

Habitat Happenings

SAVING BIRDS THRU HABITAT NEWSLETTER

May, 2018, Volume 17, Number 1

Leelanau Native Plants Initiative



Glen Lake High School Envirothon Group

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. 🦋



Leland High School Ecology and Conservancy Class



Leland High School Ecology and Conservancy Class

Website: www.savingbirds.org

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Kay Charter

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Edited by: Kathie Snedeker, Kay Charter



Leland High School Ecology and Conservancy Class

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



Twelve-spotted Skimmer by Jeff Kingery.

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 com-

pleted. A bridge was added from which visitors could more easily see the insects once they colonize the ponds. 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.



From the Executive Director's Desk

by Kay Charter

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. 



Letter From Our Board President


by Linda Ketterer

Birders come in all forms. We all know about the 'professional' birders that chase all over the globe for the chance to add an additional species

to their life list. Others are much more casual and simply enjoy seeing a 'red bird' out their window. I think most supporters of SBTH fall in between. My husband Ed and I have enjoyed birding together for as long as we've known one another. We each have 'car binoculars' that are always handy for chance sightings on the bay as we travel about. When we go out for a walk in the woods our binoculars go along with us and we delight each spring in keeping an eye on the unfolding migration story.

This year we achieved something that so many other birders have enjoyed – we took a road trip to SE Arizona to spend a few days in the sunshine and to explore some of the many 'birding hotspots' in that region. While we don't keep a formal life list, we do note the birds that we have seen whenever we venture out and we generally remember the ones that we have seen or not. For our road trip, we started the list as we drove out of our driveway and added to it each day. It was fun as we drove south to see the first magpies and other species that don't make it to northern Michigan. At Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge in central New Mexico, we had our first glimpse of the almost iridescent Vermillion Flycatcher (and then saw dozens more of them in SE AZ!). We love watching the antics of our ruby-throated hummingbirds in Michigan – and what a thrill it was to see the many varieties of hummers that frequent the feeders and flowers in AZ! Few things are more beautiful than a Broad-billed Hummingbird in the sunshine. Places like the San Pedro Riparian area, Ramsey Canyon, Patagonia, Madera Canyon, etc. each provided new experiences for us. On the return drive, we were thrilled to see thousands of sandhill cranes flying in for the evening along the North Platte River in Nebraska.

By the time we drove back into our garage after a drive of nearly 5400 miles, our list included 107 bird species and 36 that we had not previously seen!

As spring finally makes its way to your part of the world, I hope that you will be able to take some time to get out and enjoy the winged show to which we are treated each year. Whether your show takes place out in the woods, along the shoreline, or simply looking out your window, enjoy it! And recognize that we all have a chance and a responsibility for helping keep the show going. Thank you for your support of Saving Birds Thru Habitat and the individual efforts that you take for maintaining healthy habitats for our feathered friends! 

Linda Ketterer
SBTH Board of Directors President



Saving Birds 2018 Calendar of Events

231-271-3738 for more information. All programs will take place at Saving Birds' Habitat Discovery Center (5020 North Putnam Road, Omena) except for June 7 and August 4.



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.

“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 9, 10AM, Saving Birds Thru Habitat:

Retired Michigan DNR wildlife biologist, **Jerry Weinrich** spent three Antarctic summers studying Adelle Penguins for his Master's thesis. He will present his popular program about his experiences with these fascinating birds. He calls himself,

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

super birder **Brian Allen** and dragonfly hike with birder and dragonfly lover **Dave Dister**. Cost of **\$50.00** each includes lunch.

Saturday, July 14, 4PM – 6PM: Celebration of Life

In memory of **Jim Charter**, co-founder of Charter Sanctuary and Saving Birds. There will be food and wine, photos of his life and time to share your own stories and remembering him

Saturday, July 21. 9:00 AM: Dr. David Ewert,

Kirtland's Warbler expert will present a program about one of North America's rarest migratory songbird. With intensive habitat management, the population has increased to over 2,300 pairs. Current and future management plans for protection of the bird will be included in the presentation.



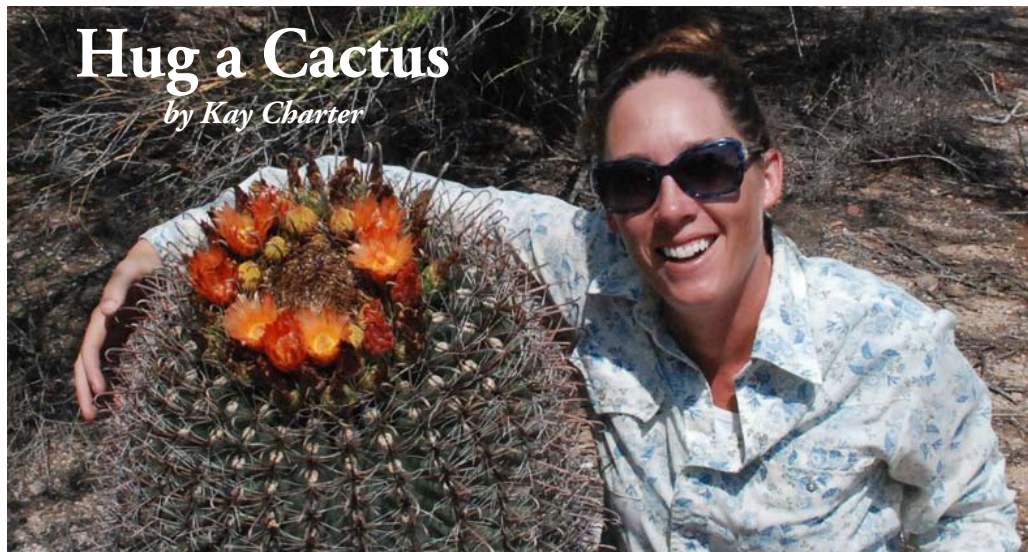
Saturday, August 4: Fascinating field trip to Michigan Wildflower Farm in Portland, Michigan.

We will carpool to the farm leaving at 8AM and arriving between 11:30 AM and noon. After lunch, we will tour the farm and then learn how wildflower seeds are collected and prepared for sale. Price is **\$35.00** each and includes lunch. Limited to 40 individuals.



Saturday, August 25, 4:00 PM: Annual Fundraiser.

Featured speaker: **Steve Holmer**, Vice President of Policy for the American Bird Conservancy. Steve will be sharing the details of his work with our Representatives and Senators in D. C. on behalf of bird conservation. Wine and extended hor's doeuvres and silent auction. **\$35.00** each




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.

Jesse, 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/

Pictured above, Pima County Native Plants Nursery Manager, Jessie Byrd, embraces a fishhook barrel cactus (*Ferocactus wislizeni*). 

Saving Birds Thru Habitat

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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.



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.