gaining free access to all refuges during the year the stamp is valid.

Formalizing a Partnership



Kay Charter and Karen Schmidt

SBTH Executive Director Kay Charter and Board Chair of the Botanic Garden Society of Northwest Michigan, Karen Schmidt shake hands after signing a Memorandum of Understanding between the two organizations. We have long been solid partners with the BGS; the signing of this document formalizes that partnership.

When SBTH member Mike Davis proposed the idea of a "Tallamy Garden," Karen Schmidt stepped up to the plate and offered to include such a garden at

the Society's home within the Historic Barns Park in Traverse City. A "Tallamy Garden" is one that consists of native plants, following the message of Doug Tallamy's book, *Bringing Nature Home*.

Learn more about the BGS at: www.northwestmichigangarden.org



Reduce • REUSE • Recycle



SBTH member Judy Walter designs delightful totes from used bird seed bags, which she lines with matching recycled fabrics. Excellent as gifts for carry on or beach totes. They are available from Judy at: jawbrook470@yahoo.com



Saving Birds Thru Habitat Membership List 2011

American Goldfinch

NEST BUILDERS

(\$250 and above)

Bruce and Judy Balas
David and Patricia Barrons
Marlin and Pat Bussey
Jim and Kay Charter
Steve and Jackie Cuson
Laura Deibel
John Downing
Gina and John Erb
Judy and Rick Evans
Judy Gass
Michael and Ellene Gibbs
Carl and Mary Lou Griffin
Mark Holmes
Debby Igleheart
Nana and Dick Kennedy
Linda and Ed Ketterer
Anne Leugers and Elmer Lipp
Dorothy and David Mainz
Malcolm and Roxane Morrison
Luvie and Scott Myers
Judy Oetinger
Bobbie and Jim Poor
Leslie and Walter Schmid
Nicholas and Liz Schroeck
John and Mary Scott
Dick and Posy Shuster
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Judy and John Smart
Kathie and Jack Snedeker
Valerie and Randy Trumbull
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Donors up to \$249

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 David and Carolyn Wollenhaupt
 Jean Woodhull
 Thomas and Sarah Woods
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Anonymous in honor of
 Gina Erb
 Chris Beaudoin in memory
 of Ann Beaudoin
 Eleanor Stephenson in
 memory of Dedie Roth
 George and Sally DeWeese
 in memory of Beverly Wooters



*Many thanks to all
 who support us!*

Tree Swallow Pair by Gary Siegrist

**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:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Chickadee (\$25) | <input type="checkbox"/> Bluebird (\$50) |
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| <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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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:
 bobolink3@prodigy.net

Thank You!



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Saving-Birds-Thru-Habitat


*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.

Volunteers of the Year



Ann Davey and Mike Litch were honored as our Volunteers of the Year at our annual Nest Builders Reception. As our database manager, Ann makes sure that our membership information is kept up to date. Mike has served as our database “techie,” tweaking our software to fit our needs whenever asked. For the past several years, Mike and Ann have spent many hours on their volunteer tasks. Their efforts have been crucial to our growth. Many thanks to both of them! 



Female American Redstart, Photo Credit Jim Stevenson