

**Grant Proposal – Iosco County Community Foundation
Healthy Bird Feeding Demonstration
March 2025 Status Report**

Amount Received: \$1,000

Project Description

Tawas Point State Park has a bird feeding station that was donated by AuSable Valley Audubon (AVA) to foster education about bird migration and emphasize protection of this unique and important habitat. The feeding station historically provides a focal point for people to sit and watch birds immediately adjacent to the parking lot, providing access to those that can't walk the non-motorized trails. This project funded updates to the bird feeding station and provides a demonstration area that highlights bird feeding practices that protect feeder birds.



Old Platform and sitting benches,



New platform and storage benches.

DELIVERABLES:

Viewing Platform:

Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) replaced the viewing area as part of park upgrades and to support this project. While the new viewing area is a bit smaller than the last one, it was sturdily built. The new platform has a lower entrance platform, so it is more wheelchair accessible. MDNR's contribution was in-kind and in support of this project.



New platform before bench installation.

In-Kind Donation: New Viewing platform from MDNR

Food Storage Sitting Benches:

AVA Volunteers built new bird-food storage benches for the new viewing platform. Under the leadership of Bob Kemnitz, they formed a team and brainstormed design elements to address storage that would deter wildlife night raids of the food. Bob and Larry VanWagoner built the food storage benches in Larry's workshop in accordance with the team's design. Each bench (two total) has hardware cloth lined storage space for 50 pounds of seed, PVC plastic seating material, stainless steel hinges, 5/4' cladding, and is made entirely of weather resistant treated wood. Other team members, Tim Morand and Ken Kuck, helped install the benches in the new viewing platform.



Bench being built



Benches being delivered



Bob and Larry installing bench.



Ken, Bob, Tim and Larry installing bench.



Finished food storage bench, outside



Finished food storage bench, inside

Grant Money Used: \$401.86 for bench building materials

Donations Leveraged:

- \$825 labor donated (55 hours x \$15/hr.)
- \$64.82 gas donated by team for travel to the park and gathering supplies (4 trips @ 40 miles round trip to park; 3 trips @ 25 miles each to lumber yard; truck gets 12 mpg)

Bird Feeders

Feeder height and implementation of structural controls to allow volunteers to efficiently and safely fill the feeders was evaluated. It was decided to shorten the poles and install new feeders. The height is not perfect for some of the species, but the feeders will be able to be filled more frequently since more people will be able to reach. In addition, feeding will only take place early in the day because other wildlife tend to empty feeders at night.

The bird feeding team selected the feeders and asked the building team to shorten the existing feeding posts and build new platforms for the new feeders. The team decided to buy the following feeders:

Grant Money to be used: \$569.70

\$79.95 4 x 4' Green Post Baffle (x 3)

\$109.95 Red Barn Cardinal Feeder (x 3)

Donations Leveraged \$90 labor donated/to be donated

Larry 6 hours

3 hours for building platforms for new feeders (complete)

~ TBD -- Installation of new feeders (estimated to be around 3 hours)



New Feeders



Old Feeders and food storage

Public Education Campaign

Educate the public about safe feeding practices. AVA Volunteer, Pam Carter, lead a team of five bird feeding educators to develop a power point presentation about Safe Bird Feeding Practices.

Pam has presented four times so far and has reached over 50 people. Another presentation is planned for Spring. The presentation is available on AVA's website and Facebook page.

Donations Leveraged:

\$345 labor donated (23 x \$15)

Team ~ 5 hours (~ 1 hour/member)

Pam ~ 18 hours:

~ 6 hours giving presentations

~ 12 hours developing presentation

AuSable Valley Audubon presents

Safely Feeding Your Backyard Birds

Choose one of 2 sessions:

Thursday, November 7th at 1:30 pm
or
Saturday, November 23rd at 10:30 am


Learn about how feeding impacts bird behaviors

Recognize common avian diseases that are spread at the feeder and how to prevent them

Gear the food you purchase to attract the birds you want to feed

Creating a naturalized environment to feed and protect the birds

Harrisville Branch
Alcona County Library
call 724-6796 to RSVP
312 W. Main St. Harrisville, MI



BIRD FEEDING TIPS

Considering the birds need food and rest during migration, there are many things you can do to help the birds. Below are some tips:

- Keep your cat inside during Spring and Fall migration, and do not feed birds if you have an outdoor cat.
- Provide a canopy and shrub area to give cover to birds that enjoy your feeder. This will help the birds avoid predation by raptors and other predators.
- Make use of native plants around your bird feeding area to provide natural sources of berries and seeds. Diffuse sources help reduce the spread of avian flu.
- Clean your feeders routinely and stop feeding if avian flu is spreading in your area. Use no-mes bird food.
- For hummingbirds, use only white processed granulated sugar (e.g. 1/2 cup sugar to 2 cups water). Keep the feeder clean and replace the nectar routinely to keep it fresh and free from mold which can kill hummingbirds.
- Prevent bird window collisions; if you have a window that confuses birds, consider screens, window decals, an awning... anything to stop the illusion from the bird perspective.
 - Turn off your outdoor lights during migration season.

GRANT EXPENDITURES

BENCHES

Initial materials cost	-408.85
Materials Refunded	+135.79

Materials kept and used:

- 2 (5/4 x 7 – 8' PVC deck boards)
- 7 (2 x 4 – 8' treated wood)
- 2 (2 x 6 – 8' treated wood)
- 9 (5/4' x 6" – 8' treated wood deck boards)

Cost of wood	273.06
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2 sets of stainless-steel hinges (\$22.25/each)	44.50
1 roll of ¼' hardware cloth (24" x 50')	58.55
125 coated pocket screws (2 ½")	21.00
50 coated construction screws (2 ½')	5.00

TOTAL for both benches:	\$401.86
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BIRD FEEDERS

\$79.95/each 4 x 4' Green Post Baffle (x 3)	\$239.85
\$109.95/each Red Barn Cardinal Feeder (x 3)	\$329.85

TOTAL for bird feeders	\$569.70
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1,000.00	Total Grant
-401.86	Benches
-569.70	Feeders

Amount left: \$28.44, which will be spent on no-mess bird food and suet.

Tawas Point Bird Migration Days

Tawas Point is a unique place and a premier birding location because of its geography. The point extends into the Bay, providing one of the few resting places for exhausted and energy depleted birds during their migration. These little creatures fly as much as a couple thousand miles from wintering to breeding locations. Basically, when they get to Tawas Point, they are hungry and need rest. The gathering of these birds in this consolidated spot brings in birders from all over the world. AuSable Valley Audubon has a celebration, usually the third weekend of May, each year to help introduce the public to birding and help people view these beautiful creatures in safe and ethical ways.

2025

We are sad to inform that the 2025 event is cancelled. Tawas Point State Park is under construction, including the parking lots and the roads leading into the park. If you plan to bird independently, you may want to check the status of the park before you make the trip. See you in 2026.

Tawas Point State Park
(989) 362-5041

Alternative Birding Locations: "[Self-Guided Birding Page](#)" at ausablevalleyaudubon.org

2024

Thank you to everyone that participated in the 2024 Tawas Point Birding Celebration. We were lucky to stay dry, we had a large variety of cooperative feathered friends, and we enjoyed comfortable weather this year.

In 2024, 590 participants signed AuSable Valley Audubon's (AVA) guestbook. In addition, several groups arrived in busses and some with guides. Overall, a rough estimate is 750 participants in the two days of the celebration is likely. The group was once again international, with representation from at least five countries and 26 states.

The 2024 species count did not disappoint. Participants counted 87 species on Friday and 106 on Saturday. The most unusual, feathered visitor was a Mississippi Kite that provided a fly over to the amazement of many participants.



AuSable Valley Audubon Board Members

- Bill Roth, President (wigwambayguy@icloud.com)
- Kathy Swindlehurst, Vice President (kswindle1@icloud.com)
- Amy Kohlhepp, Secretary (kohlhepp@comcast.net)
- Dawn Hooper, Treasurer (hooperstu2414@gmail.com)
- Nancy Myers, Member at Large (imace2u@yahoo.com)

Board Member terms are staggered. Election for the positions of President, Secretary and Member at Large are held one year, and the election for the positions of Vice-President and Treasurer are held the following year.

March 2025