

GET MOVING: THE BIRDS ARE WAITING FOR YOU!



BY: Janet M. Hug

We are so very pleased to have Janet doing our Birding in S.E. Michigan column. Janet is not only an avid Birder, but an accomplished photographer. So she just does not study and observe birds in the wild, but has the talents and patience to capture their images. All the photos as well as the text is Janet at her finest. Her third installment is on Spring Birds and their return. We hope you enjoy the wonderful writings and pictures by Janet M. Hug.



It's early April, and you have gleefully stored away the winter coats and boots, hung up the snow shovel, swept away last fall's oak leaves that have nestled into the corners of the front porch, and maybe you even started up the lawn mower for the first time. It is that one day in spring when you feel we have turned the corner and can look forward to those long warm days outdoors and take in the beauty of our Michigan landscape.

Springtime often stirs up ideas and interests within you that you want to do something different this year, make a change, wake up your mind and learn something new. There are so many choices, but what to choose to do is the big question?

My answer for you is to start noticing birds from a different approach, not just seeing them as the winged creatures that you see chaotically flying about in your neighborhood. Birds can provide that spark for self enrichment, and a way for you to get moving outdoors and experience your environment from a new perspective, to appreciate what is living just a few feet outside your door. Listen to your voice, get outdoors, look around and get excited, for a new season is here for you to experience. Go Birding!



Magnolia Warbler
Janet Hug ©2012



Prothonotary Warbler
Janet Hug ©2012

Birds are always nearby, available year round, able to be seen from your window, your backyard and while out on the hiking trail. Some people call it birding, others call it birdwatching, call it whatever you prefer, but watching birds is one of nature's free shows and it goes on everyday, you just have to look about you and listen.

What makes birding in the spring so unique, is the opportunity to see brightly colored warblers that appear for a few short weeks in our backyards, as they migrate through the area onto their summer breeding grounds to the northern forest habitats.

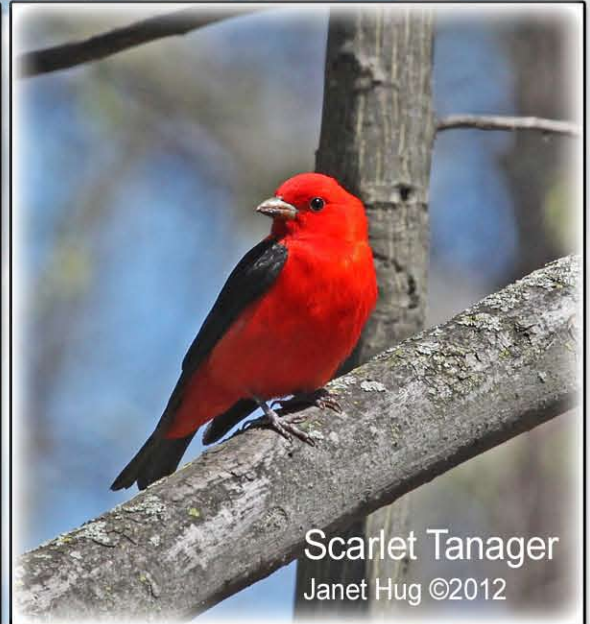
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Spring harkens the return of the Baltimore Oriole and Scarlet Tanager that brighten the summer treetops with their cheerful song and showy colorful plumage. The lakes, fields, forests and backyards are about to come alive with the birds that make Michigan their summer home.



Baltimore Oriole
Janet Hug ©2012



Scarlet Tanager
Janet Hug ©2012

Your personal birding journey can start with simply sitting and watching what is flying about in your backyard. With a pair of binoculars and a field guide, you are on your way to a becoming one of the millions of people who enjoy the pastime of birding. You might find yourself noticing the color of birds, their shapes and sizes. Do they perch on the side of a tree like a woodpecker, do they run on the ground like an American Robin, do they fly through the air after insects, or sip nectar from flowers or special feeders. You will start noticing the Red-tailed hawks soaring overhead, Cooper's and Sharp-shinned hawks flying like a missile through your backyard, a Turkey Vulture tilting into the warm updrafts, gulls roosting on the nearby beach, the many varieties of ducks and Great Blue Herons and Great Egrets stalking the shore of the local wetland. You will never be alone - a bird is nearby ready to catch your imagination and grab your attention.



American Robin w/ Fledgling
Janet Hug ©2012

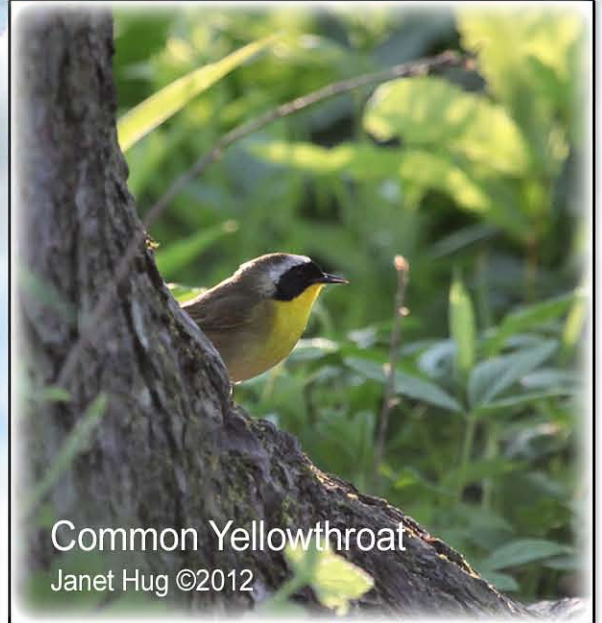
By learning about birds, you may make a contribution to research about birds. How can an amateur birder help with research? You can become one of the many citizen scientists of all experience levels who document their sightings through the web-site eBird.org (<http://ebird.org>) research database project run by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. When you post to eBird, you are documenting what you are seeing out in the field, as well as telling them what you aren't seeing in the field. Both sets of information are valuable to ornithologists to build a better understanding of bird migration patterns, breeding successes and distribution throughout the United States. Ebird also gives you the opportunity to create a personal list of

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the birds you have seen and the ability to review your birding records over the year. You are able to look up when you saw the first Robin of the year in your yard, etc. Using eBird is a win-win tool for birders, by contributing to citizen science and your own personal record of your birding activities.

The next time you see a bird, whether through your kitchen window or while out on a hike, stop and tell yourself: I became a birder today, just by the simple act of looking about, slowing down and noticing birds from a new perspective.



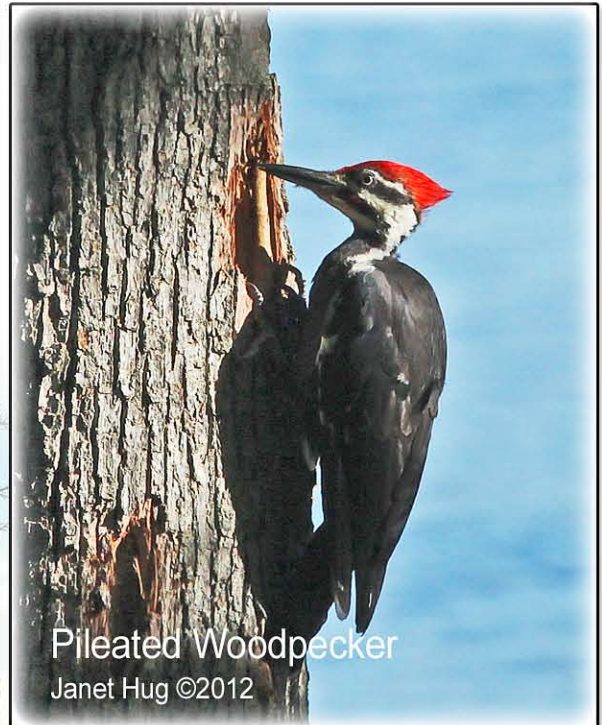
Common Yellowthroat

Janet Hug ©2012



White-breasted Nuthatch w/nestlings

Janet Hug ©2012



Pileated Woodpecker

Janet Hug ©2012



The best way to describe me would be to say, I am an outdoors woman at heart who grew up in the city of Ferndale, Michigan (just outside Detroit). As a kid, I couldn't wait to escape to the lakes, woods and fields outside the city limits. Our small backyard and surrounding neighborhood offered a limited glance at the beauty of nature. I enjoy spending time in the outdoors and learning new things just for the sake of knowledge. There is joy in finding things out.

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