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www.benzieaudubon.org



Edited by Doug and Sally Cook



From the President By Doug Cook

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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, Vice President, Treasurer, and the Chairs for Membership, Conservation and Field Trips.

After getting a late start it seems as though Summer is pulling an early disappearing act. On the other hand, it is sometimes a little hard to tell. One day it is sweltering hot and two days later we are all huddled by the fireplace trying not to turn on the furnace yet.

As we make our way about the natural world we see signs of change wherever we look. Weather patterns are highly unusual and frighteningly intense; plants are blooming at odd times; birds are coming late or leaving early or both; certain

insects have disappeared while others are doing very well, thank you very much.

Whatever your politics or your science, it is hard not to admit that things are changing. As a group of people interested in nature and somewhat knowledgeable about how things should work, it is our responsibility to be observant and to sound a warning when necessary to let others know that all is not well.

To this end, our field trip and program schedules are packed with opportunities for people to learn more

about the issues and concerns that keep them awake at night. We will do our best to keep the information coming and welcome your input as to the types of trips and programs you would like to see in 2014.

Thanks your input and for your support. We appreciate it very much.



Photo by Carl Freeman

Bird Photo Quiz in this Issue!

Since the program at our upcoming annual meeting in November will feature the best photographs taken by several of our members, we thought it would be fun to give you a preview and an opportunity to test your field birding skills at the same time.

Carl Freeman has been kind enough to provide us with 4 photos featuring 5 different species he has photographed during his jaunts about the area this year. Study the photos carefully, crack open the field guides, consult your Ouija boards and see how many

you can accurately identify. The answers will be revealed at the annual meeting, so you won't want to miss that or the outstanding photographic show being lined up for our enjoyment. Details of the meeting are on the last page of this newsletter. Good luck!



Photo Quiz Bird #2

Photo by Carl Freeman

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.



Photo Quiz Bird #3

Photo by Carl Freeman

Mini-Grants Available by Sally Cook

If you are new to Benzie Audubon, you may not be aware that the club has mini-grants available to fund small projects. Created from a bequest from the estate of Robert Lytle, the mini-grant funds have been used for many worthwhile projects. For example, schoolchildren have learned about the relationships between raptors and watersheds; injured raptors have been successfully rehabilitated; and students

have made pottery bird houses and learned about House Wrens.

The only requirement is that the funds requested must be used for environmental education or to enhance the natural environment in our area. Also, as the word 'mini' in the title implies, funding is limited, but a grant may be requested to partially pay for a larger project. Further details and the application are

available on the club website,

www.benzieaudubon.org.

Please help spread the word about Benzie Audubon mini-grants. The next time you say (or hear) "Gee, I have an idea, and I'd really like to ...", think about whether the idea fits the criteria for mini-grants and consider applying. The money isn't doing any good for our environment sitting in the bank account!

Bluebirds Along the BVT by Paula Dreeszen

The past few Septembers, Bryce and Paula Dreeszen have led a Birding by Bicycle field trip from Beulah to Thompsonville to clean out the Bluebird boxes located next to the Betsie Valley Trail. They inspect each box and note which need repair, try to determine what may have used the house over the past season, and remove any material still in the boxes. This year's trip took place Saturday, September 21st and included 9 individuals who rode the trail between Beulah and Zimmerman Rd. Paula and Bryce then finished the ride to Thompsonville, cleaning out the rest of the boxes along the way. Paula's abbreviated report of what they found is as follows:

Total boxes monitored and cleaned out = 46
 Boxes with Bluebird nests and possible success = 23
 Boxes with House Wren nests and success = 1 to 3 (all three were near each other, so it may have been 1 male stuffing nearby boxes with twigs)
 Boxes with Chickadee nests and apparent success = 2
 Boxes with Tree Swallow nests and possible success = 4 or 5
 Boxes with dead adult Tree Swallows = 2
 Boxes with dead nestling or juvenile Bluebirds = 3
 Boxes with apparent predator attack = 2 (bear claw scratches on one box!)
 Empty boxes = 12

Carl and Ginny Freeman cleaned out another 9 boxes between Elberta and Beulah. They found:

Boxes with probably successful Bluebird nests = 2
 Boxes with unsuccessful Bluebird nests = 1 (eggs and looked disturbed)
 Boxes with unsuccessful Tree Swallow nests = 2 (feathers, skeletons, and egg shells)
 Box with an undetermined nest = 1
 Empty boxes = 3

Library Materials and Services by Cathy Carter

Libraries have materials that may be of interest to members of the Audubon Society. Following is a short sampling of what is available at the Benzie Shores District Library, at your local library or through InterLibrary Loan.

The library owns DVDs, such as AUDUBON VIDEOGUIDE TO 505 BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA; books on CD including BIRD SONGS: EASTERN AND CENTRAL (Petersons) and COMMON BIRDS AND THEIR SONGS by Lange Elliott and Marie Read. A wide variety of non-fiction books on bird watching and

birds are available. The library also has fiction books with bird watching as a component of the story. In addition to print format, several titles are available to download to e-Readers through the library's website at no charge. There are also fiction books based on bird watching available for check out.

The BSDL offers MeL-Cat, the statewide interlibrary loan service that can be accessed remotely 24/7. This outstanding service makes it possible to borrow materials from the hundreds of Michigan libraries, including university libraries, at no charge.

Another free service available remotely is the MeL (Michigan Electronic Library) databases which offer thousands and thousands of full-text articles, databases and reliable information. The MeL databases can be accessed through the library's website or directly from www.mel.org.

National Geographic (interactive), as well as 49 other magazines, can be downloaded to your tablet or Ipad through the Zinio icon at the Benzie Shores District Library's website.

To access these services, visit the library's website at www.benzieshoreslibrary.org or call 231-352-4671.



Photo Quiz Birds #'s 4 & 5

Photo by Carl Freeman

Tell us about your bird sightings for inclusion in our regular reports by emailing them to Carl Freeman at carljfreeman.com

The Hummingbird Moth Enigma by Doug Cook

A late summer visitor to our Butterfly Bush this year had us confused for a bit when we saw what we thought must be the smallest Hummingbird ever. A closer look revealed a transparent patch in the wings of what otherwise acted very much like a Hummer. It turned out to be a type of Sphinx Moth known commonly as the Hummingbird Moth.

Like most moths, the Hummingbird Moth is a nocturnal creature while Hummingbirds are diurnal, or active during daylight hours, and the best time to

see the moth is at dusk.

Collectively, Hummingbird Moths are known as clearwing moths because of the transparent window in their wings caused by scales dropping off the wings soon after the moth emerges from its chrysalis. They are agile fliers, and like Hummers are able to hover, and fly sideways and backwards.

The moths are actually much smaller than our local hummers at only 1 to 2 inches in length compared to the Hummers 3 to 4 inches. Both creatures are effective pollinators of

many of the same flowers, but while Hummers cover a wide variety of habitat, the smaller Hummingbird Moth prefers the herbs and shrubs usually found in urban gardens. The Hummingbird Moth is a nectar sipper and its favorite plants tend to be of the teasel and honeysuckle families.

Besides their much smaller size, the moth differs from the Hummer by having the 6 legs of an insect and two prominent antennae on top of its head. If you see a tiny Hummer in your yard, look again; it might just be a moth.



Hummingbird Moth

BENZIE Audubon Club

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

We're on the Web at
www.benzieaudubon.org

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.

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 7, 6:00 p.m. at the Tribal Outpost at 7282 Hoadly 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.