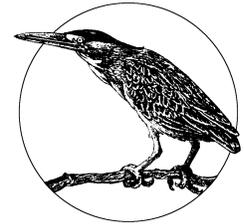


WINGS



ERIE SHORES BIRDING ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 272, Monroe, Michigan 48161

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February 2017

JANUARY RECAP

25 people attended the January meeting. Anne Smith opened the meeting welcoming everyone, including new attendees Herb Harley, James Voelker, and Marcia Close! She mentioned that Bob Pettit had cataract surgery and is doing fine.

Jack and Janet Volker presented beautiful pictures from their 18-day trip to Ethiopia in October (their 4th time to Africa!). Security has improved a lot since they first visited the country. It was very dry there since no rain had fallen in a year! They tallied 150 life birds, and Jack has over 4000 species on his life list!

Raffle Winners: Philip VanDaele won the camera case donated by Diane Kovach (attribution was erroneously reported last month); Jerry Jourdan won the window view bird feeder donated by Anne Smith; James Voelker won the eagle mug donated by Carolyn and Dick Boellner's neighbors

Hospitality: Thank you, Lou and Marigail Stubleski, for providing refreshments for this meeting.

Bird Sightings: A Northern Mockingbird has spent the winter at Terri & Joe Janssen's home in Maybee, and they also found owl pellets inside their homemade Kestrel/Screech Owl box!

FEBRUARY MEETING

Speaker: Jerry Jourdan will be presenting **Shorebirding Southeast Michigan by Season**. Southeast Michigan hosts a wide range of habitats and is an important migration stopover for shorebirds heading both north (to breed) and south (to winter). How do you separate Lesser from Greater Yellowlegs? Short-billed vs. Long-billed Dowitchers? Peeps? HELP!!!! This program will cover shorebird identification from January to November in southeast Michigan and will provide tips on "what to expect" and "what to look for" in the way of shorebirds and their identification on a monthly basis.

Raffle: Carved wooden bird, donated by Lou and Marigail Stubleski; Camera tripod, donated by Jan Morrow; Indoor/outdoor cast bird plaque, donated by Bob Pettit

Semi-annual Raffle: Metal bird welcome plaque and Forever bird postage stamps, donated by Len and Nancy VanDaele

Hospitality: Karen Potts will provide refreshments for this month's meeting.

Meeting Info: Wednesday, February 15, 7:00 pm; room 201 Life Science Building, Monroe County Community College.

SPRING FLING!

Karen Potts and Rita Montague are signed up to attend **Whitefish Point Bird Observatory's 29th Annual Spring Fling** on April 29th and 30th! Join hawk watcher Josh Haas, featured speaker, for an informative and innovative new way of identifying flying hawks as he releases a brand new DVD entitled "Hawks on the Wing." In addition, our own Bob Pettit will be presenting a program on bird songs! Registration is open NOW, so join Karen, Rita, and Bob and plan to head to the U.P. at the end of April. Check out wpbo.org/events/spring-fling/ for full event details and the schedule.

FROM THE BOARD

- **Individual dues are \$20 and family dues are \$25.** We LOVE new members! Your dues support bird conservation, as we are a non-profit organization!
- LIKE the ESBA Facebook page! You can report your bird sightings, share pictures, and receive notices about upcoming field trips and meetings.
- Check our website www.esba-monroe.org for field trips, pictures, newsletter archives, birding links, etc. If you'd like to have information or pictures posted, just email the webmistress at birdladypotts@me.com.
- Carolyn is happy to accept raffle donations at each meeting (please, no books).

UPCOMING EVENTS

Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge

14000 W. State Route 2, Oak Harbor, OH
(419) 898-0014; fws.gov/refuge/ottawa/
www.friendsofottawanwr.org/events.html

Wed, Feb. 15, 9 am—12 pm & 12:30—3:30 pm: Eagle Tours. Bus tour through the Refuge to view and learn about nesting eagles. Reservations required. *Many other dates throughout February and March are available:* check www.friendsofottawanwr.org/events.html for all dates & times.

Sat. & Sun., Feb. 18 & 19, sunrise to sunset: Self-guided Auto Tour. Visit areas of the refuge normally closed to the public. Stop in the Visitor Center to enter your sightings at the eBird kiosk. Weather dependent. Free. ONWR members can enjoy free nature talks on auto tour weekends: check Friends website for details.

BIGGEST WEEK IN AMERICAN BIRDING

Black Swamp Bird Observatory/ Magee Marsh Wildlife Area

W. State Route 2, Oak Harbor, OH
(419) 898-4070; bsbobird.org

May 5—14: If you're signed up for the Biggest Week eNews, you already know that registration is OPEN and events are filling up fast. Go to www.biggestweekinamericanbirding.com to see the full schedule of festival events, or go to individual pages to read about field trips, workshops, and keynote presentations.

Biggest Week Social Media: Facebook [The Biggest Week in American Birding](#) Twitter [@BiggestWeek](#); Instagram [BSBOBIRD](#);
Favorite hashtag #BWIAB

MICROSCOPIC INVESTIGATIONS

The ESBA's own Jerry Jourdan conducted some research into iridescent color variations in Ruby-throated Hummingbirds. Below is a brief outtake from [his blog](#) dated January 28, 2017:

So, here's the backstory. I had come across a blog post by David Sibley discussing why some **Ruby-throated Hummingbirds** (*Archilochus colubris*) appear to have orange gorget feathers. The discussion included references to "plates" and "air bubbles" in the barbules of the hummingbird's feathers, and possible causes for the dilution of color from ruby-red to orange.

Since I did not understand a bit of the discussion regarding plates and air bubbles in the feathers, I remember asking the question, "So, which is it? Plates or air bubbles." As a Sr. Research Microscopist at BASF I decided to do a bit of researching to learn more about hummingbird iridescence. A quick Google search produced limited results, but the [Hummingbird Website](#) produced a pretty concise explanation. In short, air-filled platelets in the barbules of the gorget feathers act as a diffraction gradient to scatter light at specific angles and wavelengths to produce the intense color that ranges from red to brown to black. Greenwalt (1960) summarized it best:

"Nature varies the iridescent colors of hummingbirds by varying the thickness of the platelets and their air content. Melanin reinforcements in the air gaps create the continuous RI variations that lead to pure and stable color formation. Stacking increases color brilliance"

Having some time, I decided to collect a loose back feather from [a] dead hummer and see what I could learn using my light microscopes (LM), scanning electron microscope (SEM) and atomic force microscope (AFM) that I have access to in the lab. ...

For full scientific results and photos, visit Jerry's blog: jerryjourdan.blogspot.com/

WHY BIRDING IS THE PERFECT HOBBY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

USA Today published an excellent article by Terry Byrne in 2014 all about the wild and wonderful hobby or sport of bird watching, or birding. It's available in its entirety online via www.usatoday.com. Here are some excerpts...

- About 85 million Americans enjoy observing, photographing or feeding wild birds. Birding ranks 15th on a list of the most popular outdoor activities...
- About 18 million are serious enough to take trips exclusively to commune with other birders or count birds by sight or sound...
- The Internet and mobile devices are pushing the pastime to new heights as about 300,000 people a year—from home-schooled youngsters to seniors—engage in such "citizen science" projects as sending bird counts to scientists and conservationists...
- "You can tell birders even without their binoculars....We're aware of our surroundings and nature even in places that don't seem very natural. Sometimes I have to apologize to people at an outdoor function because I'll be in the middle of a conversation, and I'll look away to see something. Once you're keyed in, you're always birding. You don't *go* birding, you *are* birding, all the time."

Thanks, Bob Pettit,
for suggesting this article!

Bird Humor
Q: Which bird is the slowest?
A: The turtle dove!

WINGS

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