



David Richard Luukkonen

August 24, 1961 - December 23, 2021

David Richard Luukkonen of Charlotte passed away December 23, 2021 at his home surrounded by his loving family. David was born August 24, 1961 in Chicago, Illinois to Jack and Nancy (Savala) Luukkonen. He graduated from Grand Ledge High School Class of 1979 and went on to receive a bachelor's degree from Michigan State University, master's degree from Virginia Tech, and PhD from Michigan State University. David worked as a Wildlife Research Biologist for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources for 30 years, where he focused on waterfowl and game birds. After retiring from the state, he became an Adjunct Professor at Michigan State University where he enjoyed working with and mentoring graduate students. He loved hunting, fishing and spending time in the outdoors, and he celebrated his best hunts with the practice of taxidermy. He also enjoyed hobby farming by creating wildlife food plots and was an accomplished woodworker. Every year, he traveled to Michigan's Upper Peninsula, where he loved spending time on Lake Superior, picking wild blueberries, and fishing. David was a loving and devoted husband, father, son, and brother and will be missed by his family and many friends and colleagues.

He is survived by his wife of over 29 years, Carol; children, Benjamin, Emma and Hannah; ward, Nevaeh Terry; father, Jack; siblings, Jack Jr., Denise (Jeff) Herweyer and Valerie Luukkonen along with his uncle, Bill (Gerry) Luukkonen. David was preceded in death by his mom, Nancy Elaine in 2016.

THE DATE OF THE MEMORIAL SERVICE HAS CHANGED, THE NEW

SERVICE DETAILS ARE AS FOLLOWS. A memorial service will be held Tuesday, January 4, 2022, 11:00 am at the Holihan-Atkin-Barclay Funeral Home, Grand Ledge with Chaplain Steve Ezop of Compassus Hospice, officiating. The family will receive friends on Tuesday from 10:00 am until the time of the service. Memorial contributions in David's name may be given to the MSU Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, Natural Resource Building, 480 Wilson Road, Room 13, East Lansing, Michigan 48824 (<https://www.canr.msu.edu/fw/giving/>) or the American Cancer Society, Mid-Michigan Office, 129 Jefferson Avenue SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503 (https://donate3.cancer.org/?campaign=default&lang=en%20&_ga=2.195104364.1109462343.1640638780-1115391072.1640638779), in lieu of flowers.

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 4. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (ET)

Holihan-Atkin-Barclay Funeral Home & Cremation Services
406 N. Bridge Street
Grand Ledge, MI 48837
(517) 627-2531
jasonbarclay@holihanatkin.com
<https://www.holihanatkin.com>

Memorial Service

JAN 4. 11:00 AM (ET)

Holihan-Atkin-Barclay Funeral Home & Cremation Services
406 N. Bridge Street
Grand Ledge, MI 48837
(517) 627-2531
jasonbarclay@holihanatkin.com
<https://www.holihanatkin.com>

Tribute Wall



“ *Holihan-Atkin-Barclay Funeral Home & Cremation Services created a Tribute Video in memory of David Richard Luukkonen*



Holihan-Atkin-Barclay Funeral Home - January 11, 2022 at 12:52 PM



“ *Holihan-Atkin-Barclay Funeral Home & Cremation Services created a Webcast in memory of David Richard Luukkonen*



Holihan-Atkin-Barclay Funeral Home - December 29, 2021 at 10:08 AM

PE

“ *I want to send my condolences to his family. He and I started our career together and he was always wonderful to work with. I miss seeing him and his Sunil ing face. Bye Big L.*

Love, Penney (Melchoir) Wright

penney - January 11, 2022 at 10:08 AM

FB

“ I was saddened to hear of Dave's passing. I've known Dave since 2009, when I attended my first Mississippi Flyway Council meeting as a new rep. I'll always appreciate Dave's warm, welcoming demeanor that put me at ease as I settled into my new role on the Tech Section. Dave always had a thoughtful take on waterfowl management issues, and I looked forward to his turn to speak when controversy arose. I will never forget some of the hilarious exchanges with other members.

Dave was instrumental in leading changes to the management of Canada geese in the Mississippi Flyway, which has benefited both hunters and waterfowl managers across the flyway. His wit and good company will be sorely missed from the Tech Section. To his family, I am very sad for your loss- my deepest sympathies are with you.

Frank Baldwin, Manitoba, Canada

Frank Baldwin - January 05, 2022 at 02:34 PM



“ It was such an honor to get to know Dave over the last several years. The kindness and sincerity that so many have written about was constantly present in my interactions with him as well. The students and staff of Franklin College extend very sincere condolences to family and friends as you grieve. We are so thankful for Dave's legacy and will strive to honor him in our ongoing work!

Warm regards, Ben O'Neal, Franklin College, Franklin, IN

Ben O'Neal - January 05, 2022 at 12:36 PM

AP

“*Dave was kind and generous, understated and hilarious. He could pitch a wiffle ball like nobody's business. He was a great mentor and colleague and he was instrumental in forming how I think about waterfowl management. He was great to talk to after the meetings, and fantastic to hunt with. I will miss him, as will we all. My deepest condolences to his family.*

Adam Phelps, Bedford, Indiana

Adam Phelps - January 04, 2022 at 11:39 AM

MS

“*Dave and my wife and I have worked together with the DNR for over 30 years. He has always been a leader in wildlife management as well as a leader of people in general and will be dearly missed. His wisdom followed with a smile was always greatly appreciated. Our deepest sympathy and condolences to Carol and Dave's family at this time of loss.*

Mark and Lori Sargent

Mark Sargent - January 04, 2022 at 09:22 AM

VB

“*I was sad to hear of Dave passing. He had a huge impact on those that had the privilege and honor of working with him! I have so many wonderful memories of Dave including playing on the Wildlife softball team and working on so many projects together. Every time that I look at the turkey call that he made me for my retirement will bring back fond memories. I will miss him so much!*

Vicki Brown - January 04, 2022 at 08:28 AM

MB

“ My deepest sympathy and condolences to Carol and Dave's family at this time of loss. Dave was a devoted colleague and true friend. I am very glad we were able to share stories and thoughts during many trips to meetings of CWAC, NRC and the Mississippi Flyway Council. Dave always provided ingenuity as well as needed insight and reason to our complicated process of managing waterfowl and upland game birds. What I miss most is our hunting days of turkey and deer on his property in Eaton County. Dave will be missed. Thoughts and prayers are with Dave's family.

Mike Bailey

Mike Bailey - January 03, 2022 at 09:36 AM

HS

“ Dr. Dave Luukkonen took a chance on me as a grad student exactly 10 years ago. The 3 years I spent working with Dave were some of the most formative years of my nascent career. Dave taught me more than just mallards:) He taught me that it was okay to think differently than the crowd, to believe in the work you do, and just to be happy with what you have. Dave always had a positive attitude no matter what was going on. He introduced me to a whole new world of waterfowl science that I didn't know existed. I can honestly say that without Dave's patience, expertise, caring and professional attitude, I wouldn't be where I am today in my career focused around waterfowl conservation. Thanks Dave for everything you taught me. You will be greatly missed but never forgotten. Sending my deepest condolences to his family; Carol, Ben, Emma, and Hannah.

Howie Singer, Ducks Unlimited Canada

Howie Singer - January 02, 2022 at 04:04 PM

AR

“*Dave will be sorely missed. I got to know Dave through our involvement in the Mississippi Flyway Council Tech. Section for the past 20 or so years. It’s hard to put in words his kind, gentle, humorous and gifted presence. Whether it was on the mound pitching in our wiffle ball games or debating a heated topic, you could always count on Dave’s grace, ok, maybe not during our whiffle ball games. He just had a way about him. During one of our meetings maybe 10 years ago I got tongue tied and the words came out as jelly bar. Ever since, I could count on Dave suggesting we meet at the Jelly Bar. And of course, who can forget that his last name, Luukkonen, is spelled the traditional way with two ks.*

Dave we’re going to miss you.

My thoughts and prayers are with his family.

Andy Raedeke - Missouri Department of Conservation

Andy Raedeke - December 31, 2021 at 03:10 PM

JH

“*My sincere condolences to the Luukkonen family. I had the fortune of flying waterfowl surveys with Dave on several occasions- his banter with other biologists, his measured wit, and stories from his years with Michigan DNR will be just a few of the fond memories I will have of him.*

The waterfowl world, and specifically Michigan waterfowl hunters, owe Dave a debt of gratitude for his efforts for them and the resource. Dave made all of us better waterfowl biologists, may we remember his guidance and manage forward in his stead.

Jeremiah Heise, Michigan DNR Wildlife Division

Jeremiah Heise - December 31, 2021 at 12:05 PM

JO

“ *Dave is an amazing human being who touched so many lives. I feel fortunate to have worked in Michigan for 20 years and talked with Dave on several occasions. He was honestly interested in how you were doing, had a great family, and loved sharing a smile, some humor, and the outdoors with everyone. His footprint is large and the love he spread even larger. My condolences to the family.*

Jennifer Olson - December 31, 2021 at 11:01 AM



“ *Memorial Trees was purchased for the family of David Richard Luukkonen.*

December 31, 2021 at 10:30 AM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of David Richard Luukkonen.*



December 30, 2021 at 03:21 PM

MB

“ Like so many others, I was honored to have met, befriended, and work with Dave. He was indeed a brilliant and respected scientist, but he was an even better person and friend. Never without a smile, quick-witted response, or critical thought, people were always reassured and uplifted when working with Dave. He will be greatly missed, but his mark and legacy will live on.

Prayers and hugs to the Luukkonen family.

Mike Brasher, Ducks Unlimited

Mike Brasher - December 30, 2021 at 12:43 PM



“ 1 file added to the album *Dave*



Holihan-Atkin-Barclay Funeral Home - December 30, 2021 at 12:41 PM

GB

“ My sincere condolences to all of Dave’s family and friends. All our lives were made richer for having known and shared time with Dave. While I first met Dave while he was an undergraduate at MSU, most of our interactions occurred during our shared years working for the Department of Natural Resources. His sincere smile, his positive attitude, his deep knowledge, and his humble manner made him a great contributor in every project he touched. *George Burgoyne, DNR-Retired*

George E Burgoyne - December 30, 2021 at 12:08 PM

JS

“ I was very fortunate to meet and work with Dave through his participation in the Mississippi Flyway Technical Section. He was, without question, one of the best and most thoughtful people I have known professionally. When he spoke, people listened. He was very intelligent, well-spoken, and kind. I was blessed to duck hunt with Dave for a couple of days at Harsen's Island, MI and we had a very nice time - a memory I will cherish. I have been unable to locate the photos from that hunt but will post or send them when I locate them.

Dave, I will think about you often and will continue to use you as an example of what to strive for personally and professionally. I'm so sorry you were taken from us so soon.

*Joshua Stafford
Sinai, SD*

Joshua Stafford - December 30, 2021 at 11:40 AM

AJ

“ Students, staff, and faculty in ISU's Department of Natural Resource Ecology and Management were deeply saddened to hear of Dave's passing this week. We're sending our love and healing thoughts to Ben and the whole Luukkonen family during this difficult time and reflecting fondly on the memory of the pride Dave showed on the day of Ben's MS defense last year.

Adam Janke - December 30, 2021 at 11:35 AM



“ Country Basket Blooms was purchased for the family of David Richard Luukkonen.



December 29, 2021 at 03:20 PM

BK

“ *My sincere condolences to Ben and his family. I met Dave on several occasions - mainly socially with Ben. Dave was always kind, gracious, and welcoming. He shared his deep devotion for conservation. He will be sadly missed.*

Bob Klaver

Bob Klaver - December 29, 2021 at 12:04 PM

SC

“ *I've known and worked with Dave for ~20 years through the Mississippi Flyway and he will be greatly missed. I always appreciated his wit, humor, and knowledge. Before every Flyway meeting, we would talk on the phone and catch up on family, hunting and fishing stories, and finally work in that order. I can't recall every seeing him without a smile on his face. It was my privilege to have known him and call him my friend.*

My thoughts and prayers go out to his family.

Steve Cordts, Minnesota DNR

steve cordts - December 29, 2021 at 09:26 AM

SR

“ *The ducks have lost a friend, as we all have.*

Shawn Riley - December 29, 2021 at 09:18 AM

RK

“ Dave was a great scientist, mentor, and my PhD co-advisor at MSU. He knew I wanted to work for a state wildlife agency upon finishing my graduate degree and did everything he could to help make that a reality for me. He always made it a point to ask how I was doing when we passed in the hall or in our meetings. I would start to reply with a research update but he'd quickly stop me to ask again, "How are YOU doing?" Dave truly cared to ask that question and listen to the response. He wanted to see his students develop both personally and professionally and never skipped an opportunity to let that happen. We ventured to Estonia together to present our research and spent a few hours together in Helsinki, Finland, on the return trip to sightsee, seek out a (very bland) cinnamon roll that we were told was the best in the country, and let him connect with his Finnish heritage - something he was proud to do. That trip will always stand out among my memories and I'm glad I was able to spend that time with him one-on-one. My sincerest condolences to his entire family. He will be missed by many.

Randy Knapik, Michigan DNR - Wildlife Division

Randy Knapik - December 29, 2021 at 12:20 AM



“ A New Sunrise Spray was purchased for the family of David Richard Luukkonen.



December 28, 2021 at 09:36 PM

BA

“ I'm going to miss my dear friend Dave. My colleague, my travel partner to numerous Flyway meetings, our whiffle ball pitcher for the Upper Region Goldeneyes, and the one I always turned to when I needed data or didn't understand some complex population model. I have so many fond memories of Dave. Many have already pointed out his brilliance, but he was also exceedingly kind, gentle, funny and a really good friend. I'm blessed to have known him.

My thoughts and prayers go out to his family and friends.

Barbara Avers - Michigan DNR Wildlife Division

Barbara Avers - December 28, 2021 at 08:37 PM

NA

“ Nathaniel, Trey, and Ashley purchased the [Memorial Trees](https://www.holihanatkin.com/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) for the family of David Richard Luukkonen.

Nathaniel, Trey, and Ashley - December 28, 2021 at 08:06 PM

BH

“ I was saddened to hear of Dave's passing. He was a good friend during our high school and college days with many great hunting & fishing memories together. Condolences to his family, he was truly a great person and will surely be missed by all who knew him. Rest in peace Dave. Sincerely, Bob Hamly

Bob Hamly - December 28, 2021 at 04:20 PM

J7

“ *The Grand Ledge Class of 79 wishes to express our deepest sympathy to Carol, the children and family. What a tremendous loss this is. We are praying for all of you for strength and comfort. David, May you Rest In Peace in God’s loving arms. Till we meet again, fly high my friend!*

Julie Miller class of 79 - December 28, 2021 at 02:59 PM

KW

“ *Dave's passing is truly heartbreaking and my deepest condolences go to his family who lost him much too soon.*

I have had the pleasure of Dr. Luukkonen's acquaintance as a colleague in the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Division. He was always kind and respectful when we'd find ourselves chatting at the Rose Lake Office or at a meeting somewhere.

I think one of his greatest qualities is his humility. Although he is a well-known expert in his field, he never seemed to boast or talk down to anyone; he's just a really nice guy who knows his stuff. I'll miss bumping into him at the Lansing Customer Service Center and seeing his kind smile.

Kristin Wildman, Michigan DNR - Wildlife Division

Kristin Wildman - December 28, 2021 at 12:28 PM

JH

“ To Dave's family, my sincere and heartfelt condolences for your loss. I worked with Dave for several years at the Mississippi Flyway Technical Committee and continued to work with him until very recently as a member of the Great Lakes Wind Power and Wildlife Science Committee. While I have enormous respect for Dave as a scientist and a professional wildlife manager, my fondest memories will always be of conversations with Dave. Always quick to smile and rarely a bad thing to say about anyone, he was a pleasure to be around and I am happy to have known him.

Jack Hughes, Canadian Wildlife Service, Ottawa, Ontario

Jack Hughes - December 28, 2021 at 12:27 PM

JB

“ I will miss Dave. I know him from his involvement as student and collaborator via MSU's Fisheries and Wildlife Department. I worked with him on a Turkey modeling project, and he was respectful and open-minded even when what I said was crazy (being a fish guy I am sure there was some of that!). Always learned something new when I had a conversation with Dave. My condolences to his family and friends.

Jim Bence

Jim Bence - December 28, 2021 at 11:43 AM

EP

“ Dave was one of the most respected and respectful folks I ever had the privilege of getting to know during my time on the Mississippi Flyway Council. He was a warm and kind man and lived out his beliefs and ethics through his work everyday. He will be greatly missed by waterfowl hunters in Michigan and waterfowl managers across the country. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family now.

Ed Penny - Ducks Unlimited

Ed Penny - December 28, 2021 at 10:04 AM

KF

“ Katie Farinosi and Family purchased the Serene Retreat for the family of David Richard Luukkonen.



Katie Farinosi and Family - December 28, 2021 at 08:27 AM

TR

“ I worked with Dave for many many years in the Wildlife Division of the DNR. He was one co-worker that I really enjoyed being around and communicating with. I was sad when he left us to head to MSU but really enjoyed being able to say hello and briefly talk when he showed up for a function we held. He will be missed by his Wildlife family and myself greatly.

Hugs,

*Theresa Riebow
DNR-Wildlife Division
1994-present*

Theresa Riebow - December 28, 2021 at 07:52 AM

"Beauty
IS
MEANINGLESS
UNTIL IT IS
shared."

“ I worked for David in 1995 in the Sichuan pheasant program at Rose Lake. He was a kind, mentoring boss and a genuinely creative and fun human. Those were good times. Though my life went in a very different direction, I've always considered him a friend and valued the brief moments our paths crossed since. My sincere condolences; the world needed more David. Godspeed, Cap'n.

Mark Ledebuhr - December 27, 2021 at 11:37 PM



“ Dr. Dave Luukkonen was my co-advisor in the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife at MSU. I will cherish the memories I've made with him, especially my times doing field work with him. He was a great advisor and mentor to me and inspired me to continue doing wildlife research. My deepest condolences go out to his family and friends. He will be forever loved.

Nathaniel Yost - December 27, 2021 at 09:01 PM

TC

“ My thoughts and prayers are with the Luukkonen family during their time of loss. I worked with Dave for many years through the Mississippi Flyway. He was a thoughtful man who cared very much about the conservation of our migratory bird resources. He believed in using the best science to guide their management and wasn't afraid the challenge the status quo in a respectful way. His knowledge and wisdom will be greatly missed by all his friends in the Flyway.

Tom Cooper - December 27, 2021 at 06:19 PM

BD

“ Dave was “The Godfather” to both my sons.
I was honored to have both Dave, (and Carol)
as our neighbors (and friends).
Dave was a patient, loving, and generous man. He shared his time,
his knowledge of hunting, and wildlife with both my sons throughout
their lives.
Dave (and his beautiful wife Carol), spent countless day’s, and
hours creating life long memories that I, and my sons will always
have to cherish throughout our lifetime’s.
The world has lost a great, generous and wonderful Man here on
this earth,
and heaven has welcomed the most beautiful soul.
You are, and always will be greatly loved, admired, and missed.
Brenda (English- Keel) Delaney
(and sons) Denny and Jake Keel

Brenda Delaney - December 27, 2021 at 06:06 PM

HP

“ Dear Carol and Family

So sorry to learn of Dave's passing. He was clearly one of the best
students I worked with during my career. During his time with me I
was never sure of who was the student and who was the Prof. He
made great contributions to waterfowl biology and management
throughout his years at DNR.

Harold Prince Professor Emeritis, Department of Fisheries and
Wildlife, MSU

Harold Prince - December 27, 2021 at 05:49 PM

AA

“ Our deepest and sincerest condolences to the Luukkonen family during this difficult time. While we didn't know Dave personally, we greatly benefited from witnessing his vitality and love for conservation through Michigan State's fisheries and wildlife department, where he often served as an advisor of students, including close friends of ours. He also regularly attended departmental research seminars, and we fondly recall Dr. Luukkonen asking gracious and thought-provoking questions of presenters, especially students. He led us all by example and with grace, and his vast passion for conservation and its associated professionals shined brightly through every interaction. He will be sorely missed. May he rest in peace.

Sincerely,
Andrew Dennhardt & Amanda Dolinski

Andrew & Amanda - December 27, 2021 at 04:50 PM

BL

“ Dear Carol and family. Stef called me today to bring me this sad news. I am so sorry to hear it.

I have many fond memories of Dave. As you know, he and I worked together at the pheasant farm in Dansville way back in the 70's. We had a lot of good times there then. Of course, a few years later, he started working at Rose Lake. I was working there as well, and we got to spend a lot of time together. I recall him inviting me to your house for lunch of corn dogs and canned ravioli. We often joked around about that.

One afternoon, after I told him that my wife and I had gone to see the movie Pulp Fiction and that she hated it so much that she got up and walked out and I never got to finish watching it. He said, "let's go see it now." So, he, Stef and I all went to the movies that afternoon.

We played a little softball together and we had a lot of good times. He was always a fun guy to be around.

I will be in Alpena from the 30, through next weekend and so I regret that I will not be able to attend the service. Please know that I will be there in spirit. Hugs to you and the family.

*Sincerely,
Barry Loper*

Barry C Loper - December 27, 2021 at 03:00 PM

TM

“ Dave was my DNR teammate, my grouse hunting companion, and my Friend. He was highly intelligent and wonderfully humble. Dave is the son of the UP. His grandparents lived on the next road over from my current home. He spend his childhood summers fishing with his grandpa in the streams around my hunting camp. Each fall, he would make the trip to the UP for a grouse/woodcock hunt with my dogs and me. Evenings were spent sharing an adult beverage and discussing woodcock migration, ruffed grouse abundance/cycle and Sharptail distribution. He was extremely proud of all three of his children and spoke of them often. Dave, my friend, you will be greatly missed.

Terry Minzey - December 27, 2021 at 01:19 PM

SW

“ Dr. Dave Luukkonen was my colleague and friend in the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife at MSU. For the past decade or so he was the leading force on a number of research projects that I was lucky enough to be a part of. Dave was an outstanding scientist and knew more about ducks than anyone I have ever met. We have lost a true champion for Michigan's natural resources. He loved his family, the outdoors and tractors. I will miss him, horribly. My deepest condolences go out to his family. I am so so sorry that he was taken from you far far too soon.
Scott Winterstein

Scott Winterstein - December 26, 2021 at 11:58 PM

LR

“ Grew up with Dave and “The Mt. Hope Kids.” Always kind and respectful to everyone, Dave was a lot of fun to be around. Priceless memories we'll always cherish. Prayers and sincere heartfelt condolences to the entire family. Sincerely, Laurie (Swint) Raines and family

Laurie Swint Raines - December 25, 2021 at 04:35 PM

DM

“ *Dave was a great friend and neighbor. He will be dearly missed.* ”

Deb Martin - December 25, 2021 at 09:19 AM