



Volume 29, Issue 5
February, 2018

February 20

7:00 P.M.

Ornithology and Taxidermy

Roger Tharp is a member of Owashtanong Islands Audubon Society. He has more than 40 years of teaching experience in the area of biology. Self taught as a taxidermist, he conducted classes in this subject at Mona Shores High School in Muskegon. Over the years he has given many well illustrated presentations on bird study. His presentation will include bird humor, facts about birds, bird I.D. and stuffing of birds.

We welcome everyone to OIAS's free programs.

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<http://www.oias.org>

2017-2018 Programs



March 20: *Nest Wars: Research on Eastern Bluebirds and their Nestbox Competitors*, Kathy Winnett-Murray, Professor of Biology, Hope College

April 17: *A Birder's Guide to Muskegon County*, Ric Pedler & Charlie DeWitt, Muskegon Nature Club

May 15:

6:00: Potluck, Annual Meeting, and Member Photos

7:00: *Feather Brained – My Bumbling Quest to Become a Birder and Find a Rare Bird on My Own*, Bob Tarte, Author to talk about his latest book



CBC Summary

Carl M, Compiler

Here is a summary of the final results of the participants' combined efforts for the Hudsonville Christmas Bird Count:

34 counters in 16 parties braved 20 degree temperatures and cloudy skies to tally 79 species plus 5 other taxa (10 more than 2016) and 14,782 individual birds (Nearly identical to last year). The counters logged 537 miles by car and 13 on foot, for a total of 84 hours in the field.

Highlights were a Virginia Rail (Carl & Judi - first in count circle history), Gray Catbird (Chace, Rob and Rick) and the fourth occurrence of Yellow-rumped Warbler (Robert). Other noteworthy records were 2,510 Canada Goose, 1,123 Common Goldeneye, and 115 Downy Woodpeckers. Owling teams spent 3.2 hours morning and evening and found two species of owls, in addition to two Snowy Owls during daytime counting. The high individual species count was 2,735 European Starlings, down from last year, but still a large number.

This was the 118th year that data has been gathered throughout the United States during the Christmas Bird Count.

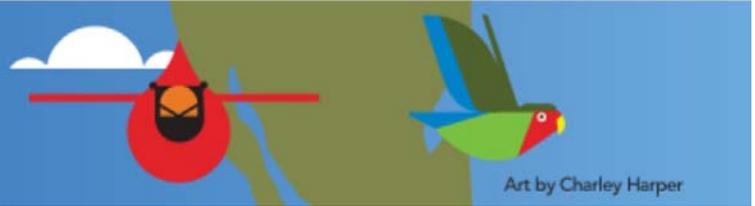
A big THANK YOU to all participants - this count could not happen without you.



I am bathing. Who am I?



The Great Backyard Bird Count



Art by Charley Harper

February 16-19, 2018

Excerpts/Synopsis: <http://gbbc.birdcount.org/about/>

Scientists and bird enthusiasts can learn a lot by knowing where the birds are. Bird populations are dynamic and constantly in flux. No single scientist or team of scientists can document and understand the complex distribution and movements of so many species in such a short time. Scientists use information from the Great Backyard Bird Count, along with observations from other citizen-science projects, such as the [Christmas Bird Count](#), [Project FeederWatch](#), and [eBird](#), to get the “big picture” about what is happening to bird populations. The longer these data are collected, the more meaningful they become in helping scientists investigate far-reaching questions, like these:

How will the weather and climate change influence bird populations?

Some birds, such as winter finches, appear in large numbers during some years but not others. Where are these species from year to year, and what can we learn from these patterns?

How will the timing of birds’ migrations compare with past years?

How are bird diseases, such as West Nile virus, affecting birds in different regions?

What kinds of differences in bird diversity are apparent in cities versus suburban, rural, and natural areas?

The Great Backyard Bird Count is led by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, with Bird Studies Canada and many international partners. The Great Backyard Bird Count is powered by [eBird](#). The count is made possible in part by founding sponsor [Wild Birds Unlimited](#).

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED EVERY YEAR TO MAKE THE GBBC SUCCESSFUL!

Here is what you can do:

- ✎ Spend as little as 15 minutes on one or more days of the count in your yard, park, or any location.
- ✎ Tally the species and number of each species seen in each location.
- ✎ Enter your data on eBird. If this is your first count, or have not participated since before 2013, you must [create a free online account](#) with eBird to enter your checklists.

In 2017, Great Backyard Bird Count participants in more than 100 countries counted more than 6,200 species of birds on more than 180,000 checklists!

During the count, you can explore what others are seeing in your area or around the world. Share your bird photos by entering the photo contest, or enjoy images pouring in from across the globe.



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I am still bathing. Who am I?



The newsletter is printed on
recycled paper.

Winter Wren

Judi Manning

Troglodytes hiemalis

The secretive Winter Wren can be described as a plump, small round ball with a tiny tail sticking straight up and full of energy. It is overall brown with darker brown barring on the wings, flanks, undertail, and belly. It has a tiny bill, pale eyebrow stripe and plain brown cap. As it rapidly beats its tiny wings, the short distance flight is very distinct.

They prefer deciduous and evergreen forests with understory vegetation, standing dead trees, fallen logs, often near streams. Bouncing up and down, scurrying among fallen logs like a mouse, they search for insects in the crevices of roots and vegetation. They eat beetles, ants, flies, mites, caterpillars, millipedes, and spiders and sometimes berries.

April through July listen for their loud, cascading, bubbly song early morning in the right habitat. Its song has dozens of bell-like notes. In winter they have a quieter call. Watch for their quick movements while out hiking the parks. At four inches long and weighing one-half ounce, the Winter Wren delivers its song with 10 times more power than a crowing rooster.

They breed, according to eBird, mostly from Grayling north. Multiple nests are built by the male in the territory. He shows her each nest and she picks one.

The Pacific Wren (*Troglodytes pacificus*) found west of the Great Plains appears nearly identical to the Winter Wren. The AOU Checklist (July 2010), split the Winter Wren into Eastern and Western species based on genetics and song. Overlapping in eastern British Columbia, females only mate with males that sing the correct song. This seems to be all that is keeping them from hybridizing. Read an excellent summary entitled “The Winter Wren is multiple species”, by David Toews and Darren Irwin, 7/27/2008 at <http://slybird.blogspot.com/2008/07/winter-wren-is-multiple-species.html>

Over 80 species of wrens live in North and South America and only the Eurasian Wren is found in the rest of the world. The Winter Wren is common and widespread.

Predators: domestic cats and Northern Harriers. Crows, jays and weasels prey on nestlings.

Native plant landscaping is good for Winter Wrens, including dense vegetation and brush piles. We have them migrate through our yard spring and fall.

References: Cornell Lab of Ornithology, https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Winter_Wren/id, Audubon, <http://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/winter-wren>, Stone: *The winter wren has arrived*, Emily Stone, Wisconsinoutdoorfun.com contributor Published 5:55 p.m. ET May 15, 2016, USA Today, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/outdoors/blogs/2016/05/15/stone-winter-wren-has-arrived/84422116/>

**House Wren**

Judi Manning

Troglodytes aedon

A common energetic backyard bird, the House Wren is found in nearly the entire Western Hemisphere. This is the largest range of any songbird in the New World.

They can be found in open forests, forest edges, backyards, farmyards, and city parks. You can see them hopping quickly through shrubs and low tree branches in search of insects. They eat insects, spiders, beetles, caterpillars, earwigs, flies, and daddy longlegs.

Both have calls and songs, but the male's song is a long, complex, bubbling song. If you have nest boxes, the male will sing from the top of the boxes and around his territory.

The House Wren is 4.3 to 5.1 inches long. The head, nape, and back are uniformly brown. The throat and chest a uniform light gray. Dark brown spots are on the flanks, tail, and wings. They have a flat head and fairly long, curved bill. It has a steady, level flight. The longish tail is usually straight out from the body but sometimes the tail is cocked slightly.

Weighing the same as two quarters, he fights for nest holes by harassing and pecking much larger birds. They will pierce eggs and drag the young and eggs out of a nest site. The male builds multiple nests and the female chooses one. Fragmented forests have created more good breeding as they prefer a wide variety of semi-open habitats.

They use old woodpecker holes, natural crevices, nest boxes, old cans, boots, or boxes filling them with twigs. They sometimes mound twigs into a barrier between the nest and entrance to protect the nest from cold weather, predators, or cowbirds. If a nest box gets over 106 degrees Fahrenheit, eggs will die; below 65 degrees Fahrenheit, they will not hatch. Nests can become infested with mites and other parasites. Wrens often add spider egg sacs to the nest materials. Lab studies show the hatched spiders eat the nest parasites.

There are 30 different subspecies of House Wrens. Southern House Wrens have 20 subspecies.

Predators: domestic cats, rats, woodpeckers, foxes, owls, raccoons and squirrels.

They help to control several insect populations and supply and abundant food source to many types of animals.

References: Cornell Lab of Ornithology, https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/House_Wren/lifehistory, Audubon, <http://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/house-wren>, NestWatch, <https://nestwatch.org/learn/focal-species/house-wren/>, http://www.biokids.umich.edu/critters/Troglodytes_aedon/



You can now find us on Facebook!

Lisa Casler

OIAS now has a Facebook page. You can find us by searching Owashtanong Islands Audubon Society. Look for program announcements, local bird sightings, conservation news and information, and other assorted tidbits. Have a picture or information you'd like us to share? Send us a message!

Like us on Facebook



Sandhill Crane Game Species Designation Update

Diane Huhn, January 16, 2018



Submitted by
Michael Lombardo

Sandhill Crane Game Species Designation Update

The future of Sandhill Crane protections in Michigan is still unknown. Following the approval of House Resolution 0154 in October, the legislature and Natural Resources Commission (NRC) has not taken any further action on the issue. House Resolution 0154 encouraged the NRC to add Sandhill Cranes to the game species list and seek U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approval to establish annual recreational Sandhill Crane hunting seasons in Michigan. Former NRC chair, John Matonich, announced at the November 9 meeting that if the commission considers adding them to the game species list, and subsequent to that, considers hunting, it will do so only after a thorough consideration of the science and a complete exploration of all effective alternatives that might be used singly or in combination to resolve concerns. If and when the NRC takes up the issue, Michigan Audubon will present our concerns and share the relevant science with the NRC. Click below to read our full update and learn more about this issue.



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For more information, follow this link:
https://www.michiganaudubon.org/sandhill-crane-game-species-designation-update/?mc_cid=382d34e146&mc_eid=41e46f0169

Morning Surprise

WHAT DID THIS?



I walked into the back yard early February 4th after four inches of freshly fallen snow arrived over night. I walked back toward the house and bent over to brush some snow off the rim of our heated bird bath. A loud whirr of wings sounded and about 15 small birds took off in all directions from the Rhododendron 10 feet away. Best I can tell they were a small percentage of the Pine Siskins we have in our yard.



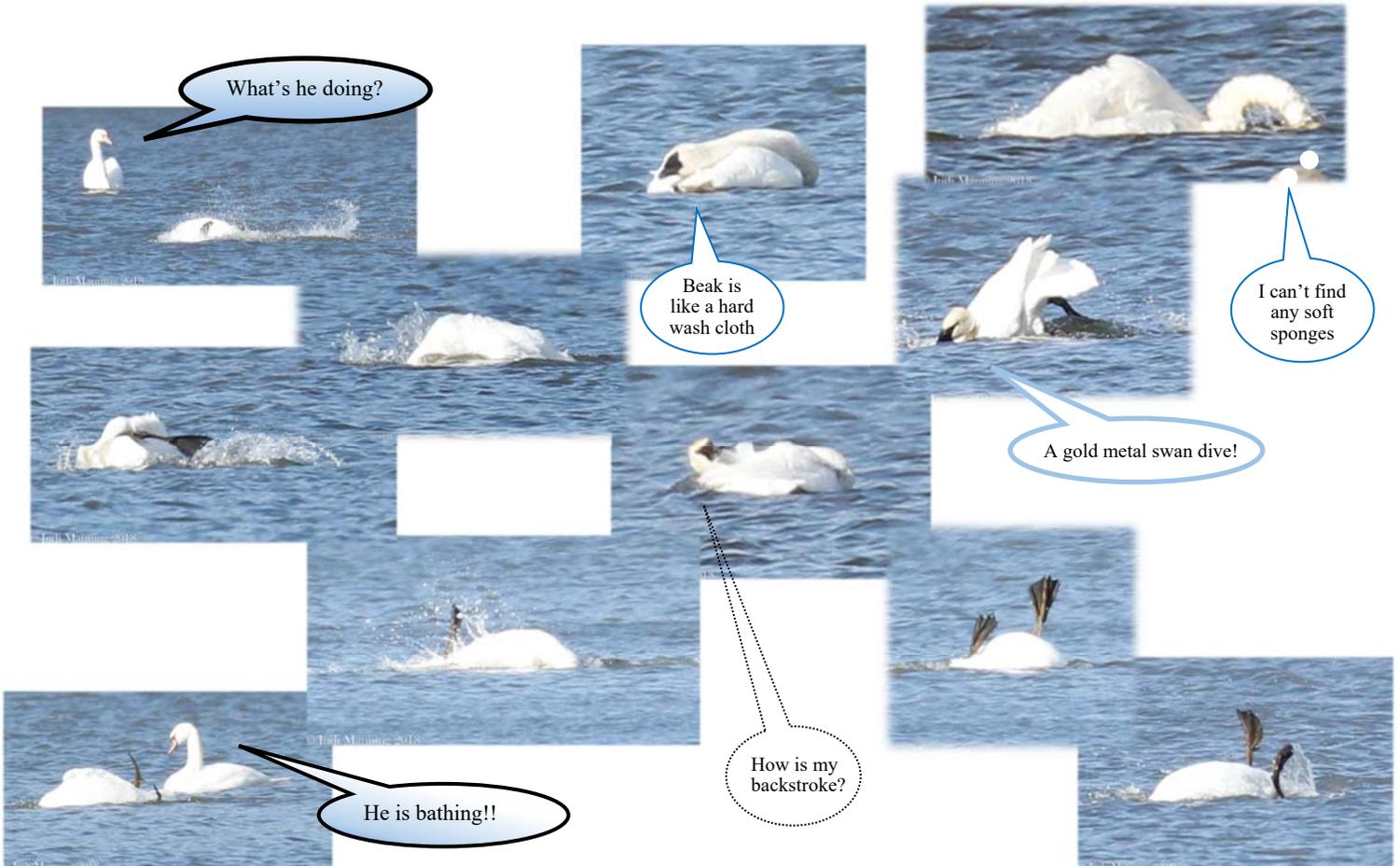
Pine Siskins

Since early January our Pine Siskin numbers have escalated from a small number to at least 300. They are everywhere in the front yard – feeders, ground, trees, bushes. They quickly eat a few bites from the sunflower heart feeders and the thistle. They are full of energy and extremely skittish, grabbing a bite of seed and soon leave the feeders for the surrounding habitat in a large cloud of whirring wings.

Bathing at its Finest

Judi Manning

One day we were at Pigeon Lake looking at all the birds. I noticed some splashing and quickly realized a Trumpeter Swan was bathing. What a site to watch:



Can you identify these wrens?



2017-2018 OIAS Membership Application Date _____

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City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ How did you hear about OIAS? _____

Check Member Type: \$18 Individual or Family \$30 Contributing
 \$100 Individual Life

My contribution to speaker fees \$ _____

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Grand Haven, Michigan

2/2018

FAR FLOWING WATER

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Far Flowing Water is published eight times per year. If you would like to contribute a complete article for the next issue, please have your articles to me by March 1st

Mission Statement
Owashtanong Islands Audubon Society
 a 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Corporation

- Provide stewardship of local Grand River island wildlife sanctuaries owned by the Michigan Audubon Society;
- Achieve through education, public recognition of the value and need for protecting and preserving wildlife, plants, soil, water and other natural resources as well as an understanding of their interdependence;
- Promote an interest in our native birds and as well as native flora and fauna, and their habitats because of their great economic, cultural and recreational value; and
- Aid the Michigan Audubon Society in its study, conservation and research efforts.

Do not forget the Great Backyard Bird Count
February 16-19, 2018

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 PLEASE FORWARD
 ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

FEBRUARY 20, 2018
7:00 Ornithology and Taxidermy

Roger Tharp