



April 2023

The Meadowlark

The Newsletter of the Benzie Audubon Club
www.benzieaudubon.org

President's Letter

Greetings,

We are excited to be able to bring back a schedule of programs in 2023. Program Chair Char Ester has put together a great lineup beginning with our May meeting.

Award-winning photographer Greg Bodker will present his program "Birdwatching and Birding" at our May meeting on Thursday, May 4, at 7:00 PM. Greg has been a serious birder for almost twenty years, and he has led birding trips for Michigan Audubon as well as serving on the Michigan Audubon Board of Directors. He has birded in all of Michigan's 83 counties and in many regions of North America.

Greg's presentation will incorporate his own photographs and will be a timely overview of the pleasures of birdwatching and birding at the most exciting point in the birding year – spring migration. He will explain how to attract more birds to your backyard; how birding beyond your backyard can lead to enriching experiences; and places to go birding in our area; as well as sharing some of his adventures finding rare birds in unexpected places.

The meeting will be held at St. Phillip's Episcopal Church, 785 Beulah Hwy., Beulah, MI. We hope you will be able to join us.

In addition to restarting our program schedule, we are again offering a complete list of field trips covering a variety of topics. Check our website benzieaudubon.org for a list of trips and additional details.

Speaking of our website, we are currently in the process of having the site completely redesigned. It will have a fresh new look with updated information and new features for you to use and enjoy. I will keep you posted as to when we are ready to launch the site.

We are looking forward to seeing many of you outside in the coming months. In the meantime, please feel free to get in touch with me with any questions, concerns or observations about Benzie Audubon Club. We appreciate your input.

Doug Cook—President nedthebirder@gmail.com 231-930-8722



Eastern Bluebirds
Photo by Greg Bodker

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EBIRDING IN BENZIE COUNTY

◆ Species observed	288
◆ Checklists submitted	13,200
◆ eBirders	1,310
◆ Hotspot Sites	55
◆ Favorite Hotspots	
1. Platte Point	
2. Otter Creek	
3. Elberta Marsh	

Source: EBird

BENZIE BIRDING HOTSPOT HIGHLIGHT

Doug Cook

Upper Herring Lake Preserve is located 5 miles south of Frankfort just off M-22. A two track trail wanders 0.7 miles through a young forest and a meadow ending at a boardwalk. The boardwalk provides access to a pond and a marsh which are adjacent to Upper Herring Lake. It is a small preserve, just 180 acres, but that is its advantage. The even trail, the level terrain, and the short distance make this preserve readily accessible to most.

The varied habitat attracts many types of wildlife, including birds. According to eBird, 166 species have been recorded there. In the past few years, birders have found 9 species of raptors, including a Golden Eagle this spring, 14 species of sparrows, 21 war-

blers, 7 thrushes including a Townsend's Solitaire in December of 2021, and 4 wrens. The boardwalk over the marsh is usually reliable for Virginia Rail, Sora, and in the spring, Wilson's Snipe. Recently, an American Bittern was spotted there. The ponds are great places to find many of the ducks of our area including Ruddy Duck.

Spring and Fall are the best time to see birds, while the summer months can be slow-going. That's the time to concentrate on dragonflies, damselflies and other aquatic creatures. An evening summer walk to the boardwalk is a very relaxing experience. It's hard to beat an easy saunter along the trail to the boardwalk where you can sit and listen to Nature sing.

SAVE THE DATE—This year's Benzie Big Day Bird Count will be held Saturday, May 13th. Go to all of your favorite birding spots, keep track of the species you see, and report them to eBird or to Doug Cook.

BAC MINI-GRANTS

In 2001 the Benzie Audubon Club received a bequest from the Estate of Robert Lytle. With this gift the Club established the Robert Lytle Education and Environmental Fund. The Fund is administered by the Club to promote environmental education and to enhance the natural environment within the Benzie County area.

Each year the Club offers a limited number of mini-grants to further this goal. The Club awards such grants subject to the continued availability of funds. To see the criteria for qualifying for a mini-grant go to our website:

www.benzieaudubon.org

NEONICS—A THREAT TO BEES AND BIRDS

Candy Petrick—Conservation Chair

Neonicotinoids, also known as neonics, are a class of insecticides chemically similar to nicotine. Neonic use has been linked to several adverse ecological effects, including the collapse of honeybee populations and the decline of populations of insect-eating birds.

In 2008, the European Union banned the three main neonicotinoids (clothianidin, imidacloprid and thiamethoxam) for all outdoor uses, but in 2020, France re-allowed the use of neonicotinoids on sugar beet crops. Several US states have restricted neonicotinoids out of concern for pollinators and bees.

In order to get neonics removed from the market, it is necessary to contact the people involved in reviewing their use and manufacture. Currently, neonics are being reviewed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EPA reviews each registered pesticide at least every 15 years to ensure each pesticide can carry out its intended function(s) without creating unreasonable adverse effects to human health and the environment. The review period for most neonics is scheduled for the 4th fiscal quarter of this year, or July – September.

The EPA accepts public comments at most stages of the review process. The person at the EPA responsible for this review is Elissa Reaves, the director of the Pesticide Re-evaluation Division at the EPA Office of Pesticide Programs. Email her at Reaves.Elissa@epa.gov. A note letting her know how you feel about the environmental damage caused by these chemicals and your desire to have them removed from use in the US and around the world would be helpful.



Cape May Warbler
Photo by Greg Bodker

PREVENTING BIRD-WINDOW COLLISIONS

Candy Petrick—Conservation Chair

It is a sad fact that up to 1 billion birds die from window collisions in the U.S each year. Birds see reflected images in glass windows as actual objects and react according to the image they see, often with disastrous consequences.

What you can do to prevent bird window collisions at your own home?

Acopian Bird Saves (www.Birdsaver.com) has created easy to install products you can purchase, or you create them yourself. This DIY project to prevent bird window strikes is the easiest and cheapest I have found.

It is a simple construction project using 1/8" nylon cords which hang 4.25" apart. There are several ways you can hang these cords outside your window: Tie the cords to a board and mount the board above the window. Tie the cords to individual screws placed at the top of the window. Or tie the cords to another cord which is screwed at both ends above the window. Their YouTube video describes how you can create one yourself: (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P_jy7qAY_-k)

There are other actions you can take to help prevent bird window collisions

- ◆ Place your bird feeders and bird baths within 3' or farther than 30' from your windows.
- ◆ Turn off any lights at night in your home that you don't really need.
- ◆ Put screens on your windows.
- ◆ Close vertical blinds but leave them partially open to see out.

If a bird does hit your window, and it is not moving but still alive, put it in a shoe box and bring it inside where it is warm to protect it from cats while it is vulnerable. Release the bird when it becomes active.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Excerpt from the Club newsletter dated April 1977 written by Pam Yarwood.

By a vote of 6-1, the joint rules committee headed by Rep. Thomas Anderson approved the rules and regulations of the Betsie River at a hearing March 29th in Lansing. The rules should be in effect by the end of April.

The Betsie was designated as a "wild-scenic river" under the Natural Rivers Act in 1973. At that time, control was offered to local governments, which rejected responsibility for enforcing the Act. The task was then returned to the state.

Late in the story, the Betsie River Watershed was formed to try to defeat the rules, and regain local control, so as to decrease the protective measures drastically.

Throughout the fracas, Benzie Audubon and other interested citizens declared support for the rules as written. It all ended with a sigh of relief on March 29th when Keith Westphal and Jay Yarwood drove to Lansing to testify before the committee.

Editor's Note: To clarify, after the Betsie River received protected designation in 1973, a local movement surfaced which would have threatened the protective measures afforded the Betsie. Through the actions of members of Benzie Audubon and others, the threat was nullified.

BENZIE AUDUBON CLUB

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 Tuesday of each odd month (January, March, etc.) at the Tribal Outpost at 7282 Hoadley Road in Benzonia. Field Trips are taken throughout the year.

Our major objectives are promoting an appreciation for 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.

TREASURER'S REPORT

John Ester—Treasurer

Treasurer John Ester has provided the following financial report for the period of October 1, 2022—March 31, 2023

Starting Checking Balance	\$8,543.19
Receipts	2,400.00
Disbursements	<u>1,642.27</u>
Ending Checking Balance	\$9,300.92
Savings Balance	1,059.35
Certificates of Deposit Balance	<u>7,795.65</u>
Total Funds	\$18,155.92

THE COLLECTIVE NOUNS OF BIRDS

Doug Cook

I have had on my shelf for some time a book called *The Secret Language of Birds* by Adele Nozedar. Thumbing through it recently I ran across a chapter where the author has collected a list of names used around the world to refer to particular groups of birds. Most people are familiar with a Murder of Crows and a Covey of Grouse, but how about a Paddling of Ducks or a Charm of Finches? As the author notes, "...the terms are fascinating and intriguing and contain a poetry all their own." Below is a list a few I thought would have local interest.

- ◆ A Band of Jays
- ◆ A Bevy of Quails
- ◆ A Chime of Wrens
- ◆ A Congregation of Plovers
- ◆ A Conspiracy of Ravens
- ◆ A Crowd of Redwings
- ◆ A Descent of Woodpeckers
- ◆ A Flight of Swallows
- ◆ A Fling of Dunlins
- ◆ A Herd of Cranes
- ◆ A Host of Sparrows
- ◆ A Leach of Merlins
- ◆ A Mutation of Thrushes
- ◆ A Parliament of Owls
- ◆ A Rafter of Turkeys
- ◆ A Siege of Cranes
- ◆ A Spring of Teal
- ◆ A Wisp of Snipe



Dedicated To
Increasing Our Knowledge
Of the Natural World