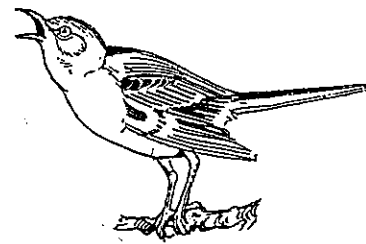


BROCKWAY LOOKOUT

Copper Country Audubon Newsletter Volume 28, Number 2, Oct/Nov 2021



Update: MOTUS Radio Tracking Birds Through the Keweenaw

by David Flaspohler

On Sunday, Sept. 19, 2021, a group of seven MTU students along with Drs. Jared Wolfe and David Flaspohler were able to place the first MOTUS transmitter tags on southbound migrating birds near Phoenix on the Keweenaw. Tags were placed on a Swainson's Thrush, a Gray-cheeked Thrush, and a Fox Sparrow. Birds caught but not tagged included three Golden-crowned Kinglets and a Dark-eyed Junco; the tiny kinglets were too small even for the very smallest MOTUS tag.

Two MOTUS antennas are operating, one at the Calumet Wastewater Treatment site and one on private land near the Phoenix Church. These antennas are only the height and size of old-fashioned residential television antennas that people used to have on top of their houses. Like hundreds of other antennas spread from Canada to Mexico, these antennas detect the unique radio signal given off by individual MOTUS tags attached to birds. Small birds traveling from Canada to South America and back can now be detected and their pathways known in large numbers. MOTUS tags are small and always less than 3% of the bird's body weight. Once attached and activated, they have a battery life of between a few weeks to several months, with larger birds able to be fitted with larger tags with longer-lasting batteries. Although other tracking technologies exist such as GPS-satellite transmitters, these still remain too heavy for most small songbirds like thrushes and warblers.

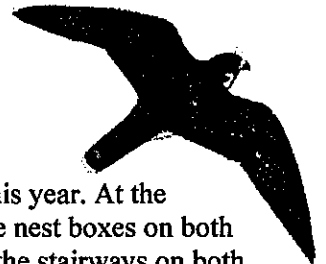
We now know that millions of birds perish each year in the U.S. from window and tower collisions, outdoor cats, habitat loss, and pollutants. To conserve declining populations, we need information on migration movement, timing and numbers and MOTUS can help by providing higher resolution location and path information for more individuals than traditional passive banding. CCA has generously supported the establishment of the two antennas and plans to continue to support this research and education effort by purchasing more tags for deployment in the spring of 2022.

For more information and to see a map of MOTUS antenna locations including those in the Keweenaw, go to <https://motus.org/>



2021 Keweenaw Peregrine Falcon Report

by Joseph Youngman



There were significant changes to Peregrine nesting in both Houghton and Keweenaw Counties this year. At the Houghton / Hancock Lift Bridge the MDOT in their wisdom decided to remove (temporarily?) the nest boxes on both towers. They were worried about the adult Peregrines dive-bombing bridge workers as they used the stairways on both towers. I've seen it happen myself and heard that several bridge workers have taken hits to their hardhats. So MDOT figured that no nest boxes would mean no nesting falcons. *Wrongo!*

The falcons just moved their nest site to a hole in a square steel beam on the south tower that the Great Horned Owls used successfully about 4 years ago. So the public lost the viewing that CCA's webcams gave us at the two nest boxes. But I kept an eye on the progress of the falcons and was worried that one or more young falcons would slide down the sloping beam as they exercised their wings prior to fledging and fall into the roadway and be squashed. *Wrongo again!*

I witnessed the young falcons (three) slide down the beam and almost fall off but they used a maneuver they copied from Loony Toons cartoons to get back to the nest hole. As they slid down toward disaster they would use their flapping wings and turn their legs into virtual spinning wheels as they worked their way back up the slippery slope. In the end all three youngsters fledged from the new nest site by 28 June. The first out of the nest was found on the road and saved and placed back up high on the 'porch'. Unfortunately, two days later it was found squashed on the roadway. Almost every year one falcon dies that way. Near as I could determine, the next two fledglings survived to disperse by September.

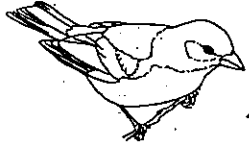
With the MDOT removing the bridge nest boxes, in early March CCA and MDNR worked with MTU and the Quincy Mine Hoist Association to put up two new nest boxes. We placed one on the north side of the roof of the EERC building at MTU and one up high in a window of the Quincy Mine Shafthouse. Both of these boxes are viewable on the internet. The bridge falcons obviously did not use either box as we'd hoped, but it's possible that in the next year or two a new pair

of Peregrines might set up shop at either box. Other places in the upper Midwest have nesting Peregrines at similar distances apart.

Up in Keweenaw Co. at Bare Bluff the falcons there seemed to fledge two young. Those young were banded by Brad Johnson and John DePue from Baraga MDNR on the 18th of June.

Over at Cliff Drive it was a different story. After nesting successfully for several years the Cliff Drive pair just seemed to disappear. Phil Quenzi and I made many visits to the cliff during April and May but never saw or heard them.

Out at Isle Royale things seemed to go well. I only have 2nd hand knowledge but there are now three known Peregrine nests there. The main island has nests along the north shore; one near the south and north ends and one on Passage Island.



Industrial Wind Turbines in the Keweenaw: Update

by James Mihelcic, North Superior Rd, Stanton Township

You have most likely seen the “no wind turbine” signs along local Copper Country roads. These signs were placed by residents fighting a proposal to construct 575-foot wind turbines in Houghton County. The nonprofit group, Guardians of the Keweenaw Ridge (guardiansofthekeweenawridge.org) organized in June. Over the summer the Guardians educated themselves, residents, and elected officials about the project. At one public event Joseph Youngman discussed the unique bats and birds that inhabit and migrate along, and over, the Keweenaw Ridge. See this on the web at:

<https://lateedition.substack.com/p/experienced-birder-talks-danger-to>

Why the Project is not Sustainable? The Guardian website documents many social and economic issues that make the project non-sustainable. Regarding the project’s environmental sustainability, the project’s physical footprint is enormous because of extensive steel-reinforced concrete foundations and 60-foot wide industrial roads that further fragment local forests. End-of-life waste issues and use of already depleted metals and minerals for a technology with a 10-30 year lifetime are ignored, along with the ecological damage and unjust working conditions associated with metal extraction (often in the southern hemisphere). Residents who recreate near the proposed locations report seeing eagle, wolf, moose, fisher, and bear and CC Audubon members know the Keweenaw is a spring migration highway for tens of thousands of raptors (including bald and golden eagles). Scientific studies document wildlife leaving industrial wind areas because of noise and ecosystem fragmentation.

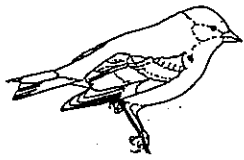
What did EGLE Conclude? On July 30, the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) denied the developer’s environmental permit for reasons including the project: 1) would have significant adverse effects on fish and wildlife, and 2) was not in the public interest and any benefits would not balance the reasonably foreseeable detriments. The U.S. EPA provided a letter on the project’s inappropriateness and we learned U.S. Fish and Wildlife (FWS) had repeatedly informed wind developers (documented as far back as 2017) that they re-site the project due to wildlife concerns. One reason is because federal guidelines on siting wind projects recommend avoiding critical areas of wildlife congregation.

Both EGLE and FWS noted the project’s proximity to former copper mines will endanger 3 local bat populations. Besides the little brown bat, our area hosts northern long-eared bats that are already listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act and FWS is currently considering a 2016 petition to list tricolored bats as endangered or threatened. Up to 95% of our local bat population has been killed by white nose syndrome, bats reproduce slowly, and industrial wind turbines are now the second largest killer of bats in the U.S.

The Future. In October we learned that 83% of Stanton Township registered voters who submitted surveys oppose industrial wind turbines. Stanton Township understands the developer may circle back to them later and is planning accordingly. Adams Township is now the immediate target, with Circle Power stating they plan to place all 12 turbines there. Both townships also initiated the process of creating and/or re-establishing planning commissions. The developer plans to reapply for a new environmental permit.

Ensuring renewable projects don’t cause major environmental problems is a matter of proper siting. A recent article on the impact of poorly sited wind turbines in greater sage grouse habitat said the following “if policymakers were to shift the focus to building distributed renewables projects instead – like solar arrays on rooftops and parking-lot shade awnings – the vast majority of energy production could occur in developed areas which lack any remaining natural values. That’s a win for the climate, a win for biodiversity, and could be a win for social justice as well. “

<https://www.counterpunch.org/2021/09/17/americas-largest-windfarm-an-environmental-disaster/>



Keweenaw Wild Bird Rehabilitation

by Michelle Anderson



The inaugural season of *Keweenaw Wild Bird R.E.C. (Rehabilitation, Education, Conservation)* was a big success! We were able to help over 60 of our feathered friends so far in 2021. We raised and released numerous orphaned nestling songbirds including American robins, a blue jay, a yellow-rumped warbler, a Baltimore oriole, and a pair of brown-headed cowbirds. Nest predation, windy weather and out-of-season tree-trimming were the main reasons orphans were found.

We also had a banner year for orphaned waterfowl. Generally, I get one or two waterfowl babies each season. This season was certainly a waterfowl-palooza! In the span of a few days, we received many orphaned waterfowl, including five Canada goose goslings, an older mallard duckling, two young common mergansers, and 2 trumpeter swan cygnets! It was a whirlwind finding enough outlets and heating elements in the bird hospital to keep all of these babies toasty warm. The same evening the cygnets arrived, close to 10:00 pm, an orphaned sandhill crane colt arrived as well, which fortunately was successfully reunited with its parents the next morning.

The goslings came from Calumet, Liminga, and Lake Linden. Canada Geese are the easiest to wild foster similar-aged babies into existing families. We were fortunate to find a multi-family group of Canada geese down by the Lake Linden campground waterfront. We were successful in fostering all of them into this multi-family group.

The mallard was old enough to keep in care a few weeks until ready to be released on his own. We were fortunate that members of the birding group responded to our request for mallard families in the area. We successfully released the youngster into an area with great habitat, plenty of food, various aged mallards, and plenty of cover from predators.

Copper Country Audubon board member David Flaspohler helped scout for similar-aged trumpeter swan cygnets that were found close to the road by Kearsarge. He was unable to find other cygnets that matched the age of our babies, nor could he find a nesting pair close to where the youngsters were found. Years of experience gained by swan rehabbers indicates that trumpeter swans will not accept cygnets unless they are the same size. It was decided the best course of action was to transfer the youngsters to a larger facility that had non-releasable adults that act as foster parents.

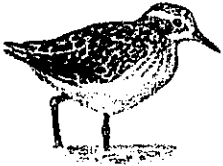
The common mergansers were quite the challenge. They will accept similar-aged youngsters, but finding family groups and keeping them close long enough to offer a successful wild fostering is difficult. The two babies were separated when the family crossed the highway in Munising. By the time the finders got them out of traffic and got them to Lake Superior, the rest of the family had swiftly departed the area. One of our DNR conservation officers drove them to me in Hancock. At the time there were no similar-aged families to be found locally, so we raised them for a few weeks until we could find an appropriate family. Mergansers eat...A LOT!!! The first couple weeks they ate mostly mealworms, by the thousands! Once old enough we introduced live fish. It is amazing how quickly hunting instincts kicked in. We needed to find a deep pool for them to practice maneuvering in water so they could learn to hunt live fish. We checked with our cow farmer neighbor and sure enough, he had an old water trough we could have. He brought it over on his tractor, we gave it a good cleaning and filled it $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way, offering a haul-out spot for the youngsters to get out of the water when they needed to, as well as branches and screening to protect them overhead. They came inside at night, but most warm days were spent outside. We set bait fish traps at a local pond and added live fish multiple times per day. They ate them almost as fast as we could add them to the pool. The young birds were also quite challenging to catch in the evening, training for evading predators in the wild!

Once the young mergansers started to feather-out we put out another call to the birding group to try to find common merganser families of similar size. David Flaspohler once again to the rescue! He had found a family he and his wife had been observing near Gay. We set a plan to release the kids in hopes they would be accepted. The best plan was to slowly approach them by water, so we launched a canoe with the youngsters in a pet kennel. The babies started vocalizing as soon as we got on the water, as if they knew they were about to head back to the wild. We released the babies when we got relatively close to the family. The youngsters swam in the direction we THOUGHT they were located. Meanwhile, David's wife was watching with a spotting scope on shore. The family had snuck past us while we were releasing the babies without us noticing. At first the youngsters swam towards shore, but suddenly changed direction, as if responding to a call from the mother. The babies then swam quickly out towards the family. We lost sight of them after that, but all indications pointed towards the adoptive merganser family accepting the chicks.

We ended the busy season by helping a pileated woodpecker. She was found on the side of the road and brought to the Seney Wildlife Refuge visitors center. It was brought in a box and given to one person, then passed to another, and the rescuer never gave the location of where the bird was found, nor contact information. A retired biologist that volunteers at the wildlife refuge took the bird home, providing plenty of bugs to eat and a place to rest, and began to seek out a licensed bird rehabber. She got in touch with us and they transported the bird to KWBREC. Being a first-year bird, and not knowing where it came from, we did a slow release on our property in Boston Location so we could offer food support while she learned the new wild space she would call home. After two weeks in the aviary, she gained strength, body weight and agility and was released. She had many conversations with the wild pair in our area.

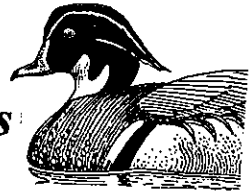
There is nothing like hearing the majestic call of the pileated woodpecker! We have set up a feeding station consisting of all the dead punky and buggy trees and stumps we had in the aviary, as well as suet, bugs, wild grapes, and a water source, as she adjusts. So far she has been seen all over the property targeting rotting wood for bugs and coming by to the feeding station to partake in some free food.

We'd like to thank CCA for their continued support of our mission and to receive a generous donation towards the insect bills over the summer. It certainly takes a village to help our feathered friends, and we are privileged to have the support of our wonderful birdwatching community! --Michelle Anderson, (906) 299-2149, kweenawwildbirdrec@gmail.com



Copper Country Audubon Lake Superior Bird Surveys

by Alison Vilag



It was a delight to return to Manitou Island (Keweenaw Co.) to conduct a spring migration count for Copper Country Audubon. During October 2020, I spent two weeks on Manitou for another CCA project: a month-long endeavor comparing the migration timings, flight directions, species compositions, and volumes at several Lake Superior vantages. In addition to Manitou, Tim Baerwald, Joseph Youngman, and I counted from Au Sable Point and Sevenmile Beach (both Alger Co.), Hebard Park (Keweenaw Co.), and compared our data with Whitefish Point Bird Observatory's (Chippewa Co.). Through the October project, we documented marked differences between these Lake Superior sites. For example, at Manitou, Redhead were detected more numerously than at the watches further east, Long-tailed Ducks were seen in far more substantial numbers at the eastern points, and at Au Sable, there was a very dense movement of westbound Northern Pintail in late October, when the species was essentially absent from the other sites. These disparities fascinate me, particularly because they inspire questions at least as readily as they suggest answers. For this, I will always love documenting Lake Superior's migrations.

The spring Manitou project took place from 6 May to 21 May. Waterbirds were the primary focus, but observations of landbirds and raptors were recorded too—the nature of Manitou makes it easy to appreciate all types of migration. Witnessing migration in an island environment, where weather patterns and their impacts affect the migration counter and migrating birds similarly, is to me experiencing migration in a fuller dimension. On that note, it was reassuring to depart for Manitou with the knowledge that weather conditions would generally be *improving* throughout our stay—not deteriorating, as in October. This was a comfort! Weather, in fact, was generally pleasant throughout the count's duration: bluebird skies, light southerly winds, generally balmy temperatures.

When Captain Travis (of Keweenaw Fishing Charters) left my partner, Tripp, and me at Manitou's dock, we were welcomed by kettling raptors. In fact, there was such a nice assortment of Rough-leg hawks (a favorite!) that it was difficult to focus on the task of schlepping our gear down the trail to the lighthouse... we were welcomed, too, by the signs of a place on the cusp of winter and spring: snowshoe hare sheddings; morels in the yard; feather pile remnants from Sharp-shin meals. May is a great month in these parts. There's a certain urgency to get north to the breeding grounds, and it manifests in dense flights; unexpected vagrants; and life and death, predator and prey. Conducting a standardized migration count provides an ideal lens to observe all this.

At Manitou, the protocol is fairly simple: start at sunrise. For 8 hours, count migrating birds and note the direction of travel. (Most waterbirds at Manitou fly northwest in spring.) Take weather measurements (wind speed and direction, temperature, pressure, precipitation, visibility...) hourly. After the 8 hours? Poke around the lighthouse "yard" (I found a Sora by doing this!) and walk down to the dock; appreciate the simplicity of life on Manitou—read on the sunny side of the house; tote water from the bay to filter for drinking; hope that Tripp's daily fishing endeavors break up the rather Spartan camp food we brought. (He did bring back a few delicious splake!)

The weather at Manitou during the count was the sort of weather that, at the springs I've counted at Whitefish Point, have been accompanied by some really stellar waterbird flights. I was hopeful—expectant, even—that this would be the case at Manitou! The count's first day delivered a 338-strong Common Loon flight; this is usually the timing of Whitefish Point's largest spring Common Loon push. But otherwise, Manitou's waterbird numbers were a small fraction of what Whitefish Point gets during this same period. However, diversity between the sites was comparable.

Table 1. Cumulative totals of selected waterbird species from 6–18 May, 2021.

Species	Manitou Island	Whitefish Point Bird Observatory
Common Loon	1404	1813
Red-throated Loon	27	294
Red-breasted Merganser	331	913
White-winged Scoter	73	918
Red-necked Grebe	61	182



Another spring migration phenomenon I've enjoyed at Whitefish Point is the night flight. There, calm, clear evenings deliver heavy movements of species like Bonaparte's Gull, White-winged Scoter, and Long-tailed Duck. This push begins about an hour before sunset and continues on into the night—in fact, it's possible to hear the vocal species, like Bonaparte's Gull, well after dark. The flights are dense: for example, I expect to have, in a few hours one evening, the same number of Bonaparte's Gulls tallied during the entire daytime counts of the 6-week count. It's intense! I was very curious to see if night flights could be observed at Manitou. Conditions were amenable, effort valiant—I enjoyed many stellar sunsets and watched a Long-eared Owl lift from the trees and head west over the lake at dusk—but I saw zero migrating waterbirds during these evening shifts!

Manitou affords great hawkwatching opportunities in spring. Sharp-shins were prominent—sometimes, a couple dozen were visible in a single field of view. On mornings when large numbers of passerines were wearily nearing shore, the Sharpie, uhh, "welcome committee" went out to "greet" these inbound warblers and sparrows. This supplied a sort of grim excitement: I don't enjoy seeing things die, but I recognize it must happen for others to live; predator or prey, I tried to root for the winning team. The female Chestnut-sided Warbler that dodged two Merlins for a half-mile, landed in the bush in front of me, trembled for a few minutes and then began eating midges. A winner. The courting Peregrine Falcons that executed, effortlessly, a prey exchange out over the lake? Also winners. During the duration of my count at Manitou, most raptors I observed leave the island headed over Superior to the northeast, but perhaps the perspective was biased—the count site is on the island's north shore. Previous spring surveys at Manitou have documented that most raptors return west, to the Keweenaw mainland. And it does merit mention that most outbound raptors I saw depart to the northeast eventually returned to Manitou. This is to be expected with substantial water crossings. Sometimes, though, the return is not immediate! A non-raptor example of this is a Great Blue Heron I watched set off in the direction of Isle Royale. An hour and forty-eight minutes later, it returned—generally flying back on the same line down which it had departed.

Passerine presence on Manitou during the count was a mixed bag. Mid-range migrants seemed to be around in very diminished numbers. I detected no Fox Sparrows, just two Hermit Thrushes, and relatively low numbers of White-throated and White-crowned Sparrows and Palm Warblers. I happened to drive through Louisiana and Texas during the February ice storm, and saw hundreds of sparrows, Hermit Thrushes, and Palm Warblers were dead on the road-shoulders. Perhaps, these observations are to some degree connected. The woods were very quiet this spring and I know I'm not the only person to have noticed this.

However, on a happier note, I did have an incredible warbler fallout during the early morning hours of 17 May. Many small birds migrate primarily at night. Zach Gayk, who has paid close attention to landbird migration events along the Keweenaw suggested that the morning flights of passerines returning to Manitou that I saw were birds that, perhaps, drifted too far east on tailwinds, found themselves above open water after sunrise, could still see the hills of the Keweenaw and then corrected course.

Though the factors in passerine fallouts at Manitou aren't yet precisely defined, they are still incredible to observe. The May count site happened to be the place where many of these returnees made landfall. You hear them before you see them. Quiet, high-pitched, buzzy calls coming from well overhead. The window is limited and the strain great to pick out identifying features as loose flocks rush overhead: the white belly on a Black-throated Blue Warbler; the heavy dark streaking that contrasts with intense yellow on a male Magnolia...and for every one of these confidently identified, several, anyway, will go down as "warbler sp." And the colorful volleys keep coming off the lake, straining for land...on 17 May, I had 1,224 inbound passerines reach Manitou, most of these were "warbler sp."

Though I had some fun avian finds on Manitou this spring (Yellow-headed Blackbird, Piping Plover, Whimbrel, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Short-eared Owl, and House Wren all stand out), my most memorable Manitou observation was not a rare species. During the waterbird count one day, 7 Rough-legged Hawks set out north over the lake, one after the other. Within the next hour, I watched all but one of these return. Then, I picked out a Northern Flicker, still a couple hundred yards offshore, bouncing in diagnostic woodpecker flight towards land. Suddenly, it faltered, dropped, hit Superior's surface, floated there. A passing Herring Gull zeroed in, dropped immediately. Gulls are waterbirds. Flickers are landbirds. Flickers eat ants. Gulls eat anything they can. The flicker summoned its last resources, rose up; the gull knocked it back down and neither bird left the water this time. I'm fond of flickers and not fond of large gulls and did not watch.

The flicker was still fresh on my mind when the last Rough-leg came into view. It was weary—perhaps made the same miscalculations that the flicker had—and I watched it dip lower...lower...towards the lake. The hawk was close enough to shore that I could see the mark left on the water's surface as the wingtips began to trail. It was far enough from shore that this observation caused me turmoil. And then it dropped into the water. I've seen Herring Gulls knock Sharp-shins into the lake and have their way with them. But I'd never seen a large raptor fall into the lake. It looked horribly out of place, floating there 200 yards or so offshore. The Herring Gulls noticed immediately. "Noooooo," I said, out loud; the hawk stirred and the gulls veered off. It remained unmoving on the surface. A Bald Eagle made a pass; again, the hawk moved just enough to show the eagle it would be no easy prey. The lake was slowly delivering the hawk towards shore, and I imagined lifting it from the rocks, tucking it into a quiet, dark, warm space—certainly, there were enough mice in the lighthouse to provide sustenance. But suddenly, the hawk rose, nonchalantly crossed the last bit of water, and disappeared into the thick boreal forest. I didn't know its fate—how long it had been since the last meal, how badly it needed the next—but I did think about whether I'd prefer to die on land or in water. I thought about how this bird had spent an amount of energy on its survival that we rarely spend on ours. I thought about how it had moved—at least once in its life—between tundra and trees. Ponderings like these are one of the greatest gifts from counting migration, especially in places like Manitou, and I was fortunate to have had the opportunity to spend part of another season of movement there.

Newsletter Note! Submit bird news and nature notes for next newsletter to dlrichte@mtu.edu, 906-482-3361. THANK YOU! for your MEMBERSHIP! We have no connection to National Audubon and get no funds from Michigan Audubon so we rely on your support to help fund our PROJECTS that help the birds of the Copper Country!



Bird Killer Windows and the Onslaught of the Humans

by Dana Richter



If the birds could write a book describing their interaction with people over the centuries, they might call it: *The Onslaught of the Humans*. The book would be a history of their demise and there would be chapter headings for every destructive thing humans have inflicted on them that killed them one by one and decreased their populations over the years: windows, cats, pesticides, towers, sky-scrapers, guns, cars, roads, and habitat destruction in its many forms. It would be a very sad book.

What a terrible thing for an innocent bird on an otherwise beautiful day to fly with great speed into a window. Sometimes it is just a graze and a few feathers float in the air and the bird flies away. Sometimes the bird falls and sits dazed for awhile and later flies away. Too often though when a bird strikes the window it dies right away. Even with the birds that fly away one never knows how many eventually die from their head or neck injuries.

Humans enjoy windows. Windows provide light and visibility so we can see the sky, the landscape, trees and wildlife. They contribute to our enjoyment and peace of mind. Every large facility like offices, hotels, businesses, schools, etc. has windows for beauty and necessity. We put bird feeders outside of our windows to be able to observe birds close-up. Windows as well as much of human activity is in conflict with birds.

Copper Country Audubon has been working with buildings at Michigan Tech to reduce bird strikes to windows on some of the campus buildings where bird strikes occur most. This summer 48 *Bird's Eye View*® window films were installed on the lower east windows of the Library. On some windows two or three films were placed. That side gets many bird strikes because it faces a courtyard where there are a lot of trees and shrubs. Places like that are the worst for bird window strikes because the windows act as mirrors to the bird. The films are designed to reflect UV light that the birds avoid in a larger area than the actual film itself. The films are not 100% effective, depending on which way the sun is shining the films are not always visible. The library put two posters near the windows explaining what the films are for. We have found this to be important, because sometimes the films get taken down. Library staff have noted considerably fewer bird-strikes this year, but still there are some.

We have also installed films on bad windows at the Dow Building, the Forestry Building, and the Sustainability Demonstration House, which has large windows close to the woods. Many people helped with the project to save birds from window death on the MTU campus. We thank them and also those who allowed the installation of the bird films. Among others, these include Karleigh Krieg and Tom Polkinghorn at the Dow Building, David Zei and David Holden at the Library, and all the concerned students at the Sustainability House. During incidental checks this summer, dead birds found outside windows were a female indigo bunting, a juvenile yellowthroat warbler, a white-throated sparrow, and an unidentified passerine.

How many birds die from window strikes at a place like Michigan Tech each year? An estimate might be in the hundreds. In a 2015 daily survey of windows conducted by Copper Country Audubon at eleven buildings on campus, over the course of ten weeks from May to August, 150 dead birds were found. A follow-up study with game cameras suggests this is likely an undercount since predators such as cats, racoons, skunks and gulls regularly check below windows to snatch the dead birds before they can be counted.

The films are far better than nothing on a window or the little hawk cut-outs one sometimes sees on windows. There are other more effective treatments to prevent bird strikes to windows, like reflective ribbon, such as *Goeter Bird Scare Tape Ribbon*®, put in strips across windows that shine and shimmer in the breeze, but it is not always possible to install these due to location, labor involved, or appearance, so a compromise must be settled on. From the bird's point of view the best thing would be to have no windows at all, or even better, no humans. That would be in their book. -D. Richter



The Great Horned Owls will be in the Nest Box

On Top of the Jutila Center in Hancock Again this Winter!!



WEBCAM ALERT! Be sure to watch the Great Horned Owls that nest on top of the Jutila Building (the old hospital in Hancock) overlooking the Portage Canal. They will start laying eggs in the nest box as early as February, so start watching the webcam then. Go to the Copper Country Audubon website www.coppercountryaudubon.org and click on the link *Jutila Web Cam* on the right side of the main page.



Raptor Rehabilitation in the Upper Peninsula

by Beth Maatta



This has been quite the exciting year for raptor rehabilitation in the Upper Peninsula! Along with a record-breaking donation, several changes have taken place. An Eagle River seasonal resident, local philanthropist and nature lover saw a post about a Red-Tailed Hawk that was shot in Baraga County and immediately donated to cover the medical costs. He contacted me and expressed his interest in becoming involved with *UP Wildlife Rehabilitation – Keweenaw Group* and raptor rehabilitation. To make a long story short, he realized our need to construct a flight enclosure for raptors and agreed to be a matching donor for funds raised. His donation covered the cost of the enclosure as well as a lead-testing machine and a dedicated rehabilitation space for injured birds.

The new flight enclosure was constructed this summer on the Pontiac Road, about five miles north of Hancock. It measures 50 ft x 12 ft x 20 ft. A smaller aviary on the site was constructed several years ago with help from Copper Country Audubon. While Wuebben Construction built the structure; doing the site work, siding and more fell on me and a

fantastic group of volunteers, the enclosure was ready for use just in time to get an orphaned Great Horned Owl conditioned for release. The bigger aviary gives raptors room to exercise and build wing muscles for hunting and migration. In the past larger birds like raptors had to be taken to Marquette or farther to other rehabilitation facilities.

Other notable changes that occurred this year were the retirement of UP raptor rehabilitators Phyllis Carlson and Jerry Maynard. Currently, I am the only rehabilitator permitted for raptors in the Upper Peninsula. I have admitted birds from Munising, Marquette, Norway, Crystal Falls, Bessemer, Ironwood, Ontonagon, L'Anse/Baraga and the local area. The next undertaking for UPWR and raptors is acquiring Jerry Maynard's education raptors, Eric the Red-tailed Hawk and Phoenix the Peregrine Falcon. This will involve fundraising and building mews for the birds as well as gaining the proper permitting from the US Fish and Wildlife Services and getting yearly donors to cover the food and vet bills.

As far as patients go, I have admitted 6 Bald Eagles, 2 Great Horned Owls, 1 Barred Owl, 1 Short-eared Owl, 4 Cooper's Hawks, 2 Red-tailed Hawks, 1 Sharp-shinned Hawk, 2 Ravens, 1 Crow, and 1 Ruby-throated Hummingbird, as well as some adult songbirds and several pigeons. On a non-bird related note, I also took in 4 turtles, and a porcupine!
— Beth Maatta, UPWR – Keweenaw Group Raptor Rehabilitator, (906) 370-3825, bmmaatta@mtu.edu

Brockway Mountain Hawk Watch 2021 – Another Low Year!

Over the course of the spring 2021 survey, from 15 March to 15 June, 7,210 eastbound raptors of 15 species were counted, and 3,105 westbound raptors were observed migrating past the count site on top of Brockway Mountain. Unlike a year ago when most species were recorded in below average to record lows, the totals for this year were only slightly below average. No species set new high counts this season. For complete species accounts and comparison of yearly totals see the web site hawkcount.org. You can find more information on the Brockway Mountain Hawk Watch website www.thekbrg.org.

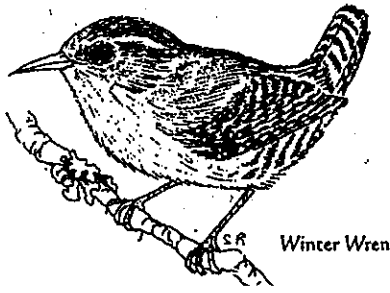
Expand Wilderness Areas in the Upper Peninsula



Copper Country Audubon has recently joined a coalition effort to expand Wilderness Areas in the Upper Peninsula. The proposed areas include the Ehlico area, the Trap Hills, and Norwich Plains, all in the Ontonagon and Porcupine Mountains area, and an addition to the Sturgeon River Gorge Wilderness south of L'Anse. By designating these four key areas that already lie within National Forest boundaries as Wilderness, we can ensure that these rare and beautiful places in the stay pristine for our use, enjoyment, and as habitat for birds and other wildlife — both today and for generations to come. Learn more about this campaign and see maps of the areas at www.KeeptheUPWild.com

Christmas Bird Count Saturday Dec 18, 2021. Watch for details on 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 locations 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.

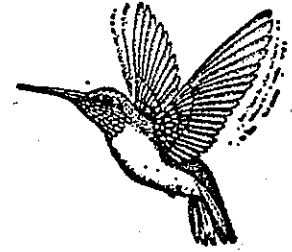
THANKS to everyone for your membership in Copper Country Audubon and especially for your donations that make our projects possible. Your donation is for the birds! We couldn't do it without you!



Winter Wren

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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. Life members and courtesy mailings have no date. We're sorry for any mistakes; please let us know! *Thanks!*

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



There's Always Great Birdwatching in the Keweenaw!