One third of North America’s birds are currently at risk of extinction. Native bees and butterflies are similarly at risk. Although tragic, this is no reason to descend into gloom and doom. Rather the situation is a call to action for those of us who care about the future for all of our wildlife.

Saving Birds Thru Habitat, along with partners including Invasive Species Network, Leelanau County, Leelanau Conservancy, Leelanau Conservation District, Glen Lake and Leland High Schools, Michigan State University Extension Master Gardeners and others, has embarked on the Leelanau Native Plants Initiative to raise awareness among county landowners of this serious decline in birds, pollinators and other wildlife. Most declines can be traced to habitat loss – either directly through development or indirectly through the spread of introduced floral and faunal species. One of the goals of the Initiative is to certify at least 5% of county lands through our habitat certification program.

Students from Glen Lake and Leland High Schools participated in the formal launch of the initiative on April 18th.
Welcome New Board Member Bert Thomas

Bert and his wife Diane moved into their new house in Leelanau Township two years ago and now call the area home. But he has been summering in family cottages in East Leland since birth and has developed deep friendships and great appreciation for the natural beauty and serenity of Leelanau Peninsula as a result.

He grew up in Northern Kentucky near Cincinnati. Bert served four years in the Air Force, which sent him to the Institute of Far Eastern Languages at Yale University to learn Mandarin Chinese and later to Korea as an intelligence specialist. His professional career, however, was centered in Washington, D.C. as a civilian and involved domestic and foreign service activities and operations that took him to assignments and postings globally but mostly in South and Southeast Asia and a year at the Naval War College in Newport, R. I. After his retirement, he was chief of Washington operations for a company that provided communications systems and training for small team activities in remote areas overseas.

Although now retired, he still keeps the tip of a little finger in the water as a consultant. Bert's interest in nature developed in his youth in the forested hillsides near his home in Kentucky and during full summers here in Leelanau. In 2008, he immersed himself in conservation and founded a forest conservancy in northern Kentucky dedicated to land preservation and public awareness. He served as its chairman for six years before moving here. He and Diane have landscaped their 10 acres with native trees, shrubs and grasses toward maintaining a natural environment and have earned the Certified Bird Habitat designation from Saving Birds Thru Habitat. He enjoys landscape and wildlife photography, serves as a volunteer for the Leelanau Conservancy. As a bird enthusiast and conservationist, Bert is honored to be a board member of Saving Birds Thru Habitat.

More Improvements to Sandia Texas Wetlands

After visiting Bosque del Apache NWR in New Mexico, Ellen Weinacht was inspired to restore a small section of the ranch she and her husband Don own to a ponded wetland. The restoration was specifically to attract overwintering birds. The project has been so successful, it is now a "must visit" spot for birders. From the beginning, Saving Birds has been a partner in the project.

Last year a new pond designed to support dragonflies was completed. A bridge was added from which visitors could more easily see the insects once they colonize the pons. Dragonfly plants are now being installed.

Future efforts will include the installation of songbird friendly trees around the entire wetlands. Kudos to the Weinachts and their dedicated helpers (including Saving Birds member Dave Mainz) for their work on behalf of winged creatures.
Remembering Our Co-founder

Most of you likely know that my husband, Jim Charter, co-owner of Charter Sanctuary and co-founder of Saving Birds Thru Habitat, passed away on Easter Sunday. As his oldest daughter Shelley said, although losing her father was difficult, it gave her comfort to reflect on the fact that she knew he lived exactly the life he wanted to live. She said that he always wanted to travel. And he had long wanted to own a large tract of land.

Jimmy and I traveled from the time we first became a couple, in the beginning as much as long weekends and summer vacations permitted. In 1983 we took to the road in an RV and spent the next three years crisscrossing the continent; from California to Florida, from Nova Scotia to Alaska and all points in between. After that, we traveled west nearly every winter for the following thirty-two years. Then, beginning in 2006, he traveled with Shelley to Europe three times: once with her son, Brian and once with his other daughter Susie and sister-in-law Sheri.

In 1993, his second aspiration was realized when we purchased forty-seven acres of land for a bird sanctuary. Few people would take the leap of faith required to either quit their jobs in their forties to travel or put economic security on the line to purchase a large piece of land.

For a little over two decades, he planted hundreds of the native trees, shrubs, wildflowers and grasses that were my passion. He also pulled, chopped, cut and treated the invasive plants that threatened to destroy the ecosystems found here.

In the summer of 2001, when I wanted to begin a new non-profit dedicated to educating people about the importance of native plants, he was my partner and supporter. He served on our Board of Directors for the first eight years, he oversaw the construction of our nature center and installed and then cared for the native plants gardens that populate the grounds around the building for as long as he was able.

The lovely cards, notes, emails and Facebook comments are a testament to his work here. We will celebrate his life and his work at a buffet supper at Saving Birds Thru Habitat’s nature center from 4 PM to 6 PM on Saturday, July 14.
Thursday, June 7, 6PM: Suttons Bay Library: Leelanau Native Plants Initiative.
Join Kay Charter for a look at the county-wide effort to educate landowners on the benefits of native plants to birds, butterflies and bees. Learn how you can have your property certified. We will take a bird hike at the Suttons Bay wetland following the presentation. Binoculars will be available for those who need them.

Saturday, June 9, 10AM, Saving Birds Thru Habitat:
Retired Michigan DNR wildlife biologist, Jerry Weinrich spent three Antarctic summers studying Adelie Penguins for his Master’s thesis. He will present his popular program about his experiences with these fascinating birds. He calls himself, “Michigan DNR’s only penguin biologist. Jerry is also the Bald Eagle counter for both the state and federal governments. At the end of his penguin presentation, he will bring us up to date on the status of our national symbol. Adults: $10.00 each; kids under 12 free.

Saturday, June 16, 10AM: Join Kama Ross, Leelanau Conservation District Forester for her program, “Eyes On the Forest.”
Learn about the many challenges facing our northern Michigan trees and forests. Become more proactive in identifying the stresses facing our trees and mitigating their impacts through seasonal inspections, ongoing education and implementing management practices based on science. The talk will also include a discussion of the book The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate - Discoveries from a Secret World, by Peter Wohlleben.

Saturday, June 23, 8:30AM – 3PM Third Annual Conservation Workshop
Includes morning presentations by native bee expert and author Heather Holm, and a bat presentation by Dawn Vezina. Afternoon field trips will include one by each of our featured speakers as well as a bird hike with Michigan
Every winter I travel by train to visit partners, members, friends and relatives in Texas, Arizona and California. A favorite stop this year was to see Jessie Byrd, who manages Pima County’s Native Plants Nursery. Pima County’s (think Tucson) award-winning Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan, established 19 years ago, included the creation of a Native Plants Nursery. The goal of the nursery was to help mitigate the damage to the Sonoran Desert ecosystem by rescuing trees, shrubs, succulents and cacti from areas undergoing development and hold them for replanting in public places (including parks, streetscapes, and public buildings). Also, to increase species diversity in the county, locally-collected wild seeds are collected, planted and grown out to make those plants accessible for replanting public areas. Today, the Native Plant Nursery holds 20,000 native plants representing 230 Sonoran Desert species. Jessie, a native Tucsonan, grew up in the desert. As we teach at Saving Birds, she believes that using native plants in urban landscapes can help encourage biodiversity while also creating beautiful gardens. She earned a Master of Landscape Architecture from the University of Arizona and a BA in Biology from Bryn Mawr College.

For more information about the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan, go to: [www.sonorandesert.org/learning-more/sonoran-desert-conservation-plan/](http://www.sonorandesert.org/learning-more/sonoran-desert-conservation-plan/)

Pictured above, Pima County Native Plants Nursery Manager, Jessie Byrd, embraces a fishhook barrel cactus (*Ferocactus wislizenii*).
Saving Birds Thru Habitat
Membership List 2018

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Donors $250 and up:
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Bruce and Judy Balas
Dave and Patty Barrons
Robert and Nancy Beekman
John and Tina Bevington
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Enclosed is my check for $________________

Would you prefer your membership/gift to be anonymous?

In memory / honor (please circle one) of:

Bobolink

Other ($5000)

Piping Plover

Bobolink

Other ($5000)

Bobolink

Bluebird ($50)

Common Yellowthroat ($100)

Bobolink ($250)

Piping Plover ($500)

Another ($________________)

Nest Builders: Those who make an annual pledge at the Bobolink level ($250) or higher

In memory / honor (please circle one) of:

Acknowledgment card to go to:

Yes! I want to support Saving Birds Thru Habitat with a

Membership ______ Renewal at the following level:

Chickadee ($25)

Common Yellowthroat ($100)

Piping Plover ($500)

Bald Eagle ($5000)

Other ($________________)

Name __________________________

Street __________________________

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Summer Address (if different)

Street __________________________

City _________________________ State_____ Zip________

Email __________________________

Thank you for your donation. We are a 501(c)(3) organization; your tax-deductible gift is very important to us.

Questions Please call (231) 271-3738 or email: bobolink2000@gmail.com

SBTH • P.O. Box 288 • Omena, MI 49674  Thank You!
The mission of Saving Birds Thru Habitat is to protect, enhance, and restore habitat for North American birds, and to educate people of all ages about this important mission and how to achieve it. Our goal is to improve habitat for migrating birds one backyard at a time.

Flower Power

Although widespread use of neonicotinoid insecticides is at least partly to blame for the declining bee and butterfly populations, loss of habitat is the most serious issue for virtually every declining species on the planet. The good news is that we can all be part of the solution for our pollinators by simply adding native plants to our landscapes. There are numerous online sites that sell “wildflower” seeds that are purported to help pollinators. Unfortunately most of these wildflowers are not native, and some are even invasive (like baby’s breath). Our new Pollinator Packet includes seeds of only native wildflowers from The Great Lakes area. Planting instructions are on the back of the packet.

The enclosed seeds will cover a 60 square foot area. These seeds should be used ONLY in Great Lakes States. The packets are $9.95 each. Check the SBTH web site for ordering information.