

Haehule Sanctuary News



Phyllis Haehule Memorial Sanctuary

Owned By Michigan Audubon

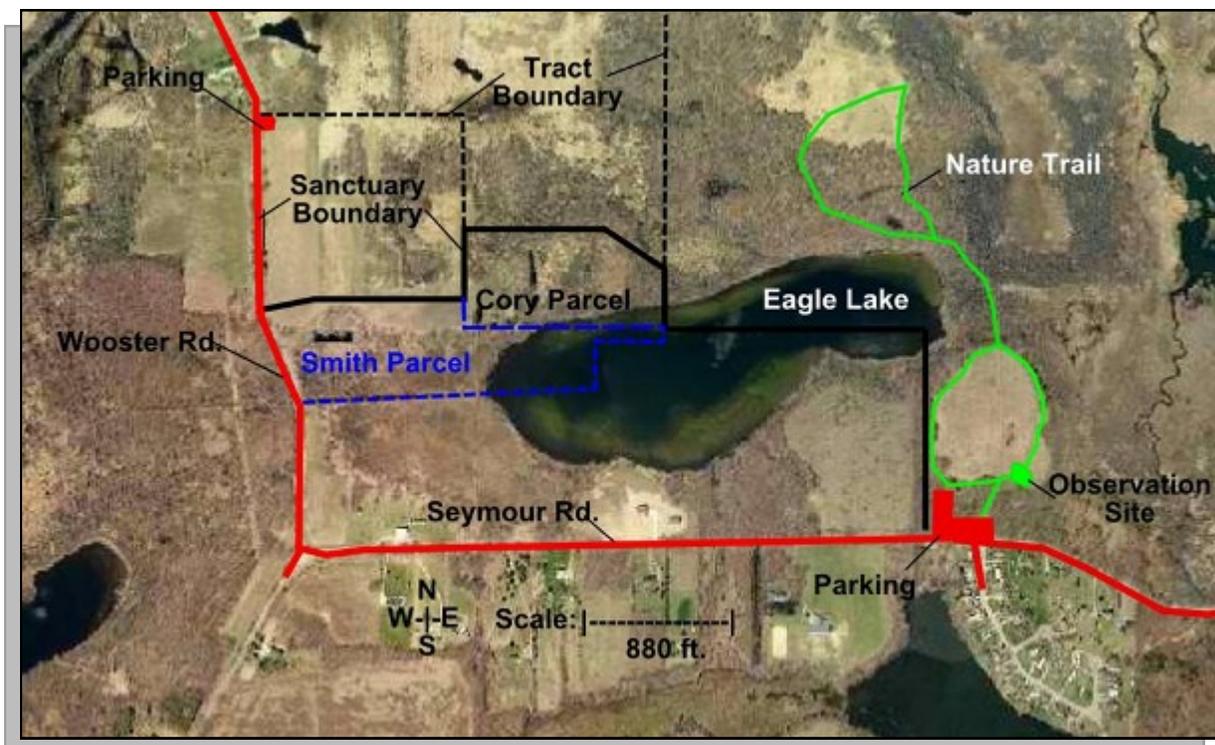
Maintained and Operated by The Jackson Audubon Society

Preserving and Protecting our Natural World

Fall 2018



ACQUISITION OF PETER AND GWYNETH SCHROEDER TRACT



We are happy to announce that your generous donations have resulted in the acquisition of 25 acres, to be designated as the Peter and Gwyneth Schroeder Tract, and identified above as the Smith Parcel.

Members of the Haehule Sanctuary Land Acquisition Subcommittee – Ron Hoffman, Lathe Claflin and Gary Siegrist – have spearheaded this effort. Besides numerous meetings and phone calls and emails with the owner, appropriate officials, and with the property's neighbors, they also did an environmental study.

They found that historically, the seven upland acres of this property have been used as cropland. The remaining thirteen are wetlands and seven are lake bottom.

No chemicals or spills have occurred on this land. Cottonwood, willows and silky dogwood are found in the wooded wetland and sedges and cattails are found in the emergent marsh.

The cropland segment can be planted to native grasses. This will provide more habitat for endangered grassland birds who prefer large areas for nesting. The purchase of this parcel also protects the wetland and maintains the natural water level in Eagle Lake.

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Peter and Gwyneth Schroeder Tract (cont'd)

On August 15th Gary Siegrist and Ron Hoffman of Haehnle Sanctuary and Heather Good, Executive Director of Michigan Audubon Society, met with George Smith, the owner. The parcel was signed over to MAS for \$90,000 plus title insurance, prorated taxes, etc. This brought the total to \$91,435.65, excluding MA's attorney fees.

This was made possible by the generosity of the various organizations and individuals listed below:

Anonymous, Doris Applebaum, Elizabeth Bishop, Gary Childs, Judith Cory, Richard Hansen, Joan & Ron Hoffman, Melanie & Wallace Hopp, William Hudson, Jackson Audubon Society, Steve Jerant, Barbara Ketchum, Micky Kress, Bob Ochs, John & Fran Parker, Helena Robinovitz, Patty Schmidt, Gary Siegrist, Charity Steere, Marc Vadnais, Catherine Whitney, John A. Woollam, and Hugh Zernickow.

While many of these individuals have donated in the past, one organization, the Woollam Foundation, has been exceptionally generous this time.



In return, John and Cyndi Woollam, foundation founders asked to name the parcel The Peter and Gwyneth Schroeder Tract, in honor of John's university physics teacher and life-long mentor, Dr. Peter Schroeder. John wrote the following:

"I was Peter Schroeder's graduate student from 1961 to February 1967. He was more of a mentor than a boss, a leadership style I adopted for my career and personal life. He gave his students freedom to discover on their own, and to be awed by the secrets they found in the world of physics.... Only long after graduating and well into a career, did I learn of Peter and Gwyneth's deep love of nature and their desires for preservation of the environment.... This Peter and Gwyneth Schroeder Tract is dedicated to their lifetime interest in nature and its conservation, including their love of birds and flowers and the habitats where they live."

The public dedication of this new acquisition will be Saturday, October 27th at 4 p.m. at the kiosk overlook at Haehnle Sanctuary. We hope to see you there!

Helena Robinovitz



The grasshopper sparrow (above) and the Henslow's sparrow (above right) are just two of several grassland birds that may benefit from this acquisition.

Haehnle Chosen as Site for Swamp Sparrow Study

By Lathe Clafin

In 2011 a doctoral student named Robert Lachlan approached us about collecting songs of Swamp Sparrows (SWSP) at Haehnle Sanctuary as part of his thesis project at Duke University. He wanted to study how bird song might reflect stable populations of SWSPs in different locations.

This research project meets one of the Sanctuary goals of increasing scientific knowledge of wildlife and their environment through research.

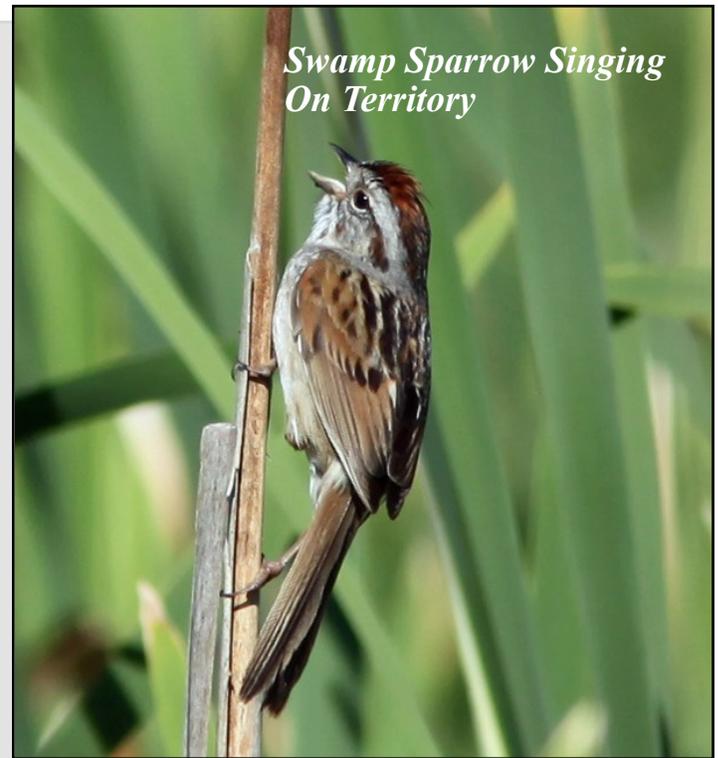
The specific questions he was asking were first, could the summer territorial song of the SWSP be used as an indicator of a population of SWSPs at a given breeding site and second, how individual SWSP song could reflect stability of SWSPs at any particular site. This necessitated recording a large number of individual songs in multiple geographic areas. His results were tour-de-force publication this year in the prestigious publication *Nature Communications* (<https://rdcu.be/1bn3>). The conclusions are more far-reaching than any of us could have imagined. A brief summary follows.

To address the first question Lachlan took advantage of bird banding studies showing that SWSPs, like many other bird species, return faithfully to their birth place year after year. In addition evidence that the primary breeding song of SWSP (as well as other bird species) could vary subtly in different geographic locations.

So Lachlan recorded singing SWSPs at their breeding sites in 6 wetland sites across the upper Midwest and Eastern U.S.: Horicon WI, Waterloo Rec. Area MI, Conneaut, PA, Montezuma, NY, Adirondacks, NY, and Hudson, NY. A total of 615 song repertoires were recorded and then analyzed.

Within the 6 sites sample sizes ranged from 70 to 208 songs, the population area ranged from 1 to 17 square miles, and the estimated number of territories ranged from 500 to 3000. As an example, at the Waterloo site he recorded 74 SWSP songs at three locations – Haehnle Sanctuary, Portage Marsh between Reithmiller and Waterloo-Munith Roads, and another section of Portage Marsh along Topith Rd. The distance between the sites was about 9 miles. The estimated number of territories was about 2000 in about 4.5 sq. miles.

Using standard laboratory procedures Lachlan and his colleagues converted each individual breeding song into a sonogram (a visual representation of



*Swamp Sparrow Singing
On Territory*

sound in a graphical form), which allows separation of the frequency of each note into fractions of a second.

When you do this you find that each species has a distinct pattern of notes. Of particular interest to research scientists is that individuals within a species exhibit subtle but stable variations in their “standard” song.

Young birds learn this variation during the first 8 weeks of their life. (Our ears cannot separate these notes but birds can.) This allowed Lachlan to compare individual variations among SWSP songs both within and between the six sites.

What Lachlan found was that each site had a remarkably similar variant of the “standard song”. Remember that there were a number of separate locations at each site, some of which were separated by several miles (the farthest locations at the Waterloo site were 9 miles apart). However, the song variant at each site was different from those at all other sites. What this meant was that the song variant at any one site was learned early in life and retained, most likely for the life of the bird.

To address the second question, stability of the population over time, Lachlan combined the analysis of stability of song variants in a site (just discussed) . . .

(continued on page 4)

Swamp Sparrow Study (cont'd)

with computational modeling to show that variants, once learned, can persist for hundreds of years.

He was able to do this part of the study because the large sample size, 615 SWSP songs, gave the study its strength and therefore credibility. I was not capable of analyzing the model building exercises, but the 4 reviewers were truly impressed.

In human cultures, stable subcultures are common. Each exhibits specific variations from what is possible. What keeps each subculture stable is the structural complexity of the society and the collection of benefits that this variation brings to the group.

Such structures have been found in other primates, but have not been studied much in other animal populations. The author's findings that a similar type of beneficial structure might exist in non-primates are intriguing and, in fact, can now be investigated in SWSPs.

One of the obvious questions is, are there other traits within a site that might be slightly different from one geographic location to another. If so, one could investigate if these traits lead to a more complex structure within a population, something unknown outside of primates.



Swamp Sparrow Singing On Territory

Haehnle is More Than Crane Habitat

Below are just a few of many species that depend on the Sanctuary for Nesting, Feeding or Migration



Least Bittern



Green Heron



Great Egret



American Bittern

A Blast From the Past - Jet Crashes at Haehnle



Lear Jet Model 23

Articles in the Jackson Citizen Patriot report that a private six-passenger Lear Model 23 jet crashed and burned north of Eagle Lake about 7:30 p.m. Thursday, October 21, 1965. Killed in the crash were the pilot, Glen E. David of Rose Hill Kan., and Lawrence Bangiola of Wichita, Kan., co-pilot. The plane was returning to Wichita, Kan. after taking Lear vice-president, W.A. Sipprell, to Detroit. A spokesman for the Cleveland Air Route Traffic Control Center, Oberlin, Ohio said the plane was originally headed southwest at 25,000 feet when it veered to the north and disappeared from its radar at 7:35 p.m.

Witnesses reported the airplane apparently blew up in the air, scattering debris over nearly a mile. Jackson County Undersheriff, Charles Southworth said that a 50-foot long, 15-foot deep hole was gouged by the airplane in a sparsely wooded area several hundred yards north of Eagle Lake. Only small parts of wreckage and parts of the bodies of the men involved were found. Officers from Michigan State Police and Jackson County Sheriff Department restricted admittance to the crash site until Federal Aviation Agency investigators arrived.

The plane had just been given a 100-hour check-up. Sixty-three of the 500-mile per hour planes had been sold and there had been no previous safety issues. A team from the FFA collected pieces of the wreckage to resemble as much of the plane as possible. It was expected to be very difficult to determine the cause of the crash based on the mile-long debris field.

The above information was taken from October 22 and 23, 1965 articles in the Jackson Citizen Patriot.

Postscript

Michigan Audubon had owned the land where the plane crashed for less than two years. It was part of 160 acres purchased from Charles Wipfler in December, 1963. Michigan Audubon was paid \$1,000 for damages from the plane crash. That money was used to purchase 1/2 of an acre north of Seymour Rd. from Russell Morton in 1966. After 53 years, the deep crash site hole is nearly filled with soil, and small trees grow in what once was an abandoned farm field. Today, small buried debris fragments from the plane still mark the location of the 1965 tragedy.

Ron Hoffman

Annual Bluebird Nest Box Report 2018

By Steve Jerant

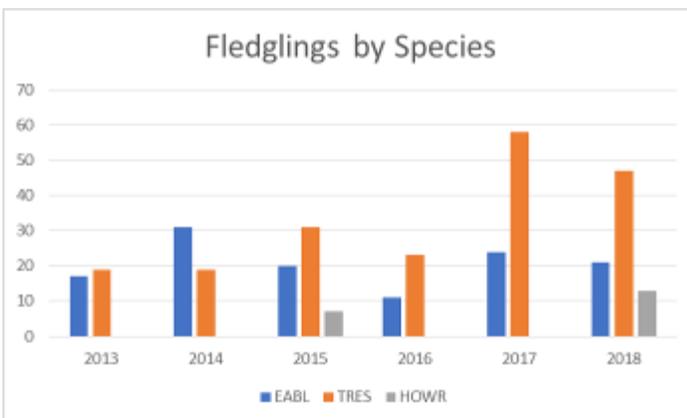
Despite the varied weather at the Sanctuary this season, we had another good year of fledglings from our nest boxes. Tree swallows dominated again with total nesting attempts, but we also had eastern bluebirds, return of the house wrens, and one successful wood duck nesting attempt.

Our house wrens returned after a two-year hiatus and they came back strong. They had a 100% nesting success rate yielding 13 fledglings. And that was with only 3 nesting attempts!

Tree swallows were, as always, our most prolific species with 47 fledglings. This, despite a success rate of only 60% and were preyed upon by house sparrows. After finding no dead adults last year, for the first time since my recording in 2013, I had 11 this year.

We had mixed results for our eastern bluebirds. While their nesting success rate went up, their overall count went down from 24 to 21. In addition, I observed a complete nest failure including dead adults. And, like last year I had a very late nesting attempt in August.

We got one year off from house sparrow visits last year but they were back with a vengeance this year.



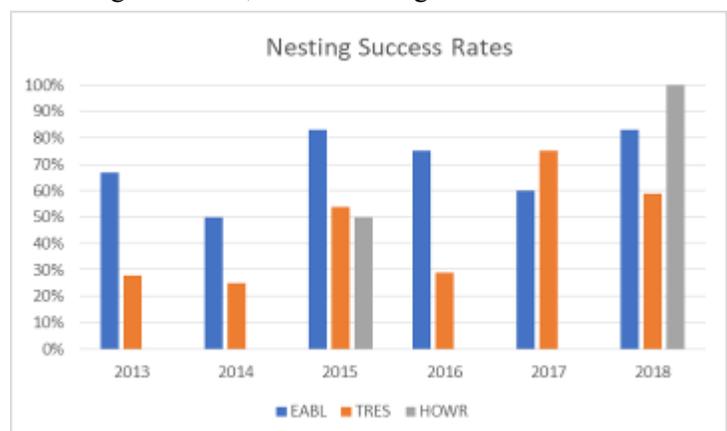
They occupied 4 separate nest boxes in two of our units: the prairie below the Harold Wing overlook and the prairie off Wooster Rd. Both these areas are near human habitation. Finding these invasive species even in our 1000+ acre sanctuary reminds us that nest boxes staged in suburban areas will have a much higher chance of use by these very adaptive birds.

If you are providing nest boxes to help native species, it is also imperative to monitor the boxes or you will find your well-meaning attempt to provide habitat for desirable species will end up benefiting the very invasive that compete with them.

Our data for the monitoring has been submitted to NestWatch (<https://nestwatch.org>) and the Michigan Bluebird Society (<http://michiganbluebirds.org/>). These are both excellent organizations that can provide you with information on observing, managing, and monitoring nesting birds in your area.

I have been using Nestwatch (nestwatch.org) since I started tracking this data in 2013 and have evolved the data collection process. This year I used the NestWatch app (for iPhone) in the field for the first time. It has made a huge improvement in the timeliness and completeness of my data entry. The data was entered into the app in the field while I was doing my rounds.

This eliminated the normal end of year slog of entering my handwritten data into the Nestwatch site at the end of the season. In addition, I could see, in one small screen, the status of all my nesting attempts for all my boxes. So, if you saw me wandering through one of Haehnle's prairies this year with my head down in my device, I was not checking Facebook, I was working!





We Invite You to support Michigan Audubon and the Phyllis Haehnle Sanctuary

I would like to support Michigan Audubon and The Haehnle Sanctuary

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Level

Amount

<input type="checkbox"/>	Basic	\$30
<input type="checkbox"/>	Donor	\$50
<input type="checkbox"/>	Supporting	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sustaining	\$500
<input type="checkbox"/>	Benefactor	\$1,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Make my donation in memory of the person(s) below: _____	
<i>Make Checks Payable to Michigan Audubon and designate for the Haehnle Sanctuary</i>		

(Print Out and Fill Out This Page)

Mail To:

**Michigan Audubon
c/o Ron Hoffman
6142 E. Territorial Rd.
Pleasant Lake, MI 49272**

***Thank You,
Your Support is Greatly Appreciated!***



*Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary
c/o Jackson Audubon Society
P.O. Box 6453
Jackson, MI 49204*



*Official News Letter
For The
Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary*



We wish to thank the following people who have generously supported the sanctuary during recent months.

Bill Steusloff
Art and Janelle Prouty
Winey Donkey



Dates To Remember

September 29: Fall Work Bee

This event will begin at 9:00 a.m. and end at Noon. Activities include planting a bed below observation hill with wildflower plugs, cutting shrubs along Seymour Road, picking up trash, installing the Schroeder Tract sign, and maintenance of the platform at Eagle Lake.

October 27, Cranes, Color & Cabernet Festival Noon Till Dark

12:00p.m. and 2:00p.m: 90 Minute Walking Tours led by Haehnle Naturalists

4:00 p.m: Smith Property Dedication

4:30 p.m: Car Tour to view cranes in surrounding fields.

4:30 p.m. to Dark: Wildlife and crane viewing at observation hill.