Habitat Happenings

SAVING BIRDS THRU HABITAT NEWSLETTER

November, 2013, Volume 12, Number 2

by Kay Charter

Ted Williams was first person I called when we received our non-profit approval from the IRS in the spring of 2002. A dedicated conservation journalist, Ted is the long time writer of Audubon magazine’s Incite column and conservation columnist for Fly Rod & Reel. He and I became acquainted when I wrote a letter to the editor of Audubon years ago about one of his Incite columns.

Over time, Ted and I became friends. He wrote a cover comment for my book, For the Love of Birds, and subsequently purchased a dozen of the bluebird nest boxes featured in one of my chapters. He and his wife, Donna, invited me to stay in their home during my 2007 speaking tour of New England.

One of my presentations, facilitated by Donna, was for Massachusetts Audubon’s Broad Meadow Brook where she was advocacy coordinator. Ted and Donna both attended. He then wrote not one, but two articles for our fall newsletter: One was about the program itself and the other was about the issue of herbicide use, which was discussed by attendees.

From the time I made that excited call to Ted telling him that SBTH was a certified, bona fide nonprofit organization, he and Donna have been dedicated and generous supporters. Last week, we received another nice check from him, and when I called to thank him, he said, “Kay your organization is one of our best investments.”

We all like to hear praise for the work we do. But Ted’s compliment isn’t just for your Executive Director; rather it has been earned by everyone who cares about and has supported SBTH. Whether you have served as a Board Member, a volunteer, a supporting member or an in-kind donor, everything you have done has helped us earn this coveted comment from a highly-respected journalist who knows a good thing when he sees it.

Thank you, Ted. And thanks to each of you who have supported us in every way you can.

Ted Williams

by Gina Erb

I hope you all got out to enjoy the beautiful fall colors this season, they were spectacular! Don’t let chilly weather keep you inside, there are plenty of wonderful days ahead so get out and take a nice leisurely walk. Look to see what birds are hanging around through the winter in the woods, along the beach or in a field. Your bird watching is not over just because the hummingbirds and warblers are gone.

While most of our feathered friends have flown south, there are many colorful and fun birds that hang around…cardinals, chickadees, tufted titmice, nuthatches, woodpeckers, buffleheads, ducks, geese, goldeneyes, eagles and many, many more. Hopefully these birds will get you through the winter months. While you’re at it, look forward to next migration season…get yourself acquainted with eBird on your mobile device…make plans to attend the 4th annual Leelanau Peninsula Bird Festival…gear up for SBTH’s docent-led hikes up at Lighthouse West and Charter Sanctuary and the new Sleeping Bear Birding Trail…watch for our calendar of programs at the “Bird House”. We’ll have a full schedule of activities for you in our Spring Newsletter.

Let me take this opportunity to thank two of our Board Members for their service, Rick Evans and Gary Siegrist. Both have been valuable members in helping the Board with grants, by-law revisions, bird hikes, and education ideas. Rick also served as Secretary for the past two years and loved being a docent with the school children. Gary, who traveled from downstate to attend meetings and events, shared his expertise from previous Board experience and his work at the Dahlem Conservancy near Jackson, Michigan. Many thanks to you both…we’ll see you on the birding trail.

Our 2013 Season was full of wonderful events: the Leelanau Peninsula Bird Festival, partnering with the Dennos Museum for the Birds of Paradise Exhibit, our Speaker Series, bird hikes and our 10th Anniversary Party to name a few…we’ll have more exciting programs in 2014. Your support is an investment in helping us teach children and adults about the wonders of our birds and the habitats they depend on to survive. Thank you!

Gina Erb

Website: www.savingbirds.org

Board Members:
Gina Erb, President       Linda Ketterer, Vice President       Barb Nowinski, Secretary       Mary Valpey, Treasurer
John Scott       Judy Smart       Sheen Watkins       Nick Schroock       Brian Allen       David Watkins       Mick Seymour

Technical Advisor: David Dister        Edited by: Kathie Snedeker, Kay Charter
Welcome to SBTH’s New Board Members

**Sheen Watkins** – Sheen is Vice-president, U.S. Operations at Kelly Services, Inc. She is looking forward to contributing to the board as she considers it a privilege to be able to give back and protect the sights and sounds of nature that provide so much enjoyment to her and others. There’s an audience out there that loves nature: but many in that audience may not realize that they can make a difference with one native planting at a time. It’s also about building a network with others, and she sees social media as a way to promote a straightforward message across a diverse, far-reaching audience. Many of the photographs in this edition were taken by Sheen. Check out her nature photography at [www.sheensnaturephotography.com](http://www.sheensnaturephotography.com).

**Dave Watkins** – Dave is a retired educator with Detroit Public Schools. He was inspired to action a few years ago after reading the book *For the Love of Birds*. Through reading this book, he saw a couple putting it all on the line and making a difference. It wasn’t until he was on a guided tour at Saving Birds Thru Habitat that he realized he, too, had an opportunity to give back to the birds that have brought him so much joy over the years. Dave will be helping us to further develop our educational outreach.

**Mick Seymour** – Mick Seymour is the founder and president of Empire Value Advisors in Glen Arbor. He is an avid and able birder, and spends as much time as he can birding the area in and around Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. He is very interested in habitat conservation for birds, and has plans to include a native plants garden for birds and butterflies in his commercial landscaping. He is co-founder of the Sleeping Bear Birding Trail, and somehow manages to keep the eBird data from that trail up to date for the blog on the trail website. Mick is also the Breeding Birds Survey Coordinator for the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.
SBTH’s 10th Anniversary Party
September 7th, 2013

John Erb bids on Brian Zimmerman’s landscape consult (yes, he won the bid).

Glen Chown, Executive Director of the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, and Greg Butcher, International Migratory Species Coordinator, U.S. Forest Service, were our speakers. Both gave high marks for our efforts and praised our achievements.

Co-founder Jim Charter enjoys messages

Dave Barrons was auctioneer – raised $1475 on our bird hikes/M-22 sign combos.

Brian Zimmerman and Ed Ketterer put heads together – we are sure they were discussing native plants landscaping.

Event photos on this page by Sherr Watkins

Background photo: SBTH Fields, by Suzanne Sudekum
Conservation Partners

On Thursday, July 25th, Don and Ellen Weinacht of Balmorhea, Texas were recognized by Saving Birds Thru Habitat as Conservation Partners of the Year for efforts on their West Texas Ranch.

Three years ago, they began work on a five-acre wetland restoration, which would benefit overwintering and migrating waterfowl, waders, shorebirds and songbirds. Ellen Weinacht flew in from El Paso to receive the award and said during the presentation that Saving Birds Thru Habitat was the inspiration for the project. She expressed appreciation to the organization for its role as a consulting partner. Thanks to the Weinachts, many migrating birds now have a much-needed stopover site in the middle of an arid part of the country.

Eric Ellis was also honored as a Conservation Partner of the year. Ellis is a Wildlife Biologist for Conservation Resource Alliance, a Traverse City based nonprofit organization that focuses on habitat restoration and mitigation. He and SBTH Executive Director Kay Charter have worked on numerous conservation projects over the past seven years, including a significant annual native tree and shrub giveaway, which is underwritten by international sand mining company, Fairmount Minerals.

More News...

Kirtland's Warbler – A Success Story

This summer, population of the endangered Kirtland’s Warbler reached an astonishing high of more than 2000 nesting pairs. While that may not seem like such a large number, this is a species that was once believed by some to be headed for certain extinction. Having exceeded the numbers established by the US Fish and Wildlife Service when it was listed, this beautiful bird is now ready to be removed from the Endangered Species list. However, since this is a conservation dependent species (meaning it will always need the care of humans), it won’t simply be cut loose to fend for itself. The Kirtland’s Warbler Alliance is the nonprofit group that is working to establish the manner in which the bird will continue to receive the protection it deserves. Kay Charter, our Executive Director, is a member of the Alliance.

Beaver Island Birding Trail

For the past several years, SBTH has conducted a spring birding trip on Beaver Island for students of the local school. Islanders are now interested in establishing a birding trail, similar to the Sleeping Bear Birding Trail. SBTH is the lead partner in the development of this trail and will facilitate website development and an informational rack card. With nineteen confirmed or probable nesting warbler species, this beautiful island will soon become a top birding spot in the state.

The Beaver Island Birding Trail website will be launched after the first of the year, and a weekend of birding and speakers over Memorial Day will celebrate its development. Speakers from around the state will share their views on island birding and conservation, and outstanding field trip leaders will be brought in to lead birding trips. Saving Birds is pleased to play a major role in the development of this great new birding trail.

New Optics for Visiting Students

With the help of three different grants (from the Feather Foundation, the Midwest Birding Symposium and the French Foundation), we were able to purchase 30 new pairs of binoculars for visiting students. Not only will these new binoculars replace damaged pairs of those we currently use, the optics are much improved since the time we purchased our original supply. And that will enhance our young visitors’ field trip experiences at Saving Birds.
This year we had the privilege of partnering with Dennos Museum for their Birds of Paradise Exhibition. We hosted two family day events. Here a family “flies through” our Great Migration game on the grounds next to the building.

One of the most rewarding aspects of our habitat work with international sand mining company, Fairmount Minerals, has been the response of many workers to our educational efforts. During the eight years we have been involved with this company, we have certified nine of their sites for good bird habitat, mostly in Great Lakes States. A friendly competition has grown up between the sites as to which hosts the most birds. For some, that competition has led to efforts to snap bird photos that would make it into the pages of our newsletter. Here are just a few:

We believe the most important thing we do to carry our mission forward into the future is educate children about birds and bird conservation. This year, more than 350 youngsters participated in field trips and other experiences both at our nature center and off site.
Saving Birds Thru Habitat

Membership List 2013

NEST BUILDERS
Donors $250 and up:

Bruce and Judy Balas
Dave and Patty Barrons
Robert and Nancy Beckman
Marlin and Pat Bussey
Jim and Kay Charter
John and Francie Downing
Kay and Robert Doyle
Kristine and Daniel Drake
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Rick and Judy Evans
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Donors up to $249:

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David Wible and Mary Cusick
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Mick and Carol Pfeiffer
David and Judith Pohlid
Robert and Jacqueline Pool
JoAnn and John Pope
Mary Pratt
Brian and Susan Price
John and Virginia Raz
Charlotte Read
Rene Reeb
Barbara and Ed Reinert

SBTH Fields, photo by Suzanne Sudekum
Robert and Katherine Roberts  
Paul and Carol Rose  
Cindy Rosiek  
Bonnie and Jim Scarlett  
Anita Schiller  
Julie and James Schopieray  
Peggy Schudlich  
Patricia Scott  
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Rachel Temple  
Nancy and Ben Tefertiller  
Kelly and Carolyn Thayer  
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Janet Wander  
Sheen and Dave Watkins  
Barbara Gilmore Webber  
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Helen and Bill Wells  
Harold and Susan Wilberg  
Harold and Susan Wilcox  
David and Carolyn Wollenhaupt  
Jay and Susan Woodhull  
Jean Woodhull  
Thomas and Sarah Woods  
John Zarafonetis  

In this season of giving, please consider a donation to help us continue and strengthen our educational efforts.

Saving Birds Thru Habitat gratefully accepts gifts in honor or in memory of others.
When making such a donation, please let us know who should be informed of your gift.

![Northern Cardinal](image1)

**Yes! I want to support Saving Birds Thru Habitat with a Membership Renewal at the following level:**

- Chickadee ($25)
- Bluebird ($50)
- Common Yellowthroat ($100)
- Bobolink ($250)
- Piping Plover ($500)
- Loon ($1000)
- Bald Eagle ($5000)
- Other ($________________)

**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:

**Would you prefer your membership/gift to be anonymous?**

**Enclosed is my check for $________________ (payable to Saving Birds thru Habitat)**

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**We Appreciate the Following Memorial and Honorary Gifts:**

**Cherryl Frick** in honor of:
- Rhoda Spuhler
- Patricia Harris

**Scott Berg (Morgan Stanley)** In honor of **Gina Erb**

**Barb and Ed Reinert** In honor of **Gina Erb**

**Fred Neidhardt** in memory of **Geri Chipault**

In memory of **Margaret Gass:**
- Kay and Jim Charter
- Doug and Ann McInnis
- Mary Jo Correll
- Bette Flactiff
- Bonnie Sue Streiter
- Susan Gail Polgar

In memory of **Bo:**
- Gina Erb
- Kay Charter

**Jack and Kathie Snedeker** in memory of **Ilene Wolcott**

**Many thanks to our in-kind donors:**

- Cook Enterprises  --- Ann Hoopfer – building cleaning
- Kent Holton  --- Let a Story Be Told, Jennifer Strauss
- Enerdyne  --- Brian Zimmerman & Associates
- Four Season Nursery  --- Designs by Nature

**Photographers:**
- Ken Scott  --- Sheen Watkins Nature Photography
- Jim Stevenson

**Thanks to the following for volunteering much time and effort on our database:**
- Ann Davey
- Mike Litch
- Jeff Kingery

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**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: bobolink3@prodigy.net

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.

**What’s in a Name?**

Ten years ago, more than 70 people pitched in to help erect the building that has served us so well as a nature center. Our helpers from Omena tagged the building “the bird house.” For ten years, it has been known as the Habitat Discovery Center. Now, we have decided it’s time to honor those men, and their work, by adopting the name they affectionately bestowed. So from here on, when you read about one of our events in the local press, you will be invited to join us not at the Habitat Discovery Center, but at The Bird House.