

October 2018

www.benzieaudubon.org



Edited by Doug and Sally Cook



### *President's Message by Sally Cook*

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Ever so slowly, summer is releasing its grip on Northern Michigan. That means another season of Benzie Audubon Programs will soon be coming to an end with our member's photo show and pot-luck dinner on November 1. However, two field trips still remain. You'll find details for these on the website.

Many of you took advantage of the opportunities the Club offered this year to travel vicariously to Borneo, to learn about amazing dragonflies (through Carl Freeman's program and two field trips), or to hone your seabird identification skills in preparation for fall migration. These are just a few of

the events sponsored by Benzie Audubon this year. We also wrote articles for the *Record Patriot's Summer Scene* section and through mini-grants, provided opportunities for area students to exercise their creativity while they learned to observe the natural world.

Now our board members are hard at work preparing and planning for 2019.

Doug and I hope to finish another section of the southern Appalachian Trail this month. When we finish those two hundred and sixty miles, we will have hiked more than eleven hundred miles, just over half of the entire trail, from Duncan, Pennsylvania, to

Springer Mountain, Georgia. On the first Thursday in January, 2019, we'll present a program about our experiences section hiking -- and the kinds of birds, wildlife, plants, and weather phenomena we've observed.

An Appalachian Trail section hike can be any length, and it doesn't have to mean sleeping in a tent or carrying a full backpack. If hiking on a long-distance trail is one of your life goals, this program should help you to figure out if it's for you and how to make it happen.

Until then, enjoy Fall, the most glorious season and Winter (at least at first). It does help to go outside through it all!

#### It's Election Time!

**Our By-Laws call for an election of officers to be held at the Annual Meeting held each November. To that end, we will conduct a brief business meeting following the potluck in order to elect Club Officers for the coming year. The Board will present a slate of candidates, but we also welcome nominations from the floor. The positions open include, President, Secretary, and the Chairs for Public Relations, Programs and Mini-grants.**

### *Members' Photo Show at Annual Meeting*

Since 2013, attendees to the Club's annual meeting have been treated to samples of the photographic talents of several of our members. The tradition will continue this year with another Members' Photo Show organized by John Ester. We are fortunate in

that our membership is made up of many talented people who also take some great photos on their travels or even in their own backyards.

Well planned and precisely timed, past shows have included photos from exotic places around the world

taken with expensive high-tech equipment to unique perspectives on local flora and fauna taken with smart phones. The meeting will be at the Tribal Outpost in Benzonia, Thursday, November 1st. A potluck dinner begins at 6:00 p.m. Nonmembers are welcome.



Photo by Carl Freeman

## *A Birder's Legacy - Joan Wolfe by Sally Cook*

Since Doug and I arrived in Benzie County, we have birded with and learned from many members of Benzie Audubon. High on that list is Joan Wolfe.

Joan's legacy includes plenty of bird lists, reflecting her lifetime of avid birding. However, some of you may not know she founded the West Michigan Environmental Action Council, shepherded landmark environmental legislation

through the Michigan legislature and was the first woman to serve on (and later chair) the Michigan Natural Resources Commission, among many other achievements.

Recently, Joan moved to The Maples in Frankfort, and in her typically generous way, she has given two boxes of nature books to Benzie Audubon, with the request that we make them available to members as si-

lent auction offerings.

I hope you will come to the November meeting prepared to look through her books and to take one or more of them home with you to enrich your own nature study.

Joan's kindness and enthusiasm remain unchanged as she adjusts to changes in her health. If I could give her one gift, it would be a perfect May morning with trees dripping warblers!

### TIME TO RENEW!

**It is time to renew your Benzie Audubon Membership. Just fill out the envelope enclosed, include your check, and either mail it in or bring it to the annual meeting.**

## *Thanks for the Help*

To meet our primary objective of increasing knowledge of the natural world around us, Benzie Audubon depends on the assistance and cooperation of several local organizations and individuals. We would like to publically acknowledge and thank the following groups for helping us to work toward our goal. In no particular order they include:

- The Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians who have kindly permitted us to use their wonderful facility on Hoadley Rd. in Benzonia for our program meetings for a number of years.
- The Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy for their hard work and dedication protecting thousands of acres of land important to the environmental health and well being of the area. Many of our field trips and citizen science activities take place on GTRLC preserves and we are grateful for the opportunity to enjoy them.
- The Northwest Michigan Invasive Species Network provides vital resources to Benzie and surrounding counties helping to "protect, enhance, and promote northwest Michigan's natural communities through terrestrial invasive plant management and outreach." They work to coordinate with various partners, including Benzie Audubon, to help improve natural habitat for local native flora and fauna.
- Our field trip leaders including Brian Allen, Doug Cook, Paula Dreeszen and Carl Freeman who, by year's end, will have led 21 trips covering not just birds but also wild flowers, dragonflies, butterflies, and frogs as well as a number of other general nature topics. Their expertise is phenomenal and their time is much appreciated.
- Members of the board who meet regularly to make sure we have a quality program all through the year. They are Sally Cook, John Ester, Carl Freeman, Jackie Jackson, Char Ester, Tom Jackson, Wes Blizzard, Greg Miller, Emily Cook and Doug Cook.



Photo by Carl Freeman

## *Dragonfly Hunting by Doug Cook*

This year we added both a program and two field trips concentrating on finding and identifying dragonflies. Carl Freeman volunteered to educate those wishing to learn about these fascinating creatures.

After years of studying the songs, calls, plumages and behavior of birds, I thought it would be interesting to delve deeper into something new. Carl's presentations on dragonflies lit a spark, so I bought a net, dusted off my hand lens, and hit the field.

Let me tell you what I learned. Dragonflies tend to stay on the move. They do land; in fact, after a while I learned they will often come back to the very same twig or stem time and again.

Then I learned that even when they land, they are so

small, it is difficult to see field marks, especially if the light is not just right.

So, then I learned to make sure the sun is behind me, and to take a picture with my phone. This led to the discovery that it can be very tricky, and possibly impossible, to properly focus a phone lens on something as small as a dragonfly since the phone autofocus tends to pick up everything but the subject of interest.

I swapped my phone for a real camera with a manual zoom lens. This led to lots of blurry photos, but often just good enough to see a field mark, just not the defining field mark I needed.

Next I learned that the best way to identify dragonflies is to net them. After spending a lot of time wav-

ing my net at passing dragonflies, I realized they are adept fliers with the ability to dodge my attempts to capture them. By watching carefully however, I learned that many species of dragonflies tend to fly regular patterns. My capture rate increased exponentially.

I learned that just having dragonflies in hand does not guarantee an easy ID. Some species can only be distinguished by the absence or presence of a tiny spike at the end of their abdomen.

And then my head exploded and the summer ended. I am looking forward to getting out there next year and building on this year's work.



*Photo by Doug Cook*

**Tell us about your bird sightings for inclusion in our regular reports by emailing them to Carl Freeman at [carljfreeman@gmail.com](mailto:carljfreeman@gmail.com)**

## *The Overstory by Richard Powers - A Review*

National Book Award winner Richard Powers' newest novel, *The Overstory*, is a triumphant tragedy. In prose that soars and branches like the canopy of a virgin redwood, Powers weaves together the stories of five individuals, unknown to one another, but whose lives eventually intertwine. Over the years, as they carom toward their shared destinies, each person learns, in his or her own way, that there is a parallel network of knowing that complements the human

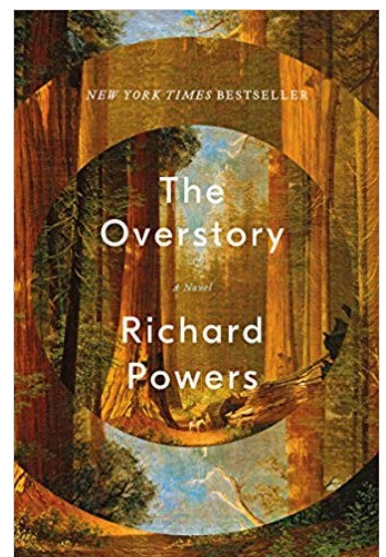
experience.

Powers has created a stirring metaphor to ask the age-old economic question, how much is enough? Rather than smack the reader in the face with the answer, he uses his characters to suggest solutions which may be difficult for us to consider, but are no less viable all the same.

*The Overstory* is both a history of our relationship with trees and a prediction for all that we will lose without them. Just as trees are connected to one another in

forests for their mutual benefit, we are connected to the forests. What will happen to us when the forests are all gone?

At 502 pages and written in Powers' marvelous descriptive style, reading this book is a commitment. In addition to the main characters, there are several others to keep track of, and putting the book down for even a day or two may require some rereading to keep all the threads properly separated to the end, but this book is worth the effort.



# BENZIE Audubon Club

P. O. Box 804  
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Dedicated to  
Increasing Our Knowledge  
of the  
Natural World

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We're on the Web at  
[www.benzieaudubon.org](http://www.benzieaudubon.org)

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Our major objectives are promoting an appreciation for and a better understanding of the plants and animals of northern Michigan, preserving our natural environment, and preventing any activities that may pose a threat to our natural ecology.

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The Benzie Audubon Club is a tax-exempt charitable organization and a chapter of the Michigan Audubon Society. All of our meetings and field trips are open to the public without charge. Meetings are usually held the first Thursday of each odd month (January, March, etc.) at the Tribal Outpost at 7282 Hoadley Road in Benzonia. Field trips are taken throughout the year.

## **PLEASE JOIN US**

**Thursday, November 1, 6:00 p.m. at the Tribal Outpost at 7282 Hoadley Road in Benzonia**  
**Potluck Dinner, Annual Meeting, and Program which will feature a Member's Photo Show.**  
**Bring a dish to pass and your own table service. Following a very brief business meeting several members will share some of their favorite photos with us.**