



BIRDTRACKS

Newsletter of the Jackson Audubon Society

517.787.3453

www.jacksonaudubon.org

Haehnle's Rarest Wetland: Fens

Ron Hoffman



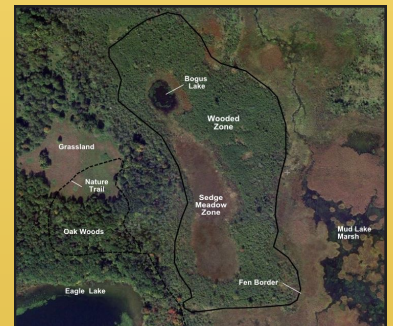
White Ladyslipper

Within the thousand-acre Phyllis Haehnle Sanctuary are some of the rarest wetlands found in North America, prairie fens. They are considered both globally and state rare ecosystems, only 140 prairie fens have been identified in Michigan. At Haehnle, fens are found at four locations; historically they probably were all connected. The largest one, at 60 acres, is the Bogus Lake Fen shown in the map. Its unusual name comes from a local legend. In the 1930's some criminals being pursued by the "Feds" dumped their counterfeit plates in the small lake now called Bogus Lake.

Fens are formed in areas with a unique set of conditions. They require a constant supply of groundwater rich in calcium bicarbonates that has flowed through limestone bedrock. Unlike bogs, which get their water from precipitation, are acid, and where outflow is

primarily to groundwater, fens receive both surface and subsurface water, are alkaline, and have both surface and subsurface outflows. Fire is necessary to maintain fen communities.

The Bogus Lake Fen has three vegetation zones (see map). At the north end is a depression filled with water containing hardstem bullrush and various spike rushes. In the center is a sedge meadow zone. Shrubby cinquefoil, various sedges, grasses and wildflowers are common here. The wooded zone is slightly higher and found outside the sedge meadow. Usually the wooded zone would have a mixture of dogwoods, willows, poison sumac, tamarack, and other native plants, but at the Bogus Lake Fen this zone is virtually a monoculture of non-native, glossy buckthorn.



Bogus Lake Fen

Fens provide critically important ecological services such as clean water, storage and slow release of stormwater, habitat for a broad diversity of plants and animals, absorption of carbon dioxide and release of oxygen through the process of photosynthesis. Several Threatened (T) and Special Concern (SC) species are associated with the fens at Haehnle including white-ladyslipper (T), mat muhly (T), barrens buckmoth (SC), Blanding's turtle (SC), eastern massasauga (SC) and northern harrier (SC). Fens are also great places for botanizing, bird watching and enjoying nature.

The fens at Haehnle have been and are faced with a variety of threats. Dredging the Portage River in 1921-22, subsequent construction of ditches and tile lines lowered water levels. Fires started by lightning, native Americans and later the early European settlers, suppressed woody plants and helped maintain prairie fens. In recent times fire has been mostly eliminated from wetlands. Invasive plants, especially glossy buckthorn, have invaded the Bogus Lake Fen as a result of disrupted hydrology and fire suppression.

The sanctuary has a history of restoring native biotic communities. Drained wetlands along the Portage River have been restored by breaking tile, plugging ditches and installing water control structures. Degraded upland areas have been restored to grasslands and savannas by removing non-native woody plants, applying herbicides, conducting prescribed burns and reintroducing native plants.

Continued on page 3



Massasauga Rattlesnake

Nancy Lapinski Memorial Grove Dedication

May 9, 2015 1:00 p.m.

Pegg Clevenger



Please join us as we celebrate the life of Nancy Lapinski at the dedication of the Nancy Lapinski Memorial Grove in Ella Sharp Park near the rose garden trellises. You may bring your own chair and remembrances of Nancy to share. If it is raining we will find shelter nearby.

Great appreciation goes out to members of Jackson Audubon, The Dahlem Conservancy, Ella Sharp Park, Grand River Environmental Action Team, and Recycling Jackson for funding this grove. Nancy mentored active volunteers and helped lead each of these groups.

For Jackson Audubon, Nancy preserved the Kate Palmer Sanctuary as an opportunity to enjoy birding and view native habitat for wildlife. She coordinated action to stop the unnecessary Ayres Road extension through sensitive wetland habitat. She was also in the forefront of action to ban DDT in Jackson County. Nancy's spirit guided many of the environmental leaders in Jackson County who now carry on her efforts.

Do Monarchs Live In Florida During The Winter?

Connie Spotts



Yes, they live and breed in Florida all year long. I personally have seen them at North Ft. Meyers in Jan. and Feb. of 2012. They were also seen in Venice (Rookery) in January, 2015 and on the Atlantic side at Brevard in January, 2014. Betty Desbiens reports seeing Monarchs all year long in Key West.

A survey was taken in 2013 at the St. Marks NWR which is along the coastal area of the eastern part of the Florida Panhandle. They reported 513 Monarchs in which some were breeding. The information is still unclear about the local Florida population. Richard Ru Bino who coordinates the tagging at the NWR says "They can survive but they need milkweed which people in that area had planted." An interesting fact was the milkweed found was the tropical (*curassavica*) which is non-native. A local butterfly farm mentioned that this tropical milkweed is the plant that will grow in a garden. Many native plants can be purchased from ShadyOaksButterflyFarm.Com which is located near Gainesville. Edith, the owner, is very knowledgeable and gives great information at www.ButterflyFunFacts.com. She has the USDA permits to send eggs, chrysalis, and adults to Michigan. You can purchase Painted Ladies, Red admirals, Black Swallowtails and even Monarchs. She treats the eggs, chrysalis, and plants with a solution of 5% bleach and 95% water to eliminate diseases. In Michigan, we have the migrating Monarchs - so let us do our part and PLANT MILKWEED AND DON'T SPRAY CHEMICALS.

Want to learn more about raising Butterflies? Join us on April 9th for our program, "Learn About Butterflies in Your Garden" with author Brenda Dziedzic. Brenda has a small yard in Westland, Michigan where she been successful in attracting 20 different butterflies. She has a butterfly house at Barson's Greenhouse, five miles North of the Detroit Airport where you can buy native plants and Brenda gives out caterpillars. Her book "Learn About Butterflies In The Garden" will be available for \$20.00 at the presentation. She is truly an educator and advocate for our butterflies. Come and learn how you can make a difference in our world of beautiful butterflies.

We now have an opportunity to restore the Bogus Lake Fen, another biotic community. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, through its Partners for Wildlife program, has offered to help Audubon restore the fen. It will involve using equipment to chop glossy buckthorn into small pieces during the winter, then using a herbicide to kill sprouts and seedlings during the growing season. Long-term management will include prescribed burns to suppress glossy buckthorn and favor native vegetation that is adapted to fire. About 48 acres are degraded by glossy buckthorn so restoration will not be cheap.

The F&WS will fund a major part of the cost, but Audubon needs to contribute volunteer work and some money. That is where you can help by making a contribution to either the Jackson Audubon Society, P.O. Box 6453, Jackson, MI 49204 or Michigan Audubon, P.O. Box 15249, Lansing, MI 48901 indicating on the check that it is for the Haehnle Sanctuary. Hopefully we will have enough money to restore all 48 acres, but if not we will go as far as the money lasts.



New Roosting Sites for Sandhill Cranes During Fall Migration

By Lathe Claflin

In a previous issue of Bird Tracks, Ron Hoffman wrote about the large fluctuations in numbers of Sandhill Crane roosting in Mud Lake Marsh during fall migration. This has been correlated with high water levels; when water depth at roosting sites exceeds 4 to 8 inches, cranes will not roost there. Long term measurement of water levels and evaluation of other factors indicate that high water levels in the fall may very well be the new norm. Thus, in keeping with our mission regarding Sandhill Cranes, it is now incumbent upon us to seriously consider creating new roosting habitat for Sandhill Cranes at Haehnle Sanctuary.

After evaluation of a number of potential possibilities, including removal of hybrid cattails on the western border of Mud Lake (very expensive and of unknown outcome) or dredging the outlet of the Marsh (unfeasible as Ron indicated earlier), we settled on creating new habitat around a four-acre island near the middle of the marsh. Water depths on the north side of this island should be suitable for night roosting, but the habitat on the island is not. Cranes like shallow water adjacent to a shoreline that is lacking vegetation or only sparsely vegetated. Brushy vegetation can hide predators. Ron's cover story on Bogus Lake fen outlines the plans to restore this critical habitat. Fortunately for us, Tom Eitnearer of the Partners for Wildlife Program of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service will fund this project. We appreciate that this is an experiment, but thanks to the extensive research on Sandhill Crane roosting behavior, there is a good chance that it will work.

2014 Waterloo Recreation Area Christmas Bird Count

Don & Robyn Henise

The 46th annual Waterloo Recreation Area Christmas Bird Count was held on Saturday, December 20th. Twenty-three participants in ten groups combed the count circle throughout the day, counting all the birds that they encountered. A day with no precipitation and no wind made for a comfortable day for the birders who were able to count a total of 64 species.

Highlights from the day included two species never recorded in the 45 previous years of the count. At Portage Lake, a group of nine White-winged Scoters were found independently by Allen King and Joyce Peterson. Gary Siegrist found at least two Virginia Rails in the Waterloo Marsh off of Riethmiller Road. The scoters, common on the great lakes, are quite rare inland. Virginia Rails are regular breeders in the Waterloo Marsh, but have usually migrated south long before December.

Partially opened water enabled the counters to record a number of waterfowl species. In addition to the normal Canada Geese, Mute Swan, and Mallards, other waterfowl tallied were 1 Tundra Swan, 1 Wood Duck, 8 Ring-necked Ducks, 1 Bufflehead, 9 Common Goldeneyes, and 24 Common Mergansers. Two adult Bald Eagles were at Portage Lake, one of them made a low pass over the scoters, causing all 9 of them to dive underwater to escape.

While many of us were viewing the scoters from the Portage Lake boat launch, a lone swan was sleeping on the ice with a group of Canada Geese. Because its head was tucked at the time, we were not able to identify it to species. Ross Green was able to photograph it a little while later when it stood up as the flock of geese flew off, confirming that it was a Tundra Swan.

A few other notable birds tallied were 2 Rough-legged Hawks, 1 Barred Owl, 1 Short-eared Owl, 5 Red-headed Woodpeckers, 1 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, 5 Pileated Woodpeckers, 1 Northern Shrike, 1 Northern Mockingbird, 1 Common Grackle, and 39 Pine Siskins.

Thanks to all who participated and helped make the count a success. Mark your calendars!! The 2015 Waterloo Rec Area CBC will be held on December 19th.



White-winged Scoters on Portage Lake

Don and Robyn are "retiring" after many years coordinating and directing the Christmas Bird Count - We thank them for their leadership and dedication, along with the many hours helping JAS members identify shorebirds.

A new coordinator(s) is needed - if you are interested please contact Connie Spotts at 517-529-9031 or 517-230-2707

JAS Thank Yous & Appreciation

We would like to thank Stew Robinovitz for his many years of service devoted to the Jackson Audubon website. We will miss your insight into the world of technology. Thank you so very much.

Thanks also to Don and Robyn Henise for their leadership on our yearly Christmas Bird Counts.

Hats off to Pegg Clevenger for all you have done for the Nancy Lapinski Memorial Grove, and the Kate Palmer Sanctuary has many improvements because of your leadership. Thanks.

Thank you to Steve Jerant - Be on the lookout for our new website!

The following made donations to the Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary when they renewed their Jackson Audubon Society membership. Thank you for supporting our mission of conservation, education and research at the sanctuary.

Gamal Abosambra

Tim Cullen

Mike French

Judith Hay

Jann & Gary Krupa

John & Pat Reynolds

Chris Von Lonkhuyzen

Heather Allison

Michael & Evelyn Digon

Patricia Harris

Ron & Joan Hoffman

Janette Mraz

Joan Rogers

Lathe & Cathy Claflin

James Eder

Deborah Hartsuff

Roderick Howlett

Nena Obits

Bill & Charity Steere

Annual Audubon Potluck

Saturday June 6th ~ 11:00 a.m.

The annual Audubon potluck will take place at Connie's house on Crispell Lake. The party starts at 11:00, food served around noon. Bring a passing dish along with a nature item for the raffle. Connie has many birds and butterflies along with a beautiful garden to enjoy. Come & relax with your friends.

Call Connie at 517-529-9031 or 517-230-2707 for directions.

Bird Words

Kon Prokos

From "A Word in Edgewise: Brief Essays in Language"

E-Book Time Press (Amazon) 2012

Nearly all language originates with names for things. These names then become labels for ideas. We have an abundance of words and ideas, for example, that we have borrowed from birds' names. I call them *bird words*. If you saw the movie *On Golden Pond*, you know the origin of the phrase *laugh like a loon*, or *crazy as a loon*. The extinct dodo bird probably became so because it was slight of wing **and** brain--hence we say *dumb as a dodo*. Other words more removed from the original don't use *like* or *as*. When we're having a *lark*, we're flitting about, and when we stretch to see over a fence, we *crane* our necks. Taking sides on the issue of war, we become *hawks* or *doves*. Before I wrote this, I *grouched* about a bit looking for a new name for bird words. Try *Ornithologia*. Though that's nothing to *crow* about, it **IS A Word in Edgewise**.

Kon will have poem about Audubon's trek across Michigan published in the March/April issue of the MAS Jack Pine Warbler

A New Look for Kate

Pegg Clevenger

Creating more public access to the Kate Palmer Sanctuary, Jim Rossman and Paul Rice have cut another new loop. This trail heads north from the main entrance and travels through previously impenetrable brush. Our volunteers found an oxbow where birds warble and the Sandstone Creek burbles, meandering around you on three sides. Your quick return to the entrance goes down big-tree ridge, perhaps the remainder of the coal mining there in the early 1900s. Enjoy this little haven even on snowshoes and be sure to come for the ephemeral spring beauties and migrant birds.

I am looking for volunteers to help with everything from historic library or computer research to hunting for living ash trees, neighborly data collection and visits, creek clearing, garlic mustard control, and keeping an eye out for Kate by driving O'Brien Road. And, if you hold any special memories of the sanctuary, call Pegg, 750-4299.

Michigan Audubon State Office - New Location

As of December 30, Michigan Audubon's state headquarters has moved to [Okemos](#). We are currently leasing space from and sharing quarters with the [Michigan Nature Association](#) in their building located at 2310 Science Parkway.

Our mailing address has not changed! If you need to send us mail carried by the US Postal Service, our address is still PO Box 15249, Lansing, 48901. **However, our phone number has changed. Our new number is 517-580-7364.**

We welcome you to stop in if you are in the area.

2015 ACTIVITIES SCHEDULE

Field Trips

Saturday March 28—Early Waterfowl trip around the Jackson Area. Meet at the Eastside Meijer parking lot at 8:00 am. Call Connie Spotts (517-529-9031) for more information.

Tuesday, May 5 —Dahlem/Audubon trip to Magee Marsh Wildlife Area in Ohio. The all-day trip leaves from Eastside Meijer at 6:00 a.m. Bring water, lunch, lawn chair. Call Gary Siegrist (517-782-3453 for advance sign-up.

Saturday, July 25 —Wildflower trip to Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary. Meet at the parking lot on Seymour Road at 10:00 a.m. or carpool from Eastside Meijer parking lot at 9:30 a.m. Call Lathe Claflin for more information.

Meetings/Programs

Regular meetings are held at Ella Sharp Museum unless otherwise noted. Meetings begin with a social time at 6:30 p.m. followed by a short meeting and program at 7:00 p.m

Bring "recyclables" (magazines, feeders, etc.) to the program.

Thursday, March 12 - Don Henise will lead us on a "Birding in Southwest Oregon" trip. We will visit the south coast and a large nesting seabird colony. We will also travel to the Cascades in search of many western species such as the white-headed woodpecker, red-breasted sapsucker, and a nesting Gray Owl.

Thursday, April 9 -Brenda Dziedzic of Westland, author of "Learn About Butterflies in the Garden", will present a program on raising butterflies from a small city yard. She has an indoor butterfly house at Barson's Greenhouse where she educates many people about saving butterflies. Her book will be available for \$20.00.

Other Events

Saturday, April 25 —Workbee at Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary, 9:00-12:00. Meet at the main parking lot on Seymour Road. For more information, call Lathe Claflin, 517 522-3949

Saturday , April 25 —1-4 p.m. Earth Day Celebration at Cascades Park in conjunction with the Jackson Outdoor Coalition. Enjoy booths, prizes, and Audubon led bird walks.

Saturday, May 9 —Celebration of Nancy Lapinski's life begins at 1:00 p.m. in the Memorial Grove at Ella Sharp Park near the rose garden trellises. Bring a chair and come rain or shine.

Saturday, June 6 —Audubon Potluck at Connie's house on Crispell Lake. Bring a passing dish and a nature item for the raffle. Fun begins at 11:00. Call Connie (517- 529-9031) or (517-230-2707) for directions.

Saturday, August 15 —Birds, Blooms, and Butterflies Festival at the Dahlem Center. There will be free programs, booths, and guided bird and dragonfly trips. The event runs from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Jackson Audubon Society
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Jackson Audubon Society Mission:

To promote among the people of the Jackson Area an interest, knowledge and appreciation of birds, wildlife and the environment.



Michigan Audubon – Connecting Birds and People for the Benefit of Both