



Grand Haven, Michigan

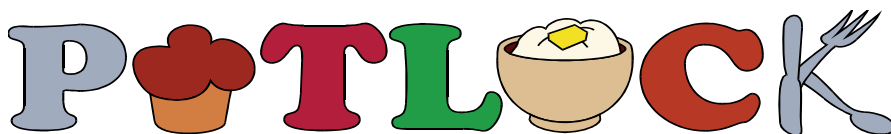
far flowing water



May 18

6:30 p.m.

Volume 21 Number 8
May, 2010



- **Bring a dish to pass and your place setting**

OIAS will provide pulled pork and rolls

7:30 p.m.

ANNUAL MEETING

- **Bring up to 20 of your favorite bird / nature shots**



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

**Everyone is invited.
Programs are free.**

Have a Great Summer

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

FROM THE BOARD:

1. The following board members are up for renewal. The board will also solicit nominations from the floor at the May meeting.

Carl Manning
Crosby Tompkins
Carol Ames

Mark Ames
Michael Lombardo

Pam Key
Sue Bastek

2. Funds are needed to cover the rising cost of the newsletter and speaker fees. After much discussion, the Board recommends an increase to \$18.00 for either a single or a family annual membership. This will be discussed and voted on at the May meeting.



Hand Carved Birds

Member Jim Ponshair's hand carved, life size birds of Michigan is now on exhibit at the Tri-Cities Historical Museum, along with artwork of several West Michigan painters and photographers.

200 of Jim's carved birds are featured in this exhibit. His first birds were carved from pine. Later he began using basswood. He began carving birds 45 years ago. Jim became interested in birds when he was in grade school when his teacher brought in the Junior Audubon to class.

Jim began keeping bird records from our area in 1951 and was the record chairman for Grand Rapids Audubon for 30 years. In 1998 Jim published "Birds of Ottawa County" a book chronicling this area's birds.

This wonderful exhibit will close in October.

Do not miss it!

Tri-Cities Historical Museum, 200 Washington, Grand Haven.

Excerpts: River Winds March/April, 2010, Tri-Cities Historical Museum newsletter

Michigan Birds and Natural History

Submitted by Michael L

is a publication devoted to Michigan's ornithology and natural history. It serves a vital role by documenting the status and distribution of Michigan's avian life. Seasonal compilers assemble and assess thousands of bird reports from hundreds of observers on the Internet and from forms submitted by birders around the state. These reports are compiled into a report that summarizes all species during each of the four seasons. Seasonal and long-term trends of bird activity can be followed in the survey—information about Michigan's birds that cannot be found elsewhere.

The costs have increased and Michigan Audubon is asking for help. You may subscribe to the journal or make a general donation, earmarked for the journal. The donation form can be found https://secure.digital-community.com/english/michiganaudubon.org/support_us/donate_secure.html

We encourage students, researchers and readers to submit short notes and papers, and amateur birders are welcome to submit notes on first state, regional or county records in addition to other bird or natural history notes.

Subscription information: \$25/year http://michiganaudubon.org/news_events/publications/birds_natural_history.html

Excerpts from article by Jonathan T. Wuepper, managing editor

Bird Census Opportunities

Thomas Funke, MAS Director of Conservation

Volunteers are needed to help census the following birds:

Piping Plovers:

Do you like long walks on the beach? Can you round up four of your friends to spend a day or several days walking beaches in search of Piping Plovers? We are in need of birders to search for undocumented Piping Plovers that find their way in to the Great Lakes. We will train (its easy, it takes a couple of hours and we'll visit an active Piping Plover nest) then turn you loose on some beaches. Training takes place in the Sleeping Bear Dunes area. Beaches we will be walking are on Lake Huron and Lake Michigan from Muskegon north to the Bridge then south to about Bay City. We are especially looking for folks that would like to take responsibility for covering beaches in a particular county of interest. Surveys to take place between now and the end of July. If you round up a small group, Tom Funke may rent a minivan and take you to training then to the survey area. Just ask Tom.

Kirtland Warbler:

Do you like exploring off trail? Have you been on the Kirtland Warbler Tour and were amazed at how conspicuous these endangered birds are? If you've been on the tour and have one or more days between June 6-20, we are looking for adventurous volunteers to seek out singing males in the Upper Peninsula. You'll need to be a little brave as you'll be walking off trail away from a road (but not far).

Cerulean Warbler:

We are seeking volunteers to survey at least twice between May 20 – June 30 for Cerulean Warblers in Allegan, Barry, Kalamazoo, Washtenaw, and Jackson Counties. We will be having trainings:

Allegan State Game Area May 7, 8:00 am

Matthei Botanical Garden (Ann Arbor) May 20, 6:00 p.m.

Otis Farm Bird Sanctuary (Hastings) May 10, 8:00 a.m.

Stay tuned as Tom will have information regarding peregrine falcons and trumpeter swan surveys soon.

Contact Tom Funke if you are interested.

O: 517-886-9144

C: 269-275-0004

Michigan Audubon www.michiganaudubon.org



Chipping Sparrow

Spizella passerina

Judi Manning

The Chipping Sparrow is 5.5 inches and has a bright rufous cap, slender, fairly long-tailed sparrow with a medium-sized cone shaped bill. They are and are common across North America. They have white underparts, pale face, black line through the eye, and white supercilium. In the winter, they are buff brown with darkly streaked underparts. The cap is not as reddish brown.

The chipping sparrow (*Spizella passerina*) is a common summer bird throughout much of the United States and Canada, with winter populations extending into the southern states and Mexico. Easily recognized by its bold rufous cap, black eye stripe, white or gray eyebrow and clear gray breast and abdomen, this bird is an easy one to spot when it visits backyards and gardens. Female birds are less noticeable but still show the black eye stripe, a key field mark for this species.

The loud, trilling songs are one of the most common sounds of spring woodlands and suburbs. The male's song is a thin musical trill, all on one note like the sound of a sewing machine.

They feed on the ground, take cover in shrubs and sing from the tops of small trees, usually evergreens. They eat insects, including grasshoppers, beetles, and caterpillars. They hop or run through grasses looking for grass and weed seeds.

They are found in open woodlands and forest with grassy clearings across North America. They are also seen in parks, along roadsides and yards with bird feeders.

They build a cup nest of dead grasses and stems built shrubbery or in a tangle of vines. Many originally lined their nests with horsehair but as the horse population dwindled this sparrow had to become inventive. They now pluck strands of hair from sleeping dogs to line their nest.

The female develops a bare patch (brood patch) on her abdomen that fills with fluid to allow her a more efficient transfer of heat to the eggs. She incubates the 3 to 5 light blue eggs for 11 to 14 days. Young Chipping Sparrows leave the nest and can fly by the 14th day. They are monogamous and may have two broods per year.

Chipping Sparrow nests are frequently parasitized by the Brown-headed Cowbird, but the Chipping Sparrow's numbers seem to be holding steady. They have benefited from urbanization and clearing of the forests of N. America. The Breeding Bird Survey data shows a decline in the western U.S. The Christmas Bird Count data shows an increase in the central U.S.

Contributed by William DeMott Stull

[Published in 1968: Smithsonian Institution United States National Museum Bulletin 237 (Part 2): 1166-1184]

The specific name Alexander Wilson gave this little sparrow, *socialis*, aptly describes the close relationship many later authors have noted between its habitations and those of man. None has expressed it better than Forbush (1929), who wrote "The Chipping Sparrow is the little brown-capped pensioner of the dooryard and lawn, that comes about farmhouse doors to glean crumbs shaken from the tablecloth by thrifty housewives. It is the most domestic of all the sparrows. It approaches the dwellings of man with quiet confidence and frequently builds its nest and rears its young in the clustering vines of porch or veranda under the noses of the human tenants." <http://www.birdsbybent.com/ch31-40/csparrow.html>

Reference: http://identify.whatbird.com/obj37//Chipping_Sparrow.aspx; http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Chipping_Sparrow/id; <http://www.wbu.com/chipperwoods/photos/chipspar.htm>



American Tree Sparrow

Spizella arborea

Judi Manning

In summer the American Tree Sparrow eats 100% animal matter (insects) and feed only insects to their young. In the winter it eats entirely seeds and other plant foods. They breed across a vast expanse of northern Canada and Alaska.

They have a dark, conical bill with a yellow lower mandible, rusty crown and eyeline, gray supercilium and face, gray breast with a black spot, rust patch at side of breast, white belly and undertail coverts, buffy flanks, and a slim long forked tail.

The song is a series of clear introductory notes followed by a variably trilled melody. The call is: tweedle-eet, tweedle-eet.

The American Tree Sparrow prefers to look for predators out of its left eye. This preference may be because the right hemisphere of the brain is dominant in processing visual information. In the same study, Dark-eyed Juncos examined preferred to look out of their right eye.

They breed in open scrubby areas near the treeline in remote areas. They winter in fields, marshes, gardens, open forests, and residential neighborhoods.

The nest is an open cup of moss, grasses, shreds of bark and twigs, lined with fine grass and feathers one to five feet above ground. The female incubates 4 to 6 eggs for 12 to 13 days. Both parents feed the young who fledge after 8 to 10 days. They cannot fly until at least two weeks old.

The American Tree Sparrow is not associated with trees. Its breeding habitat is in the far north shrubby tundra beyond the tree-line. During winter and migration they can be found in a variety of open habitats, including dry grassland, sagebrush desert, and farmland, and in woodlands bordering rivers, shrubby thickets and other weedy edges and yards with bird feeders. In winter they will beat tall weeds with their wings and collect the fallen seeds from on top of the snow.

They migrate late in the fall and early in the spring. During the winter, residential gardening practices such as clearing underbrush, removing weeds and cutting grass reduce their food supply, but bird feeders help and they have adapted well in suburban areas.

Leaving plants with seeds until spring is a big benefit for all of our winter birds who rely on seeds to get them through the harsh winter.

References:

[http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/AmericanTree Sparrow/lifehistory](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/AmericanTree_Sparrow/lifehistory); <http://www.mbr-pwrc.usgs.gov/id/framlst/i5590id.html>; http://www.seattleaudubon.org/birdweb/bird_details.aspx; [http://identify.whatbird.com/obj/670/overview/American Tree Sparrow.aspx](http://identify.whatbird.com/obj/670/overview/American_Tree_Sparrow.aspx)

- There are 83 counties in Michigan
- by Father Jacques Marquette founded Sault Ste. Marie in 1668. It is the third oldest remaining settlement in the United States.
- In 1817 the University of Michigan was the first university established by any of the states. Originally named Catholepistemiun and located in Detroit the name was changed in 1821. The university moved to Ann Arbor in 1841.
- Michigan has more than 11,000 inland lakes and more than 36,000 miles of streams.
- Michigan has 116 lighthouses and navigational lights.
- Forty of the state's 83 counties adjoin at least one of the Great Lakes. Michigan is the only state that touches four of the five Great Lakes.
- Standing anywhere in the state a person is within 85 miles of one of the Great Lakes.

Chipping Sparrows and American Tree Sparrows look very similar. Their ranges overlap during migration. Chipping Sparrows are increasingly found north of their traditional winter range as shown on Cornell's website for FeederWatch data.

American Tree Sparrow

6.25 inches long and looks similar in summer and winter. It has a rusty cap and a rusty eye line, bicolored bill and a breast spot that is sometimes hidden.

crown cinnamon rust year-round with faint gray streak down the middle in winter.
 rusty brown eyeline
 bi-colored bill, dark upper mandible, yellow lower mandible
 grayish breast with central, isolated, breast spot
 rusty patch on shoulder
 two white wing bars

Chipping Sparrow

In summer this 5.5 inches long sparrow has a chestnut cap, a distinct white eyebrow and black eyeline, and a dark bill. In winter the striping is much duller.

crown in winter more tan/brown than rufous with some streaking
 black or dark brown eyeline
 dark bill
 pinkish bill in winter
 grayish breast with no breast spot
 plain gray shoulder
 two buffy wing bars

Reprinted with permission from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's All About Birds web site, accessible from http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/AboutBirdsandFeeding/chispa_ amtspa_IDtable.htm



American Tree Sparrow



Chipping Sparrow

FIGHT GLOBAL WARMING: EAT ORGANIC

Conventional farming depletes soil carbon, preventing the soil from absorbing carbon dioxide.

What Can You Do?

Buy organic! A bit like the carbon offsets of agriculture, organic farming not only consumes 37 percent less energy than conventional farming, but in one year, an acre of organic crop soil will pull up to 7,000 pounds of CO₂ from the atmosphere, according to the Rodale Institute. That's more than half of the average vehicle's total emissions over the course of a year. So while the premiums we often pay for organic food can feel extravagant, the benefits are priceless.

HOLD THE FRUCTOSE

In a year, the average American consumes close to their entire body weight in high fructose corn syrup (HFCS) and refined sugar found in processed foods such as cookies, cakes, ketchup, canned and frozen fruits, juices and soft drinks.

What Can You Do?

The simplest way to avoid HFCS and refined sugar is to not eat highly processed foods. This doesn't mean a life of bland-tasting food and drink. Don't hold back if you want something sweet. Just read the label carefully, or if it's possible, add your own sweetener. Honey is great in an iced cappuccino, and provides some nutrients in the form of vitamins C, D, E and B-complex and traces of amino acids, enzymes and minerals. Other sweeteners include pure maple syrup, agave nectar, date sugar or birch sugar. Even raw cane sugar, maple sugar and Sucanat, a brand name for organically grown, dehydrated cane juice to which no chemicals are added, will have some nutrients.

Reference: <http://www.thegreenguide.com/fastfact>

Check one

2009-2010 OIAS MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL / APPLICATION

Name _____

Street _____ E-Mail _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ How did you hear about OIAS? _____



Check Member Type: \$12 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

5/2010

FAR FLOWING WATER

is a publication of the Owashtanong Islands Audubon Society, Grand Haven, MI All articles are copyrighted; permission is granted to copy any article in its entirety with references attached. Please contact Editor for other arrangements.

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 September 1st**

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

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

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.

Some oysters can change their gender several times during their lives



Owashtanong Islands Audubon Society

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PLEASE FORWARD

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

MAY 18
POTLUCK
6:30 P.M.