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## Bid for 2015 Symposium

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Michigan Audubon is one of several groups that have put in a bid to host the Midwest Birding Symposium in 2015. If the bid is accepted, Michigan Audubon would schedule it to coincide with the Tawas Birding Festival here in Iosco County in May of that year.

The Midwest Birding Symposium is a biennial event and this year's sponsor, Bird Watcher's Digest, has been selected to host it again in 2013 in Lakeside, Ohio.

This year's Symposium in Lakeside, was attended by around eight hundred enthusiasts. For Michigan Audubon's bid to be accepted, details would have to be worked out to make sure that the anticipated numbers of participants could be accommodated in our hotels, motels and B & B's, and that we have auditoria (Do you like that word?) that can hold the expected audiences. You might guess that Peggy Ridgway is behind all this. She is, and the wheels are whirring. In 2015 Michigan Audubon would be able to set the agenda so it doesn't have to follow the one set up by the Bird Watcher's Digest staff for the recent symposium at Lakeside.

You know it would be different. Peggy is working with Wendy Tatar and Jonathan Lutz of Michigan Audubon to determine what will work best in Northeast Michigan.

It was with this in mind that Emily and Bob Kemnitz and Ed Cole and Peggy drove down to Lakeside to see what goes on at a four day gathering for birders.

How was it different? In Ohio the emphasis was on high profile speakers with subjects appealing to birders from beginner to expert and some events were purely entertainment. Very little time was scheduled for bird watching field trips.

In addition, there were fifty or sixty vendors selling binoculars, spotting scopes, tripods, jewelry, tee shirts, bird houses and feeders, birding tours and books. These vendors were also, in many cases, sponsors. Traditionally, the Tawas Birding Festival has depended on local merchants as sponsors.

Many participants opted to purchase catered meals. Without that option, the few available restaurants in the community would have been overwhelmed.

## Swift Night Out

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Early in September Larry Van Wagoner met a number of us at the Iosco County Courthouse parking lot in Tawas City on a Saturday evening to watch chimney swifts settle down for the night. He first made us aware of the chattering sound overhead as the birds swooped about catching insects. Then, as dusk came on, one by one, or in groups, they would seemingly dive headlong into the chimney of the courthouse and by dark all two or three hundred had disappeared into that one chimney. We witnessed a remarkable avian acrobatic feat that evening that they accomplish easily every day.

In early November Larry will help us witness again our own special CraneFest near M-55 and Sand Lake Road where hundreds of sandhill cranes will gather before migrating south for the winter. Afterward we will get together at the Café International in Prescott to marvel and eat.

## Coming up

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Our October meeting will be our annual exchange with Thunder Bay Audubon. This year it will be in Alpena. Bob has already notified you about signing up for dinner at NOAA. Jerry Weinrich will be talking to us about the present state of the eagles and ospreys in Michigan. He retired from the MDNR after 31-years' service and conducted bald eagle surveys for 30 of them.

Our November 8 AVA meeting at the Tawas High School Library will feature Dave Wentworth, head of Develop Iosco, an organization dedicated to the economic development of our area. He will probably touch on the Natural Heritage Route and the "Blueways and Greenways" project under way, which is intended to make visitors to Northeast Michigan from Saginaw Bay to the Straits aware of our many public access birding sites. When the present survey is completed we all may learn of new good birding spots.

The Kemnitzes will host a bluebird box workshop at their home in late October to get ready for the school Bird Box Building Bees next spring. Emily has also invited attendees to lunch.

## New Trails

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There are two new trails in our area that birders will enjoy. One is at Tawas Point and the other at Au Sable Township's Shoreline Park. Matt Hegwood had the idea for a new trail along the south side of the marsh and pond near the Tawas Point campground. When Matt presented the idea to Chuck Allen, the park manager, he readily agreed and it didn't take long to accomplish the task. So you will be able to enjoy it next time you visit The Point. And thank Matt next time you see him.

The Shoreline Park trail is shorter. It starts near the bulletin board and is cut through the aspens out into the open field to the edge of the pond. We have Cal Taylor, the Au Sable Township head of maintenance, to thank for coming up with that idea.

## Chippewa Nature Center

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During the third week of November we are planning a trip to Midland and the Chippewa Nature Center. This is a newly renovated building and grounds dedicated to teaching natural history of the Saginaw Valley and, especially, the tributary Chippewa River. The Visitor Center contains an interactive ecosystem gallery and large windows overlooking the river to provide indoor viewing of riparian wildlife.

## Road Work

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The third highway pick-up project on M-55 at Sand Lake Road has been postponed until October. The weather and general disinterest seem to have been factors. In August we did see some neat birds at a gravel pit along the way. Bank swallows were nesting in the piled-up sandy-loam topsoil. We don't get to see that species every day. And there were some unusual wildflowers in the ditches; probably arrowhead. There are always some things of interest for us to discover outdoors.

Sue always has good soup and breads at the house afterward. Bringing salads or other goodies would help add to the feast.

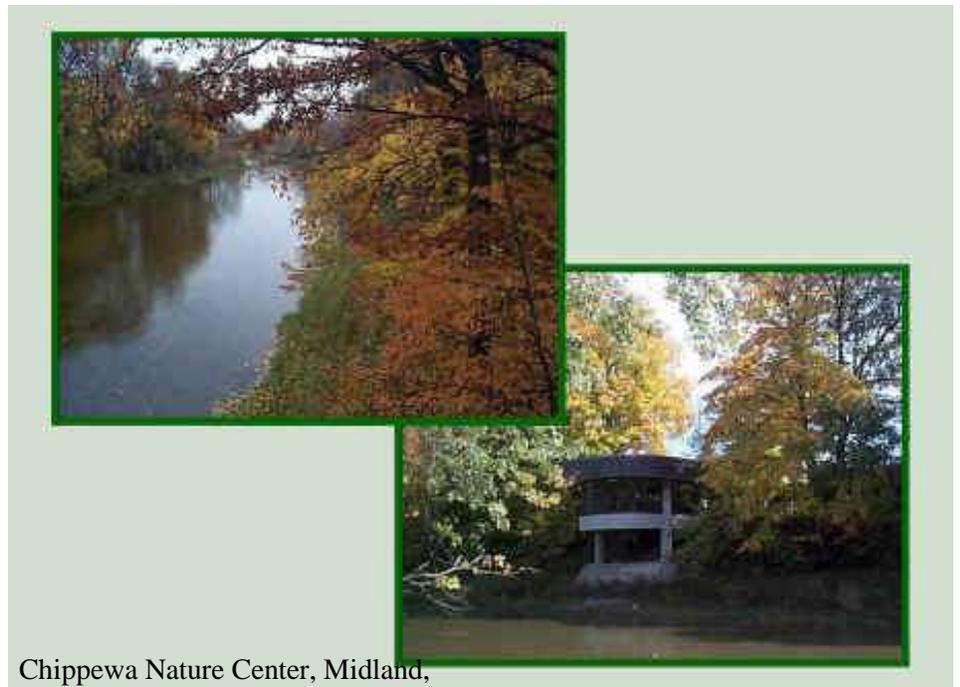
Au Sable Valley Audubon Officers  
Ruth Golm, President  
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Larry Van Wagoner, Secretary  
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## Shade-Grown

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We learned in Ohio that more than 40 percent of the shaded coffee fields in Mexico and Central America have been converted into sun-exposed plantations, their once-nurturing forest canopies destroyed in the process. In the 1960s, scientists began tweaking coffee plants so they could withstand sunlight and produce more beans. Governments soon also joined the push.

But plantation-style coffee growing has produced results that few anticipated. Open fields of coffee plants sap nutrients from the soil, increase erosion and are dependent on chemical fertilizers. The wholesale burning and clearing of forests today produces roughly 16 percent of the global greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change. And the migrating birds are deprived of habit in the process.



Chippewa Nature Center, Midland,