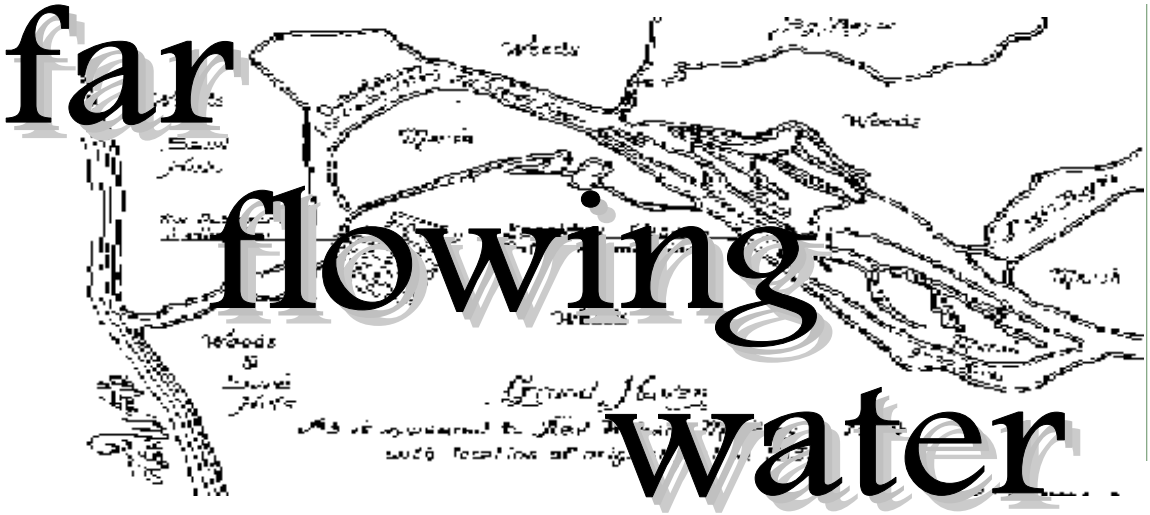
far flowing water



OWASHTANONG ISLANDS AUDUBON SOCIETY

Grand Haven, Michigan

April 21 - 7:30

Volume 20 ❖ Number 7
April, 2009

Michigan's Important Birding Areas
Update for the Ivory Billed Woodpecker

Caleb Putnam

The rediscovery of the long-thought extinct Ivory-billed Woodpecker in Arkansas in 2004 ignited a flurry of excitement in the biological world. However, doubts as to the validity of the claims surfaced soon after the public announcement of the sighting. Search participant Caleb Putnam will describe the evidence of the bird's existence and the subsequent discussion over the conclusion that the bird was not extinct as of 2004. The talk will include photos and anecdotes from Caleb's time spent searching the area of the sightings in April, 2005.

Caleb is Coordinator of the Michigan Important Bird Areas program and has extensive knowledge of Michigan's birds and places. He has a B.S. in Biology from Alma College in 1999 and M.S. in Environmental Studies in 2003.

Visit the OIAS homepage at
http://www.oias.org

Table of Contents

United Methodist
Church of the Dunes
717 Sheldon, Grand Haven, MI

Everyone is invited.
Our programs are free.

Programs 2008 - 2009

More Directors are needed!!!
If you would like to be a Director, let Michael L know.

MAY 19 — **Annual Potluck & Members'** "Show-and-Tell" Slide Show. Start gathering photos and bird related to share. Put your thinking caps on as to what you will be sharing at the potluck.

INTERNATIONAL MIGRATORY BIRD COUNT / NORTH AMERICAN MIGRATION COUNT

MAY 9, 2009

If you are interested in counting birds in your yard or at a particular location in Ottawa County on May 9th, please contact Carl at webmaster@OIAS.org The more people out there the more data can be gathered to help in this citizen science project.

MICHIGAN AUDUBON SPRING BIRDING FESTIVALS

Tawas Point Birding Festival - Friday May 15, Saturday May 16, and Sunday May 17
http://www.tawasbirdfest.com
Cerulean Warbler Birding Festival – Friday June 5 and Saturday June 6,
http://www.ceruleanwarbler.org/cerulean.html
Kirtland's Warbler Wildlife Festival: May 16, Roscommon
http://warbler.kirtland.edu/

MICHIGAN AUDUBON CHAPTER CONNECTION

April 2009

WEST MICHIGAN BIRDING FESTIVAL

If you plan on birding on the western side of the state this spring, mark your calendar for this new birding festival presented by Sable Dunes Audubon Society on May 15 – 17, 2009 at the Art Center in Ludington. Come for an unforgettable weekend or only a single day to the charming town of Ludington, on the white sandy shores of Lake Michigan. Whether you are a beginning or an advanced birder, don't miss this special opportunity to get an up-close look at migrating birds, such as the endangered piping plover. Activities include workshops, interactive programs, and field trips guided by expert naturalists and biologists. For more information contact Judy Bach 231-843-4826. The West Michigan Birding Festival, to be held in Ludington this May, is online. Please visit our new website at www.birdingfestival.org and encourage your friends, family and neighbors to do likewise. It's not too early to register: a form is provided online.

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

Our programs are made possible, in part, by an Emilie Baker Fund for the Environment grant from the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation.

Printed on Recycled Paper

FAR FLOWING WATER
is a publication of the Owashtanong Islands Audubon Society, Grand Haven, MI

4th ANNUAL LAKESHORE EARTH DAY CELEBRATION

Saturday, April 18th

Submitted by Doris Ducey

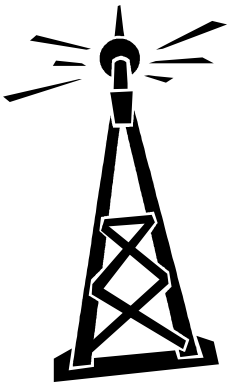
- 9 AM to 11 AM - **Kay Charter on Birds**
- 12:30 PM to 1:30 PM - **Green Parade**
- 1:30 PM to 4 PM - **Earth Day Fair**
- 8 PM to 11 PM - **Earth Rock EnviroParty - Open Mic**

Mark your calendar now

Saturday, April 25th

10 to 4 PM - **A Day in the Park** Hosted by Friends of the Ottawa County Parks at the historic Weaver House, Pine Bend County Park. For more information on A Day in the Park visit the Friends of Ottawa County Parks website: **www.Friendsofocp.org**

Towers Kill Birds



The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimates that up to **40 - 50 million birds are killed each year** by communications towers. Migrating birds become disoriented and trapped by the halo of light surrounding towers that use steady-burning illumination — especially during bad weather conditions. The birds circle endlessly until they either collide with the structure, each other, or simply fall dead from sheer exhaustion.

Simple steps can be taken to prevent these needless deaths, but for over ten years, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC, the government agency that licenses towers) has been slow to take action, despite repeated appeals by Audubon, American Bird Conservancy, and Defenders of Wildlife, as well as independent scientists, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and even a federal court order. *You can send your own letter directly to the FCC* demanding action at the *Audubon Action Center*, http://audubonaction.org/audubon/home.html

Audubon Advisory, February 26, 2009, Vol. 2009 Issue 2

SALMONELLA OUTBREAK UPDATE

There have been reports of Salmonella outbreaks affecting birds in northern Michigan. To help reduce transmission, feeders should be disinfected weekly with a 1:10 (10%) bleach to water mixture and clean up all spilled seed. Feeders should be thoroughly dried before refilling. Feed should be removed for 2 to 4 weeks. With the food supply removed, birds will disperse, and carrier and susceptible birds separated. For more information visit the DNR webpage at:
http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-10370_12150_12220-27268--,00.html

Michigan Audubon Connection 4/09

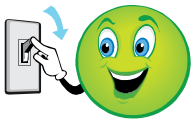
BIRDWATCHERS NEEDED TO MONITOR FOR RARE CERULEAN WARBLER The Michigan Audubon Society is seeking experienced bird watchers to help find Cerulean Warblers nesting locations in southern Michigan.

"The Cerulean Warbler is North America's fastest declining songbird. It is closer to extinction than the Kirtland Warbler, which has experienced population growth in recent years," says Thomas Funke, Director of Conservation for Michigan Audubon. "We are looking to enlist the help of bird watchers who would be willing to volunteer two mornings of their time to help locate these birds." Birders will be asked to take a survey route that is done from a road by vehicle, an established hiking trail, or a route that is off trail. They will need to do their route at least twice between mid-May and the end of June. Michigan Audubon will offer informational training sessions for interested bird watchers at the following dates, times, and places:

For more information, please contact Tom Funke, at tfunke@michiganaudubon.org or 517.886.9144 or 269.275.0004

10 Ways to Go Green

Synopsis



Little things -- like using a colorful cloth bag, or tossing potato peels and eggshells into the compost heap-- can help the environment. Encourage everyone you know.

REDUCE ELECTRICITY

- Lights, computers, televisions and furnaces use energy, and that energy is in short supply. Flip off the light when you leave a room. Shut off the TV when you are no longer watching.
- Anything you use with remote, like TVs, use energy even when off, so cutting the power totally is the only way to conserve. Buy power bars and plug your electronics into them.

TAKE SMALL STEPS

- Shut off the water when they brush their teeth
- Walk, ride a bike or take the bus instead of traveling by car
- Take faster showers or baths in just a small amount of water
- Help hang clothes on the line instead of putting them in the dryer
- Choose products that are not over packaged

RECYCLE

- Sort recyclables and take them out for pickup. If there's no recycling collection in your area, find out where you can drop off items.

COMPOST

- It's easy to collect your own food scraps and garden waste and turn it into healthy compost in your own yard.
- Buy a composter and fill it with kitchen scraps and garden waste on a daily basis. Stir it to get things breaking down. In a few months when you've got compost, spread it over the garden. The "garbage" becomes rich dark dirt to make a garden grow.

DONATE

Take old clothing, toys, shoes, or other items in reusable condition to the donation center.

- No matter how little, you can teach kids to be pro-active about initiating eco-friendly practices in their homes and communities. Below are some examples of how kids can get involved.

MAKE A REUSABLE BAG

- Plastic shopping bas are a big garbage problem -- it takes 1,000 years for a bag to break down! Choose some heavy fabric and sew it into simple rectangular bags with handles. Or, buy some canvas bags at a craft or environmentally friendly gift shop. Take the bags out with you every time you shop.

ENJOY THE EARTH

- Kids have to love the world to want to protect it. So take nature walks and look at the trees, flowers and sky. When you're away on vacation, don't forget to enjoy the local natural environment, not just the tourist sites. Encourage them to take pictures, draw pictures, read books and write stories about the world and its beauty.

TALK ABOUT IT

- "We focus on just being aware," says Altman. She often talks to her daughter about birds, plants, gas-guzzling vehicles and energy use. Indeed, just asking your children to shut off the lights and reuse plastic bags is not enough -- they must understand why we're doing these things and what impact they might have.

Click here for a kid-friendly Earth Day story.

For more ways to be eco-conscious and earth-friendly games, crafts, and activities, check out the main Earth Day holiday page.
http://holidays.kaboose.com/earth-day/earth-day-crafts.html

Native Bees

Excerpts and synopsis: MSU publication. See below

Bees are essential pollinators of many crops. Some plants have lightweight pollen transferred by wind. Others have heavier pollen that must be transferred by animals. Insects, birds and bats can move pollen between flowers, but bees are most important for achieving pollination and maximum yields of many crop plants. Without bees to move pollen, some crops would be far less productive, and many fruits and vegetables would not ripen as evenly or as quickly.

Why conserve native bees? Since their introduction from Europe in 1622, honey bees have become the most economically important pollinator for fruit and vegetable production. Each spring, U.S. growers rent millions of beehives to pollinate their crops to help ensure high yields. Honey bees are becoming more difficult to manage because of parasites and diseases. Diversifying the pollinators that are active on a farm makes good economic sense because it spreads risk across many bee species. This can reduce the chance that poor weather conditions will reduce pollination, as sometimes happens in colder springs. Another benefit of having more kinds of bees pollinating is that for some crops, native bees are much more efficient at shaking the flower to release pollen. A bumblebee is six times more efficient than a honey bee at pollinating blueberry flowers.

Some common groups of native bees:

Mason or Osmia bees (family Megachilidae). Many mason bees are active in early spring and large numbers are present to pollinate spring-blooming fruit crops. Although they will nest close to other females of their species, these are solitary bees and have a single generation per year.

Leafcutter bees (family Megachilidae) Leafcutter bees are first observed in late spring, and some species continue collecting pollen until the first frost. These bees are solitary and have a single generation per year.

Sweat bees (family Halictidae). Usually the most abundant group of bees around farms. Some sweat bees are solitary, with a single generation per year. Others are social and have one to a few queens, supported by a number of female workers, producing multiple generations per year.

Andrenid bees (family Andrenidae). These are small to medium-sized bees that nest in the soil and are active early in the spring. In bee surveys in Michigan blueberry farms, andrenids were some of the most common bees on flowers, and most of the pollen recovered from them was from blueberry. All are solitary with one generation each year, but various species emerge throughout the growing season.

Bumble bees (family Apidae). A single queen emerges in the spring and produces several generations of workers through the season to build her nest. In late summer, new queens and males (drones) are produced; they mate and the new queens overwinter and begin the cycle again the following year. Unlike honey bee queens, bumble bee queens must gather nectar and pollen during early spring until their first offspring emerge. Bumble bees are very effective at pollinating many crops.

Carpenter bees (family Apidae). These bees are large and often mistaken for bumble bee queens because of their similar size and markings. Carpenter bees are distinguished by their hairless, shiny black abdomens. Carpenter bees bore into wood to create their nests and are generally considered to be solitary. They can be a problem because they steal nectar through holes they cut in the sides of flowers to reach the nectar, thereby failing to pollinate the flowers.

You can follow some simple practices to make landscapes more suitable for bee pollinators. Bees need undisturbed nesting sites and access to nectar and pollen when the crop is not in bloom. They also need water, and some need materials for nest building, such as mud or leaves. Your yard may already have some of these. However, increasing them should improve native bee abundance over time.

As a first step, consider how abundant blooming plants are around. Early-blooming woody plants such as willow, wild cherry, redbud and elderberry can provide resources for bees emerging in early spring. For flowers in late summer and early fall, herbaceous plants such as bee balm, hyssop, goldenrod and asters can be encouraged or planted to provide food for bees.

Bee exposure to pesticides. Protect the bees. Avoid insecticide applications immediately before, during and directly after plants bloom. These steps are critical for native bees to emerge, lay eggs and provision their nests with food for their young. Other bee species are active throughout the season (e.g., bumble bees), and they will be exposed to pesticides used during the rest of the growing season.

Everyone can adopt some relatively simple practices in and around their homes and fields to enhance suitability for these important beneficial insects:

☺ Provide habitat suitable for nesting.

☺ Encourage or plant native flowering plants to provide blooms through the growing season.

☺ Provide access to clean water.

☺ Provide nest-building materials, including mud and waxy-leaved plants.

☺ Minimize insecticide use, avoid spraying during bloom, and switch to more bee-friendly pesticides.

Continued on Page 6


Mason


Leafcutter


Sweat bee


Andrenid


Bumblebee


Carpenter

References: Excerpts and all pictures: Conserving Native Bees on Farmland, Rufus Isaacs and Julianna Tuell, *Department of Entomology, Michigan State University*

The entire pdf can be found at: http://nativeplants.msu.edu/pdf/E2985ConservingNativeBees.pdf Photos from this pdf

Birds Building Case for Warming

excerpts by Judi Manning

As the temperature across the U.S. has gotten warmer, the purple finch has been spending its winters more than 400 miles farther north than it used to. An Audubon Society study released in February found that more than half of 305 birds species in North America, a hodgepodge that includes robins, gulls, chickadees and owls, are spending the winter about 35 miles farther north than they did 40 years ago.

Bird ranges expand and shift for many reasons, among them urban sprawl, deforestation and the supplemental diet provided by backyard feeders. But researchers say the only explanation for why so many birds over such a broad area are wintering in more northern locales is global warming.

Over the 40 years covered by the study, the average January temperature in the US climbed by about 5 degrees F. That warming was most pronounced in northern states, which have already recorded an influx of more southern species and could see some northern species retreat into Canada as ranges shift.

"This is as close as science at this scale gets to proof," said Greg Butcher, the lead scientist on the study and the director of bird conservation at the Audubon Society. "It is not what each of these individual birds did. It is the wide diversity of birds that suggests it has something to do with temperature, rather than ecology." The study provides compelling evidence for what many birders across the country have long recognized — many birds are responding to climate change by shifting farther north.

Previous studies of breeding birds in Great Britain and the eastern U.S. have detected similar trends. The Audubon study covers a broader area and includes many more species.

The study of migration habits from 1966 through 2005 found about one-fourth of the species have moved farther south. But the number moving northward — 177 species — is twice that.

The study "shows a very, very large fraction of the wintering birds are shifting" northward, said Terry Root, a biologist at Stanford University. "We don't know for a fact that it is warming. But when one keeps finding the same thing over and over ... we know it is not just a figment of our imagination."

The research is based on data collected during the Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count in early winter. This is citizen science at it best that we participate in and they use our data! At that time of year, temperature is the primary driver for where birds go and whether they live or die. To survive the cold, birds need to eat enough during the day to have the energy needed to shiver throughout the night.

Milder winters mean the birds don't need to expend as much energy shivering and can get by eating less food in the day.

General biology aside, the research can't explain why particular species are moving. That's because changes in temperature affect different birds in different ways.

References: Dina Cappiello GR Press 2/15/09 Pg A16 and http://www.mnn.com/earth-matters/climate-change/stories/study-birds-shifting-north-global-warming-cited

20 on the fly

The following 20 birds moved the farthest north of all 305 species studied by the Audubon Society. The list shows species and estimated miles moved north 1966-2005:

Species	Miles
Purple Finch	433.0
Wild Turkey	407.6
Marbled murrelet	361.9
Ring-billed gull	355.8
Red-breasted merganser	316.9
Spruce grouse	316.1
Pine siskin	288.2
Fox sparrow	286.8
Boreal chickadee	279.4
House finch	269.8
Pygmy nuthatch	265.5
Steller's Jay	264.4
Red-breasted Nuthatch	244.4
Virginia rail	231.6
Varied thrush	229.9
Ring-necked duck	219.2
American goldfinch	219.1
Snow goose	217.1
Eastern towhee	215.0
American robin	206.0

Green Resolutions from the Natural Resources Defense Council's Simple Steps.

By NRDC Simple Steps

GIVE UP PLASTIC (AND PAPER) BAGS - Cost: $1 - Do you opt for paper or plastic when at the grocery store? Neither is a good choice. Twelve million barrels of oil were used to make the 88.5 billion plastic bags consumed in the United States last year. And it takes four times more energy to make paper bags. The best choice is reusable shopping bags made of cotton, nylon or durable, meshlike plastic. Put a few reusable shopping bags in your car so you have them handy on your next shopping trip. And if you happen to forget your reusable bag, choose paper if you will recycle it or plastic if you will reuse or recycle it.

STOP BUYING BOTTLED WATER - Cost: $14.98 for aluminum water bottle - Did you know that it takes 26 bottles of water to produce the plastic container for a one-liter bottle of water, and that doing so pollutes 25 liters of groundwater? Don't leave a trail of plastic water bottles in your wake! Stop buying bottled water. Use reusable water bottles instead made from materials like stainless steel or aluminum that are not likely to degrade over time. If you choose a plastic water bottle, check the number on the bottom first: Plastics numbered 3, 6 and 7 could pose a health threat to you, so look for plastics numbered 1, 2, 4 or 5.

GIVE UP CONVENTIONAL DETERGENTS - Cost: $10.25 for one 112-oz box - Many natural detergents clean clothes just as effectively in cooler water temperatures. Choose detergents and other laundry products that are plant-based, concentrated and biodegradable.

Stop Receiving Unwanted Catalogs - Cost: $0 - Each year, 19 billion catalogs are mailed to American consumers. All those catalogs require more than 53 million trees and 56 billion gallons of wastewater to produce -- and many of us don't even know how we got on so many mailing lists! So grab that stack of catalogs piling up on your coffee table and clear out the clutter. Visit CatalogChoice.org to put a stop to unwanted catalogs. Within 10 weeks, your mailbox will be empty of unwanted catalogs. A less cluttered mailbox means less pollution, less waste and less of the pollution that cause global warming.

GIVE UP HOT WATER (AT LEAST IN THE CLOTHES WASHER) - Cost: $0 - Did you know that only 10 percent of the energy used by a typical washing machine powers the motor? About 90 percent of the energy is used to heat the water. Most clothes will come clean in cold water. So switch your washing machine's temperature setting. For heavily soiled clothing, change it from hot to warm, but otherwise try to wash and rinse most of your clothing in cold water.

GIVE UP THE CLOTHES DRYER - Cost: $0 - The second biggest household energy user, after the refrigerator, is the clothes dryer. Overdrying your clothes can end up costing you money. (As much as $70,000 over your lifetime, according to the Green Cheapskate.) An electric dryer operating an extra 15 minutes a load can cost you up to $34 a year in wasted energy; a gas dryer, $21 a year. Clear the lint filter after each load and dry only full loads of clothes. Dry heavy fabrics separately from lighter ones. Don't add wet clothing in the middle of the drying cycle. Hanging clothing outside in the sun and air to dry is the most energy-efficient method -- or use a folding indoor rack all year long.

CHECK FOR LEAKS IN YOUR TOILET - Cost: $0 - Most of us would be surprised to find out that one in every five toilets leak, and since the leaks are usually silent, you probably have no idea if your toilet is leaking. A leaking toilet can waste anywhere between 30 and 500 gallons of water every day, so any leak should be repaired. To see if your toilet is leaking, put a few drops of food coloring in the toilet tank. If the dye shows up in the toilet bowl after 15 minutes or so, the toilet has a leak. Leaking is usually caused by an old or poorly fitting flapper valve, which can be replaced by any amateur DIY-er!

GIVE UP TOILET PAPER (OK, JUST CONVENTIONAL TOILET PAPER) - Cost: $2.96 for 4-pack, 260 sheets - Believe it or not, switching to recycled toilet paper can change the world. If every household in the United States bought just one four-pack of 260-sheet recycled bath tissue, instead of the typical tissue made from virgin fiber, it would eliminate 60,600 pounds of chlorine pollution, preserve 356 million gallons (1.35 billion liters) of fresh water and save nearly 1 million trees. A four-pack of recycled toilet paper costs about the same as a four-pack of conventional toilet paper.

GIVE UP PAPER TOWELS - Cost: $6.95 - Paper towels create waste. Buy some reusable microfiber towels, which grip dirt and dust like a magnet, even when they get wet. When you are finished with them, toss the towels in the wash and reuse them again and again. They are even great for countertops and mirrors. When you absolutely have to use disposable towels, look for recycled products. If every household in the United States replaced just one roll of virgin fiber paper towels (70 sheets) with 100 percent recycled ones, we could save 544,000 trees.

RUN A FULLY LOADED DISHWASHER - Cost: $0 - If you have dishwasher, use it. Running a fully loaded dishwasher -- without prerinsing the dishes -- can use a third less water than washing the dishes by hand, saving up to 10 to 20 gallons of water a day. Simply scrape large pieces of food off your dishes and let the dishwasher handle the rest. And by using the air-dry setting (instead of heat-dry), you will consume half the amount of electricity without spending a dime.

LOWER THE TEMP IN YOUR FRIDGE - Cost: $0 - As one of the biggest appliances in your kitchen, the refrigerator is also one of the most power hungry, accounting for 10 to 15 percent of the average home energy bill each month. Get your fridge running in tip-top shape. Set the refrigerator thermostat to maintain a temperature between 38 and 42 degrees (F). This temperature will protect your food from spoiling while saving electricity. Twice a year, clean the condenser coil at the back of your fridge. Condenser coils tend to get dusty, making them less efficient.

GIVE UP 2 DEGREES - Cost: $0 - Electric power plants are the country's largest industrial source of the pollutants that cause global warming. By snuggling under a blanket on the couch on a snowy winter night instead of turning up the heat, or enjoying the breeze from a fan in the height of summer instead of turning up the air conditioning, you can save pounds of pollution, as well as some money off your utility bills. Set your thermostat in winter to 68 degrees F (20° C) or less during the daytime and 55 degrees F (13° C) before going to sleep or when you are away for the day. And during the summer, set thermostats to 78 degrees F (26° C) or more.

Con't Pg.8

Green resolutions from the Natural Resources Defense Council's

Con't from Pg. 7

GIVE UP DRY CLEANING - Cost: $0 - Until recently, almost all dry cleaners used a cancer-causing chemical called perchloroethylene, also known as Perc or TCE. Traces of this toxic chemical remain on your clothes after dry cleaning and will evaporate into the air in your car or home. If you have to use a traditional dry cleaner, take your dry cleaning out of the plastic and air it outside or near a window before hanging it in your closet. To avoid the need for dry cleaning at all, make customer care a part of your clothing purchase decisions and choose fabrics that don't require dry cleaning at all.
STOP WASTING GAS - Cost: $0 - Increase your gas mileage by checking your tire pressure. More than a quarter of all cars and nearly one-third of all SUVs, vans and pickups have underinflated tires, according to a survey by the Dept of Transportation. If every American kept his or her tires properly inflated, we could save 2.8 billion gallons (10.6 billion liters) of gasoline a year -- and help curb global warming pollution -- so inflate the tires on your car or truck and continue to do so once a month or as necessary.
AVOID WASTE: RECYCLE - Cost: $0 - For every trash can of waste you put outside for the trash collector, about 70 trash cans of waste are used in order to create that trash. To reduce the amount of waste you produce, buy products in returnable and recyclable containers and recycle as much as you can. The energy saved from recycling a single aluminum can operate a television for three hours! If your community doesn't provide containers for recycling, designate a bin in your garage for recyclables to make it easy for you and your family to recycle things like the newspaper and aluminum cans.
http://www.thedailygreen.com/environmental-news/latest/green-new-years-resolutions-10109

Whitefish Point Bird Observatory

excerpts from: http://www.wpbo.org

"With its massive concentrations of birds, Whitefish Point ranks among the most significant avian migration sites in North America. The Observatory's research programs are built around the vast biological opportunities of Whitefish Point and the northern Great Lakes ecosystem. The Whitefish Point Bird Observatory conducts a diurnal raptor census, a nocturnal raptor census, a waterbird census, and a daily estimated total of all migrants moving through Whitefish Point."

DIURNAL RAPTOR CENSUS

WBPO is one of the most important spring flight corridors for raptors in North America. Diurnal Raptor Census conducted by WPBO's professional staff document the migration of hawks, falcons and eagles; and provide reliable comparative data for long-term monitoring of raptor populations. The Raptor Census occurs daily from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM Eastern Standard Time from March 15 through May 31.
Whitefish Point is a phenomenal concentration spot for migrating owls during spring and fall and an ongoing owl banding research programs are conducted by WPBO. Owls observed at the Point include Northern Saw-whet, Boreal, Long-eared, Short-eared, Great-Horned, Great Gray, and Northern Hawk Owl. This research monitor owl populations over time to gain a better understanding of how these populations fluctuate and change over the years. The spring owl banding has run annually since 1988, from 1 April to 31 May. Nets are operated every night (weather permitting)

WATERBIRDS

WBPO is the most important spot for documenting and monitoring waterbird movements in the upper Great Lakes. Spring and fall counts record loons, grebes, ducks, geese, shorebirds and other waterbirds, providing important information on abundance and timing of migration, aiding in regional and international efforts to monitor changes in populations.
Unlike the hawk count the hawk count, the waterbird count is conducted from April 15 to May 31, and August 15 to November 15. It is conducted from the beach near the tip of the Point about 50 yards from the shore. The exact location varies slightly as the beach changes due to erosion. The count begins at sunrise and continues for 8 hours.

SONGBIRDS

They conduct a census program to document migrant passerines at the Point, and songbird populations throughout the Upper Peninsula. This program documents species distribution, abundance, and habitat use with an emphasis on rare species and other birds of special concern, including Neotropical migrants. The daily census information is used in combination with the hawk count and waterbird count to produce a Daily Estimated Total (DET) for all species migrating through Whitefish Point.

If you have never been to the Point, a good time is during the
Whitefish Point Bird Observatory Annual Spring Fling — Friday April 24th, Saturday April 25th, Sunday April 26th 2009
Check the website for additional information: http://www.wpbo.org/Trips.html#springfling

NESTWATCH PROGRAM Anyone with bird nest boxes can help scientists learn more about bird families and how they might be affected by climate change. Register your nest box (or boxes) with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's NestWatch program (www.RegisterYourNestbox.org). It doesn't cost anything but yields valuable information needed to better understand breeding birds and how their natural rhythms may be changing.

Michigan Audubon Connection 4/09

JOIN THE NORTH AMERICAN MIGRATION COUNT NAMC is similar the Christmas Bird Count. Spend some time counting birds in a specified area and keep track of hours and miles by foot, car, boat, or feeder watching. Unlike CBC, which is spread over several weeks, this count is done on a single day across the entire country. The count is Saturday, May 9. Contact Carl

Judi Manning

Wild Turkey

Meleagris galopavo

Wild Turkeys were a very important food animal and hunting pressure contributed to their elimination from much of the range by the early 1900s. Habitat loss also contributed to the decline. Introduction programs in the 1940s when wild birds were caught and transported were successful in quickly re-establishing them in their original range as well as in new areas and now they are now found in 49 states.

Male: 48 inches long; average weight 18 pounds
Female: 36 inches long; average weight 8 pounds

The identification of a Wild Turkey is unmistakable. The male has a prominent beard which is a tuft of filamentous feathers and is long and more obvious on an older bird. Scientists do not know what, if anything they are used for. The head and neck are completely bare. During spring displays, the forehead and face are bright blue and the neck is scarlet. He has: spurs on the legs which curve upward on an older bird; a *snood*: the flap of skin hanging down the beak; and a *wattle*: the bumpy skin on the neck. The female has a gray head and a feathered neck and sometimes a very small beard.

These ground-dwelling birds are found in hardwood and mixed conifer-hardwood forests with scattered openings like fields, pastures, orchards, and marshes. They are omnivores and eat acorns, nuts, seeds, fruits, insects, buds, fern fronds, and salamanders. They forage on the ground in flocks, scratching the ground to uncover food.

"The male gobbles to attract females. When she appears, he struts around her. He has his tail fanned and held up vertically, lowers his wings so that the wingtips drag on the ground, raises the feathers on his back, throws his head back onto his back with the bill forward, and inflates his crop. He makes occasional deep 'chump' sounds, followed by a low 'humm,' and accompanied by a rapid vibration of his tail feathers. During the strut his facial skin engorges and the colors intensify, especially the white forehead." http://www.birds.cornell.edu A male's gobble, strutting, and tail fanning attract and hold his harem. The gobble can be heard up to a mile away.

They are polygamous and mate in early spring.

The nest is a depression hidden by brush, grass, vines or other vegetation. She lays 4 to 17 eggs. The male provides no parental care. The young hatch downy, leaving the nest shortly thereafter. They are precocial and feed themselves shortly after hatching. Several hens and their brood join up.

They are quite wary and swift runners. For short sprints, they can dash up to 18 miles per hour. They often roost in trees over water because of the added protection this gives them. They hardly fly but can take-off like helicopters, going almost straight up. When they fly straight ahead, they go fast. One was clocked at 55 miles per hour.

They spend their winters together in flocks. They flock together to protect each other with the toms in one flock and hens in another. At least one bird is always on the lookout for danger and signals the others if a predator appears. Male poults stay with their mother through the fall. Female poults stay with their mother until the next spring.

Certain American Indian tribes considered Wild Turkeys stupid and cowardly and did not eat them for fear of acquiring these characteristics.

If Benjamin Franklin had had his way, the Wild Turkey would have been the symbol of the United States instead of the Bald Eagle. He thought the wild turkey was more dignified than the eagle.

References: http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/BirdGuide/Wild_Turkey_dtl.html; http://www.nature.com//flashcard; http://www.nhptv.org/NatureWorks/wildturkey.htm; http://www.norcrosss.org/html/wild_turkey.htm

A BIG THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THIS ISSUE OF
far flowing water

Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as life lasts.

Rachel Carson

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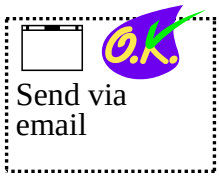

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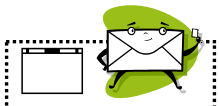

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Caleb Putnam

May 9
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