

*Published bi-monthly by members of Au Sable Valley Audubon, a chapter of Michigan Audubon.*

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## Christmas Bird Count

The next big thing on our calendar will be the Audubon Christmas Bird Count. We will get organized at our next monthly meeting December 13. Please note that this meeting will be held at an unusual time and place. We will meet at the Robert Parks Library on the former Wurtsmith Airbase at 6010 Skeel Ave. at **1:00** p.m. The time has been shifted to try to eliminate driving in the long winter night.

Larry Van Wagoner will lead the Tawas Circle count scheduled for Thursday the 15<sup>th</sup> and Ed Cole the Oscoda one set for Saturday the 17<sup>th</sup>. We will meet for breakfast at 7:00 a.m. (Big Boy in Tawas and Bavarian Bakery in

Oscoda) on those respective days. Details will be discussed at the preparation meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup>.

This will be the 112th Christmas Bird Count. Last year in December there were over 62,000 observers in Canada, the United States, the Caribbean and Latin America reporting 646 total species and over 61 million total birds.

The Christmas Bird Count is a day of fun for experienced and novice birders to get together during the holiday season to share their common interest in birds but it also serves the purpose of monitoring changes in the winter distribution of each species of bird. Two years ago we noticed an unusual number of pine siskins at our feeders. The CBC verified it was a wide-ranging event.

## Thunder Bay

Our October meeting was held jointly with Thunder Bay Audubon at the NOAA Marine Museum in Alpena where Jerry Weinrich presented a program dealing with his experience with monitoring bald eagles and their nests from the air. His report confirms that the bald eagle population has recovered from near extinction half a century ago. We also learned that Alpena and Iosco Counties have the most active eagle's nests in Michigan.

## Sandhill Cranes

On the evening of October 28 a number of our members met at Nester's Corner in Ogemaw County to view sandhill cranes as they congregated in fields before roosting for the night during their annual journey south for the winter. Larry Van Wagoner is one of a number of observers around the state who report the results of regional counts to Michigan Audubon volunteer, Ron Hoffman, for U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service on a predetermined day so there are no duplications. Larry reported 507 this year. At left, the photo shows some of us on Brown Road.



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## Discover Iosco

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Dave Wentworth, current President of the booster group Develop Iosco, and his wife Stephanie joined 17 of us at Los Cuatro Amigos for dinner before our November meeting at Tawas High School. Dave was the featured speaker and his talk made us all aware of the efforts being made locally to promote Iosco's many recreational and tourism opportunities. Our Tawas Birding Festival is a small but important part of it.

## January Meeting

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Our January Audubon meeting will again be a review of our last year's special happenings. They may not be as exciting as 2010 but with your help we can put together a good show. Please be ready to send Larry any photographs or stories to include in our review. Piping plovers come to mind.

Also, remember that the meeting will be at **3:15** p.m. at the Tawas High School Library so no one has to drive at night.

## Chippewa Nature Center

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On Wednesday, November 16 nineteen of our members met at Chippewa Nature Center in Midland to become acquainted with its virtues. Janea Little, the naturalist there, guided us through the many galleries and gave a talk on the history of the center. After a walk through the grounds and the remarkable pre-school facility, we adjourned to nearby Pi's Chinese restaurant for lunch and then home, except those obsessed with shopping and geocaching, who stayed on until evening.

## Beginning Birding Class

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Peggy Ridgway conducted classes for persons who are interested in learning to recognize the various resident bird species, what to feed them and appreciate their gifts. Subjects included what to look for to identify each species, field guide selection, binocular options, bird feeder types and bird food varieties.

The classes were held at Robert Parks Library at the former Wurtsmith Air Base on Thursdays the 10<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of November. There were sixteen total attendees



*Sandhill Cranes at Dusk*

*Photo by Arno Poerner.*