

**Bird Blitz Report**  
**Grass River Natural Area**  
**Antrim County, Michigan**  
**July 26, 2012**

**Purpose**

The primary purpose of Bird Blitz is to survey the nesting birds and establish a baseline of bird populations in the Grass River Natural Area (GRNA). The Bird Blitz will also serve as a tool for monitoring the change or lack of change in populations of bird species over time. Whether these changes are due to man-made or endemic natural variation in climate or habitat will be studied, evaluated and if possible, determined by additional scientific studies. Results of these bird population assessments will provide the scientific basis for management decisions for habitat enhancement in the future. Monitoring populations of nesting bird species will be an indicator of the success of management practices.

**Project Description**

This year's Bird Blitz at Grass River Natural Area was another success building upon last year's first ever Blitz. There were a total of 20 volunteers reporting a total of 531 birds of 76 different species, including a new species that previously was not reported.

Birds (531 individuals) were counted in all seven of the management areas, which were divided into seventeen smaller Bird Blitz Areas. Fourteen of the twenty Bird Blitz Areas were surveyed: five of the six upland areas (93.6% of the acreage) and nine of the fourteen wetland areas (62.6% of the acreage). These counts were conducted on June 9, 2012.

**Method Summary**

Birders were assigned to survey Bird Blitz Areas ranging from 11 to 130 acres: six upland areas (#1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8) and fourteen wetland areas (#6, 7, 9A, 9B, 9C, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17A, 17B). Five of the six upland areas were counted, and they comprised 93.6% of the combined upland acreage. Nine of the fourteen wetland areas were counted, and they comprised 62.6% of the wetland acreage. The fifteen areas counted comprised 69.2% of the total 1272.98 acres. See GRNA Bird Blitz Areas Map.

For this project one to four people were assigned to each area as a group with at least one of the group being an experienced "birder" Participants walked or took a boat through their assigned areas and to the best of their ability traveled along designated transects of their area as marked on the map provided. Birders recorded the birds they heard or

sighted in their area. For the most part, the counts were taken between 6:00 am. and 10.00 am. See GRNA Bird Blitz Volunteers List for further details.

## Results Summary

GRNA Volunteers:

GRNA Bird Blitz Areas surveyed:	14	of	20
GRNA Upland Acres surveyed:	253.49	of	270.81
GRNA Wetland Acres surveyed:	627.56	of	1002.17
Bird Species observed:	76	of	154

Over the past thirty years, GRNA naturalists and volunteers have compiled a list of sightings of 153 different bird species. One new species was added this year during the Bird Blitz. The new specie was the Acadian Flycatcher, found in area 6. The new total of bird species is 154.

During this year's GRNA Bird Blitz, there were 531 individual birds counted and 76 species represented. There were 173 birds of 44 species found in the Upland Areas, and 358 birds of 47 species found in the Wetland Areas. The five most common birds found in the Upland Areas were: American Robin (18), Black- Capped Chickadee (17), Tree Swallow (15), Blue Jay (13) and Red-Eyed Vireo (10). The five most common birds found in the Wetland Areas were: Red Winged Blackbird (69), Common Grackle (27), White-throated Sparrow (22), Blue Jay (21) and Black-Capped Chickadee (20).

Michigan Species of Special Concern:

**Common Loon (T):** 1 sighted in section #6 Sedge Meadow Trail, 1 heard in section #9 NE Interior, 7 sighted in sections #13-15 River (Mating pair with young),

**Caspian Tern (T):** 1 sighted in area #13-15 River

Report prepared by Harry Dittrich, GRNA Conservation Intern and student at NMC Water Studies Institute.

Report reviewed by GRNA Conservation Committee members: Rich Hannan and Peg Comfort.

## Species Numbers

<b>Name</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Total</b>
Bittern, American	1	Heron, Great Blue	1	Tanager, Scarlet	2
Blackbird, Red-winged	69	Hummingbird, Ruby-throated	2	<b>Tern, Caspian (T)</b>	1
Bobwhite	1	Jay, Blue	34	Thrush, Hermit	2
Bunting, Indigo	5	Kingbird, Eastern	13	Thrush, Wood	2
Cardinal, Northern	2	Kingfisher	3	Titmouse, Tufted	3
Catbird, Gray	1	<b>Loon, Common (T)</b>	9	Veery	3
Chickadee, Black-capped	37	Merganser, Hooded	6	Vireo, Red-eyed	10
Crane, Sandhill	11	Nuthatch, White-breasted	9	Warbler, Black-and-white	4
Creeper, Brown	1	Oriole, Baltimore	4	Warbler, Blackburnian	2
Crow, American	20	Ovenbird	8	Warbler, Black-throated Blue	1
Dove, Mourning	6	Phoebe, Eastern	3	Warbler, Chestnut-sided	1
Duck, American Black	1	Raven, Common	1	Warbler, Common Yellowthroat	8
Duck, Mallard	15	Robin, American	27	Warbler, Mourning	1
Duck, Wood	2	Sapsucker, Yellow-bellied	3	Warbler, Nashville	4
Flicker, Northern	4	Sparrow, Chipping	3	Warbler, Yellow	3
<b>Flycatcher, Acadian*</b>	1	Sparrow, Field	1	Warbler, Yellow-Rumped	2
Flycatcher, Great-crested	10	Sparrow, Song	9	Waterthrush, Northern	2
Goldfinch, American	8	Sparrow, Swamp	6	Waxwing, Cedar	5
Grackle, Common	27	Sparrow, White-throated	5	Woodpecker, Downy	2
Grosbeak, Evening	1	Starling, European	26	Woodpecker, Hairy	2
Grosbeak, Rose-breasted	3	Swallow, Barn	3	Woodpecker, Pileated	5
Grouse, Ruffed	9	Swallow, Tree	29	Woodpecker, Red-bellied	1
Gull, Ring-billed	1	Swan, Mute	19	Wood-Pewee, Eastern	5
Bittern, American	1	Heron, Great Blue	1	Tanager, Scarlet	2
				<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>531</b>