



Habitat Happenings

SAVING BIRDS THRU HABITAT NEWSLETTER

May 2022, Volume 22, Number 1

The Power of One North Point Park in Onekama

By Michelle Ervin*



North Point Park



Dr. Brian Allen



Black-billed Cuckoo

During a walk in North Point Park several years ago, bird song carried me along. Despite the beautiful, robust chorus, I knew songbird numbers were declining, and soon learned that we must all work to protect their threatened ecosystems. This is how that effort begins, with just one person, who teaches one person, who teaches another person, and soon an entire community becomes aware.

My first meeting with Dr. Brian Allen, was – unexpectedly - so much fun. I didn't know what to expect from this very serious birder. But his relaxed manner made me feel as entitled to be with the birds as he was. Brian is a board member of Saving Birds Thru Habitat, and he agreed to work with the Onekama Township Parks and Recreation Committee to host a regular "Guided Bird Walk in North Point Park." Tourists and local people alike caught the fever as they saw the birds of the Park through Brian's eyes. His walks include various themes: nesting, night owls, migration, and birding by ear. Brian's walks are now the talk of the town and reservations for them fill quickly!

Brian's bird walks always include a discussion about birds' habitat requirements. So I asked him: These birds are here because there is something attracting them; what can we do to support **more** birds? As a board member of Saving Birds Thru Habitat, he introduced me to Kay Charter, the organization's Executive Director. Kay shared her bird habitat knowledge that I and the members of the Committee lacked. We agreed to follow her recommendations. Habitat Certification from Saving Birds Thru Habitat was our first step in bringing out the best in our park. Because of the newly installed native plants, North Point Park, qualified to be a Certified Bird Habitat!

Our 60-acre bird habitat presents a daunting management task. How did we begin? It started with partners who care. Brian, Kay, and Josh Shields of the Manistee Conservation District were willing to take the time to answer their phones, and respond to many emails to educate bit by bit. Our partners did not just educate, they also encouraged along the way and kept us going. In an incredible collaborative effort, the Onekama Garden Club, the Portage Lake Watershed Forever, and the Manistee ISD Special Education Department began to teach students about pollinators. The kids were captivated by our learning stations. A pollinator foods station displayed pollinator dependent grocery items. The favorite was French fries! Each youngster then planted a native pollinator plant plug. Then the kids made their own thank you notes. Some drew flower pictures, some colored butterflies, and several, with the boldness of true believers wrote "BEES ROCK"!

The success of our events inspired us to do more. Our next step will be to complete our Welcome All Abilities Garden. After that, the Committee will use a grant from Wildflower Association of Michigan to build a Garden of native pollinator plants. The excitement in our community is attracting attention. Our township is small, but the interest in native plants, pollinators, and birds is taking off beyond our borders. 🌿

**Michelle Ervin is the Power of One in this wonderful account. Northpoint Park is located at: 8999 Greenway Street in Onekama, MI*

BRINGING NATURE HOME TO CALIFORNIA



Cleveland Salvia



California Poppy



Slender Cinquefoil

The \$150,000 grant our Director wrote about in her letter for this issue has been named “Bringing Nature Home to California.” This grant is from a trust dedicated to conservation in the west; therefore our grant is focused on teaching Californians about the importance of native plants to birds and pollinators. The timing runs through the end of 2024, and will require numerous trips for our Director. For the first, she and Assistant Director Trish VanDusen will travel to San Diego in late September and will begin with 500 “packets” (small fabric bags), each with a copy of Doug Tallamy’s NYT best-selling book, Nature’s Best Hope, copies of brochures, including: ABC’s Cats Indoors, a window crash brochure by Dr. Daniel Klem - the first scientist to research the topic, Doug Tallamy’s Homegrown National Park and harm from insecticides. There will also be list of native plants for western San Diego County, a flash drive of Doug’s PowerPoint presentation of Nature’s Best Hope, and a copy of our most recent newsletter.

We will ultimately give thousands of these packets to people who can move the issue forward like docents, field trip leaders, conservation organization members, environmental teachers, etc.

Kay was in San Diego in March. While there, she learned that the state is ahead of most of the country regarding native plants; they are more easily found for sale in the state. It is our hope that working on this grant will create a larger demand for – and use of –

the plants that will benefit pollinators and birds. Moreover, California has at least two native plants botanical gardens (one in Santa Barbara and another in Claremont) and a number of native plants garden clubs.

One of the things this grant will provide for is a garden installation at a historic home in nearby La Mesa. There the public will be able to see and appreciate the beauty of Southern California’s native plants. 🌿



The Bushtit is one of the species that would benefit immediately in San Diego area yards with improved habitat. This energetic, cute little ball of a bird typically travels in small flocks, often in urban areas, foraging for the tiny insects and spiders that make up the majority of their food.



California Scrub Oak

Website: www.savingbirds.org

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Edited by: Kathie Snedeker, Kay Charter



From the Executive Director's Desk

by Kay Charter

For the past ten years, I have traveled west by train during late winter to visit family in Tucson and friends in San Diego. Last year, I passed on my trip because of COVID, but this year I picked it up again and this time took my beloved niece, Rachel with me to Tucson, where we stayed in a nice little condo in the foothills of the Catalina Mountains – my favorite part of the city. Tucson is my favorite city because it lies in Pima County, home of the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan. Because of this plan, most landscapes in that area rely heavily on native plants, and that means there are far more birds within Tucson's city limits than any other city I know.

While there, a long-time friend from my San Diego days (and an early and generous member of Saving Birds) contacted me and asked how Saving Birds would use a significant grant. He asked if we might come up with a project for the western states. I said that we don't do boots on the ground projects; we are an educational organization. We teach people how they can aid our declining bird populations by including native plants in their landscapes. I mentioned the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan and said I had always hoped other urban areas might take the same approach. He asked me to send an outline of the way we might incorporate that idea into a plan for California. I did, and we were awarded the grant.

A number of people have congratulated me for the grant. While I appreciate the sentiment, our success has resulted from far more than my own efforts. Congrats go to the collective work and support of every single person who has joined, volunteered for, donated to, served on the board, or in any other way helped Saving Birds grow and expand its efforts. In a very real way, I want each of you to understand that we are all responsible for the successes of Saving Birds Thru Habitat. Our reputation for effectiveness and integrity resulted from the growth supported by all of you, and has brought this great opportunity to our organization. Stay tuned for news about the ways in which we will be carrying out the tasks laid out in this grant.



Letter From Our Board President

by Dave Barrons

It has been a busy fall and winter season for me. Year before last, the Board of Directors decided the organization needed a website upgrade. I volunteered to lead the effort – along with the work on the following two mentioned websites. It was a long and tedious effort, but I enjoyed working with the people at Byte Brothers Productions, and I learned a lot about building (or rebuilding) a website. If you haven't visited the new savingbirds.org web site, please check it out. We are very happy with all of the efforts made and the new look we achieved. The new site presents a strong, clear message about the critical relationship between native plants and healthy bird populations.

The Board also voted to resurrect the birding festival, the Leelanau Birdfest. For many, a birding festival with quality leaders for numerous field trips provides the opportunity to see a variety of birds for the first time. Beyond the fun and excitement this festival offers, it is also an opportunity for us to connect with avid birders who haven't yet learned the conservation message we work hard to promote. BirdFest required developing a new website, mibirdfest.org. Check that one out, too, and consider joining us June 2 through 5 for outstanding field trips, two excellent evening presentations and a Sunday morning presentation with coffee and pastry.

Finally, we updated a third website when we took over ownership of the Sleeping Bear Birding Trail. Again, managing the Trail site gives us an additional opportunity to connect with birders and expose them to our conservation message. Take a look at sleepingbearbirdingtrail.org and plan a visit to one of more than 30 sites across Northern Michigan where you may meet other birders seeking some of more than 300 species identified along the Trail.

Dave Barrons

Pima County Conservation Plan



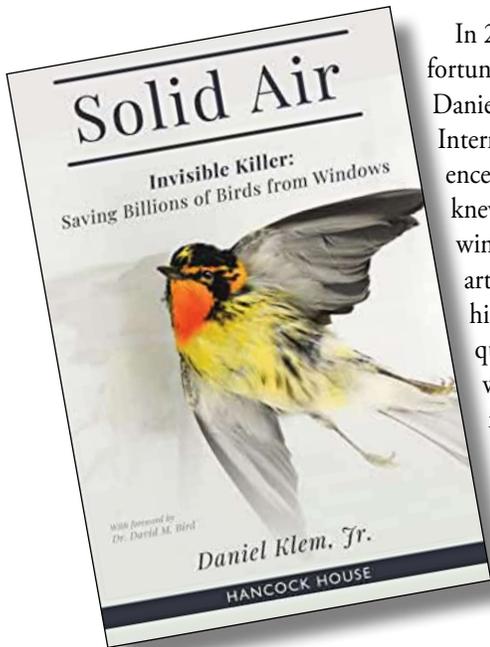
Director Kay Charter presents Award of Exceptional Merit to Pima County Board of Supervisors

Our California project was inspired by the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan, which was Pima County, Arizona's plan to balance conservation and cultural heritage with economic growth. In the spring of 2017, our Director presented an Award of Exceptional Merit to the County Board of Supervisors. If you visit Tucson (in Pima County), you will see hummingbirds and songbirds like warblers living in the downtown area.

I was in Tucson this year when I was approached about the California project. Pima County's award-winning plan was on my mind. But establishing similar plans in other parts of the country is not possible because so little native vegetation is left. Bringing Nature Home to California is a plan to restore urban areas to as much native vegetation as possible. If enough property owners respond, the results will be just as impressive in those areas as they are in Tucson. 

“Solid Air” by Daniel Klem, Jr. PhD.

Review by Kay Charter



In 2008, I had the good fortune of meeting Dr. Daniel Klem Jr. at the 4th International Conference in McAllen, Texas. I knew of his research on window crashes from an article I had read about him, and I had a few questions for him. It was noon and our mid-day meals were included in conference registration. He invited me to join him for lunch. After we finished, we spent the afternoon

birding the Rio Grande Valley, home to a host of birds either not found, or rarely seen, in other parts of the country. We birded trails in Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park and Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge. We ended the day on a first name basis and he became a member of Saving Birds Thru Habitat. I especially wanted to know about the effectiveness of window screens as my late husband and I had installed the old type double-hung windows with screens on the outside on our home – and on Saving Birds’ Discovery Center. He said that in his experience they work very well.

Early this year I received an email from Dan informing me of his newly published book, *Solid Air - Invisible Killer: Saving Billions of Birds from Windows*. Read it and you will get to know not only

the devastating impact of window crashes on our bird populations, but also the man I became acquainted with, who is aptly described by David M. Bird, Emeritus Professor of Wildlife Biology at McGill University in the Forward as a “humble, modest and gracious person.”

Dan began by tracing the circuitous route to his chosen field of study, and follows with the history of glass for human use and early reports of birds dying when they crash into windows. But there were no in-depth studies on the subject until he opted to collect research about it for his PhD dissertation in 1974. Research for his dissertation was so compelling that studying the impact of window crashes became his life’s work.

He includes his initial foray into seeking support for his early research. Being new to grant writing, he looked for support after he had finished his research – which was supported by a loan from his and his wife’s limited coffers (with her approval). His determination, which has contributed to his success as a researcher, paid off and he ultimately found the funds to replace the family loan.

This is not simply a book documenting a thoroughly dedicated man’s years of careful research. It is an inspirational view into the life and efforts of a researcher who never gave up his efforts to educate a public that often seems indifferent to the losses which he takes very personally

We at Saving Birds are acutely aware of the avian losses involving window crashes and have included the issue in all of our presentations. Now we have a brochure produced by a group working with Dan and his colleagues at Muhlenberg College. This brochure is on our website for downloading. We urge you to check it out, print it out and share it with others. Then pick up a copy of *Solid Air* and learn more about the details of Dan’s efforts, his failures and successes. 

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Nancy and Ralph Kalchik for Patricia Scott
Anne Kelly for Thomas Kelly
Pat Lamb for Kathryn Denny
Suzanna MacIntosh for Penny Odom Thompson and Boo
Lillian Mahaney for Daniel
Judy and John Smart for Charlotte Carrington
Robert and Mary Smart for Jimmy Charter

Saving Birds 2022 Calendar of Events

Saturday, May 14, 8:30 – 10:00 AM

Bird Hike on Charter Sanctuary



Baltimore Oriole

Join us at our Discovery Center (5020 N. Putnam Road) for a guided birding hike with leader Greg Nobles through Charter Sanctuary. During this hike, we may see a number of newly arrived migrants from the Tropics such as Baltimore Oriole, Indigo Bunting, and Ruby-throated Hummingbird. Charter Sanctuary was established exclusively for the benefit of declining songbird populations. It is closed to protect

nesting birds except for special events like this one. No charge. STRICTLY LIMITED TO 10 PARTICIPANTS: Moderately strenuous. RESERVATIONS ESSENTIAL. Call 231-271-3738 or email: bobolink2000@gmail.com

Saturday, May 21, 8:30 – 10:00AM

Bird Hike on Charter Sanctuary

Join us at our Discovery Center (5020 N. Putnam Road) for a birding hike with Marlin Bussey through Charter Sanctuary.

During this hike, later arrivals like Eastern Wood Peewee should be seen or heard. No charge.

STRICTLY LIMITED TO 10 PARTICIPANTS: Moderately strenuous. RESERVATIONS ESSENTIAL. Call 231-271-3738 or email: bobolink2000@gmail.com



Eastern Wood Peewee

Saturday, May 28, 8:30 – 10:00AM

Bird Hike on Charter Sanctuary



American Redstart

Join us at our Discovery Center (5020 N. Putnam Road) for a birding hike with leader Jim Kartsimas through Charter Sanctuary. All regularly nesting species should have arrived by this time. We should see the usual suspects such as those named above as well as Rose Breasted Grosbeak,

nesting warblers like Common Yellowthroat and American Redstart as well as both Brown Thrasher and Gray Catbird. No charge. STRICTLY LIMITED TO 10 PARTICIPANTS: Moderately strenuous. RESERVATIONS ESSENTIAL. Call 231-271-3738 or email: bobolink2000@gmail.com



Boblink

Thursday, June 2 – Sunday, June 5, Leelanau BirdFest 2022

Saving Birds Thru Habitat Discovery Center, 5020 N. Putnam Road Join us for the Fifth Annual Leelanau BirdFest. Registration is \$45 dollars. Field trips all led by qualified leaders.

All field trips and events, except for the bus trips and the Saturday evening banquet (with music by the Hot Biscuits), are included in the registration. Visit our website for complete schedule and field trip details: www.mibirdfest.org Electronic registration ends May 30, 2022 at Noon.

Saturday, June 18, 11:00 – 3:00PM

SBTH will be at Elk Rapids Nature Fest

Bird habitats, Grow a Bird Feeder presentation, native plant information... and more! Join us for a gathering of regional leaders and organizations with exciting ideas, plans, and projects for healthy people and a healthy planet. Come visit us in beautiful Downtown "Green" Elk Rapids.

Saturday, June 25, 11:00 – 3:00PM

SBTH Discovery Center - Open House



Come spend time at the Discovery Center! Activities include; 11:15 Birding hike on Charter Sanctuary, A presentation about our \$150,000 California grant, (similar to those on how to aid birds locally), and more. Kids' program by Ann McInnis. Local Food Truck "Antojitos" providing delicious Mexican fare.

Saturday, July 16, 10:00-11:30 AM

Saving Birds Thru Habitat Discovery Center



Guest Speaker Andrew Bowman. Andrew Bowman is President and CEO of the Land Trust Alliance in Washington D.C. He will talk about what the Land Trust Alliance is, what it does and what it means to conservation across the country.

Saturday, August 20, 4:00 – 6:30PM

SBTH FUNDRAISER - Greg Butcher – speaker



Greg is International Migratory Species Coordinator for the U. S. Forest Service. His program is "Michigan's Tropical Connections." He will include data from his latest State of the birds report.

This outdoor program is our annual fundraiser, and will include food, wine, a silent auction, and live music by "The Hot Biscuits", a hot Leelanau County band! Time

of event extended over previous years by popular request. RESERVATIONS STRONGLY SUGGESTED. Suggested donation: \$45.00.

Saving Birds Thru Habitat

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Grants

The Little Garden Club (2021)
The Little Garden Club (2022)

Heritage Society

Anonymous

LEELANAU BIRDFEST



Birders at the Arcadia grassland



Kirtland's Warbler

Registration for the festival is open now at mibirdfest.org. Sign-in will begin at 3PM on Thursday, June 2 at our Habitat Discovery Center, when registrants will pick up their handouts, name tags and the list of bird hikes they signed up for. Early arrivals will be able to join a walk through the Charter Sanctuary trail with a field trip leader. Friday and Saturday are filled during the day with a variety of field trip offerings.

There will be two all-day bus trips (one to see Kirtland's and Golden-winged Warblers and the other to Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy's grassland and wetland). For both trips, registrants will meet at Cherry Bend Community Park, 10071 El. Avondale (off Cherry Bend Road). Lunch and drinks will be provided for these trips. On Friday evening, Keith Kintigh will present a program about Warblers. Keith will be our leader for the trip to see the birds. On Saturday evening, there will be a buffet banquet dinner (\$35.00 each) which will be followed by Brian Allen's program "The Birds of Peru." The presentations will be free, but signing up is highly advised.

On Sunday morning, our final gathering will include coffee and pastries. Brian Zimmerman will present "Life Beneath Our Feet," about the amazing numbers and varieties of microbes that live underground and keep life above ground moving. 🐛



Trumpeter Swan at Arcadia Marsh

✂

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.

- Yes! I want to support Saving Birds Thru Habitat with a Membership _____ Renewal at the following level:**
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Questions? Please call (231) 271-3738 or email: bobolink2000@gmail.com

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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.

Looking Back...

Major Accomplishments of the Past Two Decades



Our Director presents award at one of Fairmount Minerals' sites.

Early in our history, our Executive Director was invited to the Sustainable Inquiry Summit for Fairmount Minerals, an international sand mining company. She subsequently became part of the company's environmental team, where she served for more than a decade. That same year, she pulled 25 local, state, national and international organizations together for Nature North in the Grand Traverse County Civic Center, a day-long event to introduce people of all ages – especially youngsters – to the beauty and mystery of the natural world.

In 2007, our Director was invited to the New England area to present her program “Grow a Bird Feeder” to standing room only audiences in four different states.

We have hosted thousands of people – adults as well as students – at programs in our Habitat Discovery Center, at birding hikes on Charter Sanctuary and at events at remote locations. We established



Ronald Brown Academy student watches Bald Eagle through spotting scope.

a birding festival, produced for Leelanau Chamber of Commerce, and helped establish both the Sleeping Bear Birding Trail as well as the birding trail and festival on Beaver Island. Spring of 2014 saw the establishment of our program for the students at Detroit's Ronald Brown Academy. For more than ten years, we partnered with a wetland project in west Texas and in 2016 we facilitated research on nesting Bobolinks at a cattle breeding farm in Michigan. In the fall of 2019, our Director was invited to join American Bird Conservancy's V.P. of Policy, Steve Holmer lobbying Congressional leaders in D. C.

We are fortunate to count among our supporters Dr. Douglas Tallamy, author of three books on the importance of native plants, noted conservation writer Ted Williams and his wife, Donna, US Forest Service Migratory Species Coordinator, Greg Butcher, and Dr. David Ewert, Warbler Program Director and Conservation Specialist for the American Bird Conservancy. 