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President, Ruth Golm Vice-President, Larry Van Wagoner Secretary, Jen Gravlin Treasurer, Donette Spiekerman  
Contact Secretary, Jen Gravlin, [jgravlin@charter.net](mailto:jgravlin@charter.net), 989-747-0300

## Ho, Hum. Another Tawas Point Birding Festival

Kidding, of course. But the 2013 Tawas Point Birding Festival was easier and more fun than ever. May 16, 17, 18, and 19 were bright and sunny with little wind and the warblers and vireos dropped in for a day or four to recharge their little bodies with the good insect-type food our budding trees and shrubs had to offer. It wasn't just warblers and vireos; over 180 species were observed over the four days.

They weren't all at Tawas Point State Park either. Charity Island, Tuttle Marsh, Clark's Marsh and the Wurtsmith Grasslands, Eagle Run Trail, Pine River Kirtland Warbler Management Area, Little Loon Lake, Hartwick Pines and Harrisville State Park all contributed their particular avian specialties to the total.

Alvaro Jaramillo was a wonderful choice for keynote speaker. He provided Festival participants with an entertaining, insightful view on why they enjoy birding and how it enriches their lives. Vince Cavalieri of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service gave an inspiring Power Point presentation on preservation of Great Lakes piping plover. Roger Eriksson's warbler identification program drew a full house. Dave Cuthrell's talk on the results of a Nightjar Survey and Chris Hoving's historical account of the disappearance of the passenger pigeon and present day species conservation efforts were well received. Gary Siegrist's talk caused many attendees to want to make a winter birding journey to Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Abigail Ertel, Kirtland Warbler Coordinator of Huron Pines, in her talk, outlined ways being considered to compensate for the problems that will arise when the Kirtland's warbler will no longer have the benefits of a Federal listing as an endangered species.

Peggy Ridgway's bird identification class was well attended and all three "Birds of Prey" demonstrations proved to be popular again this year.

Even the wildflower walks at Foote Dam proved to be the best yet with an optimum numbers and varieties of blooming spring plants. Our Emily Kemnitz and Sierra Peterson, botanist from the local National Forest Service, did excellent jobs of pointing out the plants in interesting ways. The bicycle birding tour of the Tawas Point triangle had thirty happy participants.

There were about three hundred attendees from four countries and eight states.

## And Another Owl Rescue

Mothers' Day weekend was going to be easy for Larry Van Wagoner before Peggy Ridgway called early Friday to ask if he could pick up an injured bird near Glennie and transport it to a veterinarian. Larry being Larry told her, sure. At the end of the day he had travelled 140 miles; he had driven to Glennie, picked up the injured owl from Tim, who had found it in a ditch, driven down to Standish with the owl in a laundry basket, delivered it to the veterinarian, Molly Lien, then returned the laundry basket to Tim in Alcona County and after four hours, arrived back home south of Sand Lake. Joe Rogers, in Shepherd, our favorite rehabber of wounded birds, indicates the owl will return to the wilds of Glennie soon. Stay tuned.



Festival Attendees at the Point

Courtesy Copy

## Special Thanks

Recognition should be extended to the people who work all year on the Tawas Point Birding Festival. Wendy Tatar, Program Coordinator for Michigan Audubon, and Peggy Ridgway, Festival Coordinator for Au Sable Valley Audubon, work more or less all year, previewing speakers, checking out interesting trips, coming up with innovative ideas that will appeal to birders during their visit to North-eastern Michigan in the middle of the following May. They really work hard at what they do so well.

# Because She's Worth It

L'Oreal, that is. She and Lancelot are two piping plovers. Peggy Ridgway named L'Oreal. And it was Ed Cole's sister-in-law from Massachusetts who came up with the name for Lancelot at the Festival. They are two piping plovers that were at Au Sable and Tawas Point last year. Those are the main characters but that's not the whole story. You can get it by buying a plover pin. Maryann Wojahn came up with the idea of the pins and the story and Peggy wrote it, "The Legend of L'Oreal." Maryann ordered and insisted on donating the pins and the cost of printing 100 copies of the legend. Maybe they are all sold. In that case you guys may have to borrow a copy if you want get the story. Our treasury has been enriched by \$511.00 through the generosity of Maryann and Ed Wojahn and the creative talent (and perhaps the cost of the special printing paper) of Peggy.



*Lancelot and L'Oreal Photo Courtesy of Doug Jackson*

## Plover Patrol Organized

In early May Tom Funke of Michigan Audubon came to Tawas to prepare us for this year's Plover Patrol if our little friends should visit us again. Twenty-four potential plover observers met with Tom at The Bay Inn in Tawas City to learn about the Great Lakes endangered species and how the US Fish and Wildlife banding program helps to identify individual birds and know where they were hatched or nested in previous years.

And now we have at least one pair, L'Oreal and Lancelot, as we have named them, are back at the tip looking after four eggs, and we perhaps will have another pair nearby if they ever settle in.

Those who volunteered for the plover patrol have been issued patches to wear that identify them as sort of semi-official guardians of the nests and chicks. Peggy Ridgway is making sure one or two patrol members are at the restricted area to greet beach walkers and boaters and make them aware of the nature of the restrictions and ask them not to enter the restricted area.

The goal is to aid these birds by protecting them from human interference as they hatch and fledge their off-

spring so that they will all want to come back to our beaches again next year.

## Letters to the Editor

### *Our Silent Auction*

The silent auction that was held during the bird festival on Saturday far exceeded our expectations. The total funds from sales were \$675.00. This money will greatly benefit our chapter; it will help us fund our civic initiatives. We wish to thank all the members who donated pictures, birdhouses, shirts, stuffed Audubon birds, jewelry and other objects. We also wish to thank those who kept the bidding going, the highest priced photo print sold for \$80.00! Everything ran very smoothly and it was certainly a worthwhile fund raiser.

Thank you.

*Maggie Berch, Jen Gravlin*

### *Volunteers Make the Festival Go 'Round*

There were forty-seven Au Sable Valley Audubon members (or forty-eight, if we count Roger Eriksson who was a speaker) at this year's birding festival at Tawas Point. That is over 50% of our membership. There were seven or eight who had never helped at the festival before, and some helped who have never been to a regular meeting.

What a great group of volunteers! Mostly it sounded like they had fun, as did our out of town guests! A few AVA members got knocked out of the fun with injuries or illness, but most made it through to the glorious end on a beautiful Sunday!

There were over 90 different volunteer positions during the festival itself. If all the 'behind the scenes' work for prep and follow up were counted, even more! There's a lot to be proud of, but none of us want to tally up the HOURS spent, so let's just have a big HURRAH and stop counting.... Unless it is birds!

*Sue Duncan*



*Festival Birders*

*Photo courtesy of Ken DeMar*