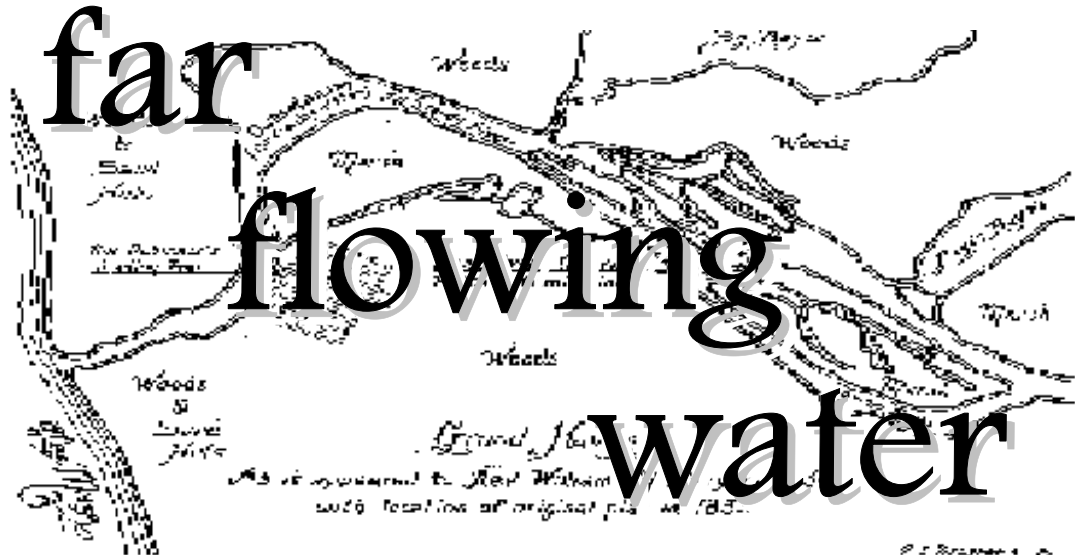


Grand Haven, Michigan



March 19

6:30 P.M.

EDUCATION AND RESTORATION AT THE OUTDOOR DISCOVERY CENTER

Presented by **Jamie Krupka and Tanner Bricker, ODC**

You will learn more about ODC's outdoor education and ecological restoration impacts in recent years. Jamie will highlight outdoor education efforts for the first half of the program. Tanner will explore some of ODC Conservation Services grassland/meadow restoration projects throughout the community during the second half.

In the past 20+ years, ODC Network has transformed from a small nature preserve into a multi-faceted organization that preserves and manages over 2,000 acres of natural area, operates three nature-based preschools, includes an explorer network that features guided trips across the globe, and much more.

Jamie is the Chief of Interpretation and Tanner is the Conservation Services Director, both for the ODC Network.

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You can watch
 live on the OIAS
 Facebook page

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Everyone is welcome to OIAS's programs

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From the President's Desk – March 2024

Update on changing the English names of birds in the Western Hemisphere.

As many of you know, the American Ornithological Society (AOS) announced on 1 November 2023 that it was about to embark on a multiyear project to change the English names of many species of birds found in the Western Hemisphere. The AOS is responsible for the naming and taxonomy of birds in North America. The project has two main goals. First, changing the eponymous English names of birds. These are birds currently named after an individual. For example, Kirtland's Warbler named after Jared P. Kirtland. The first specimen of Kirtland's Warbler was collected on Kirtland's farm near Cleveland, OH in 1851 (allaboutbirds.com). In recent years there has been a movement to change the names of birds that some deem offensive or exclusionary because the person who the bird was named after had an unsavory past. For example, in 2021 the AOS changed the name of McCown's Longspur to the more descriptive Thick-billed Longspur because McCown was a general in the Confederate Army during the Civil War. The AOS is not planning on changing the scientific names of birds so the Thick-billed Longspur's scientific name is still *Rhynchophanes mccownii*. Second, the AOS wishes to change the names of birds currently with eponymous so that their English names are more descriptive of the characteristics of a particular species. So, McCown's Longspur became the Thick-billed Longspur. The AOS is not planning on changing the names of birds with names associated with a geographic location (e.g., Tennessee Warbler).

You should be aware that the AOS's plan has become a highly divisive and publicized issue. Indeed, there is currently a proposed moratorium to halt the AOS from going ahead with its plans to replace all eponymous names. The moratorium is proposed by several prominent ornithologists in North America and has been signed by many professional ornithologists including Past Presidents of AOS, past editors of scientific ornithological journals, honorary Fellows of AOS, and winners of awards for their research on birds. The moratorium, which I signed as a Fellow of the AOS, makes several compelling points for halting the AOS's plan at this time. These include (1) the AOS did not consult about their plan in a meaningful way with other Western Hemisphere ornithological societies such as the Association of Field Ornithologists, Wilson Ornithological Society, Society of Canadian Ornithologists, and the South American Classification Committee, (2) the North American and South American Classification Committees voted 12-0 and 9-1, respectively, against the recommendation to change all eponymous names and instead recommended changing names after careful consideration of the merits of changing a bird's English name on a case-by-case basis, (3) the AOS committee planning the name changes did not consult the members of AOS about their plan to change names, (4) the International Ornithologists' Union which maintains a list of English names of all of the birds in the world is not in favor of the AOS's plan, (5) many people prefer retaining inoffensive eponymous names that honor deserving individuals, and (6) changing the English names of birds destabilizes communication among scientists, birders, and the general public. Indeed, the changing of all eponymous names does not have much support from the general public <https://osf.io/preprints/osf/tnzya>. Clearly, I think that AOS's plan will need much more discussion amongst professional ornithologists. I will keep you posted as this controversy progresses.

Please attend this month's program "Outdoor Discovery Center: Conservation Studies" presented by Tanner Bricker and Jamie Krupka on 19 March at Loutit District Library in Grand Haven. Tanner and Jamie will discuss the ODC's outdoor education and ecological restoration projects. We begin with a social "hour" from 6:00-6:30 pm. The program begins at 6:30. Please invite your friends to this program. All are welcome!

Remember that you can view our programs on the OIAS YouTube channel at (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCg4WKwR1KqyfLoqZuoY18Jg>). Please subscribe to the OIAS YouTube channel. We will continue to live-stream our programs on Facebook and post the videos on YouTube. Also, please visit our website <http://www.oias.org>, and, like our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/oias.org. We will post birding information and information about OIAS and upcoming events there.

Good birding,
Michael P. Lombardo

2024 PROGRAMS

April 16—Kirtland’s Warbler Conservation: Background and Future, David Ewert, Kirtland’s Warbler Program Director and Conservation Specialist, American Bird Conservancy

May 21—Stay tuned for more information

Field Trip Schedule in conjunction with Muskegon Nature Club
Mar. 16, 2024: Black Lake Park
Apr. 20, 2024: Howard Christensen Nature Center
June 15, 2024: Walkinshaw Sanctuary and Gale's Pond
July 20, 2024: Allegan State Game Area and Crane's Orchard Pie Pantry Restaurant
Aug. 17, 2024: Muskegon County Resource Recovery Center

All field trips are from 8:00 AM to 12:00 noon

OIAS welcomes the new member.

INTERESTING TIDBITS

Beth M

Both Peregrin falcons are currently on site at the Old Huntington bank downtown Muskegon where they have nested for a couple of years. We encourage local birders to visit the site frequently as time allows and document their courtship behavior and then their nesting efforts. We were not able to place a nest box at the site due to lack of access to the nesting ledge. We hope for the best; two juveniles have had to be rescued and taken to Wildside Rescue in Eaton Rapids the last two years when the juvies got down on the ground and lacked the strength to get back to the nest ledge. Thank you, birders! (edited)

Recently posted on Discord



Mark P received a bird feeder with a camera for Christmas. He set it up in Petoskey.

Here is what he saw on March 4th. Has anyone else every seen this behavior by a Red-bellied Woodpecker?

We have not.

FAR FLOWING WATER

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Please contact Editor at oias@oias.org for other arrangements.

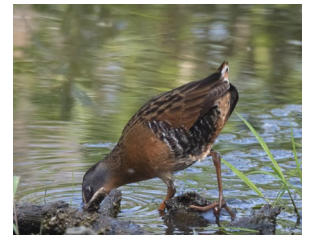
Thank you

TO EVERYONE WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THIS ISSUE OF *far flowing water*

Virginia Rail

Rallus limicola

Judi Manning



The medium-sized Virginia Rail is a very secretive bird found in freshwater marshes that have tall stands of rushes and cattails. They are found from sea level to one and one-half miles high in the Peruvian Andes. The preferred habitat has standing water less than six inches deep with a muddy bottom. Often heard rather than seen. If you are lucky, you might get glimpses as it forages between plants.

Its forehead feathers are adapted to withstand wear and tear from pushing through the dense, tough leaves and stems of cattails, and sharp marsh vegetation.



“Thin as a Rail” comes from the thin body Virginia Rail. The laterally-compressed body helps it sneak through dense wetland vegetation. It sometimes swims and dives underwater using its wings. Large feet help it walk on soft mud. Rails have the highest ratio of leg muscles to flight muscles of any bird. In wetlands, its flight is weak and short. During migration is the only time they have sustained flight.

They forage by probing the long bill into mud or shallow water. In summer 85-97% of their diet consists of animal parts such as beetles, spiders, flies, small fish, crayfish, frogs, and slugs. In winter 20-30% of the diet is plant-based material, seeds, and the remaining percentage is small aquatic invertebrates. Some winters they have been found over winter in Ottawa and Allegan counties.

Grunts, tick-its, kickers and kius (alarm sound) can be heard from the marsh if there is a Virginia Rail around. The male’s song is “ka-dik ka-dik ka-dik.” The female’s song is a rapid “ki-ki-ki-ki-ki-ki-kedew” that descends at the end. With a large number of nasal glands and ducts in the olfactory chamber and large olfactory bulb in their brain, it is thought that they have a highly developed sense of smell. 1*

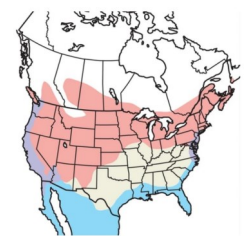
They aggressively defend their nests but are tolerant of Soras. They build dummy nests as well as the one where eggs are laid. The black downy young leave the nest the day they hatch and can drink, preen, and stand that day. Females are smaller than males.



Loss of wetland/marsh habitat by draining and development has caused a decline in its populations, but they are still common. They are also victims of the bioaccumulation of mercury and collisions with human-made structures. Predators include: (1) Feral cats, muskrats, raccoons, and mink are some of the mammals that eat the eggs and nestlings, (2) birds such as wrens, hawks and crows prey on the nests. Sandhill Cranes, pike, frogs, and bass prey on the young chicks. Owls and Northern Harriers prey on adults and juveniles and (3) snakes and reptiles.



References: https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Virginia_Rail/overview, article and migration map, <https://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/virginia-rail>, https://animaldiversity.org/accounts/Rallus_limicola/, *Bird of the Month: Virginia Rail*, 4/17/23, <https://www.nhauadubon.org/bird-of-the-month-virginia-rail/>



- All Seasons - Common
- All Seasons - Uncommon
- Breeding - Common
- Breeding - Uncommon
- Winter - Common
- Winter - Uncommon
- Migration - Common
- Migration - Uncommon

1* Virginia Rail fledgling Nyanquing Pt., Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge 2015

Tufted Titmouse Rescue

Judi Manning

June 10, 2006, our neighbor came by and said they have birds they think are nesting in the open hole at the top of the basketball hoop pole. We took the ladder and checked it out. Sure enough we could see a very young Tufted Titmouse about four to five inches down in the four inch diameter hole. There was no way this bird would ever get out on its own.



I know we tried many things but cannot remember what we tried that did not work. However, I do remember what we finally tried to rescue this young bird. We slowly put sand in the side of the hole. I think Carl was holding the bird off to the side so it would not get covered up. Slowly, the bird got closer and closer to the top so we could successfully remove it. Its siblings did not make it.

June 6

What to do now? How to make sure the parents would resume feeding and taking care of it. As you can see from the photos, we put it in a clear

June 6

box with some mealworms in a separate container. A parent soon came to the call of the youngster and started feeding it. We did not want it to stay out in an open container, so we put it in a nest box. Again, a parent was seen taking good care of it.

After the youngster was out, we filled the hole up with sand and put a metal cap on top so it would never happen again. To protect other animals, we also turn over our wheelbarrow and any buckets we have outside or in the garage. One day we found a dead frog in an upright bucket and do not want this to happen again.



July 9

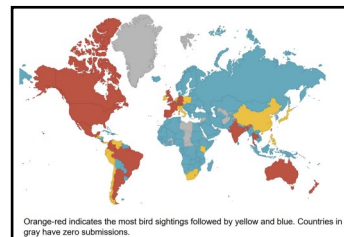
GBBC 2024 Results

<https://www.birdcount.org/results/>

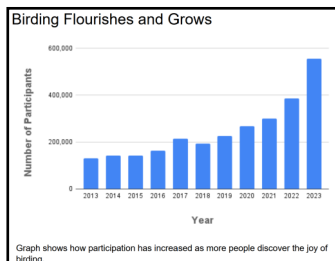
Birds unite the world each February for the Great Backyard Bird Count. Collectively, **7,538** species of birds were found — 2/3 of the known **10,960** species that share the planet with us. More than **200 countries** came together to share bird sightings, making the global submission map light up for four consecutive days.

In a snapshot

- 7,538 species of birds identified
- 202 participating countries
- 390,652 eBird checklists
- 372,905 Merlin Bird IDs
- 151,479 photos, videos, and sounds added to Macaulay Library
- 555,291 estimated global participants



Orange-red indicates the most bird sightings followed by yellow and blue. Countries in gray have zero submissions.



eBird Helps Researchers

Judi Manning

Excerpts/Synopsis from eBird

Citizen science has rapidly increased in the last 10 years for birds, bees, and butterflies. This abundance of data helps scientists better understand animal, plant, and insect populations and helps inform policies to safeguard birds.

The data must be valid and reliable. The eBird team, including scientists at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Cornell Lab of Ornithology “*rigorously compared five different data sources, including the Christmas Bird Count, the Breeding Bird Survey, citizen-science data from eBird, and surveys conducted by the Fish and Wildlife Service.*” They found sightings “*submitted by eBirders and the advanced statistical models generated by the eBird Status and Trends Project Team provided the best available, high-resolution information across wide areas of the United States for the entire year—a key piece needed to advise wind-energy policy.*” The eBird data was critically important because it covered so many different areas and year-round.

“*Convinced by the reliability of citizen-science data and the eBird relative abundance models, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is suggesting that results be used to define low-exposure areas for Bald Eagles, marking the first time eBird data has been used to directly shape policy decisions at the federal level.*”

In fact, the USF&W Service desired to identify places where wind energy projects would have minimal risk to Bald Eagles by knowing where they are year-round. They used eBird—the world’s largest citizen-science efforts at Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

“*Using citizen-science sightings in combination with relative abundance model results from the eBird Status and Trends project could obviate the need for the lengthy survey period, and provide significant cost-saving—a win-win situation for Bald Eagles and green energy. “eBird relative abundance models provide information at such fine spatial and temporal scales, and this can guide conservation approaches that more readily balance human and ecological needs,” says Amanda Rodewald, director for the Center of Avian Population Studies.*”

For example, over 180,000 eBirders reported their Bald Eagle sightings that gave researchers an excellent idea where Bald Eagle populations are. If you switch habitat types or change elevation, start a new list. The more accurate the data, the more it will help inform policy.

Checklists must be complete to be used by researchers.

Reference: *Sightings submitted by eBirders can help inform policy to safeguard birds*, By Team eBird, 4/16/21, <https://ebird.org/news/ebirders-can-help-inform-policy-to-safeguard-birds?tagId=129>

What is an eBird Hotspot?

“Hotspots are public birding locations created by eBird users. Hotspots allow multiple birders to enter data into the same shared location, creating aggregated results available through [eBird's "Explore" tools](#).

....

The more precise you make your birding location, the easier it is for scientists to associate your observations with habitat information.”

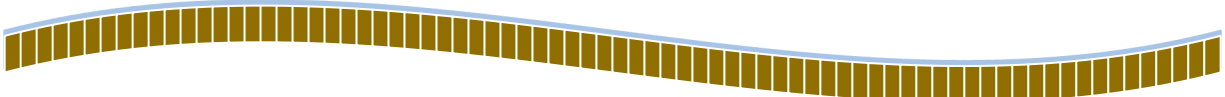
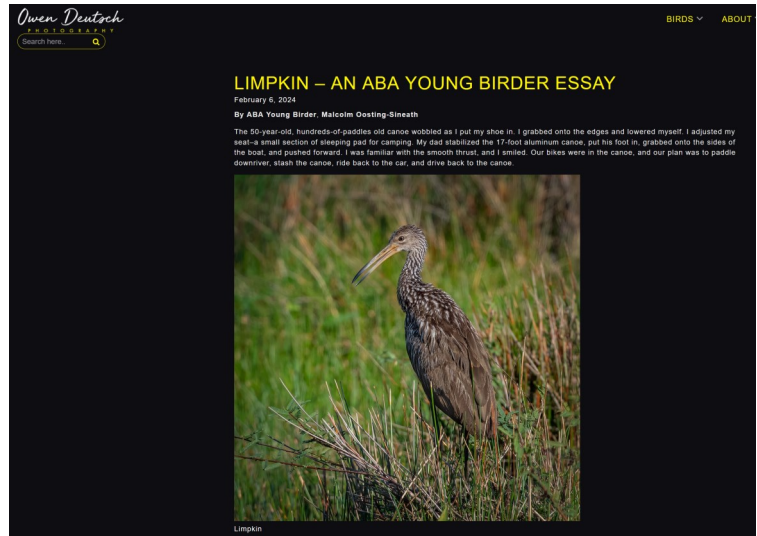
For detailed information, check out the FAQs at: <https://support.ebird.org/en/support/solutions/articles/48001009443-ebird-hotspot-faqs#anchorWhatIsHotspot>

Malcom and Karl

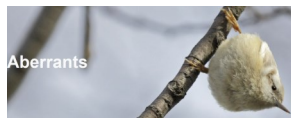
Congratulations to Malcolm and Karl to have this exciting experience published.

To read the article, follow the link:

https://owendeutsch.com/limpkin-an-aba-young-birder-essay/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery



Interesting Websites:



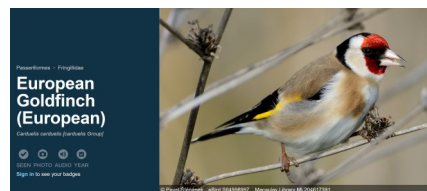
Here are some links to interesting articles that have been posted by various people on Discord.

“What's in a name? Nomenclature for colour aberrations in birds reviewed by Hein van Grouw acts as the basis for classifying the primary aberrant plumages shared on this page. We've done our best to sort the birds presented below, however there are likely mistakes. If you have any thoughts on how to improve this section, including classifications - please let us know!

Some common species have many well documented examples of abnormal plumages. To help show how pigmentation can alter appearance, we've made a species-specific page for [American Robin here!](#)”

This website has some interesting photos.

<https://sites.google.com/view/greatgreatlakesbirding/home/vagrants-hybrids-and-aberrants/aberrants>



<https://ebird.org/species/eurgol1>

Status and distribution of an introduced population of European Goldfinches (*Carduelis carduelis*) in the western Great Lakes region of North America

By Julie A. Craves, Nicholas M. Anich, <https://neobiota.pensoft.net/article/97736/>



The ABA Checklist includes species found in the ABA Area which are breeding species, regular visitors, casual and accidental species from other regions that are believed to have strayed here unrestrained by humans, and well-established introduced species that are now part of our avifauna. Species Total: 1138

The CLC (ABA Checklist Committee) has recently accepted four species to the ABA Checklist: **Southern Lapwing (*Vanellus chilensis*), Kentish Plover (*Anarhynchus [Charadrius] alexandrinus*), Ainley’s Storm-Petrel (*Hydrobates cheimomnestes*), European Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*).**

<https://www.aba.org/aba-checklist/>

The S. Lapwing acceptance was based partly on the Oscoda County, Michigan sighting.

Decline of Backyard Birds

Judi Manning

Synopsis/Excerpts

According to Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s Status and Trends, <https://science.ebird.org/en/status-and-trends>, there are fewer American Robins being seen in Michigan. During breeding season, the American Robin population dropped 20%.



ALSO IN DECLINE:

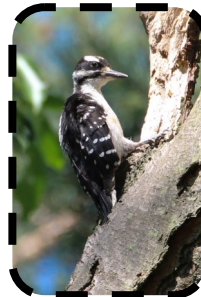


This information was gathered by people who eBird their sightings. It is important to report all birds that are seen and the number. Any checklist that has an “X” is not used by researchers.

By following the above link, you can search for almost all the species in North America. It is possible to get the data for a species in as little as a 16 square mile area.

The decline is most likely due to the loss of habitat to urban spaces resulting in less habitat to feed and raise young. Climate change is also affecting populations.

SPECIES ON THE INCREASE:



Tom Auer, a Hancock, Michigan native who serves as a geospatial data scientist for Cornell says “migration trends give us an idea of the bigger picture when it comes to the health of the environment around us. They are what we call valuable indicators of what’s going on with ecosystems and landscapes, because they’re dependent on those places. They need bugs or fruit or seeds to feed their young, to raise chicks, and to migrate between places across the entire hemisphere.

....

We get a lot of information about not only the health of different ecosystems in different parts of the country, but also what’s going on in terms of changing dynamics at much bigger scales. Are birds arriving earlier than they have been? Are they just not appearing in places anymore? Are they declining more dramatically in some places than others?”

“If you’d like to help local bird populations in your area, Cornell has released a [list of "seven simple actions" people can take to protect birds.](#)”

Reference: American Robin populations declining as shown by newly released data tool, Matt Gard, 13 On Your Side, 3/7/24, <https://www.wzzm13.com/article/tech/science/environment/declining-bird-populations/69-f7c55822-df00-4d3b-a322-3647d37a347a>



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Check Member Type: \$20 Family \$30 Contributing \$100 Individual Life

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Grand Haven, Michigan

Thank you for your support!

(3/24)

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.

Owashtanong Islands Audubon Society

Judi Manning, Editor

P.O. Box 1654

Holland, MI 49422

PLEASE FORWARD

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

MARCH 19, 2024

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