

BROCKWAY LOOKOUT

Copper Country Bird Club Newsletter Volume 31, Number 2, Oct/Nov 2024



FRESH NEW START: THE COPPER COUNTRY BIRD CLUB!

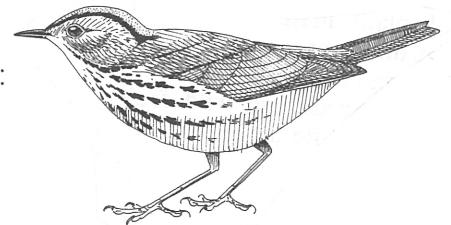
After over two years of input and discussion among the membership, 71% of the Copper Country Audubon Club voted to change the name of the club. They selected Copper Country Bird Club as the preferred name for our local birdwatching group.

Here are the details of the mail-in vote that went out to the active membership in July. Ballots were sent to 297 members with a stamped return envelope enclosed. The ballot asked: ***Do you wish to change the name of our organization 'Copper Country Audubon Club'?*** If you vote YES, then you can vote on the preferred name for the club, a choice of three new names as selected by the board.

Vote envelopes were collected in the Post Office box until Sept 6, 2024 and opened and counted at a special board meeting Sept 7, 2024. Since the name of the club is specified in the bylaws of the constitution, any change needed to be approved by 2/3 (66.7%) of the voting members.

There were 228 total votes received from members. Voting to change the name were 151 YES with a choice checked, plus 11 YES votes saying "no preference"; total voting YES to change name was 162. This is 71.1% of total voting members. Total NO votes was 66 members. Thus, YES votes of members to change the name prevailed.

The number of votes for the new name selected by the members were as follows:
Copper Country Bird Club, 89 votes
Keweenaw Bird Alliance, 42 votes
Keweenaw Bird Club, 20 votes



Copper Country Bird Club (CCBC) is the new name for the club! The new name honors birds instead of a man. It simplifies our name and avoids confusion with any other Audubon Society with which we have no connection or get anything from. Many small local bird clubs are doing this, and the trend is also to change all bird names that are named after a person to a bird characteristic or locale where a bird is found. The new name will be especially welcoming to young people who are new to birdwatching but have no idea who or what Audubon is or was. Bird Club is a fresh new start for birds in the Copper Country! ... *D. Richter*

Status of Keweenaw Trumpeter Swans - 2024 ... *Joseph Youngman*

In the fifth year of surveying Trumpeter Swans in the Keweenaw and the 2nd year of using a drone to do so I recorded 43 nesting pairs this spring. Last years total was 33. The initial total count of cygnets was 155 and at publishing date in last week of September there were 52 still out there. I put in just over 6,000 miles by car driving around the three counties and the little drone flew over 1,100 miles. I am anticipating one more year of study using the drone and then Zach Gayk and I intend to publish our data in a peer-reviewed journal.

The increase in nest numbers over last year is partly a result of finding more nest sites with the drone and because last year one traditional nest site took a year off. In four cases 2024 was the first year that swans that had been "territorial" in 2023 actually got down to nesting. Keweenaw county had nests at Five Mile Point, Meadow Lake and Thayer Lake. Houghton County had 28 nests spreading from Kearsarge down to near Sidnaw. Baraga County had 12 nests.

That reduction in cygnets from 155 down to 52 seems kind of brutal. But it represents 1.2 fledged young per nest. In a warbler that only lives a couple years that's a scary number. But for a long-lived species like Trumpeter swans that number means over 10 new birds raised by each pair. Good enough. The fact that they didn't exist in the Copper Country back in the 1990's and now have at least 43 known pairs speaks for their success. Let's thank the many, many persons and organizations that worked to save Trumpeters back in the 1980's and reintroduce them in Wisconsin and over at Seney NWR!

It was not part of my survey area but I heard that out at Isle Royale at least one pair nested again on Chickenbone Lake. I'd like to thank my wife Lynn who purchased the drone for me and much thanks to CCA for reimbursing my road mileage.



New Board Members!

At the May 18 member meeting in Houghton this year three new board members came on board. All the old-timers are still hanging around, too. Each new board member gives a little information about who they are.

Amalia Anderson moved to the Keweenaw in 2006 to work on a doctorate in physics at Michigan Tech. She has continued to live in the area most years since she graduated. Currently, she works as Principal Engineer at Signature Research in Calumet. Amalia first became interested in birds as a child, watching them at her parents' feeders. At that time, the eccentric and memorable behaviors of individual birds sometimes made them seem like members of the family. This included "mad cardinal" who would regularly attack his reflection in certain windows and "Gertrude" a ruffed grouse that would follow Amalia's dad around, particularly when he was splitting wood. In addition to bird watching, Amalia enjoys cross-country skiing, canoeing, gardening, and hiking. She also serves on the board of the Friends of the Calumet Public Library and plays French horn in the Keweenaw Symphony Orchestra and Copper Country Community Band.

Tom Oliver is the Director for Michigan Tech's Center for Science and Environmental Outreach. His career in wildlife ecology and education has taken him around the world. He and his wife Kay, returned to the UP in 2020, after living overseas for 14 years. Tom has been birding for nearly his whole life. He's pretty sure that his "spark" bird is the Downy Woodpecker, a species he loved to watch come to suet at his grandparents' house when he was a young child. At that time, Tom's grandfather was simultaneously thrilled and frustrated with Tom's interest in wildlife because he was always eager to explore and learn about the outdoors but was too young to really know he shouldn't play with the diopter focus ring on another person's binoculars...he claims to know better now. In addition to his life-long interest in wildlife ecology, Tom is an enthusiastic wildlife and night sky photographer. You can see some of his photos on his website (teoliver.com) or on Instagram (@theupwell).

Brendan Leddy has been a long-time birder who's been involved in a number of bird related organizations since 2012. Born on National Bird Day and raised in Clarkston, Michigan, he moved up to Houghton in 2021 to study Policy & Law at Michigan Tech. An Eagle Scout and long time outdoors person, he continued his passion for birding, regularly reporting sightings to ebird and conducting spectrogram analysis from two sites in the Huron Mountains. He joined the Undergraduate Student Government in Spring of 2023, and in Spring 2024 was hired as Campaign Manager for Kim Corcoran, a candidate for the 110th. Currently, he continues involvement in USG, Kim's Campaign, and bird spectrogram analysis. He is proud to add candidate for Houghton City Council to the list and is thrilled to be a board member of Copper Country Bird Club, bringing back regular bird walks for the first time in over a decade.

Great Newsletter Help!



After nearly 30 years putting out the Copper Country Audubon newsletter, Dana Richter is slowly stepping aside and this time turned over the task of assembling the newsletter and arranging the events and presentations to Joseph Youngman. Dana will continue to help with the newsletter and CCBC as needed. Thanks, Joe!

Keweenaw Peregrines 2024 ... *Joseph Youngman*



The two longest running nesting pairs of Peregrines in the Keweenaw returned again this year. Up at Bare Bluff the pair was observed early in the season but no later knowledge of their success is known to the editor. Back at the Lift Bridge at Houghton / Hancock the same male and female returned and successfully raised two young to fledging. The fledge date was about the 24th of June. Some efforts were made to locate the Cliff Drive pair but were unsuccessful. They disappeared a couple years ago. Out at Isle Royale the traditional three nesting pairs were seen on territory in spring but no updates on nesting success are available.

JUTILA GREAT HORNED OWLS: 2023-2024 ... *Phil Quenzi*



The Great Horned Owls at the Jutila Center nest box had another successful season raising two more young. The nest box was installed there in 2015 for the Peregrine falcons but they have never used it. However, a couple years later the owls began using the box and have raised two young there every year but one since. The total young from that box to date is around a dozen. The adults seem to be excellent parents with the male providing much of the food while the female is on the nest and later feeding the young. The young are normally hatched in the winter and both the adults and young are very tolerant of the cold weather and snow.

Banding studies indicate the average dispersal range for young Great horned owls is around 50 miles or less from their nest site. They are quite territorial and need to find an area not occupied by another owl and one with a good food supply. The owl territory size is anywhere from 0.5 to several square miles, depending on food availability. They have a varied diet including small mammals such as rabbits, rats, mice, squirrels and skunks. Rabbits and squirrels seemed to be some of the main prey for the Jutila owls. Other prey includes, birds, reptiles and amphibians, fish and insects. It seems to me, good territories would be around towns and villages which often have relatively high populations of squirrels, birds and rabbits due to bird feeders.

They are large powerful birds with few natural predators, but mortality of the young owls after fledging can include starvation, vehicle collisions, poisoning, disease and parasites, territorial disputes and even electrocution on power poles. That being said, it appeared the Jutila owls spend a lot of time teaching the young hunting and survival skills after fledging with the young remaining in the nest area for a month or more. It would be very interesting to be able to satellite track one of the young for the first year or so of its life.

The nest box can be seen by clicking on the "Jutila web cam" button on the coppercountryaudubon.org home page. the owls normally show up in November or December to start the nesting season.

Kirtland Warblers on the Baraga Plains: a 28 Year Review ... *Joseph Youngman*

Kirtland Warblers are obviously a pretty rare bird. They nest exclusively in young Jack Pine stands in Michigan and occasionally in Wisconsin and Ontario. They winter mostly in the Bahamas. Since 1996 Kirtlands have been seen and heard on the Baraga Plains southwest of L'Anse. I personally have an extensive experience with them out there and eBird shows a modest number of sightings, especially since 2020. All Keweenaw sightings I know of are on the Baraga Plains.

In 1996 I found a singing male out on the plains. In 2000 while working as a field tech for a MTU doctoral student I spotted a female Kirtlands. In 2005 I worked harder and found a nesting pair and documented their success. That nesting pair was in the same spot that I had the single female in 2000.

In 2015 I found two successful nests. Of course the 2015 birds were in a different location from the 2005 birds - their favored habitat disappears at any given spot as the trees grow up to heights the warblers don't like.

This year I scored again with significant help from Brendan Leddy. I had found 4 singing males and two of them clearly had mates and I lucked out and witnessed a female building the nest. I continued monitoring but a trip to Arizona (doesn't everybody go to southern Arizona in July?) meant I'd probably miss the hatching at a 2nd suspected nest. Brendan went out several times in my absence and narrowed down the search for that 2nd nest. On return I found it easily in the smaller search area and was able to find the nest and watch the adults bring food to nestlings. A few days later I was able to photograph both the male and female adult feeding recently fledged young.

There is still suitable nesting habitat out there and its likely that they'll continue nesting in small numbers. Their nests are on the ground and often out in the open where a human is apt to walk. If anyone goes out to see these birds please keep that in mind. You might expect them to put the nest under a branch or right next to the truck - places you are not apt to step. Wrong! 4 out of the 5 nests I've found are in open areas a human is apt to walk as they stalk the singing bird. So please be careful.

In November I'll have some Kirtland photos in a slide show I'll give to the club. Check the 'Upcoming Events' towards the end of this newsletter.



2024 Keweenaw Wild Bird Rehab Summary

...by Michelle Anderson, Director/Licensed Wildlife Rehabilitator, Keweenaw Wild Bird R.E.C.



The 2024 season started with a crack, then a peep, and didn't stop until many weeks later. A dog brought its owner a sandhill crane egg, that was in the process of hatching! This happened in rural Marquette, so the transportation orchestra ensued to get the egg first to an incubator at a mammal rehabbers place in Marquette, then driven up to me in Hancock once hatched. Everyone involved kept the now hatched colt from seeing humans, and played adult sandhill vocalizations, all to avoid imprinting on humans. The next morning I made the trek back out, located the nest, and donning a ski helmet and goggles, was able to reunite the baby with its parents.

The reuniting game had just begun because then the trumpeter swans started hatching out babies and were having a hard time keeping their youngsters together. Joe Youngman was a huge help getting multiple cygnets reunited with families. Knowing where the nests are located and being able to use the drone to locate families was a huge asset to reuniting these youngsters. We also wild-fostered a cygnet into the Swedetown family, after being unsuccessful finding its parents elsewhere. The family took him in but unfortunately he was not seen with the family a few days post reunite. This is a species that is challenging to raise, as they spend such a lengthy time with the parents, and we don't have the space to keep them in rehabilitation long term. Reunite and wild fostering is their best chance at a wild life.

It was then onto baby songbirds, and boy were we busy! Last season songbird numbers were low, so this season made up for it, and then some!!! A trio of downy woodpeckers cut out of a tree, a five pack of robins orphaned when mom was killed in a mouse trap, several barn swallows (a first for us to raise!) fell out of a high horse barn nesting spot, and a clutch of tree swallows (also a first to raise) that had their nest predated and tossed about in a field, found by a very observant nestbox landlord! Some of these babies came as hatchlings, which comes with 15-20 minute feedings from 7am-9pm!

We also had a ring-billed gull from Ontonagon rescued on the side of the road after the Good Samaritan watched as he could not take off. She pulled over and approached, and his feet were encased in spray foam! This was quite the lengthy process of soaking the feet with warm soapy, water and slowly, manually removing the spray foam from his feet with hemostats one chunk at a time.

We also had a clutch of eastern phoebes that had their nest removed from an old bridge so the owner could replace it. In addition, a few more displaced robin babies, a clutch of cedar waxwings whose nest was also cut out of a tree, a cat caught red-eyed video nestling, and a lone mallard duckling found orphaned in Negaunee

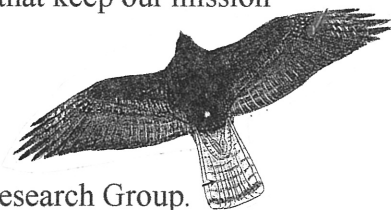
was raised and later released into a multiple family group. Two nestling blue jays from different areas both found near death in rain storms were combined to become brothers from another mother. There are many more but that is a somewhat chaotic rundown of our most memorable cases that were successfully rehabbed and released!

We also get many window collision birds during spring and fall migration. We've had many warblers, a few hummingbirds, and a few sparrows hit windows. We will likely get quite a few more collision cases as our feathered friends finish up migrating through our area over the next several weeks.

As you can gather, almost all of our cases are related to human activity. Outdoor domestic cats, out of season tree cutting, and window collisions, are our three major reasons for intakes. Keeping cats indoors or contained outdoors, treating problem windows from the outside with a numerous pattern to break up the reflection of windows, and resisting cutting trees during peak breeding season (generally May-August), will greatly help! Dead trees are really important as well to keep standing when safe to do so, because they offer food by hosting insects, while also hosting critical nesting sites for a multitude of cavity nesters that we have breeding in the Keweenaw.

Unfortunately, volunteers have steadily declined, and we are reevaluating our caseload for the future. I have a fledgling human as well, and we only have so many more summers together as she spreads her wings and flies away. We will still definitely be here to help the birds, and further education and conservation efforts, but will likely need to reduce our rehabilitation caseload going forward. Thanks so much to all that keep our mission flying!!

Brockway Mountain Hawk Watch 2024 –



No raptor count was conducted at Brockway Mtn. this spring by the Keweenaw Bird Research Group. They are a small group of people and this year they had difficulties organizing the count. They did indicate their plans to resume the count in 2025.

Bird Walks Resume!

...Brendan Leddy



On August 3rd, 2024, Copper Country Audubon held its first of what will be many regular bird walks in over a decade. We had 10 participants, and it was lots of fun getting to explore some migrant shorebirds! We walked over 2 miles around the loop at Lake Linden Recreation Park and had a total of 39 species! We we're worried that the construction of new ponds would harm shorebird potential, but that was far from the case. The 2 new ponds had multiple shorebird species with a highlight Stilt Sandpiper! List is included below with a link to the eBird checklist. Thank you so much to everyone who attended!

See bird list below:

Canada Goose- 45, Wood Duck- 3, Gadwall- 20, Mallard- 20, Common Goldeneye- 1, Common Merganser- 1, Mourning Dove- 2, Chimney Swift- 1, Sandhill Crane- 12, Killdeer- 5, Wilson's Snipe- 5, Spotted Sandpiper- 3, Solitary Sandpiper- 1, Lesser Yellowlegs- 10, Stilt Sandpiper- 1, Least Sandpiper- 16, Semipalmated Sandpiper- 1, Ring-billed Gull- 3, Herring Gull- 1, Larus Sp.- 12, Turkey Vulture- 2, Belted Kingfisher- 3, Northern Flicker- 1, Alder Flycatcher- 3, Eastern Phoebe- 2, Eastern Kingbird- 1, Warbling Vireo- 2, Red-eyed Vireo- 2, American Crow- 2, Black-capped Chickadee- 1, Tree Swallow- 2, Northern Rough-winged Swallow- 1, Barn Swallow- 16, American Robin- 7, Cedar Waxwing- 16, American Goldfinch- 2, Vesper Sparrow- 1, Savannah Sparrow- 12, Song Sparrow- 2, Yellow Warbler- 1

Link to checklist: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S190045204>

On August 17th Copper Country Audubon held a bird walk at Calumet Sewage Ponds. It was exciting to be out there checking out what shorebird species Calumet has to offer. Stilt Sandpiper was again the highlight species, with some notable misses like Baird's Sandpiper and Wilson's Phalarope. A steady foggy mist kept us a touch damp, but overall, it was a good day of birding. Thanks to everyone who attended! See list below:

Wood Duck - 4, Blue-winged Teal - 6, Gadwall - 8, Mallard - 28, Ring-necked Duck - 12, Killdeer - 16, Semipalmated Plover - 4, Wilson's Snipe - 6, Spotted Sandpiper - 2, Solitary, Sandpiper - 14, Lesser Yellowlegs - 10, Greater Yellowlegs - 1, Stilt Sandpiper - 2, Least Sandpiper - 18, Semipalmated Sandpiper - 6, Ring-billed Gull - 48, Northern Harrier - 1, Red-eyed Vireo - 1, American Crow - 10, Black-capped Chickadee - 1, Barn Swallow - 3, Swallow sp. (Likely Cliff) - 1, Cedar Waxwing - 2, Savannah Sparrow - 4, Palm Warbler - 1, Yellow-rumped Warbler - 3, Indigo Bunting - 1



Link to checklist: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S191772812>

On August 31st, eight of us birders found ourselves in Copper Harbor for a great morning of birding Westcoat's Field and the town. There was an excellent warm southwest wind with good birds all around! Philadelphia Vireo and Bay-breasted Warbler were highlights back around Westcoat's Field. Sadly, however, it started to get too windy as we went into town. But, to our surprise, a Male Blackbird showed itself on the lake shore. No red and yellow coloring ruled out Red-winged. Its smaller stature with a shorter tail, smaller bill, and relative consistency in dark color ruled out Grackle. Rusty Blackbird seemed to be a safe bet even if rare, but after some further investigation by Nancy Leonard, we discovered it to be an apparent Brewer's Blackbird! Absolutely the highlight of the day. Thanks Nancy! Here is the written list and eBird checklists below. Let me know if you have any questions!



Westcoat's Field:

Ruby-throated Hummingbird - 1, Downy Woodpecker - 1, Pileated Woodpecker - 1, Northern Flicker - 3, Least Flycatcher - 1, Empidonax Sp. (Likely Alder) - 1, Philadelphia Vireo - 1, Red-eyed Vireo - 2, Blue Jay - 2, American Crow - 2, Common Raven - 1, Black-capped Chickadee - 3, Red-breasted Nuthatch - 1, Swainson's Thrush - 1, American Robin - 12, Cedar Waxwing - 22, Pine Siskin - 2, American Goldfinch - 2, Chipping Sparrow - 12, White-throated Sparrow - 1, Savannah Sparrow - 6, Song Sparrow - 4, Lincoln's Sparrow - 2, Swamp Sparrow - 1, Tennessee Warbler - 1, Nashville Warbler - 4, Common Yellowthroat - 3, American Redstart - 3, Cape May Warbler - 2, Northern Parula - 2, Magnolia Warbler - 1, Bay-breasted Warbler - 1, Palm Warbler - 3, Yellow-rumped Warbler - 1, Black-throated Green Warbler - 2, Indigo Bunting - 6

Link to checklist: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S193520736>

Copper Harbor Town: Red-breasted Merganser - 7, Herring Gull - 2, Ring-billed Gull - 2, Barn Swallow - 1, Brewer's Blackbird - 1

Link to checklist: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S193521886>



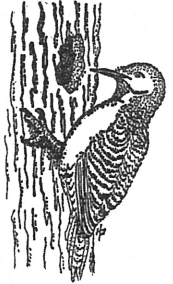
Newsletter Note Submit bird news and nature notes for next newsletter to murphnj@up.net 906 231 3605.
Check out our website: <https://www.coppercountryaudubon.org/> (and watch for the name change, it might cause search problems).

THANK YOU TO DONORS AND MEMBERS OF COPPER COUNTRY BIRD CLUB!

THANKS to everyone for your membership in Copper Country Bird Club and especially for your extra donations that make our projects possible. Your donation is for the birds! We couldn't do it without you!



*New Life Members: Sara and Dave Fehringer of Grosse Pointe, Hancock
Renewing Life Members: Ruth Baker of Baraga, Suzanne Knott of Lake Linden
Thanks for \$100 Donation from Barbara Schmid in memory of long-time member
Clarence "Jay" Stielstra of Manchester, MI*



Enormous thanks to the Leuthold Family Foundation for generous annual grants to fund the work of Copper Country Audubon!

(Note: A Leuthold grant was not applied for this year because the Isle Royale waterfowl survey was not conducted and last year's funding was not spent. Hopefully will be completed in 2025.)

The COPPER COUNTRY BIRDING EMAIL LIST. If you would like to join the *Copper Country Birding* Email hot-line list, go to groups.google.com and search for: *Copper Country Birding*. Follow the prompts to send a **join request** to the list owner, and within a day or so, you should be approved and ready to participate. The purpose of this list is for local birders to discuss local birds. Please give locations of your bird sightings. We discourage a lot of chatter that is off subject. Also, you must be a member of the list to post to it. Postings from outside the list are discarded. For information about the list contact Ted Soldan, tjsold@gmail.com.

*******SOME UPCOMING EVENTS*******

Saturday, October 19, 8:00 AM. Bird Walk at White City Park led by Brendan Leddy, contact him at bpleddy01@gmail.com or 248-462-9546.

Monday, October 21, 7:00 PM. Presentation: "Natural History of Common Loon in Michigan" by Joseph Kaplan. MTU Forest Resources and Environmental Science Building, Hesterberg Hall, Rm. G002.

Saturday, November 9, 8:00AM. Bird Walk at Baraga and Head of Keweenaw Bay led by Brendan Leddy contact him at bpleddy01@gmail.com or 248-462-9546.

Tuesday, November 12, 7:00 PM. Presentation: "Keweenaw Bird Year: Swans, Warblers and Falcons" by Joseph Youngman. MTU Forest Resources and Environmental Science Building, Hesterberg Hall, Rm. G002.

Saturday, December 14, 2024 - All Day! Copper Country Bird Club Christmas Bird Count: Join us and help count birds within our 15-mile diameter circle. Free and open to all! Also, count week is from Dec. 11 thru Dec. 17, so keep looking for unusual birds those days just before and just after our count date, **we do include count week birds!** Nancy Auer will be running the count and will pick a day and time for the pre-count organizational meeting. Look for a message on the Copper Country Birding email list or contact Nancy, 906-337-2690 home or email naauer@mtu.edu.

Sunday December 15th Keweenaw Bay Christmas Count After many years of no count conducted at Keweenaw Bay, Brendan Leddy is organizing a count for this year. Contact him at bpleddy01@gmail.com or 248-462-9546.

Eagle Harbor Christmas Count Zach Gayk will again be organizing the northernmost Christmas Count in Michigan. Those persons interested in helping out can contact him for the date. zachgayk@gmail.com

COPPER COUNTRY BIRD CLUB BOARD

President, Dana Richter

Vice President, Joseph Youngman

Secretary, Zach Gayk

Treasurer, Bill Deephouse

David Flaspohler

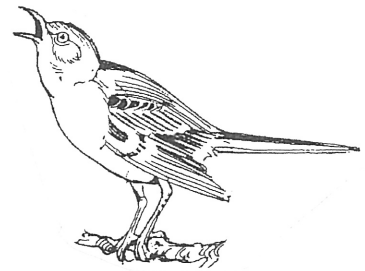
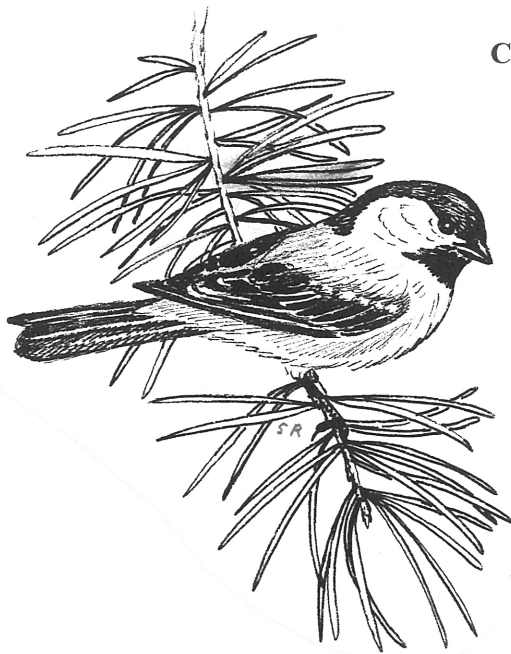
Steve Karpiak

Phil Quenzi

Amalia Anderson

Brendan Leddy

Tom Oliver



***BIRDWATCHING
IS A HAPPY THING!***

Injured Birds?

Raptor Rehab: Beth Maatta, 906-370-3825

Small Birds Rehab: Michelle Anderson, 906-299-2149

Copper Country Bird Club Membership: \$25 Regular, \$10 Student, \$300 Life. CC Bird Club is a 501(c)3 Nonprofit Organization. ***Is your Renewal Due?*** After your name on the mailing label is the date your membership is due; your last donation was sent one year prior to this date. Life members and courtesy mailings have no date. We're sorry for any mistakes; please let us know! ***Thanks!***

Copper Country Bird Club

P.O. Box 124

Houghton, MI 49931-0124

