



Grand Haven, Michigan

far

flowing

water



**March 15 @ 7:30 pm**

Volume 22 Number 6  
March, 2011

## Marsh Monitoring

Carolyn Weng

Concerned about the loss of wetland habitat for birds and other animals? Wonder if marsh monitoring is for you? Carolyn will take you on a visual journey through the MMP's work in Great Lakes and the role volunteers are playing in Muskegon Lake's wetlands restoration. She will demonstrate the bird and frog survey techniques so you can see the level of skills required. Volunteers collect data about species diversity and abundance. The existence of bitterns, marsh wrens, spring peppers and green frogs are indicators of the health of our wetlands and whether they can do their jobs such as filtering contaminants from our water. Have you stopped by a marsh lately to listen to bird singing or marvel at the patterns of the water and vegetation?

Carolyn Weng is active in local citizen science-based nature monitoring projects. As a volunteer Coordinator in the Muskegon Area for the Great Lakes Marsh Monitoring Program, she recruits, trains and assists MMP volunteers. Carolyn is also a member of the Muskegon Lake Watershed Partnership

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**Everyone is invited.**  
**Programs are free.**  
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United Methodist Church of the Dunes  
717 Sheldon, Grand Haven, MI

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

## **Invasive Phragmites: *Local Riverbanks, Wetlands, Bayous and Streams are Threatened***

**PUBLIC MEETING:** Wednesday, March 23 6:30 to 8:30 pm  
**WHERE:** Spring Lake District Library

- ☹ 15 feet tall
- ☹ rhizomes 60 ft. long
- ☹ destroys wildlife habitat
- ☹ crowds out natural species
- ☹ creates a safety hazard
- ☹ spreads alarmingly fast
- ☹ lots of seeds



photo/Wetland Watch  
 Wetland Watch volunteers cruise along a stand of 'Giant Reed Grass' in Spring Lake's Petty's Bayou.

“Harbor Island in Grand Haven has many areas of dense phragmite growth,” said Leslie Newman, vice president of Wetlands Watch.

At the meeting, attendees will learn how to identify the invasive phragmites that are taking over wetlands, bayous, islands, streams and the banks of the Grand River; gain an understanding of the regional threat if left untreated; and discover individual and community treatment methods to eradicate and control the reed.

Space is limited and those interested in attending are asked to register by calling Newman at 616-844-3066 or by emailing [newmanle@gmail.com](mailto:newmanle@gmail.com).

Submitted by: Ottawa Co. Invasive Phragmites Control Group

*A group of ducks is called “brace”, “flush”, “paddling”, “raft” and “team”*

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## **Baboons cannot throw overhand**

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**May 14th -**

**Bird Count Day**

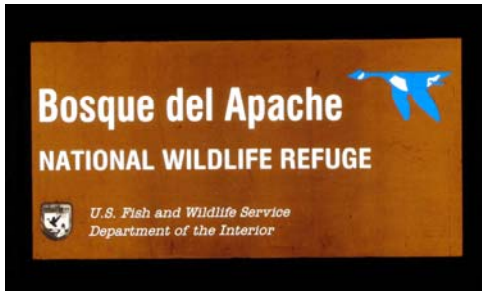
Another opportunity to be a part of citizen science.

Spring birds will be coming through.

It is always fun to see how many new ones you can find.

Let Carl know if you are interested.

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



excepts: <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/refuges/newmex/bosque/>

Bosque del Apache is Spanish for "woods of the Apache," and is rooted in the time when the Spanish observed Apaches routinely camped in the

We spent a few days enjoying the amazing numbers of bird species, and large numbers of Sandhill Cranes and Snow Geese at Bosque del Apache in December. The sunsets and sunrises were also exceptional. We drove 1300 miles the rest of the days in New Mexico and saw White Sands, Carlsbad Caverns, Valley of Fire, large array, Santa Fe, Petroglyphs, and Tent Rocks. Wonderful scenery and 99 bird species, dessert rabbit, and white-tailed antelope squirrel. All blue sky days and good food.

riverside forest. Since then the name has come to mean one of the most spectacular [National Wildlife Refuges](#) in North America. Here, tens of thousands of [birds](#)--including sandhill cranes, Arctic geese, and many kinds of ducks--gather each autumn and stay through the winter. Feeding snow geese erupt in explosions of wings when frightened by a stalking coyote, and at dusk, flight after flight of geese and cranes return to roost in the marshes.

The Refuge is 57,331 acres located along the Rio Grande near Socorro, New Mexico. The Refuge is located at the northern edge of the Chihuahuan desert, and straddles the Rio Grande, approximately 20 miles south of Socorro, New Mexico. The heart of the Refuge is about 12,900 acres of moist bottomlands--3,800 acres are active floodplain of the Rio Grande and 9,100 acres are areas where water is diverted to create extensive wetlands, farmlands, and riparian forests. The rest of Bosque del Apache NWR is made up of arid foothills and mesas, which rise to the Chupadera Mountains on the west and the San Pascual Mountains on the east. Most of these desert lands are preserved as wilderness areas.

Managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bosque del Apache NWR is an important link in the more than 500 refuges in North America. The goal of refuge management is to provide habitat and protection for migratory birds and endangered species and provide the public with a high quality wildlife and educational experience.



(c) J Manning 2010

In the summer Bosque del Apache lives its quiet, green life as an oasis in the arid lands that surround it.

**Visitors Center:** M-F 7:30-4:00 Weekends: 8 -4:30; Tour Loop: Daily, 1 hour before sunrise - 1 hour after sunset.



(c) J Manning 2010

Tent Rocks

#### **Festival of the Cranes 2011**

November 15-20, 2011

Our Wonderful and highly Acclaimed Festival Of The Cranes; Six great days filled with Workshops, special Tours, Events, lectures, Hikes, fine art and photography, a variety of exhibitors and more.

Please See [FestivaloftheCranes.com](http://FestivaloftheCranes.com)

**Northern Shoveler***Anas clypeata*

Judi Manning

The Northern Shoveler is the most distinctive medium sized, dabbling duck found in wetlands across North America. They are the most territorial of all Northern American dabblers.

Carolus Linnaeus, Swedish botanist, physician and zoologist first described the Northern Shoveler in 1758 because of its unique spatulate shaped bill. They draw water into the elongated, spoon-shaped bill, filtering out minute particles with 100 long comb-like projections that line the edge of the bill while the duck is swimming. These particles include tiny crustaceans, mollusks, insects and their larvae as well as seeds and pieces of leaves and stems of plants. They also eat water beetles, small minnows and snails. While feeding they work together in groups, rotating like a pin-wheel, stirring up the surface water and skimming it for food particles.

They prefer marshes and prairie potholes and are sometimes found in salt or brackish marshes at low elevations. With a 31" wingspan, the male weighs 17 to 38 ounces and the female 17 to 28 ounces. The bill is twice as wide at the tip than the base. Youngsters have typical duck bills that enlarge as they mature.

The call is "who, who, who", "took, too k, took". In flight they stay in tight bunches, weaving to and fro like shorebirds. They have a prolonged migration period in both spring and fall. Spring migration is later than most ducks, peaking at the end of April.

Courtship behavior includes various calls, turns, dips, and wing flaps. They breed from Alaska south to California, Nebraska and Wisconsin and are local and uncommon in the Great Lakes. They form a pair in winter and this bond remains intact through incubation, unlike most other duck species. The female chooses the nesting site in short grass in open, shallow wetlands. If the female is flushed from her nest, she often defecates on the eggs, apparently to deter predators. The young fledge at 52 to 66 days old.

In winter they can be found in any wetland as long as it has muddy edges. They forage in sewage ponds and stagnant or polluted waters avoided by other species of ducks. We find them in Michigan during migration.

They often refer to this duck as "Spoonbill" or "Spoony".

Because of their specialized bills and habitat requirements, this duck seems to be less affected by drought and food scarcity than other dabblers so its population numbers are stable.



References: [www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/northern\\_shoveler/id](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/northern_shoveler/id); [http://identify.whatbird.com/obj/97/overview/Northern\\_Shoveler.aspx](http://identify.whatbird.com/obj/97/overview/Northern_Shoveler.aspx); [http://www.seattleaudubon.org/birddweb/bird\\_details.aspx](http://www.seattleaudubon.org/birddweb/bird_details.aspx); <http://birds.cornell.edu/BOW/norshbo/>; [http://www.biokids.umich.edu/critters/Anas\\_clypeata/](http://www.biokids.umich.edu/critters/Anas_clypeata/); [http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/site/accounts/information/Anas\\_elypeata.html](http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/site/accounts/information/Anas_elypeata.html)

# Programs

## 2010—2011

**March 15** - Carolyn Weng - Marsh Monitoring

**April 19** - Carl & Judi Manning—Birds & Byways—A West Mexican Sampler

**May 17** - Potluck and Member's Show & Tell Slide Show

### Owashtanong Islands Audubon Society Mission Statement

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.

#### 2010-2011 OIAS MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL / APPLICATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Street \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_ Mail \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ How did you hear about OIAS? \_\_\_\_\_

Check Member Type:  \$18 Individual or Family  
 \$100 Individual Life  \$15  \$20  \$30 Contributing

My contribution to speaker fees \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

Make checks payable to: Owashtanong Islands Audubon Society

Mail to: OIAS, Post Office Box 1654, Holland, Michigan, 49422

If you change your mailing address or email address at any time, please contact me at [oias@oias.org](mailto:oias@oias.org). Mailing newsletters to outdated mailing addresses costs the OIAS money.

#### FAR FLOWING WATER

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**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 April 1st**

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## **Bird Die-offs in Lake Michigan**

Dead birds have begun washing up on the shores of northern Lake Michigan again. The birds have succumbed to Avian Botulism, which caused many problems in 2008. According to the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, "Type E botulism is a naturally occurring compound released by the "Clostridium botulinum" bacteria. Spores of the bacteria reside in the bottom sediments of the Great Lakes and many other lakes. The botulinum bacteria is harmless unless exposed to low oxygen conditions, which allows it to grow into a vegetative state that contains a toxin capable of paralyzing the muscles and respiratory systems of fish, birds and humans. The colonization of the Great Lakes by zebra and quagga mussels triggered a chain of events that unleashed the toxic strain of the botulism and pushed it up the food chain. As a result, an estimated 8,000 birds and thousands of fish died in 2008 in Lake Michigan from botulism."

The Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council has been appointed the regional coordinator for the monitoring efforts of avian botulism in Northern Michigan. They are currently working to disseminate information regarding botulism outbreaks and coordinating volunteer monitoring to track the problem. An Avian Botulism Cleanup Kit is now available from the Watershed Council that contains all of the elements necessary to safely dispose and report on bird carcasses that have been found.

If you have questions or would like more information, please visit the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council's website at [Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council](http://www.tipofthemit.com) or call them at (231) 347-1181.

November MAS Connections

### **Owashtanong Islands Audubon Society**

Judi Manning, Editor  
P.O. Box 1654  
Holland, MI 49422

PLEASE FORWARD  
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

