

# Faster than a speeding bullet — it's Supercrane

By LEM MESEE  
Outdoors writer



They fly with their legs and necks stretched almost straight out to about 4 1/2 feet. Their wingspreads are as wide as 6 feet.

If you seem them soaring south in the next few weeks, listen closely to the call. If it sounds like the squawking of rusty hinges, you have spotted the greater sandhill crane.

The third largest bird in this country, the sandhill crane is topped only by the condors of California and the rare whooping crane.

From 1966-73, the greater sandhill crane was an endangered species, but it is thriving now in the Hiawatha National Forest of Michigan's upper peninsula. Large bogs give them the nesting privacy they need, according to the National Forest Service. They eat rodents, frogs and insects.

The eastern UP is its favorite spot, but other nesting centers are in south central Minnesota, Wisconsin and Ontario.

Before leaving the UP in fall, they congregate in areas near St. Ignace to the east and Escanaba in the center. The St. Ignace congregation flies through the lower peninsula, making stops in Jackson and Washtenaw counties. The Escanaba contingent flies across Wisconsin.

They take the same routes back during the second week of April.

The adult sandhill crane is gray with a red cap. The immature (under age 4) birds are brown. Coloring is uniform. One field mark: The rapid upstroke of the wings.

NOW IS A good time to get in a plug for my favorite map project — getting the Michigan Department of Transportation to show the four national forests on the state map.

State parks and forests are shown, but not the federal government's forests.

The last excuse M-DOT gave for not showing national forests was "clutter." Nonsense. The state highway map is bare in those areas.

National forests were shown on the state map until 1962. Other states' maps show national forests. Why doesn't Michigan? Is there some kind of bad blood between state and federal authorities?

Michigan has four national forests — Ottawa, in the western UP; Hiawatha, in two sections in the eastern UP; Manistee, in the northwestern LP; and Huron, in the northeastern LP.

You can obtain free, excellent maps

showing campgrounds, boat and canoe launches and other national forest facilities. For UP maps, write to Forest Supervisor, Ottawa or Hiawatha National Forest, Escanaba, MI. For lower peninsula maps, write to Forest Supervisor, Manistee or Huron National Forest, Cadillac, MI.

PUT-TAKE area hunting (the DNR stocks special areas with hatchery-raised birds for their first woods outing) for pheasants is heavy, with a lot of success, DNR reports in Oakland County. There's a special license for the privilege.

Squirrel hunting is still relatively poor due to dense foliage. Falconry is permitted for hunting migratory game birds from Sept. 1 to

Dec. 16. Bag limit is three birds. Possession limit is six falcons. For rules and information on falconry, write to Wildlife Division, Department of Natural Resources, Box 30028 Lansing, MI. 48909.

STONY CREEK Metropark near Rochester has two nature walks coming up.

"The Ever-changing Trees" begins at 9 a.m. this Sunday, Oct. 7 at the nature center. Naturalist Gordon Lonie will lead the hike and talk about trees, their histories and economic importance.

"Owl Frowl" will begin at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 13. Naturalist Roger Bajorek will show slides, assisted by Oscar, the barred owl. Then there will be a walk through the dark woods.

Both programs are free (after park admission), but register in advance by calling the park office at 781-4621.

KENSINGTON Metropark near Milford has two events coming up.

"Fall Scenes," a nature walk, will start at 9 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 13 at the nature center. Migrating birds, squirrels storing food and dazzling colors will be pointed out by naturalist Dave Moilanen, who advises you to bring binoculars for this two-hour trek.

A color cruise aboard the Island Queen excursion boat will depart the west shore boat dock at 9 a.m. Sunday, Oct. 14. Canada geese, gulls, herons and other waterfowl — as well as some of the best fall color this side of the Ausable — are on view. There is a \$1

charge for the boat ride. Moilanen says to bring binoculars and cameras.

Register in advance by calling the nature center at 685-1561. There's a park admission.

A LAST REMINDER: A day-long conference on inland lake eutrophication is set for Saturday, Oct. 13 at the Orchard Ridge campus of Oakland Community College in Farmington Hills.

Lake property owners, lake association leaders and public officials can learn about water quality, weed and algae growth and declining fish populations and what to do about them.

Register in advance by calling the Oakland County Cooperative Extension, Service at 858-0880.

## Economics dean named at Oakland U

Oakland University has selected a University of Detroit faculty member as the new dean of the School of Economics and Management.

Chosen following a national search was Ronald M. Horwitz. His appointment, approved by the OU Board of Trustees, is retroactive to Sept. 1. He replaces Norton Soeber who has resigned to return to teaching in the school.

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