

# Holland Audubon Club



March 2024  
Newsletter

**Meeting March 12<sup>th</sup> at Hope Church, 77 W. 11<sup>th</sup> St.**

**Holland MI; at 7pm.** Masks optional but encouraged if you're sniffly

Peoplefeeder: Carol Brands

**"Purple Martins-Backyard Friends" by Penny Briscoe**

Most 'pets' require daily attention, lots of food, extra space and time in our lives which can seem demanding, however, Penny has a secret she's going to share. Join Holland Audubon Club as we learn the joys and benefits of Purple Martins, friendly and entertaining aerial acrobats, the largest of the swallows, they are the perfect backyard pets. Purple Martins prefer raising their young in colonies close to humans—and the species found east of the Rockies (*Progne subis*) no longer nests in natural cavities. These lovely, dark-colored songbirds with feathers of a purple sheen are one hundred percent dependent on humans for nesting houses or gourds for breeding. While thousands of Purple Martin "landlords" provide that housing, in the Great Lakes area, in particular, Purple Martin numbers are declining sharply. Penny will share what you can do to attract Purple Martins to your home and effectively manage a colony. While helping this native songbird that is in danger, your reward will be enjoying, up close, their entertaining chick-rearing routine, flying expertise, and bubbly, cheerful twitters.

Penny Briscoe has been a Purple Martin landlord for 38 years, hosting the same successful long-standing colony on Barton Lake just south of Vicksburg. Penny is a Purple Martin mentor for the nation-wide Purple Martin Conservation Association and has earned Master Naturalist designation through the Michigan Conservation Stewards Program, MSU Extension Services, and is actively involved in establishing a native plant habitat on the Briscoe properties. A retired public high school educator, Penny has enjoyed teaching others about Purple Martins and colony management, and has been volunteering her time in Michigan by encouraging more landlords in order to increase Michigan's Purple Martin population. More recently she has been working with Michigan Audubon in this endeavor.

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*Image courtesy of Karen Brown, Michiana Audubon*



*Purple Martin colony image courtesy of Penny Briscoe*

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The Saugatuck-Douglas District Library – 174 Center St, Douglas; - will host a book discussion about "A Wing and a Prayer: The Race to Save Our Vanishing Birds" Wednesday, March 27<sup>th</sup>, 7pm.

Authors Anders and Beverly Gyllenhaal's captivating drama is part travel adventure, detective story and loving tribute to the avian world.

**Enter our BIRD SIGHTINGS DRAWING for a special prize.**

Holland Audubon Club will soon be the featured Chapter spotlight in the Jack Pine Warbler publication of Michigan Audubon. Our board met recently to discuss and submit information requested. Watch for that, and if you aren't a Michigan Audubon member, now is a great time to join and see our club featured.

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Ottawa County Parks & Recreation Commission

616-786-4847 ~ [www.miottawa.org/parks](http://www.miottawa.org/parks) ~

3/16; 9:30a&11:10a; Coffee with the Birds; Hemlock NC  
 4/3; 8a; Bird Walk; Hemlock NC  
 4/5; 7:30p; Woodcock Walk; Grand River Park  
 4/6; 7:30p; Woodcock Walk; Hemlock NC



616-393-0453 [www.outdoordiscovery.org](http://www.outdoordiscovery.org) ~

3/16, 3/23; 11a-3p; Maple Sugar Time; Van Raalte Farm  
 4/2; 8:30p; Woodcock Walk; ODC  
 4/6; 11a; Live Birds of Prey; Final Four ODC



616-355-1057 ~ [www.degraaf.org](http://www.degraaf.org) ~

**Holland Audubon Club Board of Directors**

[Redacted names of board members]

Jr Audubon Chair

What's so special about an Orange-tufted Spiderhunter, spotted in the Philippines? Along with its distinctive red eye, it was also the 10,000<sup>th</sup> bird on the life list of Peter Kaestner, world record holder. Congratulations, Peter. (Our own Steve Hamberg is in, or close to the world top 50 listers, with 7677, as of January 2024).

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Did you get a chance to see the Limpkin a while back? The story, from the 'bird's eye' view of the 11 year old who ID'd it is online, just search for Malcolm Oosting-Sineath or Limpkin-an ABA young birder essay.

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*Downy Woodpecker by Ed Post*



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