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March/April, 2012

Marsh Reflections

Our regular March meeting featured Sue Malski and a Power Point presentation of her photos and comments on her experiences in local marshes. She was preparing us for spring and getting out there again. It was great.

The Big Year

Fifteen or twenty of us enjoyed a showing of the movie, "The Big Year" on Tuesday afternoon, March 20th at the Parks Library. It was fun laughing with our friends at the foibles of some fictional birders.

Maple Syrup Days

Alcona Area High School near Harrisville hosted a maple syrup festival Saturday, March 24, 2012. The weather was sunny, but cold. The pancakes abundant, sausage most tasty and fresh maple syrup.....liquid gold! Although only a few AVA folk attended, there seemed to be a decent turn out by the community.



Welcome to our pond!

Photo courtesy of Matt Hegwood

Spring Cleaning

M-55 Road Clean up time is almost upon us. Check your calendar for April 16 through the 19, Mon. thru Thurs. These are the days preferred by Sue and Larry. We feel weekends are not the best days. Time of day will be determined by when most folks are available.

This activity is a great chance to wear off some calories while having fun doing a service for all who enjoy neat and tidy roadsides. Since the spring cleanup involves clearing all of the trash left since September, many workers are needed. Ideally, four teams of 3 or 4 people each doing a one mile walk is the goal. That

means a total of 12 to 16 AVA folks and friends.

With that size crew we would need between one and a half to two hours to work. Then plan on time to gather in fellowship and for food and bathrooms at the Duncan-Van Wagoner home.

Shorebird ID

Roger Eriksson will be our featured presenter at our regular April meeting, Tuesday the 10th at Oscoda. His superb photographs of shorebirds will help us learn to recognize the difficult sandpipers, plovers, knots, whimbrels and willets. We need this every year.

Roger will also be introducing us to the concept of an International Migratory Bird Day. He may ask us to help in the celebration here in Iosco County.

International Migratory Bird Day

Each year, hundreds of thousands of people observe International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD). They will gather in town squares, community centers, schools, parks, and refuges across the Western Hemisphere to learn more about wild birds, take action to conserve birds and their habitats, and simply have fun.

Like any day of recognition, IMBD exists to focus attention on something important and marvelous -- in this case, the journey birds undertake between their summer and winter homes. IMBD was created specifically to highlight the migration of nearly 350 species of migratory birds between nesting habitats in North America and non-breeding grounds in South and Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean. However, the day serves as an opportunity to celebrate all the species of birds whose annual movements enliven our lands, waters and skies



Virginia rail at Tuttle Marsh Mar. 22, 2012
Photo courtesy of Matt Hegwood

Festival Volunteers Wanted

There are many ways you can help make the 7th Tawas Point Birding Festival a wonderful weekend of birding. Volunteering is one! There is a need for assistants on field trips, speaker introducers and door managers as well as welcome table staff. There are approximately 90 tasks. More details will be coming your way soon. So watch your email for information.

In order to have your Birding Festival registration cost waived you must be an active AVA member (dues must be paid before April 2nd) plus you must work a minimum of 3 hours on Festival tasks before or during the festival. If you are assigned to work at an event there will be no charge to you for that event. If you choose to attend an event to which you have not been assigned, you will be charged the regular fee. If you have questions, come to the April and May meetings.

Sue Duncan is happy to announce that Carole Cooper has agreed to work with her on the Volunteer organization and management at the festival this year.

Bluebird Box Workshop

Our efforts were successful. Almost 200 boxes were built.

May AVA Meeting

Looking further ahead to our annual pot luck dinner meeting at Sprinkler Lake, we will be electing next year's officers. The nominating committee is busy putting together a slate. Denise Willis and Bob Kemnitz are looking for someone to step to the vice-president's job. Donette Spieckerman (Lind was so much easier to remember) has volunteered to keep track of our treasury so we just need a veep, who, at AVA, has an easy job filling in for the president when necessary and organizing fun field trips. Ed would do it if he could hear better.

Then there will be all the last minute preparations and assignments for the Festival. Sue Duncan and Carole Cooper will be in charge of that. This is an exciting time.

Thunder Bay Audubon Visit

On Saturday, April 26 Thunder Bay Audubon, with Bill Grigg, will be coming down to Oscoda to visit our marshes and grasslands. The will be arriving at the Wurtsmith USFS office at about 8:30. All AVA members are welcome to tag along. Bill is a knowledgeable birder and has been a qualified bird bander.