

BROCKWAY LOOKOUT

Copper Country Audubon Newsletter Volume 30, Number 1, Mar/Apr 2023



Discovering Unseen Birds Electronically by Phil Quenzi

For many years we have used a baby nursery monitor to listen to bird sounds coming from outside the house. We put the microphone in a plastic milk jug with the bottom removed and hang it on a tree branch, porch railing or any other convenient spot and plug it into an outlet on the outside of the house. The receiver is inside the house and also plugged in. It works well, especially on cold days when the doors and windows must remain closed. It is also nice to listen to the wood frogs and spring peepers at night in the spring.

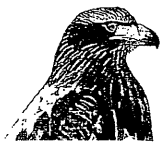
Last summer while playing with the Cornell Merlin app on our back porch we noticed it was detecting a lot of birds we could not hear (our hearing is not the best anymore). At first we thought it was just errors on the part of the app, but when we used some cheap hearing-aids we found the app was, in fact, detecting real birds and seemed to be doing it accurately. We later discovered that by placing the I-pad with the Merlin app near the baby monitor receiver it also was able to detect and identify birds.

This past winter we have been turning on the baby monitor and the Merlin app when we get up in the morning and essentially letting them run all day. At the end of the day, we note the unusual birds detected and then delete the audio file as it is quite large. It has been surprising all the birds it has detected that we were totally unaware were around. Most of the birds are transients, but some probably residents like a Saw-whet Owl. Here is a list of some of the unusual birds (for us anyhow) around our house that have been detected.

Robin; Black-backed Woodpecker; White-Winged Crossbill; Cedar Waxwing; Cooper's Hawk; Evening Grosbeak; Great-Horned Owl; Fox Sparrow; Pine Grosbeak; Bohemian Waxwing; Barred Owl; Bald Eagle; Mourning Dove; Herring Gull; Red-bellied Woodpecker; Cardinal; American Tree-sparrow; Pine Siskin; Red Crossbill; Canada Jay; Grackle; Canada Goose; Pigeon; Red-winged Blackbird; Saw-whet Owl (almost daily).

If anyone decides to try this system you may have to do some experimenting with baby monitors as some work better than others. The one we are currently using works well down to about 10 degrees F and then gets a lot of static below that. It is a Fisher Price 900Mhz monitor, but ours is pretty old and may be obsolete by now.

On a different subject, we have a trail camera to take photos of birds and animals near the house. The camera is currently mounted on a small (6") healthy maple tree. Over the winter the squirrels have really done a job on the bark of that tree while not touching other trees nearby. It did not seem to be done for sap as it was not running then. I have heard that the electromagnetic field from the cameras attracts ants and, in fact, have had a camera infested with them at one time. On inspecting the tree, I did not detect any ants or other insects as it was winter. So we wonder if the camera is also affecting the squirrels. If anyone has any knowledge regarding this I'd appreciate it if you'd let me know. (pjquenzi@gmail.com)



Brockway Mountain Hawk Watch News

by Debra Mues (Secretary, Keweenaw Bird Research Group)



The formal Spring Hawk Watch on Brockway Mountain begins its 13th year! Bob Baez returns as our counter, arriving in time for the March 15 start date and will be staying at a cabin at the Mariner North owned by Peggy and Don Kauppi. As usual the Count will end June 15. Joe Youngman and Deb Mues will be the substitute counters.

We had a very interesting count last year—both as far as counters and raptors go. Because Bob's mother took ill, he had to be away for a period of time, and my mother also, so I was able to sub only three times. Hannah Rooks and Karen Karl of the Keweenaw Bird Research group, which runs the Brockway Mountain Hawk Watch, were able to arrange some new but very knowledgeable substitutes to cover most days Bob and I were away. We are thankful to Brendan Leddy, David Flaspohler and Gary Palmer for filling in, and to Joe Youngman for doing more than his share of subbing, and to Tim Baerwald, who was our official counter for the month of April, and to Karen and Hannah, for arranging and scheduling everyone—what a team effort! As far as the raptors go, we had well below average counts in March and June, but there were some record-breaking counts in April and May! Next page is a summary of the season from Bob's 2022 report.

The March count of only 85 raptors was significantly lower than the 12-year average of 290 raptors for that 15 day period. The April count was 1,552, with the 12-year average being 2,188 (71% of the average). And yet there were records set that month! April 24 had a season high count of Sharp-shinned Hawks—290. Also, on that day, an all-time 12 year count record was set for both Northern Harriers and Rough-legged Hawks. The Northern Harriers, at a count of 39, broke the record of 36 set on April 15, 2016 and the Rough-legged count of 141 broke the record of 120 set in April, 2021. In May there was a 10-day run of high counts. From May 4 to May 13, 9,024 raptors were counted which was two-thirds of the entire season's count, and 81% of May's total.

Here are some of the season's maximums: May 5, 5 Golden Eagles; May 5 and 8, 3 Northern Goshawks on each day; May 8, 5 Cooper's hawks; May 9, 6 Peregrine Falcons, and on May 13, 1,830 Broad-winged Hawks. The May count was 133% of May's 12-year average—11,126 raptors compared to the 12-year average of 8,376. June's count was low, 948 raptors, with the average being 2,148; so this was 44% of the 12-year average. In a general overview, Cooper Hawks and Rough-legged Hawks were well above average, and Broad-winged Hawks, Peregrine Falcons, and Golden Eagles somewhat above average. All counts are sent daily to hawkcount.org which keeps the records of all hawk watches of the United States. You can see on their website the daily counts for all the hawk watches.

I'd like to tell you some interesting details about the Count Shack which magically appears on West Bluff during the count, and then disappears when the count is over. The count couldn't happen without it. It gives the counter "shelter from the storm" literally, during the 8-hour count day. The counters basically see three seasons: March is still very much winter, then spring and by June it's summer. The road opens to regular vehicles usually by Mother's Day, but until then the counter gets to the count site by snowmobile or quad lent by the trail groomers for Keweenaw County. The count shack is a necessity for shelter and warmth. The wind gusts can reach 40 to 50 mph anytime during the count. And the black flies at the end of May and in June can be intimidating! Tim Baerwald came up with a strategy in dealing with this during one of his seasons by creating a mosquito net door secured with velcro. It gives sanctuary to the counter on a calm day as visitors come and go quickly, batting at the air around them and diving into their cars. On windy days there is relief from the black flies.

The original shack was built by Joe Youngman and stored at Bill Degowski's cabin on the mountain. Bill did most of the maintenance and embellishment. It served us well for many years. The current shack, was built by Tom Gemignani who engineered it to be assembled and disassembled, facilitating transport and storage. As of this year it is stored in a shed on our property near Ahmeek. We bring it up to Hannah Rooks in Copper Harbor. When the Keweenaw County snowmobile trail groomers groom the trail up Brockway Mountain, they notify her and the shack is loaded on the groomer and sledged up the mountain in the middle of the night. Hannah then unloads it near the count site. She then goes back up on a calm day, with a volunteer to assemble and anchor it to the mountain. Steve Brimm of Copper Harbor often is that volunteer who helps Hannah set it up. Quite a process! Again, what teamwork! There are a lot of logistics, and people involved in order to get the shack transported to and assembled on the count site for the counter's use.

Talking more about teamwork, Copper Country Audubon has always been a huge supporter of the Brockway Mountain Hawk Watch. And of course, CCA along with Laughing Whitefish Audubon of Marquette, started the first formal 3-month count (Keweenaw Raptor Survey) in 2010. CCA continues to donate \$2000 each season to KBRG for the Brockway Mountain Hawk Watch. For this we are extremely grateful! This generous donation is integral to the count!

The Keweenaw Bird Research Group will be having a fund-raiser pizza party for the Brockway Mountain Hawk Watch on Saturday, May 20, 5-8 pm at the Mariner North. Donations of \$25 for adults and \$10 for children are suggested. Pizza, coleslaw and soft drinks will be offered. Come and have fun, and help support Brockway Mountain Hawk watch! And as always, when the road opens, we hope to see you with your binoculars on the mountain watching the raptors in their amazing migration journey north.



HOW TO JOIN THE COPPER COUNTRY BIRDING EMAIL LIST

If you would like to join the *Copper Country Birding* Email hot-line list, go to groups.google.com and search for: ***Copper Country Birding***. Follow the prompts to send a join request to the list owner, and within a day or so, you should be approved and ready to participate. The purpose of this list is for local birders to discuss local birds. Please give location of your bird sightings. We discourage a lot of chatter that is off subject. Also, you must be a member of the list to post to it. Postings from outside the list are discarded. For information about the list contact Ted Soldan, tjsold@gmail.com.



Keweenaw Trumpeter Swans Survey - 2023 Edition by Joseph Youngman



Three years of a semi-formal survey of Trumpeter Swans in Baraga, Houghton and Keweenaw counties is moving on into a fourth (final?) year. In that grand American tradition, this year it's "new and improved".

My plan is to find all nesting Trumpeter Swan pairs in the three counties and to document their breeding success. That is, how many young Trumpeters fly away from each nest in October. I've been doing that for these last years by stumbling around the edges of the beaver ponds the swans are nesting on hereabouts. In general, that technique is pretty successful. After all, Trumpeters are pure white and they're three feet long!

After a modest test of using a drone to help locate swan nests in 2022, the CCA board has decided to fund my proposal to use a drone extensively for the 2023 project. I will use a drone in the spring to help locate swan nests in difficult to access ponds -- and there are plenty of those. In mid-summer I'll check all nest sites again to get a count of the initial number of cygnets at each nest pond. The fall check will be the critical one, the one where the drone will really earn its pay.

The fall count of the number of cygnets at each pond will be my final determination of how many young swans have survived the spring and summer. It's my best determination of how many young are "fledged" from each site. But how good is that determination? How close to reality is it?

By fall each wiggly* beaver pond edge has its maximum vegetation blocking my view of swans. Some ponds are not too hard to walk around but many are REALLY hard to circumnavigate, and due to the mosaic** nature of the vegetation and uneven topography of each pond there are some ponds where it is impossible to truly determine that I am indeed completely inspecting the entire pond for swans. I said that swans are very big and pure white but it's impressive how well they can and do duck down to escape detection. There have been many times in the last three years when I spend half an hour examining a pond and yet detecting zero swans in my last fall visit. So in the past I have to conclude that all the swans have died or left that pond. I can't record any young swans as having "fledged" from that pond.

The drone will take the uncertainty out of those last couple fall visits. I may walk to a pond and see the swans easily. Or I will likely launch the drone and in 15 minutes of viewing the pond from 150 feet in the air I will surely detect those big white birds from above.

That's the plan, to get a very accurate count of fledged swans from at least 30 nests throughout the Keweenaw. Zach Gayk, new CCA board member, will help me write up the results to be published in an ornithological journal (besides this august and distinguished journal you are reading now).

Footnotes

* By "wiggly" I mean that the shoreline meanders a lot and therefore tricky to walk.

** "Mosaic" means a highly variable set of cover - some open water, some tall bushes, some tiny islands with trees, some cattails.



GREAT-HORNED OWLS IN THE BOX AGAIN ON TOP OF THE JUTILA CENTER!

After skipping a year, the Jutila owl has two eggs again this year, though much later than previous years. You can view the nest box at the web site coppercountryaudubon.org at the bottom of the Home page.



For the Love of Birds, Grow Native! by Marcia Goodrich, President, Keweenaw Wild Ones

Few things are more entertaining than checking out the birds at a backyard feeder. In our household, even binge-watching *Breaking Bad* comes in a distant second. Not only is it great to see birds, you also get to feel like a good person for nourishing wildlife. It's a tough world out there, and there may not be much for birds to eat.

However, songbird populations need more than sunflower seeds. Except for a few groups, such as finches and doves, seeds don't come close to providing a complete diet. Most birds, including warblers, rely on insects for food, and when it comes to raising young, insects are essential. To raise one clutch of nestlings, those seed-loving chickadees at our feeders must gather between 6,000 and 9,000 caterpillars. (continued next page)

Fortunately, if you want to provide insects for your birds, you don't have to load up your feeders with a writhing mass of insect larvae. All you have to do is grow the things insects like, and the insects and their caterpillars will come to you. And the things insects like are native plants.

So, what makes native plants so special to birds and bugs, as opposed to our beloved nonnative peonies, tulips, and chrysanthemums? Compared to the ornamental garden plants from around the world that populate most yards, native plants have relationships with insects that go back many thousands of years. Our North American plant-eating insects evolved alongside North American native plants, and most rely on those plants for food. In addition, a full 90 percent of plant-eating insects eat only very specific plants. The best-known example is the monarch butterfly, whose caterpillars can only eat milkweed, but there are many others.

Not only have exotic plants displaced native plants in our gardens, adding insult to injury, some of our favorite nonnatives—Norway maple, Japanese barberry, periwinkle, and others—escape our yards, displacing native plants in the wild and creating wildlife food deserts.

Fortunately, it's relatively easy to provide songbirds with an all-you-can-eat buffet of insects. Add native plants to your flower beds, replace some of your lawn with native plants, and get rid of invasive exotic plants. Don't worry too much about insect damage; when birds find the caterpillars, they will usually snap them up before they can do much harm.

You don't even have to say goodbye to your favorite nonnative flowers to make a difference. Research has shown that birds do best in yards with at least 70 percent native plants. That means you will still have room for those fancy irises and hybrid tea-roses.

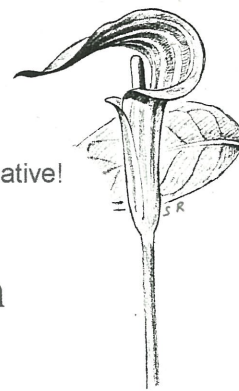
Finally, choose larval host plants that are especially productive. Oaks host hundreds of different species of caterpillars. Other good host trees are native cherries, serviceberry, and maples. Native goldenrods and sunflowers are some of the best flowering plants for caterpillars.

Learn more

A great source for choosing bird-friendly plants is <https://www.audubon.org/native-plants>. The Keweenaw Wild Ones website, keweenaw.wildones.org, includes lots of good resources for growing native plants. If you want to dig deep, some excellent books are

- *Natures Best Hope*, by Douglas Tallamy
- *Lawns Into Meadows*, by Owen Wormser
- *The Humane Gardener*, by Nancy Lawson
- *Attracting Birds, Butterflies, and Other Backyard Wildlife*, by David Mizijewski

Spring is just around the corner. As you plan your garden, give a thought to the birds. Go forth, and grow native!



Update on Songbird Migration Monitoring Research In the Keweenaw *by Zach G. Gayk*

Last spring and fall, we deployed acoustic recorders at 12 sites throughout the tip of the Keweenaw Peninsula to study large movements of songbirds as they attempt to cross Lake Superior during migration. The recorders were set up at each site, and automated to turn on each morning and record the calls of migratory birds flying overhead. This research is part of an ongoing study supported by Copper Country Audubon and Keweenaw Community Forest Company.

Since then, I've using *Vesper*, a computer program that detects migratory bird flight calls, to sift through the thousands of hours of raw recordings from my 12 sites to find the short signatures of migratory birds flying overhead. This program only detects the calls, and still requires humans to identify each single call to species. I have been slowly working to identify these calls to species manually, and we found 2.6 million calls of migratory birds in spring 2022. With this many calls, identifying all of these calls has been an overwhelming challenge. So far, some interesting results have been found, including thousands of Bay-breasted Warbler flight calls, which are considered uncommon to rare on the ground during spring. Why have these birds been overlooked until now? Likely, they move through the Keweenaw in fast-moving, concentrated flocks and are not readily observed by birders unless one happens to be very lucky, in the right place at the right time.

Another interesting result is that a large and diverse migration of songbirds appears to regularly fly west over our
(continued next page)

recording site at Agate Harbor. Laurence Binford, well-known Keweenaw ornithologist, occasionally mentioned seeing these sorts of movements, but not as regularly as we have been finding. It remains a mystery why migrations of these birds at Agate Harbor and the North Shore of the Keweenaw have escaped notice until recently.

I have also found several hundred calls of Blackpoll and Canada Warblers, with most calls found at the Bete Grise, Smith Fisheries Rd, and Fadner Point at Manitou Island sites. These warblers are not very common in spring, and are declining throughout North America due to losses of habitat. The high numbers of migrant Bay-breasted, Blackpoll, and Canada Warblers in the Keweenaw suggests that our region may be home to an important migratory pathway for large numbers of songbirds and species of conservation concern.

This suggests to me that more study of the size of migratory movements in our region is needed, especially as the Keweenaw is increasingly recognized as a place of outstanding natural beauty and outdoor recreation opportunities. I think that the significance of our region for migratory birds should also be considered. Recently the Nature Conservancy purchased approximately 33,000 acres of forestland in the tip of Keweenaw region, with the goal of preserving land access for future recreation opportunities. I hope that in the future, managers of the Nature Conservancy lands in the Keweenaw will also take into consideration the important migratory bird corridor at the tip of the Keweenaw. Perhaps Copper Country Audubon members can provide their input on how they would like to see the tip of the Keweenaw managed for biodiversity based on the knowledge being obtained by this study.

What are the next steps with my research on migratory birds in the Keweenaw? I am still working with others, including collaborators at Cornell Lab of Ornithology, to amass a large dataset of Keweenaw flight calls that we can use to estimate the size, species composition, and drivers of Keweenaw songbird migrations. We hope to finish analyzing this dataset and submit a manuscript focused on the biogeography of songbird migration through the Keweenaw in 2023. Cornell is also developing a publicly-available app that will allow smartphones and computers to identify the flight calls of migratory birds to species, just like their popular Merlin app for bird songs. I am excited to report that we have contributed a large amount of data from the Keweenaw migratory recorders to help Cornell refine their app. We will also have a forthcoming scientific paper to be published in April that focuses on how migratory songbirds communicate during migration.

Both Copper Country Audubon and Keweenaw Community Forest Company have generously agreed to continue funding this research in Spring 2023. Starting in April, with help from a couple volunteers, I will be setting up each of the 12 recording sites for another season of migration monitoring in the Keweenaw. I look forward to informing Audubon members of what we find in the near future!

THANKS!

THANKS to New Life Members: *Tom and Sandra Collins of rural Calumet;
Leslie and Dennis Sotala of Allouez.*

THANKS to Life Members Renewing their Life Membership!:

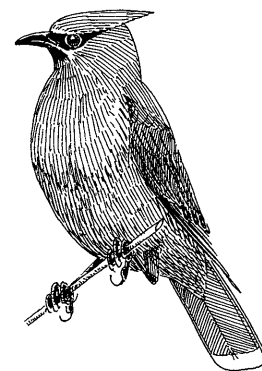
*Janet Hewitt and John Fountain of Iola, Wisconsin;
Virginia Sisson and Will Maze of Houston, Texas and Keweenaw;
Gregg Maze of Peru, Illinois and Keweenaw.*

THANKS again for a generous donation from John Van Westenburg, “for Youngman’s projects.”

THANKS to Kurt Leuthold and the Steven C. Leuthold Family Foundation for a very generous donation for all of our projects to benefit birds, bird habitat, and to advance the knowledge and appreciation of birds in the Keweenaw!

THANKS to Connie Sherry and Ralph Horvath for a fantastic donation for the Trumpeter Swan Drone Project!

THANKS to **EVERYONE** for your membership in Copper Country Audubon, and especially for the extra donations with your renewals that make our projects possible. We couldn’t do it without you!



A Newsletter Note: Regarding CC Audubon name associations, as was mentioned in a previous newsletter article, it has been noted by a concerned member that the National Audubon Society magazine has changed in the past several years, and now contains very little in the way of advertising for expensive travel, high-end optics and other outdoor gear. It was also noted by several members that Copper Country Bird Club would be a simpler name and carry less baggage. --Ed.

2022 Houghton Co. Christmas Bird Count *by Nancy Auer (Compiler)*

On 17 December 2022, fifteen people covered a 15-mile diameter circle centered in the middle of Portage Lake from dawn to dusk for our 46th Houghton Co. Christmas Bird Count. Ten people were covering the field and five contributed feeder surveys. All-together, **45 species of birds, 40 on count-day and 5 in count-week, were seen.** Only six other times since 1976 have we reported more than 40 species. At last year's Christmas Bird Count, with the same number of people, 39 species were reported.

In open water: Most water was frozen over except for an area near the South Entry which provided sightings of: 6 Tundra Swans, 3 Canada Geese, 44 Common Goldeneyes, 1 Mallard, 2 Buffleheads, 23 Common Mergansers, 1 Hooded Merganser, 6 Herring Gulls, 13 Ring-billed Gulls and 15 gull species.

Inland birds observed included: 11 Bald Eagle, 3 Ruffed Grouse, 51 Wild Turkeys, 282 Rock Pigeons, 37 Mourning Doves, 2 Great-Horned Owls, 2 Barred Owls, 1 Saw-whet Owl (CW), 26 Downy Woodpeckers, 21 Hairy Woodpeckers, 9 Pileated Woodpeckers, 1 Red-Bellied Woodpecker (CW), 1 Arctic Three-toed Woodpecker, 2 Black-backed Woodpeckers (CW), 70 Blue Jays, 94 American Crows, 41 Common Ravens, 225 Black-Capped Chickadees, 6 Red-Breasted Nuthatches, 23 White-Breasted Nuthatches, 1 Golden Crowned Kinglet (CW), 1 Brown Creeper (CW), 185 European Starlings, 4 American Robins, 96 Bohemian Waxwings, 8 Cedar Waxwings, 11 Northern Cardinals, 2 Tree Sparrows, 6 Dark-eyed Juncos, 4 finch species, 15 Pine Grosbeak, 1 Purple Finch, 27 Common Redpolls, 6 Pine Siskins, 220 American Goldfinches, 74 Evening Grosbeaks, 30 House Sparrows.

Most unusual birds seen on this Houghton County CBC count:

Tundra Swan, Seen previously only in 1978 (1), 2012 (2), and 2015 (5).

Saw-whet Owl, Reported one other time, 2013 (1).

Arctic Three-toed Woodpecker, First Record for Houghton CBC.

Black-Backed Woodpecker, Reported previously in 2008 (6) and 2019 (1).

Evening Grosbeak, The 74 for this count is the highest number since 2000; there were also a few high counts between 1976 and 1999.

Northern Cardinal, The total of 11 is our highest count of N. Cardinal for the CBC; there were no records until 1995 when they were first reported.

Usual birds we didn't see this year: Northern Shrike, Hawk species, Crossbill species, Hoary Redpoll.

Many thanks to field and feeder birders: Andrew Meyer, Zach Gayk, Brendan Leddy and Matt Moore, Joe Youngman, Lynn Murphy, Kristine Bradof, Valorie and Keith Troesch, Emma Dlutkowski, Paul and Ginger Sulisz, and Joan and Hugh Hosafros, and me, Nancy Auer, Compiler.

Additional Report from John Trapp, Regional Michigan CBC Compiler:

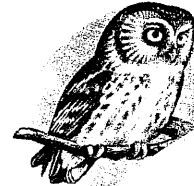
At 71 Christmas Bird Counts across the State of Michigan (12 in the UP, 24 in the NLP, 35 in the SLP), between December 14, 2022 and January 5, 2023, 1,469 field observers spent 3,528 party hours (1,048 on foot, 2,456 by car, and 71 by other modes of transportation); traveling 24,221 party miles (1,133 on foot, 22,239 by car, and 104 by other modes of transportation), plus an additional 197 hours and 677 miles in nocturnal pursuit of owls, and 320 feeder watchers spent 556 hours watching feeders. They reported seeing 643,014 individuals of 146 species.

Our Arctic Three-toed Woodpecker Was One of 5 Rare Birds for the State in 2022!

The other four species were: Ross's Goose (Allegan State Game Area), American White Pelican (Midland), Purple Sandpiper (Manistee), and Lincoln's Sparrow (Western Macomb County).

Eagle Harbor Christmas Bird Count *by Zach Gayk (Compiler)*

On January 1, 2023, nine people braved the snow and wind to help with Michigan's northernmost Christmas Bird Count. We had several groups of people, including Joe Youngman, Gina Nicholas, and Matt Moore covering the bogs and forests around Bete Grise. Drew Meyer covered the Copper Harbor area and found the rarest species—including Northern Cardinal, Red-necked Grebe, and Red-bellied Woodpecker. Paul and Ginger Sulisz covered Eagle Harbor, where they also saw a Red-bellied Woodpecker. Zach Gayk, Kristine Bradof, and Alison Pontynen covered various parts of the Keweenaw north shore coastline. In total, we saw 30 species on count day, with additional species over count week. We are always looking to recruit more birders to help with the count, so please contact me if you wish to help next year (zachgayk@gmail.com)! (Complete list of birds on next page).



Species: 30 + [1 CW Dark-eyed Junco]; **Individuals:** 1,170; **Dominant Species:** Bohemian Waxwing 236 (20.26% of total individuals); **Singles:** 5 – Bufflehead, Red-necked Grebe, Bald Eagle, Mourning Dove; Northern Cardinal.

The List: Great Horned Owl 2; Long-tailed Duck 35; Common Goldeneye 13; Bufflehead 1; Red-breasted Merganser 10; Red-necked Grebe 1; waterbird species 2; Ruffed Grouse 5; Herring Gull 132; Bald Eagle 1; Downy Woodpecker 20; Hairy Woodpecker 4; Pileated Woodpecker 8; Red-bellied Woodpecker 2; Wild Turkey 23; Blue Jay 150; American Crow 12; Common Raven 13; Black-capped Chickadee 125; Red-breasted Nuthatch 9; White-breasted Nuthatch 5; Golden-crowned Kinglet 5; Brown Creeper 2; Bohemian Waxwing 236; Evening Grosbeak 150; Pine Grosbeak 2; American Goldfinch 158; Common Redpoll 15.



Keweenaw Wild Bird Rehabilitation, Education and Conservation

by Michele Anderson, Director and Licensed Wildlife Rehabilitator

It has been a busy fall and winter for Keweenaw Wild Bird R.E.C. A big part of our mission is school-aged education (the E in R.E.C.). The bird patient numbers are minimal over the winter so we shift gears to education. We were fortunate to get a grant through the Keweenaw Community Foundation, specifically through the Kellogg Youth Endowment, for several lesson and activity kits created by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. These lessons/activities range from very young (preschool/kindergarten), to 8th grade. For younger students, there are lessons and activities connecting birds and literacy, with some great story books and activities. The older student kits offer a schoolyard bird exploration, owl pellet dissection, as well as habitat exploration and biodiversity detective activities.

The grant also allowed us to purchase 15 pairs of quality kid-sized binoculars. So far we have done a couple of lessons and activities for younger students and have a few owl pellet dissection and habitat exploration lessons scheduled over the remainder of the school year with area schools. It has been amazing being able to introduce birds and a love and respect for nature at a young age. After teaching a group of second-graders about chickadees (they will be placing a chickadee nesting box on school property), they went on a bird walk with their teacher and heard a chickadee call. They immediately identified it by call and later by sight from what they learned in our lesson. Such a joyful feeling to be part of their first birding experience!

We have also been awarded a grant by the National Wildlife Rehabilitation Association for board member Kieran Storer to conduct research at Michigan Tech. She will be researching rehabilitated bird survival, comparing polyunsaturated fatty acids and stable isotopes between rehabilitated and free-flying songbirds. This work will commence in the summer, using **MOTUS*** tracking and molecular analyses to improve bird rehabilitation practices and understand how birds prepare themselves for migration.

In other news, we will be holding our second annual native plant fundraiser soon! Plants can be pre-ordered April 1st-May 15th, then will be available for local pickup the first week of June. We will once again be getting plants through Designs by Nature-U.P. Native Plants, out of Marquette. Michelle Wietek-Stephens is the nursery owner/operator and does a fantastic job providing healthy and robust native plants. Email or call if you'd like a plant order list! All of the native plants selected are useful for local birds in our zip code, determined through the National Audubon Native Plant Database. Native plants are one of the most important things we can provide for our feathered friends. They provide food, such as seeds, nectar, and fruit. Native plants also provide homes for insects which are critical for songbirds to feed young during nesting season.

A reminder to be sure to rake and spread old seed below feeders as the snow melts to prevent transmission of salmonella and other communicable diseases. Also make sure to treat problem windows that are prone to window collisions as migration begins.

H5N1 (highly pathogenic avian influenza) is still a threat. As the snow melts and migrating birds travel back to the Copper Country, an abundance of natural food becomes available. We can't control natural congregations of birds as they migrate, but we can control congregations of birds at feeders. We encourage you to focus on adding beneficial native plants to your yards, rather than providing seed in feeders in the warmer months. This can reduce outdoor domestic cat predation, window collisions, disease transmission, and keep those large black furry birds (bears) away.

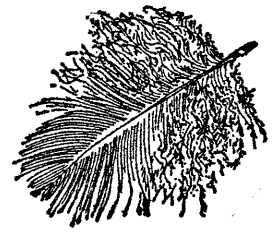
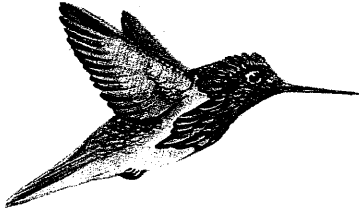
Looking forward to Spring! I'm sure we can all agree, our favorite weather is bird chirping weather! Thanks to all that keep our mission flying. We couldn't continue without our amazing community's support. Contact me at Keweenaw Wild Bird R.E.C.

keweenawwildbirdrec@gmail.com, (906) 299-2149, Facebook/Instagram @kwbrec

***MOTUS** is a system of bird tracking antennas across North America. Copper Country Audubon installed two antennas in the Keweenaw, one near Calumet and one near Phoenix, in part with the help of a generous member. The entire project cost over \$15,000, with a \$5,000 grant from CCA to Drs. David Flaspohler and Jared Wolfe of MTU in 2022 to attach 15 radio tags to songbirds passing through in migration.

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***FIND A BABY BIRD?
LEAVE IT BE!***

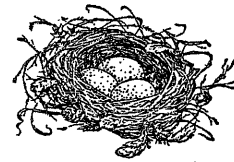
***BIRDS! - Feathered
Jewels That
Also Sing!***

Injured Birds?

Michigan DNR, Baraga 906-353-6651

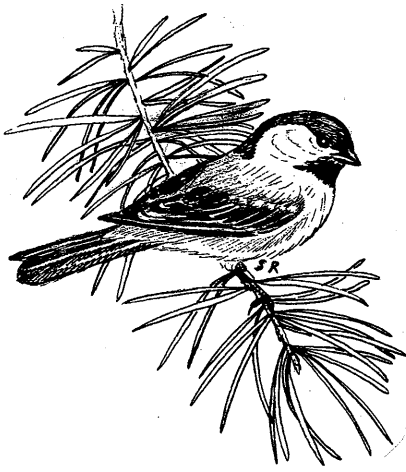
Raptor Rehab: Beth Maatta, 906-370-3825

Small Birds Rehab: Michelle Anderson, 906-299-2149



Copper Country Audubon Membership: \$25 Regular, \$10 Student, \$300 Life. CC Audubon is a 501(c)3 Nonprofit Organization.
Is your Renewal Due? After your name on the mailing label is the date your membership is due; your last donation was sent one year prior to this date. We're sorry for any mistakes; please let us know! Life members and courtesy mailings have no date.
Your support for Copper Country Audubon is for the birds! ***Thanks!***

**Copper Country Audubon
P.O. Box 124
Houghton, MI 49931**



There's Wonderful Birdwatching in the Keweenaw!