



# Heron Tracks

The Quarterly Newsletter of Seven Ponds Nature Center

VOLUME 56 NUMBER 3 • FALL EDITION • SEPTEMBER—NOVEMBER 2023

## Birds and Smells

*Article by Carrie Spencer*

Last year, I was given a gift certificate to a book store that specializes in nature, especially birds. It was amazing, all those nature books to choose from. It took me days of looking just to decide what I was going to purchase. There was one book in particular that caught my interest, and even before I bought it, sent me down a rabbit hole. I was shocked by the book's description... can birds smell? Yes, I know, some birds (the turkey vulture (*Cathartes aura*) and some seabirds) had been documented as having the ability to smell their food, but they were an exception, not the rule. Had I been teaching this all wrong? I started searching up birds and their smelling abilities, and to my disappointment, yes, I had it wrong, but so have so many other people. It was decided; I had to have that book. *The Secret Perfume of Birds: Uncovering the Science of Avian Scent* by Danielle J. Whittaker is a truly eye-opening book, and I recommend it to anyone interested birds, but also those interested in science and wonderment.

Where did we all get this idea that birds cannot smell? As Dr. Whittaker states, every form of life, including plants and bacteria, have the ability to sense chemical compounds in their worlds; using their chemical senses: taste and smell. How is it an entire class of animals could lack an "ancient and fundamental sense"? The conventional wisdom was because birds have such great eye sight they gave up the ability to smell. Again, she wondered, why would evolving improved eyesight come at the cost of smell? How would this help them to survive better?

When smelling, we inhale air that has small organic molecules contained in it. Those molecules become bound to receptors within the lining of our noses. Thus activating olfactory sensory neurons that carry impulses to the olfactory bulb located at the front of the brain. The thought was the bigger the olfactory bulb the more highly developed the sense of smell would be, and would be a sense an animal would depend on more. Birds have extremely small olfactory bulbs relative to the size of their brain, that is, when comparing them to mammals. None of the studies, though, focusing on the size of the olfactory bulb provided information on how

well the olfactory bulb worked.

Also, a major contributor to this myth is John James Audubon. Audubon, as many of you may know, was a great cataloger and illustrator of birds in the nineteenth century, but probably not a very good scientist. His 1826 paper, *Account of the Habits of the Turkey Buzzard (Vultur aura) Particularly with the View of Exploring the Opinion Generally Entertained of Its Extraordinary Power of Smelling*, concluded that turkey vultures used their sense of sight and not smell to find food. To come to this conclusion, he conducted three experiments. In the first experiment, he stuffed a dead deer with grass and let the flesh dry completely so it did not smell like rotten meat, and left it out in the open so animals could see it readily. The vultures found the deer easily, but it took them a while to realize there was no meat inside. In the second experiment, Audubon had a dead pig concealed during a hot summer to figure out if vultures could locate the hidden pig. Many vultures flew over the area, but never approached the pig. Dogs did find the pig and ate it. In the third experiment, he used two hand-raised vulture chicks to see if they reacted to the meat he put in his pockets when he approached their enclosure. The chicks did not react to the smell of the meat alone, only reacting when they saw him. This paper caused



## Reflections...

As I write this, Camp Seven Ponds! is in full swing just outside my office window. This week, three groups of children ages six through eleven are participating in the second week of *Young Explorers* camp. Each morning I hear the excited sound of their voices as parents and grandparents drop them off for another day of camp. Led by one of our naturalists, they'll head off for a day filled with games, stories, and exploration in nature with their group. The *Pint-sized Explorers* (ages 2-3) and *Knee-high Naturalists* (ages 4-5) had their camp experience in June; still to come will be the *Junior Naturalists* (ages 12-15). All told, nearly 200 children will experience camp at Seven Ponds Nature Center this summer.

Generations. We hear it all the time. Parents who attended camp (formerly Summer Field School) or other programs at Seven Ponds as children are now bringing their own children to the nature center. But it goes beyond that. With our roots extending back to the spring of 1967, we also see grandparents here who first visited the nature center as children in those early days, then brought their children here, and are now escorting their grandchildren to Seven Ponds.

These adults often recount the wonder they experienced here as children, with recollections of treks on the trails and paddles on the ponds. Perhaps they crawled into the beaver lodge in our Discovery Room. Maybe they recall a snake held in hand or an insect captured for a few moments. Those experiences may have been the spark that lit the flame of a lifetime connection to nature. And now, as they bring their children or grandchildren back to Seven Ponds, a new generation of budding naturalists can experience their own touchstone moments here.

Generations. How long will it be before older adults, who visited the nature center as children, bring their great-grandchildren to Seven Ponds? A wonderful question to ponder as we look both forward and back!

Daryl Bernard, Executive Director



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## Trek the Trails with Seven Ponds!

October 1 through 31

Throughout the month of October, Seven Ponds staff will be hiking the trails in a (mostly) friendly competition with one another - here at the nature center and elsewhere, in Michigan and beyond.

You can join in the healthy fun by hiking on your own or joining us here at Seven Ponds. Nature center staff will be leading a hiking-paced trek around the ponds each Tuesday and Thursday morning throughout the month of October.

You can also follow the staff's progress throughout the month by checking the nature center's website for mileage updates and fun photos.

Through this event, we hope to encourage you to get outdoors, stay active, and be healthy. Nature is a great place to get in your daily steps!

### Tuesday and Thursday treks at Seven Ponds

October 3, 5, 10, 12,  
17, 19, 24, 26, 31

9:00-10:00 AM  
rain or shine



## *Heron Tracks*

is published quarterly by Seven Ponds Nature Center  
a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation  
[www.sevenponds.org](http://www.sevenponds.org) 810-796-3200

*The mission of Seven Ponds Nature Center is to conserve its natural environment as a sanctuary for native plants and animals and to serve as a community resource for environmental education that fosters an understanding, appreciation, and stewardship for our natural world.*

Executive Director:

Director of Environmental Education:

Office Manager & Rookery Gift Shop Manager:

Naturalists:

Weekday Receptionist:

Weekend Receptionist:

Maintenance - Buildings & Grounds:

Daryl Bernard

Carrie Spencer

Diane Rankin

Madison Christol, Katie McKiernan

Gina Stoldt

Damian Goidich

Del Hunsinger

decades of controversy. In Audubon's first experiment, it was criticized that maybe the vultures smelled some nutrient before it figured out the stuffed deer was a cheat. In the second experiment, it was thought that the vultures would have seen the pig because of the dogs feeding from it, but wouldn't have stopped because of the dogs. What ultimately was the biggest problem for Audubon's experiments was that he wasn't studying turkey vultures. From his descriptions of the birds and their behaviors, he was actually working with black vultures (*Coragyps atratus*). Turkey vultures do rely on scent to find their food (preferring food that has only been dead up to four days), and black vultures have keen eyesight for finding food. With these experiments and many others, Whittaker said researchers were asking the wrong questions, muddling the answers and coming up with unsupported conclusions.

In the mid- to late twentieth century, Dr. Bernice Wenzel, a UCLA neuroscientist and pioneer in the field of avian olfaction, researching bird brains, olfactory structures, and neurophysiology, suggested to really understand if and how birds use their sense of smell, we need to break down the questions into three parts. Do birds perceive odors? Next, do they change their behavior in response to those odors? Finally, if they do change their behavior in response to the odor, can they learn to change their behavior?

Through Dr. Wenzel's and many other's work (which focused mainly on tubenosed seabirds), it was clear science had underestimated the olfactory abilities of songbirds. Dr. Whittaker had been working with dark-eyed juncos (*Junco hyemalis*), and these studies on bird's olfactory abilities had her "captivated". She decided it was time to add a new dimension to her junco research. In her book she says she gets asked often "why study dark-eyed juncos and not something more exciting"? Why such a normal bird? Her answer is, nor-

mal is only boring if you think you know everything about it, and she thinks we are far from understanding the reasons why "normal" is normal in the first place.

Whittaker's *Secret Perfume of Birds* takes us down her twisty road of junco and olfactory research, and what an interesting ride it is. We learn that preen oil, the secretion birds make from their uropygial gland and spread through their feathers, is the source of a bird's body odor. Dark-eyed juncos smell (as described by Whittaker) a little musty and like forest. She found that brown-headed cowbirds (*Molothrus ater*) smelled like freshly baked sugar cookies, and that red-bellied woodpeckers (*Melanerpes carolinus*) smelled horrible. She discovered that the juncos could smell the odors produced by other birds. Not only could they smell other birds, but as her research continued she found that they used odor in their breeding behaviors; that there was a link between scent and hormones. How a junco smelled could let other juncos know they are a potential mate and that they are ready to breed. Later through her research, she finds that the juncos recognize the odor of known individuals, that they can smell how healthy a potential mate is, use scent to evaluate potential rivals, and how odor could tell how an individual might respond in a social situation. Whittaker's later research shows how bacteria play a role in odor. The world of bacteria, microbes, is a remarkable thing! I appreciated microbes before this book, but now I am gobsmacked by them.

Being a naturalist for as many years as I have (since 1999) you find the wonderment in the world every day, but sometimes you find a little treasure, like this book, and the world opens up in a whole new way. I am glad I found this book, and I am glad I will no longer teach or think that birds can't smell!



# Seven Ponds Tributes

Memorials, Buy-a-Tree, In Honor

## ***In memory of Rudolph (Rudy) Ams***

- John & Ingrid Ams
- Rosalie Ams
- Meriam Elwell
- Lisa Imerman
- Dale & Gail Kleimola
- Terry & Mary Lapinski
- Chris Martin
- Marie Wirtz
- Friends of Rudy & Rosalie
- Faith Troy Small Group: Elliot, Keup, Nicodemi, and Slankster families

## ***In memory of John Stoll***

- The Caldwell Family
- William & Marlene Garrett
- Colin Kennedy
- Kay Schopf

## ***Corks & Caps donation in memory of Richard Greer, Sr.***

- Richard Greer, Jr.

## ***In memory of Helen Jones***

- Scott J. Jones

## ***Buy-a-Tree in honor of Shirley Friedmann***

- Joseph Friedmann

## ***Buy-a-Tree in memory of Orb Coffel***

- Karen Gossick

## ***Buy-a-Tree in memory of Marcia Cook***

- Marie & Bernie Wirtz



## **Wandering with the Birds** *By Daryl Bernard*

I've always been a list-keeper. Even as a young boy, I made lists for just about everything. I made a list of all the *Golden Guides* I had in my collection (and another list of all the titles I still needed). I had a list of all the state parks at which we camped. As I grew older, I had a list of all the concerts I attended (and lists of all the songs artists performed at those concerts). I had a list of all the roller coasters I had ridden (totaling more than 160). And of course, all the states I had visited. I think lists help me organize things in my brain.

When I became a birder, it was only natural for me to keep a list of all the birds I saw and identified. This is called a birder's Life List – a list many birders keep. But in birding there are so many more lists that can be kept! Yard lists, state lists, year lists, and so on. Sometime during 2015 I started keeping county lists – that is, lists of all the birds seen in each county. For these lists, I used an Excel spreadsheet to help stay organized, with columns for the counties and rows for the birds. As my modest county lists started to grow, I decided to pursue a goal of seeing 100 (or more) birds in each of Michigan's 83 counties.

Month by month, year by year, my Michigan county lists grew. I planned day trips, weekend excursions, and week-long vacations around the counties I needed to visit and the birds I wanted to see. It would usually take me multiple trips to a county to reach the century mark – different birds are present at different

times of the year. One after another the counties started to fall. And through this quest I began to get to know this wonderful state much better than I had ever anticipated. I found small parks, hidden cemeteries, backroads and byways, boat launches and river crossings, a marsh here, an open field there, even sewage treatment ponds and landfills. Oh, the places birders will go!

By the beginning of this year, I had just eight counties remaining with under 100 bird species – all in the Upper Peninsula. A successful birding trip over the bridge in May brought that number down to a single county: Gogebic, at the far western end of the U.P., where I needed just seven more bird species to reach 100. How fitting that my final county was located the greatest distance from my home.

I made the long drive north then west during late July, and over the course of a weekend notched ten new birds for Gogebic County, finally achieving the goal I had set nine years prior. How did that feel? Well, satisfying, of course. But as I look back on all the trips, the early morning wakeups, the frigid winter days, the steamy, buggy summer walks, and of course all the birds, I realize that this quest was far more about the journey than the destination.

What a pleasure it has been to explore our amazing Great Lakes state, while out there wandering with the birds.

# 2023 CAMP SEVEN PONDS! RECAP



# Volunteer News

## On the Trail

Thanks to all the many volunteers who helped with a variety of tasks this past summer:

- Thanks to **Claudine Zach** for her care of the animals in our Critter Corner every week - her dedication to our animals is truly appreciated!
- Thanks to the **employees of WYLD** for all their help during a full day of work - we accomplished so much!
- Thanks to **Nancy Kautz** and **Kathy Cole** for their help running our booth at Blake's Lavender Festival.
- Thanks to our **Friends of Herbs** for all their work in the herb garden this summer.
- Thanks to our **Butterfly Gardeners** for once again creating and maintaining a beautiful pollinator garden.
- Thanks to **the Stingers** for another awesome effort hosting their rummage sale to raise funds for the center.
- Thanks to **Julie Markgraf, Marianna Fitzgerald, Madelyn Gucciardi, and Natalie Collins** for helping the Stingers with the rummage sale. **Karen Gossick, Mary Frost, and Paige Bannister** also helped, and have since joined the Stingers!
- Thanks to **Gerald Buck** for bringing his equipment to the nature center and grooming and grading our driveway and parking lot.
- Thanks to **Marianna Fitzgerald** for all the work she has put in towards our library restructuring. Thanks also to **Jessica Bostian, Dr. Joan Beaudoin, Madaleine Wesol, and Griffin Barkdoll**, who have assisted with our library project.
- **Karen Blaszyk, Marianne Bohm, Marianna Fitzgerald, Chuck Samples, Nancy Kautz, Kathy Cole, Terry Shaw, and Tanna Chapin** for all their help monitoring the nest boxes this season.

If you are interested in volunteering at Seven Ponds, contact Katie McKiernan at [kmckiernan@sevenponds.org](mailto:kmckiernan@sevenponds.org), call us at 810-796-3200, or complete the volunteer interest form on our website at [sevenponds.org](http://sevenponds.org).

## ASSISTANT NATURALIST CLASSES

These classes are open to Assistant Naturalists only. Classes take place on the third Thursday of the month and begin at 3:00 PM. If you would like to become a part of this rewarding program in helping to educate and engage visitors of the nature center, contact Naturalist Katie McKiernan at 810-796-3200 or [kmckiernan@sevenponds.org](mailto:kmckiernan@sevenponds.org).

### SEPTEMBER

#### Feathers

Learn the how, what, and why of fantastic feathers.

### OCTOBER

#### Fall Caterpillars

It's fuzzy caterpillar season and we'll celebrate that by diving into all things caterpillars!

### NOVEMBER

#### Winter Weeds

Plant identification is a bit tricky when bright blooms get dull and wither, so we will talk about other ways to figure out a plant's identity.

## 2023 Rummage Sale Recap

The Stingers' Annual Rummage Sale was held during mid-June at the nature center and was a resounding success! The sale raised over \$7,000 - all from donations for items purchased. These funds directly benefit the programs and projects at Seven Ponds, and we are truly grateful for the effort of our dedicated crew of Stingers. Once again, our Stingers were overwhelmed with the number of donated items - and they thank everybody who donated items for the sale, and all those who came out shopping and made generous offers for the goods they took home. We will begin accepting items for next year's sale on March 1. Look for a further announcement in the winter edition of *Heron Tracks*.

## Seven Ponds Clubs!

**Astronomy Club • Beekeeping Club  
Birding Club • Photography Club  
Butterfly Gardeners • Friends of Herbs  
Friends of Seven Ponds (The Stingers)**

**Visitors are welcome at all club meetings.**

For additional information about any of the clubs which meet at Seven Ponds, please visit [sevenponds.org](http://sevenponds.org) or call the nature center at

# Around the Center

**Farewell Madeline** After spending much of the summer here at Seven Ponds, intern naturalist Madeline Luke-ns is back at Michigan Tech for her final semester of studies. Madeline was a wonderful addition to our team, helping with school groups when she first arrived, and then leading a group during each week of Camp Seven Ponds! Her "vibe" matched perfectly with ours, and she helped make Camp Seven Ponds! extra special for our campers with her kindness and patience. We will truly miss Madeline, and we wish her well as she finishes her formal education and pursues a career in environmental education.

## WYLD Volunteers

The nature center staff would like to extend a very special thanks to the seventeen wonderful volunteers from WYLD who came out to the nature center in June and put in a total of 107 work hours helping us with land stewardship tasks. They cheerfully helped clean our birdfeeder area, weed our Demonstration Garden, trim and clear trails, and pull an astounding dumpster FULL of invasive dame's rocket. They were fun, energetic, and hard working - all day long! Thanks to their company, WYLD, for their community focus and for encouraging their employees to volunteer at places like Seven Ponds. Their help was beyond measure!

If your company or organization is looking for a team-building volunteer opportunity, Seven Ponds is a great place to get together and make a difference. We have plenty of trail and garden work that could be done by your group. Many hands make light work! Contact Naturalist Katie McKiernan to discuss the possibilities.

## Holiday Auction - Save the Date

We are excited to announce the nature center's annual **Holiday Auction and Christmas Party** will take place Saturday, December 2 at 6:30 PM. We are ready to celebrate the season with you - our members - and we hope all of you will consider joining us for this wonderful celebration. The evening is always a lot of fun and all Seven Ponds members and their guests are invited. Now is a good time to start thinking about items for the silent and live auctions. Auction items might include artwork, antiques, holiday decor, services, or gift certificates. Use your talents and resources to provide a unique item for the auction. This is a very important event for the nature center and we need everyone's help to make this year's auction a big success. Make a contribution and then join us for an entertaining evening. All proceeds help support environmental education activities at Seven Ponds. Contact the nature center for additional information.

## Corks & Caps: a Big Success Again!

Seven Ponds held its annual Corks & Caps fundraising event on June 9 at the Metamora Golf & Country Club. Over 170 people attended this event, which featured a wonderful dinner, wine and beer, raffles, live auction, and the beautiful setting at the country club - and another event with incredible weather! Because of the wonderful generosity of those present, the nature center netted just over \$31,000 at this event. Special thanks to Rick Fleming and his staff at the Metamora Golf & Country Club for providing an outstanding venue and great service, to Mike Butterfield for expertly handling emcee duties, and to Brian Rowley for donating his professional auctioneer services during our live auction. Generous bidding during our live auction helped make that portion of the evening a huge success. We truly appreciate all the donated live auction items and baskets for our raffle. Additional thanks, of course, to all those who purchased a sponsorship for the event (see below) or made additional contributions to help make the evening a big success.

Next year's event will take place on Saturday, August 17, 2024. Mark your calendars and plan on joining us.

**Seven Ponds Nature Center's  
2023 Corks & Caps  
Thank You Sponsors!**

**Platinum**

<i>Advanced Auto Trends</i>	<i>Kim &amp; Heidi Mehl</i>
<i>Gaye Butterfield</i>	<i>Jocelyn Scofield</i>
<i>Denis &amp; Karen Callewaert</i>	<i>Dr. James Sillers</i>
<i>Thomas &amp; Carol Cracchiolo Foundation</i>	<i>Metamora Equestrian Conservation Alliance</i>
<i>Robert &amp; Lisa Katzman</i>	<i>Douglas &amp; Nancy Toppin</i>
<i>Dr. Michael Kubinski, DDS</i>	<i>Charles &amp; Yolanda Turner</i>

**Silver**

<i>ChoiceOne Bank</i>	<i>Bill &amp; Karen Rykhus</i>
<i>Dr. &amp; Mrs. Gregory Gossick</i>	<i>Susie Stroh</i>
<i>Chris &amp; Kelly Heyner</i>	<i>Casey &amp; Wendy Wise</i>
<i>Dale &amp; Julie Markgraf</i>	

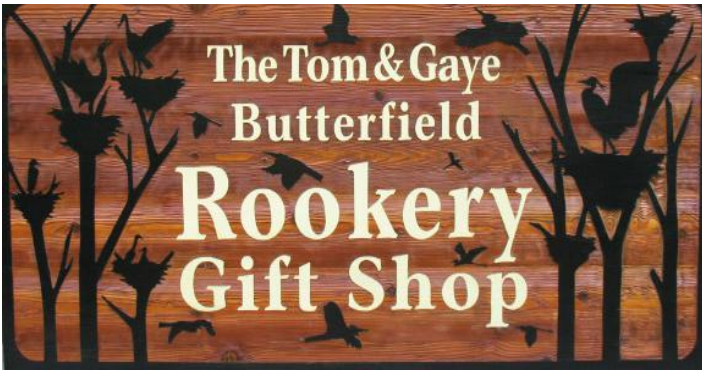
**Bronze**

<i>Brian &amp; Monique Bates</i>	<i>Roy &amp; Barbara Holden</i>
<i>Douglas &amp; Dee Ann Bauer</i>	<i>Curt Carter &amp; Marty Homan</i>
<i>Bruce &amp; Bonnie Bennyhoff</i>	<i>Wayne &amp; Amelia Inman</i>
<i>Katherine Horton Boyle</i>	<i>Richard &amp; Nancy Kautz</i>
<i>Gerald &amp; Nancy Buck</i>	<i>Raymond &amp; Delores Malskis</i>
<i>Gregory &amp; Garrett Markgraf- Grimes</i>	<i>Joanna Pease &amp; Christopher Chamberlin</i>
<i>Robert &amp; Sarah Champion</i>	<i>Bill &amp; Lynn Turner</i>
<i>David &amp; Kathy Churchill</i>	<i>Kim Van Dyke</i>
<i>Emory &amp; Christina Clark</i>	<i>Metamora Equestrian Conservation Alliance</i>

**Special Thanks for their Contributions**

<i>L.A.S.E.R. Skating Center</i>	<i>Rowley Auctions</i>
<i>Metamora Golf &amp; Country Club</i>	<i>Stone Oak Farm</i>





Be sure to check out the Rookery Gift Shop during our *Party at the Ponds* on September 9 - we have a few surprises planned for you!

Don't forget that members get a 10% discount (volunteers get 20%) off most purchases in the shop.

Include a Seven Ponds Nature Center gift membership or Rookery gift certificate with your next purchase. If you give a gift membership to a friend or family member, you are also giving them 10% off purchases for the entire year. This is truly a gift that keeps giving through all the seasons.

The Rookery Gift Shop is open during our normal business hours, Tuesday through Sunday, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

*Purchases made in the Rookery Gift Shop support the nature center, including all of the programs we do and land stewardship we perform. Your purchase dollars help us do good things!*

**THINK GLOBALLY, SHOP LOCALLY**

Have you been waiting for a new Seven Ponds hat? Today is your lucky day - the hats have arrived! We have a few colors to choose from, so stop by and check them out.

Some other new items on our shelves recently:

- Ocean fossil art
- Children's books
- Nature-themed bandanas
- Tree Trunk Art Jewelry and Succulent art
- Friends of Herbs dip mixes and Italian seasoning

Our Seven Ponds one-liter Nalgene water bottles have been a big hit this summer. They make great gifts for friends and family while also helping protect our environment by reducing single-use plastic water bottles.



**Seven Ponds Nature Center**

3854 Crawford Road  
Dryden, MI 48428  
810-796-3200  
www.sevenponds.org

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# Fall Programs

September - October - November  
2023

Autumn brings crisp, cool air, and glorious colors to the landscape, making it a wonderful season to visit Seven Ponds. Check out the line-up of fun and informational programs below, and join us as we celebrate the season. Programs are \$3 for members and \$5 for non-members unless otherwise noted. Pre-registration is required for all programs, and registering online is quick and easy. Visit [sevenponds.org](http://sevenponds.org) to register.

## September

### ***Paddle the Ponds***

Saturday, September 2, 10:00 am

Take a guided trip around the ponds with one of our naturalists. Come dressed for the weather. Minimum: 5 years old to ride and 10 years old to paddle.

### ***Prairie Walk***

Sunday, September 3, 2:00 pm

We're nearing the end of summer and the prairie is a beautiful sight to see! Hike with a naturalist to learn about the amazing features of our tallgrass prairie.

### ***Yoga at the Ponds with Peaceful Moon Yoga***

Thursdays, September 7, 14, 21, 28 6:00-7:00 pm

Unwind, rejuvenate and relax with Cat Minolli and the 'Peaceful Moon' series. These classes are designed for newcomers and beginning yoga students and/or those who wish to become re-acquainted with the practice. Participants will experience the mind, body, spirit connection while learning basic yoga poses in a serene environment. You don't have to be able to touch your toes or twist into a pretzel to participate, however many postures are done from a seated or prone position on the floor. Participants should wear comfortable clothing and bring a yoga mat or a blanket. Pillows, additional blankets, and any other "creature comforts" are also welcome. Fee is \$15.00 per session or \$50.00 for the full four-week series.

### ***Party at the Ponds***

Saturday, September 9, 12:00-6:00 pm

Please see flier insert for complete details.

### ***Grandparents Day Hike***

Sunday, September 10, 3:00 pm

Grab your grandkids (or grandparents) and enjoy a fun nature hike with one of the naturalists on Grandparents Day! We will explore Seven Ponds in September in celebration of family.

### ***Fall Migration Exploration***

Saturday, September 16, 9:00 am

Pack your binoculars and let's hit the trails! We'll learn about migration and see which birds are hanging out around the nature center.

### ***Invasive Species Work Day***

Sunday, September 17, 2:00 pm

Invasive species are in full swing here at Seven Ponds. These work days provide a great opportunity for people who are community-minded to come out and get some volunteer hours helping the nature center. Join our Land Steward as you learn about invasive plant species, and also help manage them. Please bring gloves and water; tools will be provided.

### ***End of Summer Stroll***

Sunday, September 24, 2:00 pm

As summer comes slowly to a close we will walk the trails and see what nature is doing in preparation for the seasons changes.

## October

### ***Fall Hike in Jonathan Woods***

Sunday, October 1, 2:00 pm

The cool, crisp days of autumn are upon us, and the big trees in Jonathan Woods should be ablaze in fall color. Take a walk through Jonathan Woods with one of our naturalists and enjoy the October air. We will meet at the nature center and drive over separately.

### ***Enchanted Woodland***

Saturday, October 7 - see flier insert for complete details.

### ***Vibrant Fall Walk***

Sunday, October 8, 2:00 pm

The colors around the ponds should be something magical this time of year. We will casually stroll through different parts of our property to view the sights and sounds of nature getting ready for winter.

### **Fantasy Forest Adventure**

Saturday, October 14, 1:00 pm

Explore Seven Ponds like never before! We'll make fairy houses along the trails, go on a magical scavenger hunt, and create pirate ships to launch from the dock.

### **Yoga at the Ponds with Peaceful Moon Yoga**

Thursdays, October 19, 26, November 2, 9, 6:00-7:00 pm

See September for the full yoga program description.

Fee is \$15.00 per session or \$50.00 for the full four-week series.

### **Autumn Craft Day**

Sunday, October 22, 2:00 pm

One of the best times to do a craft is in the fall. The colors and texture lend inspiration to make feel good creations. All supplies will be provided. Just bring your creativity.

### **Full Moon Hike**

Saturday, October 28, 7:00 pm

On this hike we'll explore nature after dark by walking our trails, calling for owls, and learning all about nocturnal adaptations.

### **Invasive Species Work Day**

Sunday, October 29, 2:00 pm

Invasive species are in full swing here at Seven Ponds. These work days provide a great opportunity for people who are community-minded to come out and get some volunteer hours helping the nature center. Join our Land Steward as you learn about invasive plant species, and also help manage them. Please bring gloves and water; tools will be provided.



## **November**

### **Owl Prowl**

Saturday, November 4, 7:00 pm

Step into the world of night with one of Seven Ponds' naturalists to look for the owls that call the center home.

### **Polly Ann Trail Dog Walk**

Sunday, November 5, 2:00 pm

Join Seven Ponds Nature Center as we partner with the Polly Ann Trail to take a stroll with man's best friend! We will meet up at Memorial Park in Dryden to hit the trail. Dogs must be well behaved and leashed at all times.

### **Science Saturday**

Saturday, November 11, 1:00 pm

Come explore the natural world using microscopes, water tests, magnifying glasses, creative engineering, and more. Bring your curiosity and we'll provide the rest!

### **Hike Around the Ponds**

Sunday, November 12, 2:00 pm

With leaves falling off the trees each day, we'll take advantage of the opportunity to see through the forest to the ponds. On this hike we'll check out Treetop Pond, Little Pond, Miller Pond, Big Pond, and Long Pond. It's all about the ponds!

### **Prairie Seed Collecting**

Saturday, November 18, 3:00 pm

Want to attract all kinds of animals to your property? Plant native plants! Follow a naturalist on a turn around our tall-grass prairie to collect seeds you can take home to start your own ecosystem.

### **North-80 Walk**

Sunday, November 19, 1:00 pm

Before December comes and the holidays start, let's venture into the North-80 and view the signs of winter's approach.

### **Nature Center Interpretive Building Closure**

Thursday and Friday, November 23-24

The Interpretive Building will be closed so the staff can enjoy Thanksgiving. As always, Seven Ponds members may use the trails dawn to dusk.

### **Fall Scavenger Hunt**

Saturday, November 25, 1:00-4:00 pm

While some critters may be finding somewhere cozy to spend the winter, we still have a lot happening on our trails. Stop in and grab a scavenger hunt, find all the things on the list, and head back inside to claim your prize. Show up anytime between 1:00-4:00 (must complete scavenger hunt by 5:00 pm).

### **Thanksgiving Weekend Walk**

Sunday, November 26, 2:00 pm

Looking for something to do with the family after the holiday feast? Let's enjoy a nice walk around the ponds and see how winter is approaching the nature center.



# Knee-High Naturalists Classes

**Fridays**

**10:00 - 11:30 am**

**Fee: \$7.00 per child**

For preschool children around 3 or 4 years old.

Come out and enjoy nature with your child. All classes include nature fun like walks, crafts, games, stories, snacks, and so much more! Please make arrangements for your other children.

**Please DRESS for the WEATHER**

**Space limited. Online registration required.**

**Prairie Play ~ September 15**

**Fall ~ October 27**

**Rabbits ~ November 17**

**Winter ~ December 15**

**Nighttime ~ January 19**

**Tracks ~ February 16**

**Spring ~ March 22**

**Fish ~ April 19**

**Baby Animals ~ May 17**

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## Pint-sized Explorers Classes

**Thursdays OR Saturdays**

**Fee: \$7.00 per child**

For children 1 or 2 years old.

Pint-Sized Explorers (1-3 years old) will have fun exploring nature with their adults. During this special time, toddlers and their adults will be outside exploring nature with the help of stories, songs, activities, and nature discovery. Please make arrangements for your other children.

**Please DRESS for the WEATHER**

**Space limited. Online registration required.**

**Shapes in Nature**

Thursday, September 14th, 9:30-10:15 am -OR-

Saturday, September 16th, 2:00-2:45 pm

**Going on a Leaf Hunt**

Thursday, October 5th, 9:30-10:15 am -OR-

Saturday, October 7th, 2:00-2:45 pm

**Getting Ready for Winter**

Thursday, November 2nd, 9:30-10:15 am -OR-

Saturday, November 4th, 2:00-2:45 pm

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## Nature Study Series for Homeschoolers

Seven Ponds Nature Center is an ideal outdoor classroom where children can experience nature first hand. In this series of programs, our experienced naturalists guide students toward an awareness and appreciation of our natural world, using hands-on activities, specimens, slide shows, and nature walks. These programs complement state science objectives and focus on ecological concepts.

**Please DRESS for the WEATHER**

**Space limited. Online registration required.**

**Fee: \$4.00 per person.**

**Seeds and Their Amazing Journey**

Wednesday, September 27, 1:00-3:00 pm

Grades K-2 and Grades 3-6

**Seasonal Changes**

Wednesday, October 18, 1:00-3:00 pm

Grades K-2 and Grades 3-6

**Exploring the World of Weasels**

Wednesday, November 15, 1:00-3:00 pm

Grades K-2 and Grades 3-6

# FALL BIRD WALKS

This fall we will offer three bird walks on Wednesday mornings, one for each month from September through November. Seven Ponds bird walks are open to birders of all skill and experience levels, and beginners are always welcome. Bring your binoculars, your enthusiasm, and be sure to dress for the weather. These bird walks are \$3 for Seven Ponds members, and \$5 for non-members, unless otherwise noted. Pre-registration is required, and bird walks are limited to ten (10) participants. Please note the start times below and arrive on time and ready to bird!

## Fall Bird Walk #1

**Wednesday, September 13, 7:30 AM ~ LAKE ST. CLAIR METROPARK**

Lake St. Clair Metropark is located along the shores of the "sixth Great Lake" and is well-known among birders as a highly productive birding hotspot. The shoreline, combined with wooded areas and an extensive marsh, concentrate birds in an otherwise developed area. In mid-September waterfowl will begin arriving, and we should encounter a wide variety of shorebirds, gulls, terns, herons, raptors, and songbirds that all use this location as a stopover during migration. As many as 27 warblers have been seen here during September. This will be a carpool trip, and we will leave the nature center at 6:30 so we can begin birding by about 7:30. Return mid-afternoon. Park entry not included in registration fee.

## FALL BIRD WALK #2

**Wednesday, October 11, 8:00 AM ~ SUTHERLAND NATURE SANCTUARY**

The birding at this local sanctuary is always good and sometimes fantastic. A mix of habitat types ensures a wide range of songbirds. Join us as we walk the trails of this Lapeer County gem in search of feathered friends.



## FALL BIRD WALK #3

**Wednesday, November 8, 8:00 AM ~ BEAR CREEK NATURE PARK**

This Oakland Township Park has become a favorite Seven Ponds bird walk destination. Located just 18 miles south of the nature center, we'll meet at the park and enjoy a late fall morning of birding. Most of our migrating songbirds will have moved on by now, but we should be seeing some of our winter visitors, and who knows what else we might find lingering?

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## \*\*\*UPCOMING SEVEN PONDS FIELD TOURS\*\*\*

**South Florida Birding April 12-20, 2024**

**With Seven Ponds Nature Center and Woodstars Birding & Nature Tours**

**Everglades, Pinewoods, Miami Urban, Upper & Lower Keys, Dry Tortugas National Park**

**Black Hills & Badlands Birding May 24-30, 2024**

**With Seven Ponds Nature Center and Rocky Mountain Birding**

**Black Hills, Badlands National Park, Devil's Tower National Monument, Shortgrass Prairie**

**Isle Royale Adventure June 16-22, 2024**

**A Natural History Field Tour with Seven Ponds Nature Center**

**Copper Harbor, Keweenaw Peninsula, Isle Royale National Park**

*Visit the nature center's website for full field tour itineraries and registration information*