

Haehnle Sanctuary News



Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary

Owned By Michigan Audubon

Maintained and Operated by The Jackson Audubon Society

Preserving and Protecting our Natural World



Fall 2020

Amazing Volunteers The Heartbeat of Haehnle

By Helena Robinovitz



Led by Lathe Claflin on a cold day last December, this seeding party of (L-R) Charity Steere, Ron Hoffman, Paul and Barb Wilcox and Phil Clark, broadcast native wildflower seed in the prairie north of Eagle Lake, along the new loop trail

Cap Haehnle donated the almost 500-acre Phyllis Haehnle Memorial Sanctuary to Michigan Audubon Society almost 70 years ago.

Thanks to the efforts of volunteers, donors and supporting organizations, Haehnle has grown to over one thousand acres and has become a Michigan Audubon jewel.

The dedication and generosity of many have made Haehnle possible, but it is the daily efforts of volunteers that keeps it going.

Typically, Haehnle Sanctuary Committee members hold a work bee twice a year.

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May 2020 this work crew built and placed a rail fence in the parking lot just west of Wing Observation Hill. (L – R) Phil Clark, Barb Wilcox, Paul Wilcox, and Dave Lukasik Paul Rice on the skid loader and Jim Rossman (not pictured.)

With the help of some members from Jackson Audubon Society and others, benches are repainted, downed trees are removed and invasive plants are cut and daubed, etc.

But there are always ongoing maintenance needs throughout the year that require more immediate attention. Gary Childs brings his tractor to the sanctuary regularly to mow the grass.

Dennis Morton, a nearby neighbor, watches over the property and removes fallen trees when needed. Recently, committee members Gary Childs, Lathe Claflin, Steve Jerant and Gary Siegrist installed two benches.

There is a seasonally-wet portion of the trail between Eagle Lake and the trail to the north.

Jim Rossman designed and built a boardwalk in sections at home and transported them to Haehnle.



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Both were funded by the donations made to Haehnle in the memory of former committee member, Jeanette Wing Childs.

With these needs in mind, Chairman Gary Siegrist initiated a weekly work crew schedule when he became chairperson. This group of talented volunteers has implemented some major plans.

Jim Rossman and Paul Rice have led the work crews, and Phil Clark has helped coordinate the work schedule. While numerous people have signed up to assist on this crew, a few individuals have been regulars. Some of them and their ventures are described in the pictures that follow.



Jim Rossman, Barb Wilcox, Phil Clark and Paul Rice (not pictured) installed the boardwalk last May.

This summer a new connector trail was cleared to the prairie located north of Eagle Lake. Phil Clark, Paul Rice, Jim Rossman and Barb Wilcox worked on the clearing and laying of this trail, sometimes on very hot summer days. The new trail is shown on the map below in red.

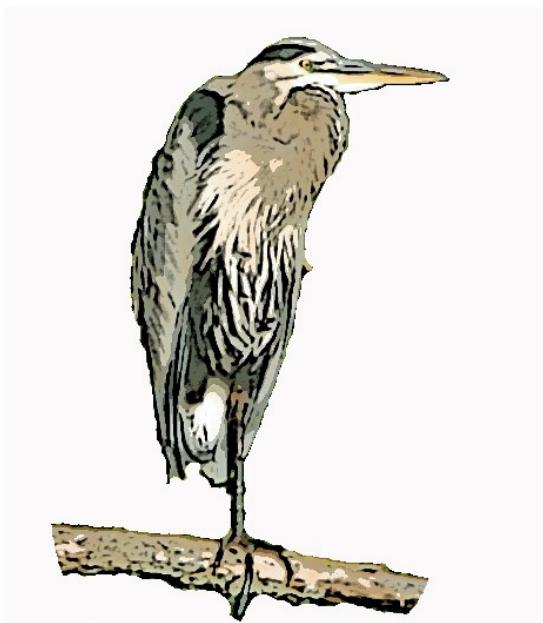


These new benches were installed on the Robert Whiting Observation Deck of Eagle Lake last August. Jim Rossman built and assembled them at home. He and his wife secured them to the deck.



(Continued on Page Four)

In early September Paul Rice, and Phil Clark placed these huge rocks along the split rail fence in the Seymour Rd parking lot to deter destruction of rail fence by RV and ATV drivers



Beat the Winter Blahs
Sign up for Project Feederwatch!

Like to watch the birds at your feeder? You can do so while helping science by joining Project Feeder Watch.

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Project Feederwatch
Cornell Lab of Ornithology
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Toll free: (800) 843-2473

The cost to register is \$18 for the season. You will receive a Research Kit with a Handbook of information and instructions, a colorful poster of common birds, a calendar and more.

Here's how it works. Choose your count days. Select two consecutive days as often as once a week (less often is fine). Leave at least five days when you do not count between each of your two-day counts.

How to count – Watch your feeders as much or a little as you want over your selected count days.

Record the maximum number of each species visible at any one time during your two-day count. *Keep one tally across both days.*

Please count all of the individuals of each species in view at any one time, birds attracted to food or water you provided, birds attracted to fruits or ornamental plantings, hawks and other predatory birds that are attracted by the birds at your feeders Report your counts – Submit counts through the Your Data section of the website www.feederwatch.org.



Remembering Jeanette Marie Wing Childs



Suzie, Jeanette's twin described her as "very sweet," and someone who loved being around people and volunteered in many organizations.

At Jackson High she was in the Euphony Choir and was the treasurer of her senior class of 1963, among other activities.

She was a long-time member of the First Presbyterian Church of Jackson and served on the boards of the Grass Lake Area Historical Society, the Whistlestop Park Association and was an active member of the Wings of America.

She volunteered for many years at the Coppernail Community Resale Shop, and was a member of the Haehnle Sanctuary Committee

On a more personal level Jeanette demonstrated her love of people in many ways. Through the National Bone Marrow Registry, she donated bone marrow twice to a young man.

After her retirement from teaching Jeanette had more time and taught herself to quilt and the results were blue ribbon quality

Jeanette Marie Childs passed away June 15th, after a courageous battle with ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease) surrounded by her loving family.

She is survived by husband of 53 years, Gary, son Aaron (Kimberly), and sisters Judy Wing Hay (Bernard) and Suzie Wing Macfarlane (Charles), her twin. She was preceded in death by her brother David Wing, son Tobin and her parents Harold and Ruth Wing.

Jeanette and Gary met at Jackson Community College. They married after she received her Bachelor's degree in teaching from Western Michigan University. She did graduate work at Eastern and Michigan State. While raising their two sons, Tobin and Aaron, Jeanette taught English and Home Economics at Concord Schools.

Gary shared that his wife was devoted to her students and she always gave special attention to students who struggled. Gary and her sisters described Jeanette as exceptionally organized and as someone with a remarkable memory, all of which helped their lives run smoothly during those busy years.



One of her last quilted projects, a wall hanging for her sister Judy.

In Memory of Jeanette Childs (continued)

Besides making special quilts for Gary and her sons and sisters, she made memory quilts for friends who had lost spouses, sewed baby quilts for newborns and refurbished old quilts for friends.

Gary said she sent out hundreds of cards, always keeping in touch with family and friends on special events and during difficult times.

Over the years Bob Ochs networked with Gary and Jeanette through their association in Jackson Audubon and Haehnle Sanctuary. More recently he also volunteered with Jeanette at the Coppernail.

He describes her as very reliable, very dependable, very giving, and especially as courageous. After her diagnosis Bob said Jeanette continued her regular work schedule at the Coppernail, "as though everything was normal."

Even when they went to Florida Jeanette would take Coppernail donations with her that needed to be refreshed and she would bring them back restored and all priced. Libby Warner described Jeanette as very grounded and personified "a life well-lived in all its aspects." Her older sister, Judy, described Jeanette as "a brilliant, all-around person, but who was always quiet about it."

As the daughter of Harold and Ruth Wing, Jeanette was introduced to birds at a young age. One of her oldest friends, Libby, tells that she met Jeanette as a playpen pal, while their parents attended Jackson Audubon meetings.

Jeanette's sister, Judy, recalls on family Sunday drives they were often shushed by their mother so their dad, Harold Wing, could listen to identify a bird call. Judy also told how Jeanette and their mother, Ruth, would make dinner for everyone in Harold's motor home on weekly crane count evenings, while Harold and Gary and others counted the cranes.



Family photo at dedication (L-R): Judy Wing Hay, Ruth Wing, David Wing, Suzie Wing Macfarlane and Jeanette Wing Childs.

(Photo by Hugh Zernickow.)

She and Gary continued to bring Harold and Ruth to the weekly evening counts after Harold's decline from Parkinson's prevented him from driving. Jeanette's roommate at Western Michigan University and life-long friend, Paula, said she was first introduced to birds by Jeanette and it has remained an important hobby. She said Jeanette had a way of pulling people with her into the circle of wildlife, spreading the joys of birding.

Harold and Ruth Wing were largely responsible for convincing Casper Haehnle to donate the original 497 acres of the sanctuary to Michigan Audubon Society. Jeanette continued the family commitment by becoming a second-generation advocate for Haehnle.

She and Gary became active members of the Haehnle Sanctuary Committee by participating in various events, such as the celebration of land acquisitions, open houses, work bees, etc. One of the most memorable occasions occurred in 2000 when Jeanette, her mother and siblings attended the dedication of the Harold Wing Observation Site at Haehnle.

During her lifetime she witnessed and helped achieve her father's vision of a 500-acre sanctuary that has now grown to over 1,000 acres.

By Helena Robinovitz

Annual Bluebird Nest Box Report 2019

By Steve Jerant

While most of us may have had a less than ideal 2020, our bluebirds and tree swallows at Haehnle had a very successful one. I got a late start monitoring as we were in Covid-19 lockdown in late March & April. By the end of May I started my rounds.

While I was not surprised that my tenants did not wait around for me to start their families, it was odd to have both eggs and live chicks on my first round.

There were 21 nest sites recorded, all had activity, and all save one had eggs. Total attempts count was 29. As I said earlier, it was a very successful year at Haehnle and we had new record highs: eggs- 131, chicks- 103, and fledglings- 91.

From a species perspective I had no House Wren activity but did have some duck nesting. And of course, lots of Tree Swallows and Eastern Bluebirds.



Public Enemy # 1



House Sparrow

The bluebirds did well this year, the best since I've been recording: 11 nest attempts and 29 fledglings. I always think there are not a lot of them as I make rounds each season as I don't really look at the cumulative data and am always overrun (and attacked) by tree swallows.

But at the end of the year the numbers tell the story. It's been great watching all the juveniles (of course they are from my nest boxes) around the overlook

during crane counting nights in September and October. Two nest failures did occur. One of them likely due to competition from a House Sparrow.

Haehnle tree swallows had a banner year with 62 fledglings. They bred in 14 of the sites compared to 8 sites for bluebirds. I observed only 1 partial nest failure and found one dead adult in May. It had evidence of head trauma so death likely not due to cold weather.

I had a new nesting species of record this year. There was a ground nest in Unit#2, the prairie in the back of the nature trail. All the eggs were broken and not by hatching chicks. Ron Hoffman was able to assist with identification as mallard with nest failed by predation. So, I guess if you just lay your eggs on the ground, lay a lot of them.

While this is the second year in row, I did not have any successful house wrens, this is the first where I had no attempts. The have always occupied nest #40 since I started doing this, and when they did have nests, they were not shy about having lots of babies

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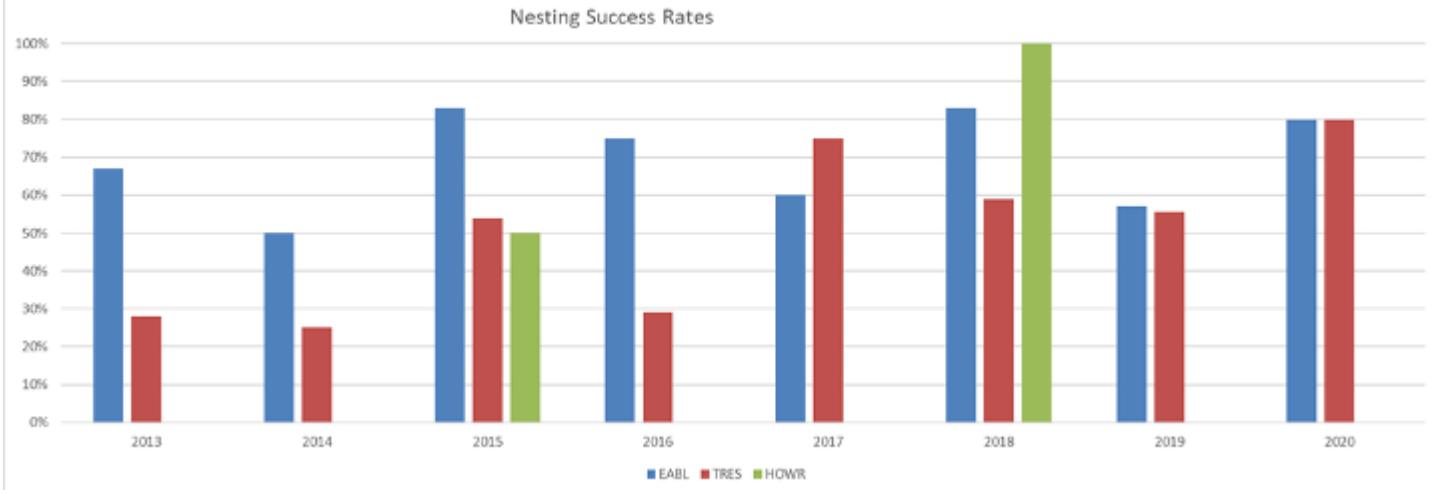
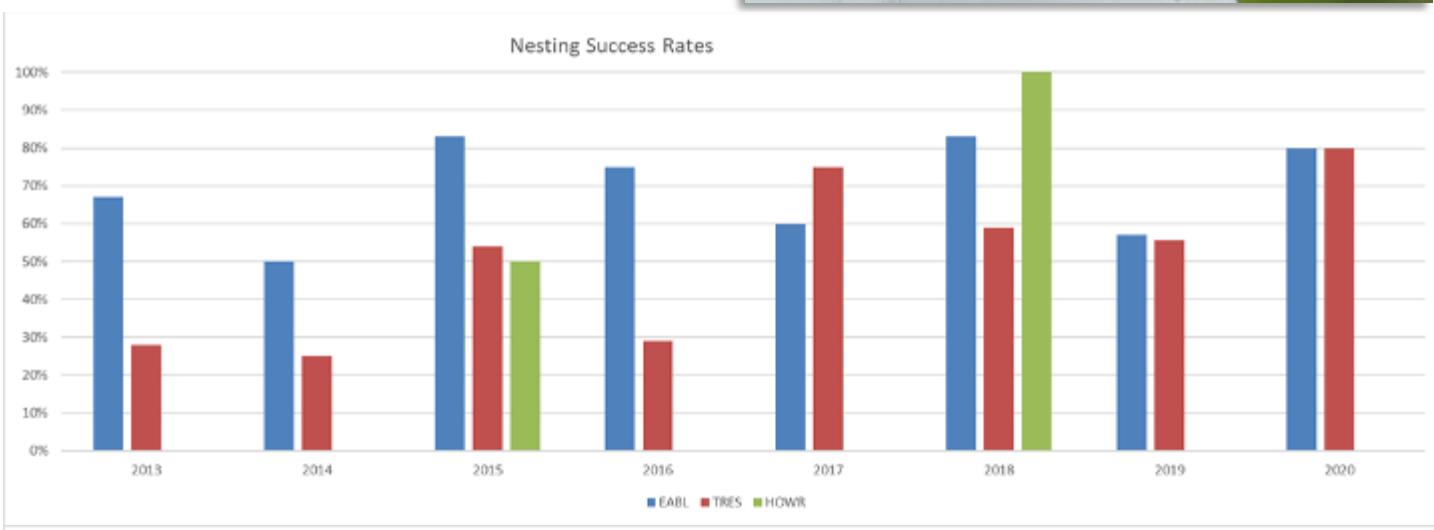
I know our target species are blue birds and tree swallows and that house wrens get a bad rap, but I do enjoy that bubble song that brings in spring. But then, after about five days they do get kind of annoying, so...

The house sparrow limited their activities to only one box again this year. Two nest attempts were made—both ending badly for this invasive pest. If you are putting up nest boxes, watch out for these birds as they crowd other desirable, native species.

And finally, this is my third year using the Cornell NestWatch app. Only one “bad data” day so not so bad. If you are managing a nest box trail, using the handheld device in the field is the way to go!

Our data for nest box 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.





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The Phyllis Haehnle
Memorial Sanctuary*

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Thank You



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

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David Mordis

In Memory of Hugh Zernickow

Gary & Jeanette Childs
Kathleen Kopczyk

Haehnle's Biggest Birds



Great Blue Heron

Sandhill Crane



Bald Eagle

Haehnle Happenings

By Gary Siegrist, Haehnle Committee Chair

The year seemed to start out as any other, until COVID-19 disrupted attendance and work crew operations.

With precautions, volunteers continued to help by keeping the trails clean and mowed. In June, following Michigan's Audubon's rules regarding COVID-19, the work crew resumed.

By not sharing tools/herbicides, socially distancing and wearing masks when needed, work continued to rid the Wooster Road Dike Trail of invasive plant species. This fall, we began cutting invasive plants from the Seymour Road main parking lot west boundary heading north toward Eagle Lake.

Prior to COVID, winter at the sanctuary began with chopping 5.5 acres of glossy buckthorn around the Bogus Lake Fen area.

These were the last remaining acres that had been sprayed via helicopter in 2018. If Mother Nature cooperates with dry conditions this fall, we will burn some of the wet meadow that had been chopped in past years.

Work crew members have been busy this year with projects to help enhance visitor experience at the sanctuary. The first was the installation of a short board walk and loop trail into the woods behind Eagle Lake. .



The second was the building and installation of benches on the Eagle Lake platform. A huge thank you goes out to all that have helped with these projects.

We continue to work with USDA – NRCS Programs for restoring grasslands and pollinator plantings. Because of the virus no prescribed burning was able to be conducted in the spring.

We are hopeful the burns can be rescheduled for this fall. We also started work on the Schroeder Tract grassland. Returning these seven plus acres to native grasses and wildflowers will help both the birds that nest in grasslands, as well as the native pollinators that need native plants to exist.

This summer the sanctuary was designated as a "Certified Bird Habitat" and awarded a plaque from Saving Birds Thru Habitat (SBTH), a nationwide organization headquartered in Omena, Michigan. SBTH is dedicated to the protection of North American birds by enhancing and restoring native habitats.

It really has been quite a remarkable year for the sanctuary. Stay safe and enjoy nature.

Gary Siegrist
Chair
Haehnle Committee

If you would like to learn more about volunteering opportunities at Haehnle Sanctuary, please contact Gary at gwsiegrist@gmail.com.

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*

