



**WASHTENAW**  
AUDUBON SOCIETY

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**NEWSLETTER**  
**November/December 2008**

**Note from Ray Stocking – President, Washtenaw Audubon Society:** *I asked the new Executive Director of the Michigan Audubon, Jonathan Lutz, to introduce himself to the members of Washtenaw Audubon Society. I am pleased he took me up on the offer immediately. Three WAS Board members met with Mr. Lutz earlier this month at the Central Region Meeting in Jackson, MI. We are very excited about the energy Jonathan brings to the Michigan Audubon Society (MAS) and his commitment to the local chapters such as ours. We look forward to collaborating with the MAS moving forward and already have a project in the works for next spring. More on this project in a future issue. Please take time to read Jonathan's message and be sure to drop him an email or call him personally and welcome him back to Michigan and into his new role. Welcome, Jonathan!*

*WAS Board Members (from left to right): Mike Sefton, Dea Armstrong, and Ray Stocking with the new Executive Director of Michigan Audubon, Jonathan Lutz enjoying the beautiful fall weather at the Dahlem Center in Jackson, MI earlier this month.*



Dear Fellow Bird Lovers:

I still feel a tingle of uncertainty when I wake up to the chill of winter air. Yet my decision to move back to Michigan is strengthened each day when I step out the front door of my house, drive through East Lansing, and arrive at Michigan Audubon. I truly believe in the work we are doing to protect and raise awareness for Michigan's birds. My staff and I are facing some tough challenges in the days ahead and we couldn't do it without the support of our local chapters.

Michigan's oldest conservation organization boasts 42 chapters state-wide, and together we protect over 5,000 acres of bird habitat. Our members receive an exceptional newsletter, *The Jack Pine Warbler*, which is in its 85<sup>th</sup> year of publication; our research journal, *Michigan Birds and Natural History*, has been an independent publication since 1994. Michigan Audubon Chapters are offered annual mini-grants, technology tips, and assistance with growing local membership. At our bird sanctuaries, we hold educational programs, workshops, and this year we added two new birding festivals. Soon, birders will be able to log their bird sightings and bird count information via the re-launch of our website, [www.michiganaudubon.org](http://www.michiganaudubon.org).

There are many exciting things happening today at Michigan Audubon! I am particularly eager to engage the next generation of Michigan birders so that birds and bird habitat continue to capture the interest and attention of families and children across the state. As your state leader, my door is always open, and I welcome your input and the opportunity to answer your questions. In the meantime, I hope you get outside and enjoy all that our winter season has to offer.

Best regards,  
Jonathan E. Lutz, Executive Director of Michigan Audubon  
[jlutz@michiganaudubon.org](mailto:jlutz@michiganaudubon.org), (517) 886 - 9144

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## Publication

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## President's Letter *By Ray Stocking, WAS President*

Recently I set a goal for myself to create an archive of photos and documents highlighting the history of Washtenaw Audubon Society (WAS) for future generations to enjoy. Much to my disappointment, I have found very little information to date other than an abundance of outstanding bird sightings. I did receive a file cabinet last year filled with WAS records from former WAS President Lathe Claffin, however it contained a few brochures and some photos, but lacked what I was ultimately seeking – a true document of this organization's history. I am still in search of documented facts and photos that tell a story about WAS since its conception back in the early 1950's. A request for your help follows this letter below.

Earlier this spring I requested any historical information from our members in attendance at one of our monthly gatherings. Long-time WAS members Lois Theis and Roger Sutherland followed up and loaned me several years worth of past issues of the WAS Newsletter. Most copies date back to the early 1970's. In reviewing these newsletters, I came across one that stood out over the rest. Allow me to take you back 34 years and highlight some of the events featured in this particular newsletter:

In January 1974, WAS offered a three-night field trip out to the University of Michigan Matthaei Botanical Gardens to look at the comet called Kohoutek. Members were encouraged to bring their binoculars and watch each night for this rare astronomical event. As a teaser, the article even offered star-gazers the opportunity to search for owls in case Kohoutek failed to show. The general meeting in January (now known as our monthly gathering) featured discussions on how to identify healthy Bluebird habitat plus highlights from the results of a nest-box project at Stony Creek Metropark in Macomb County.

One unusual article featured a warning to all black walnut tree owners. Members were warned of the extremely high commercial value of these trees. The great demand was a result of advanced veneering processes developed in Asia, which enabled substantial quantities of veneer to be obtained from a single tree. Thus, a strong black market for these trees had developed. Members were advised to be on the lookout for solicitations to purchase their trees and were encouraged to decline any offers. They were also advised to record names, descriptions of the person(s) and to get their license plates of the prospective buyers. *"Tree-nappers do exist; they can illegally 'harvest' a tree in a very short time"* the article warned.

The results of the 1973 Christmas Bird Count (CBC) a month earlier noted that 56 observers participated and a record 72 species were recorded – one more than the previous year's record of 71. Highlights of the count included the first ever recorded Virginia Rail for the CBC, plus several rare/late finds including Pied-billed Grebe, Ring-necked Duck, Rusty Blackbird and Fox Sparrow. Afterwards the participants gathered for *(continued on next page)*

## Rare Bird Alerts

### Michigan Bird Report

<http://birdingonthe.net/birdmail.html>

Scroll down to Michigan, Mich-listers, and SE Michigan

*(President's Letter continued from previous page)*

“an excellent supper” at the home of Maxine and Vaden Miles’ home. There was also a reference to “Carmen’s Birdwatcher Punch.” What was in that punch remains a mystery.

Why highlight all of these events from the January 1974 WAS Newsletter? Imagine how I felt when I discovered a significant, yet undocumented event that took place in this specific issue. I realized that the logo that has graced the front cover of our newsletter for 34 years was first introduced in this specific issue. There was no reference to the new design or even who the artist was who created it. It just appeared – and there it stayed for the next 34 years!

This past summer, WAS reached out to the local community and offered university students and others the opportunity to create a new logo for us. Many entries were received and all were reviewed by the WAS Board last September. We narrowed the decision down to three and then a final decision was eventually made last month. What you see today on the cover of this newsletter, and on our redesigned web site, is the winning entry. Congratulations to Lorena Vogeler for her outstanding design.

So let this issue be a document of another period in the history of the Washtenaw Audubon Society. Some day 30 years from now, others will look back and see that we had multiple walks in the Arb this past fall, we welcomed a new Executive Director at the Michigan Audubon and we were still counting birds during the Christmas season. For the record, I plan on placing a copy of this newsletter in that file cabinet for future leaders of WAS to look back on. I’m sure they will thank me someday in the future for doing so.

Good birding!

Ray

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*If you have any photos, printed records or general stories of Washtenaw Audubon that you would like to share, especially items dating back 10-50 years ago, I want to hear from you. Please contact me at [president@washtenawaudubon.org](mailto:president@washtenawaudubon.org) or by calling me at (734) 645-8110.*

**Editor’s Note: The old logo is older than I am!**

### **Hudson Mills Metropark for fall migrants** *By Karen Markey*

Everyday this fall migration seemed to be somewhat different at Hudson Mills Metropark. On September 6th, the most numerous warblers were Blackpolls. Our group of about a dozen birders got good looks at several Scarlet Tanagers in fall plumage, and several warblers including Black-throated Blue, Blue-winged, Blackpolls, American Redstarts, and Magnolia. Additionally, we saw Yellow-billed Cuckoos, flycatchers, vireos, thrushes and our other resident birds. All in all, 43 species seen in just over two hours. Thank you to everyone who helped others in our group locate the birds because they were very much on the move.

## **Fall Migration Walks in the Arb** *By Ellie Shappirio*

### **Thursday, 09/04/08**

In sharp contrast to the opening walk on 8/28, twenty-two birders gathered at 8:00 am at the end of Riverview Court. The weather was perfect, about 70 degrees and sunny. We set off in the direction of the river and Heathdale after searching the west end of Dow Prairie. The highlight was a pair of Ospreys flying around and perching on trees above the river. We encountered Roger Kuhlman in several areas of the Arb who told us that the action was in the Heathdale area. Roger reported a number of warbler species hanging out here, but we saw only a few of them. Approximately 25 species seen for the morning, with four warbler species included. Additionally, we found a large number of Orange-striped Oak Worms (caterpillars) on Burr Oak and one on Red Oak. They had nearly stripped all of the small Burr Oak of its leaves.

### **Thursday, 09/18/08**

Nineteen people participated in the Thursday Arb walk on a beautiful, sunny, cool morning. We walked around Dow Prairie, along the railroad tracks, and then up to the Heathdale area. Birds were very active even after 10:00 am, so many of us stayed until nearly 11 am. Roger Wykes prepared a list of the birds seen by at least a few of the people in the group. There were a couple of other birders in the area, and they saw several species that none of us saw. In total, we tallied approximately 35 species with eight of those being warblers. Also included in these were "zillions" of Cedar Waxwings.

### **Thursday, 10/09/08**

It was another beautiful day. The temperature was 65° and the sun was shining. There were only four of us, Sarah with her grandfather, Roger Wykes and me, and we had a great, birdy morning. Almost all of the birds were easy to see. 47 species for the morning including Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Eastern Phoebe, Blue-headed and Red-eyed Vireos, both kinglets, Orange-crowned and Nashville Warblers and six sparrow species including one Lincoln's Sparrow. Roger Wykes prepared our list.

### **Thursday, 09/11/08**

Another beautiful and cool morning for birding in the Arb. Nine people, including a visitor from England, decided to walk around Dow Prairie today. The birds were there. Possibly the best birds for this walk included two well-seen Olive-sided Flycatchers, one singing Yellow-throated Vireo and six warbler species, including two in the "confusing fall warblers" category. The Orange-striped Oakworms seen the week earlier had nearly all left to pupate, leaving several less mature ones on a few scraps of leaves.

### **Thursday, 10/02/08**

For the sixth Arb fall migration field walk, nine birders participated. It was sunny until 9:00 and overcast after that. The temperature was 45° to 50° with a NW breeze. Approximately 28 identifiable species were seen and a few confusing fall warbler species rounded out the list. The best sightings included both kinglet species being reported for the first time this year. Yellow-throated Vireo, Tennessee Warbler and Black-throated Blue Warbler were still around. Sparrows were starting to be more evident with White-throated Sparrows making their fall appearance.



*WAS Board member, Ellie Shappirio, standing in front of her yard bird feeders.*

*Photo: David Shappirio*

## **Special thanks to Ellie Shappirio and Roger Wykes** *By Cathy Carroll*

The third season of Thursday Fall Migration walks through Nichols Arboretum closed very successfully on October 16th. The walks were well-attended, the weather was mostly good, and it turned out to be a great fall for bird migration through the Arb. As we all know by now, the Arb fall migration walks are leaderless. We never know who will show up, but the walks are designed to have birders meet other new birders and to get new people comfortable with birding. They also provide an opportunity for out-of-towners to enjoy birding in the Arb and they acquaint everyone with the work of the Washtenaw Audubon Society. It's always great, however, when someone shows up who knows the layout of the Arb and can take the reins and *not lead* a group to all of the good birding spots - the pines, Heathdale and the north side of Dow Prairie are just three of these spots. For this reason, I wish to offer a special thanks to Ellie Shappirio for helping to make the 2008 walks successful. Even when she wasn't there, she was there. Within a few hours or a couple of days, I would have the Thursday morning walk report in my email box. It's from these reports where all of the summaries included in this newsletter come. Roger Wykes often made out the list, but Ellie emailed it to me along with the details of attendance, weather and highlights. Thank you, Ellie. Roger Wykes knows the Arb every bit as well as Ellie does and he attended many walks this fall. I know Roger pointed out many birds to those who are new to birding and not as acquainted with how to find the high-up flitters or the low-down skulkers. Thank you, Roger.



*WAS member Joe Prochaska (left) points out a Blue Jay to visiting British birder Malcolm Richards in the Arb. Blue Jay was one of Malcolm's most wanted North American birds.*

*Photo: Mike Sefton*

## Cackling Geese on Belle Isle for WAS November 9 field trip *By Allen T. Chartier*

Today I led a group of birders from Washtenaw Audubon (and others) around Belle Isle. It was windy (southwest) and overcast with occasional periods of very light rain. Ducks were not much in evidence, and the highlight was a group of 10 Cackling Geese at the Athletic Field. Dabbling ducks were represented only by 3 Green-winged Teals and a single Gadwall, and there were two groups of Hooded Mergansers (mostly males) and three female Wood Ducks. Additional highlights among the 50 species recorded included a single adult Black-crowned Night-Heron, a flyover American Pipit, a well-seen Brown Creeper, a couple of Purple Finches, and two flocks of Pine Siskins totaling at least 45 individuals.



*New WAS member, Jeannie Chang, points out long time member, Artemis Eyster, on the spotting scope. Photo by Cathy Carroll.*



*Harold Eyster said his fingers were so cold he was unable to draw. Photo by Cathy Carroll*

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## The Big Sit, 2008 *By Cathy Carroll*

What a great day it was for the 2008 Big Sit on Sunday October 12th. As always, foggy until 9:00 am, then clear and sunny all day with the temperature reaching 83 degrees F by mid-afternoon and no wind. Of course, this warm temp and lack of wind are not exactly great for migration birding, but Don Chalfant and the Independence Lake team pulled it off again. Thirteen other birders (fifteen if you include four month old budding birders, Henry and Oliver Messing-Novak) joined Don to count 52 species for the day, including two new species for the count, Merlin and Red-headed Woodpecker. The Big Sit is more reminiscent of a picnic than of competitive birding. Story-telling, joke telling and eating filled in when the birding was quiet. Other good birds for this year's Big Sit - Northern Saw-whet Owl and American Pipit. Wow, what a day!



*WAS Secretary (and new mom of twins) Dana Novak with one of her future little birders. Photo: Ellie Shappirio*

**At Last: An Updated Release From Julie Craves**  
*The Birds of Dearborn: An Annotated Checklist*

**The Birds of Dearborn**  
**An Annotated Checklist**



*Julie A. Craves*

This book provides the most intensive modern study of birds ever compiled for southeastern Michigan, and is a complete revision of *The Birds of Southeast Michigan: Dearborn*, which was published in 1996. The Rouge River Bird Observatory analyzed over 65,000 bird records spanning over 30 years for this annotated checklist. Introductory material includes birding locations in Dearborn and on the campus of the University of Michigan-Dearborn, with maps. Much of the data is applicable to the entire metropolitan Detroit region. 128 pages; includes photographs.

Provides information on 250 species of local birds:

- . \*Residency status and relative abundance
- . \*Seasonal occurrence, including record (extreme) and average arrival and departure dates for many species
- . \*Detailed information on rarities
- . \*Historical records
- . \*Interesting supplemental information from the 50,000+ birds banded in Dearborn, including longevity, recapture, and out-of-state recovery records
- . \*Reprints of articles on Dearborn birds
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***Additional Big Sit photos***  
*By Ellie Shappirio*



## WAS Whitefish Point Bird Observatory field trip, October 3rd - 5th, 2008

By Cathy Carroll

A group of ten birders from the Washtenaw Audubon Society went for a quick (too quick for all of us) weekend birding at and around Whitefish Point in the Upper Peninsula. We had some very fun and memorable sightings that included Long-eared Owl, American Golden-Plover, Parasitic Jaeger, Black-backed Woodpecker and Spruce Grouse. The Parasitic Jaeger was first spotted on Friday and hung around for us to see well on both Saturday and Sunday. The Long-eared Owl was seen flying from across the lake to the point by the waterfowl counter, Tim Baerwald. It was refound, tucked away nicely just off the main trail to the tip, by a sharp-eyed birder.

On Saturday night, after a very nice, but prolonged, dinner at the Brewery at Camp 33 we returned to the Point in hopes of some owling. In the absence of any owls being netted at this time, Chris Neri presented his WPBO slide show to us. The photos were taken by Chris and his girlfriend. Despite our almost complete exhaustion from an entire day of birding, Chris captivated all of us with this presentation. The science and photos were spectacular. Upon leaving the Point that night, we made a few anemic attempts to call in Saw-whet, Barred and Boreal Owls. When we received no response, we returned to our motel rooms and collapsed into bed.

On Sunday morning, we went on a Spruce Grouse hunt down Vermillion Road and after a couple of false starts we finally hit the jackpot when approximately eight flushed up from the ground and landed neatly in some jack pines for us to photograph and savor the experience. The wild blueberries were as abundant and delicious as we had hoped. Every so often we would lose sight of one or more of our group and turn around to find them hunched over a bush dripping with plump blueberries. The weather was a pleasant autumn surprise. On Saturday, it rained while the sun was shining and we were treated to more than one spectacular rainbow. The fall colors were extraordinary.

On the drive home, along Route 127 just north of St. John, some Canada Geese were flying south from the sewage ponds on the west side of the highway. Sharp-eyed Harold Eyster spotted a Snow Goose leading a string of Canadas. This was certainly an unexpected and surprising ending to a terrific field trip.



*Harold said that this life bird nearly walked over the toe of his shoe. Now that's the way to see a life bird! Snow Bunting. Photo by Harold Eyster.*



*How's this for a Parasitic Jaeger flying overhead?  
Photo by Andy Johnson.  
(Left)*



*Jeannie Chang acknowledges that this photo is not in the best focus and she would gladly have liked a better image. Nevertheless, it's an excellent photo to see how this bird is really "tucked in" to match its surroundings. Long-eared Owl, photo by Jeannie Chang, and life bird for most in our group. Not only that, it was a life bird for most other birders who stopped by to take a look through Tim McKay's spotting scope.  
(Right)*



*The upper Tahquamenon Falls, arguably one of the prettiest sights in the state of Michigan.  
Photo by Isabel McKay.  
(Left)*

## 62nd Ann Arbor Christmas Bird Count Saturday, December 20, 2008

*By Jacco Gelderloos*

Although the temperature is hovering in the low 60s as I am writing this, Mother Nature has been sending some signals that winter is in fact on the way. A brief outing over the weekend turned up several birds from up north: Dark-eyed Juncos, Am. Tree Sparrows, Pine Siskins, and several Purple Finches. Late fall migrants are still moving through, with waterfowl numbers increasing, no doubt peaking when the next major cold front comes through. In short, our avian friends are gearing up for winter and, really, so should we.

With winter waiting in the wings, you are all invited to participate in the 62nd annual Ann Arbor Christmas Bird Count (CBC) sponsored by the Washtenaw Audubon Society. This year the count is Saturday, December 20th. Experience in identifying birds is not absolutely necessary as you can always be grouped with more experienced candidates.

The Ann Arbor CBC is part of a hemisphere-wide effort coordinated by the National Audubon Society. The National Audubon Society publishes the data from each CBC and mails a copy of this compilation to participants (last year's data compilation just arrived in our mailboxes). To cover the cost of compiling and publishing the data, a mandatory \$5.00 fee is charged per participant age 19 and older (it's worth it!).

CBCs are conducted across the Americas (and increasingly elsewhere as well) each year within a three-week period. Each count covers a circular area 15 miles in diameter. The object is to identify the bird species and count their numbers within the CBC circle. In addition to the daylight bird census, several groups of observers will conduct a predawn search for owls.

There are several ways to participate in this count. The Ann Arbor CBC area comprises eight regions, each of which is assigned to an area leader who will coordinate the census in that region. If you wish to be a field observer, select one of the eight regions (*see map*) and sign up with the area leader of that region. If you are not sure which region you want to help census, call me (CBC Compiler Jacco Gelderloos) at (734) 973-9422 and you'll be assigned to an area based on need. The National Audubon Society web site also has

a system for signing up for counts across the nation. If you sign up through this service, please contact me by phone or email me at [JJGelderloos@yahoo.com](mailto:JJGelderloos@yahoo.com) to let me know you have done so, as I will need to place you into an area within the count circle.

You can also be a feeder watcher. If you have a feeder within the count circle this is a fun and easy way to participate. (**Remember:** the feeder MUST be within the count circle, otherwise the data is invalid.) Like field observers, you may sign up to participate for any length of time – from one hour to all day. As a feeder watcher, you don't have to pay the \$5.00 fee unless you want to receive the National Audubon Society's annual CBC publication. Call me for more information, to sign up, or to get feeder watch forms. The real fun and excitement occur at the end of the day at the potluck supper, when the final results are tallied and announced after dessert. This year, the potluck supper will be held at the Leslie Science Center - all participants are invited! If you plan to attend, please contact the Potluck Coordinator or e-mail Jacco G. to let us know you're coming and to coordinate dishes. Area leaders will have maps and directions to the site; plan to gather there around 5:30 p.m.

Please remember that the CBC is run entirely by volunteers and can always use your help, either by participating in the count itself, by assisting with potluck preparation, or both. Consider helping out with the following:

**Potluck set-up and clean-up:** We can always use people who arrive early at the potluck site before everyone else to set up tables and chairs and help prepare for the arrival and arrangement of food. This may also entail getting supplies such as tablecloths, plates, etc. (costs will be reimbursed by WAS). After the supper, we will need to clean up as well. Remember: many hands make light work!

Information regarding the count will also be available on the Ann Arbor CBC web page (<http://www.washtenawaudubon.org/aacbc>) where any updates will be posted as the count day approaches.

## Area Leaders

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## E-mail

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3	Roger Wykes	(734) 769-6482	
4	Cathy Carroll	(313) 595-4562	<a href="mailto:songsparrow@wowway.com">songsparrow@wowway.com</a>
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8	Mike Sefton	(734) 677-3275	<a href="mailto:mseft@yahoo.com">mseft@yahoo.com</a>

### CBC Compiler:

Jacco Gelderloos  
(734) 973-9422 or [jjgelderloos@yahoo.com](mailto:jjgelderloos@yahoo.com)

### Feeder Watch Coordinator:

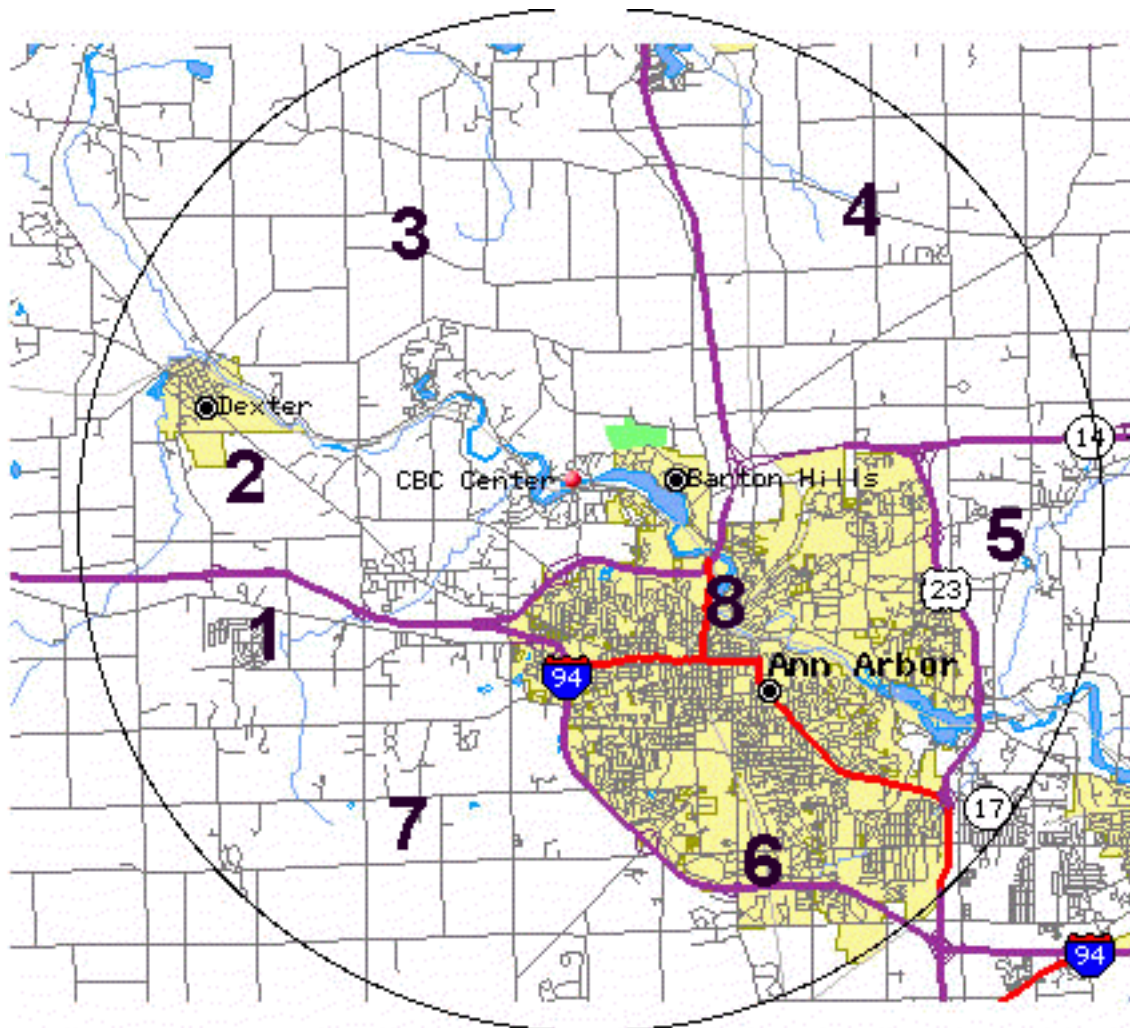
Jacco Gelderloos  
(734) 973-9422 or [jjgelderloos@yahoo.com](mailto:jjgelderloos@yahoo.com)

### Potluck Coordinator:

To be announced

### Ann Arbor CBC Web Site:

<http://www.washtenawaudubon.org/aacbc/>



**Upcoming WAS Field Trips (Dec. 2008 - Mar. 2009)** Cathy Carroll, Field Trip Coordinator

The WAS field trips are a great opportunity for anyone interested in getting outside and reacquainting yourself with all that you share the world with. After a long week at work or school - join us to restore your awareness and faith in what we work so hard to protect. All of our activities are free and open to the public; membership in the WAS is not required. Bring binoculars and dress for the weather. We do trips in the heat and the cold, including rain and snow. When introducing a field trip schedule so far in advance, there are bound to be updates and changes as the actual dates arrive. Check with our primary communication resources: [birders@umich.edu](mailto:birders@umich.edu) and our website (click on the field trips icon) as field trips approach. Additionally we list all of our field activities in the Ann Arbor News and the Ann Arbor Observer. Join us if you can!

- Sat., Dec. 13** **Salem Landfill for Gulls:** Leader: Rob French. This annual trip to the dump is a favorite for many WAS members. Because we rent a van for the trip, we limit to WAS members first and if there is still space available we open it up for non-members as well. Meet in the parking lot of Huron High School across Fuller Road from Furstenburg Park. Trip will go for +/- 4 hours. Dress warmly!
- Sat., Dec. 20** **Ann Arbor Christmas Bird Count:** AA CBC compiler: Jacco Gelderloos. Please join us for this international event. The Ann Arbor CBC 15 mile circle is segmented into 8 different regions and coordinators. The important thing for each CBC is to make sure the count circle is well-covered with thorough counting. Each coordinator will need help to make sure their segment is well-counted. As the date approaches, Jacco will post to [birders@umich.edu](mailto:birders@umich.edu) and the web site will be updated with needed information. The counting is great fun. The pot luck tally is at the end of the day. (See pg. 10 for more information.)
- Feb. 6 -- 8, 2009** **Sault Ste. Marie Winter Birding Weekend:** Leaders: Lathe Claflin and Gary Siegrist Meet Friday, February 6th at 6:00 pm at the Plaza Motor Motel. Another annual favorite, this trip is a collaboration with the Jackson Audubon Society. One might wonder why anyone would travel all the way up to the Soo in February to go birding. Well, this is your time to find out what all the fuss is about. Many come away from this trip with impressive additions to their life list. Waterfowl on the St. Mary's River, Sharp-tailed Grouse, Snowy Owl and other winter owls, Boreal Chickadee and crossbills are just a few of the target species. Sometimes we freeze, sometimes we don't, sometimes we get snowed on and other times we don't. No matter what the weather, the birds are always great. There is a limit on the number of participants and we usually stay at the Plaza Motor Motel on the I-75 business spur. As the date gets closer sign up! These two guys are the UP pros. Find out why.
- Mar 29, 2009** **The Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge** Leader: Greg Norwood. Meet at 9:00 am at the Humbug Marsh Unit gate which is located along Jefferson Avenue at the intersection of Vreeland Road at the Trenton/Gibraltar border. The Detroit River is one of North America's most impressive ecological recovery stories and provides some of the best birding in North America. The DRIWR was created by Congress in 2001 and encompasses over 5,000 acres. The refuge contains some of the most productive wild celery beds in the river for fish and waterfowl habitat and some of the best birding areas in southeast Michigan that include lands at Lake Erie Metropark, Erie Marsh, Plum Creek, Swan Creek as well as a few others. Greg Norwood, biological technician at the refuge, will take us to the best birding spots at the Humbug Marsh Unit which is currently closed to the public. Rusty Blackbirds will be in peak migration and the influence of the Detroit River as a navigational path for birds from waterfowl to songbirds is apparent. Many will remember Greg from the Point Mouillee trip he led for us in August, 2007. Greg has excellent birding credentials from his many years working as a field ornithologist for the Rouge River Bird Observatory and from summers spent doing shorebird research on the north slope of Alaska.



*Drakensberg Rockjumper*



## WAS's 2nd International Field Trip: South Africa!

In August of 2009 WAS will be embarking on its 2nd international field trip, this time to the beautiful country of South Africa! For most people interested in wildlife, Africa is at the top of their places to visit. So many of the first animals we ever knew as children are there, quite confidently, on display. Lions, elephants, zebras, giraffes... While the main focus will be on seeing as many birds as we can (especially the endemic species special to southern Africa and South Africa in particular) we will also be attempting to view as many species of Africa's famous mammals, as well. For this 17-day trip, you can plan on seeing 450-480 species of birds (over 100 of these birds are endemic to southern Africa!) and 40-50 species of mammal! Besides the large number of endemics, South Africa is an ideal location within Africa to go birding with its superb infrastructure for tourists (excellent accommodations, food, roads, etc...) It is the only true First World country in Africa. An example of a lodge we will be staying at (as well as many of the birds we will see) can be viewed at: [www.aftongrove.co.za](http://www.aftongrove.co.za). The accommodations will be a lot nicer than the last WAS international field trip (to Peru) and the trip a lot less strenuous over all.

The first 6 days of the trip will be based out of coastal Cape Town (widely considered one of the world's most beautiful cities) in the southwestern part of the country. From here we will range out to explore the varied ecosystems conveniently accessible from our comfortable base. Time will be spent exploring the breathtaking Peninsula (and its resident penguin colony), the succulent desert-like Karoo (an ecosystem endemic to South Africa), enjoying a fantastic pelagic and having the chance to get up-close and personal with one of the most magnificent predators on Earth: the Great White Shark!

From here, we will take an internal flight to the eastern side of the country. The provinces of Kwa-Zulu-Natal and Mpumalanga boast some of the country's finest birding, with a combined birdlist of well over 750 species. This impressive total is a reflection of the incredible natural diversity of the region, a factor that makes birding the area a delight. Habitats change quickly here and this birding tour will cover all important areas.

From the classic African savanna of the world-renowned Kruger National Park, to the teeming Zululand game reserves, the endemic-rich mist-belt forests of the Natal Midlands, the mangroves and mudflats along the coast to the lofty peaks of the magnificent Drakensberg (Africa's 2nd largest mountain range), this eastern portion of the South Africa tour offers the very best of African birding and game watching. The timing of the trip works in our favor as well: mammal-watching is at its best as foliage is less-dense and they are more concentrated around watering holes, sea bird diversity is at its highest as many of the birds are escaping the harshness of the Antarctic winter, Southern Right Whales are lounging offshore and it is "high season" for Great White Sharks.

Some additional highlights: Ostriches, 8 species of stork, Southern Bald Ibis, Hamerkop, Taita Falcon (extremely rare world-wide), Secretarybird, over 35 species of raptors, 10 species of bustards, 3 species of crane, 4 species of turacos, 11 species of owl, mousebirds, trogons, rollers, bee-eaters, 6 species of hornbills, 7 species of barbet, drongos, 2 species of rockjumpers, 15 species of lark (most endemic), 2 species of sugarbirds, 10 species of starling, oxpeckers, 14 species of sunbirds, 14 species of weaverbirds, monkeys, bushbabies, African Wild Dogs, Cheetahs, Leopards, Hyenas, Meerkats, Hippos, Rhinos, Buffalos, and over 20 species of antelope! For more information, a detailed trip itinerary or list of birds and mammals, do not hesitate to email Bryn Martin at [brynmartin@sbcglobal.net](mailto:brynmartin@sbcglobal.net). We hope that you will have the opportunity to share with us in this amazing experience!

**When:** July 31--Aug 16, 2009

**Cost:** 6 participants--\$5,500 per person sharing  
8 participants--\$5,100 per person sharing  
10 participants--\$4,900 per person sharing  
12 participants--\$4,700 per person sharing  
Single supplement--\$300

**What's included:** All accommodation as per the itinerary on a twin share basis, three meals (beginning with lunch on day 1 and ending with lunch on day 17), all ground transport in 17-seater, air-conditioned buses, including all costs of a driver, domestic flight from Cape Town to Durban, entry to all National Parks and reserves, as well as conservation fees, activities as per itinerary, including night drives in Kruger NP and Mkhuze GR, gratuities, all costs of a professional birding guide/tour leader.

**What's not included:** International flights and departure taxes, optional excursions (like Shark diving and pelagic birding trips), insurance, drinks, laundry costs and other personal expenses.

**International flights:** Once we get our group together we will work out a group-flight to South Africa, however you are free to do this on your own if you choose.

**How to reserve a spot:** Send an email to Bryn Martin: [brynmartin@sbcglobal.net](mailto:brynmartin@sbcglobal.net) (or call him--734-454-0439). This will hold your spot temporarily. To make it permanent, send a **deposit of \$500**. The trip is limited to only 12 participants and it will be based on whoever gets their deposits in first. When it fills up, it fills up! Trip is only open to current WAS members, but if there are still openings by the end of the year, it will be opened up to non-members, as well.

## Noteworthy Local Sightings, 10 Sep 08 to 31 Oct 08 (all in Washtenaw County, unless otherwise noted).

<b>Species</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Observer(s)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
American Golden-Plover	11 - 12 Sep	Parker & Scio Church Rds.	Bob Arthurs	Very rare in county.
Northern Pintail	12 Sep	Parker & Scio Church Rds.	Bob Arthurs	Rare in early September. Possible record early fall date for county.
Osprey	12 Sep	Little Lake, west side Ann Arbor	Lee Hefner	Probable migrant.
Olive-sided Flycatcher	12 Sep	Arb	Roger Kuhlman	Rare in September. 2 birds.
Golden-winged Warbler	15 Sep	Arb	Dea Armstrong	Rare in September.
Northern Parula	18 Sep	Arb	Roger Kuhlman	Uncommon. Roger had 15 species of warbler in the Arb today.
Northern Mockingbird	2 Oct	Manchester	Jeff Schultz	3 birds. Rare, but apparently increasing in county.
Lincoln's Sparrow	5 Oct	Arb	Roger Kuhlman	Uncommon migrant.
Northern Parula	5 Oct	Arb	Roger Kuhlman	Very rare in October.
Scarlet Tanager	5 Oct	Arb	Roger Kuhlman	Very rare in October.
Snow Goose	7 Oct	Platt & Bemis Rds.	Mike Sefton	First of the fall for this uncommon migrant.
Cackling Goose	8 Oct	Avis Farms	Greg Links	Rare migrant usually found with larger Canada Geese.
Snow Goose	8 Oct	Avis Farms	Greg Links	Uncommon migrant.
Cackling Goose	11 Oct	Platt & Bemis Rds.	Jacco Gelderloos	Rare migrant.
Snow Goose	11 Oct	Platt & Bemis Rds.	Jacco Gelderloos	Uncommon migrant.
Northern Saw-whet Owl	12 Oct	Independence Lake	Don "The Man" Chalfant	Rare in Oct. Heard at the Donster's 52 species 11th annual Big Sit.
Yellow Rail (dead)	13 Oct	Base of Burton Tower, Ann Arbor	Joseph Brown	Extremely rare in county. Killed by Peregrine Falcon on Bell Tower.
Northern Goshawk	14 Oct	Milan	Jeff Schultz	Immature. Rare in county. Flew in front of Jeff's truck.
Cackling Goose	15 Oct	Avis Farms	Lyle Hamilton	Rare migrant. More sightings than usual this fall.
Lesser Black-backed Gull	17 Oct	Ann Arbor Landfill	Joe Prochaska	Rare in county. Possibly Leroy, absent since spring 2005.
Purple Finch	19 Oct	Arb	Roger Kuhlman	First of the fall for this rare winter resident.
Pine Siskin	19 Oct	Arb	Roger Kuhlman	First of the fall for this rare winter resident.
Whooping Crane	4 Jul - present	Jackson County	Verl Tisch, Ron Hoffman, SOBs	Extremely rare. Leg band #516, hatched at Patuxent, released in Wisconsin, winters in Fla., 2nd year for this bird at or near Haehnle Refuge.
Northern Waterthrush	20 Oct - present	Oakland County	Mary Trombley, Karl Overman	Bird seed aisle inside Lowe's in Southfield, along with House Sparrows.
Piping Plover	21 Oct	Pte. Mouillee, Monroe Co.	Will Weber, Lathe Claflin	Extremely rare in Southeast Michigan.
Fork-tailed Flycatcher	22 Oct	Pte. Pelee, Ontario	Brad Ouellette, SOBs	Mega-rare Mexican stray.
Rough-legged Hawk	23 Oct	Eyster yard e. of Dexter	Harold Eyster	Rare winter resident, fairly common fall migrant.
Golden Eagle	24 Oct	M-52 & Pleasant Lake Rd.	Martin Bialecki	1 of a few sightings of this rarity in Manchester Twp. in last few years.
Fox Sparrow	24 Oct	Independence Lake County Park	Laurent Fournier	Uncommon migrant. Several other sightings this fall.
Golden Eagle	25 Oct	I-94 & US 23	Jacco Gelderloos	Adult, heading south over Lillie Park.
Northern Shrike	25 Oct	Cutler Rd., Jackson Co.	Lathe Claflin	First of the fall for this rare winter resident.
Surf Scoter	26 Oct	Cavanaugh Lake	John Swales, Roger Wykes, SOBs	Rare in county.
Tundra Swan	26 Oct	Mirage Lake	Bob Arthurs, Mike Sefton	4 birds. Rare in county.
Bald Eagle	26 Oct	Cavanaugh Lake	Jacco Gelderloos, Ed Smith	Uncommon resident.
Cackling Goose	26 Oct	Zeeb & Park Rds.	Bob Arthurs	2, possibly 6 birds.
American Pipit	30 Oct	Abel & Arkona Rds.	Bob Arthurs	50 birds. Uncommon migrant in county.
Golden Eagle	1 Nov	I-94 & Ann Arbor-Saline Rd	Matt Yawney	Flying south. A Michigan lifer for Matt.
Golden Eagle	1 Nov	Pte. Mouillee, Monroe Co.	Calvin Brennan, SOBs	35 birds, a near record number for the Detroit River Hawk Watch.

## Other Area Audubon offerings

Events are typically free and open to the public.  
If you are interested in more information on any of these, please visit their respective websites.

**Detroit Audubon** [www.detroitaudubon.org](http://www.detroitaudubon.org)

Niagra River field trip -----Dec.5-7

Belle Isle field trip-----Feb. 7

Stony Creek Owl Prowl-----Feb. 28

### **Macomb Audubon**

[www.geocities.com/macomb\\_audubon](http://www.geocities.com/macomb_audubon)

### **Jackson Audubon**

[www.jacksonaudubon.org](http://www.jacksonaudubon.org)

Captive care and conservation of local

reptiles program-----Jan.8

Early waterfowl field trip-----March 21

# We're local to the core

*Voted best salad bar  
by Current Readers' Pick!*



To become a member of Washtenaw Audubon Society, please complete the form below (or a copy) and mail it with a check or money order payable to **Washtenaw Audubon Society - WAS Membership**  
**PO Box 130923, Ann Arbor, MI 48113**

\_\_\_\_\_ RENEWAL    \_\_\_\_\_ NEW MEMBER

\_\_\_\_\_ ADDITIONAL DONATION \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### Membership Dues:

\_\_\_ Individual/Household    \$20

\_\_\_ Student    \$10

\_\_\_ Senior    \$10

\_\_\_ Patron    \$50

\_\_\_ Life (individual)    \$200

We encourage you to join at a lower rate if the suggested rates would otherwise preclude your membership, or at a higher rate if you possess the means.

Note: WAS will only use your email address to communicate with you about WAS programs, field trips, or matters of interest to you, such as membership renewal, or possibly emailed WAS newsletters (in color!). We will not give your email address to anyone else.

## WAS Monthly Programs

WAS monthly events usually are held on the third Wednesday of the month. Programs begin at 7:30pm at U-M Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 Dixboro Road, Ann Arbor. Free and open to the public. Call (734) 677-3275 for more information

- Wed, Nov. 19**      **Improving Wildlife Habitat in Your Backyard:** Thomas Funke will share ecological principles that shape what plants can be planted and which birds and animals will be attracted to your backyard. Using these principles, one can better create backyard habitat for birds and other wildlife while living peacefully with wildlife that one may find undesirable. Thomas Funke is a conservation biologist and is the Director of Conservation for the Michigan Audubon Society.
- Wed., Dec. 17**      No program this month. Please sign up for the Ann Arbor Christmas Bird Count on December 20. (See pg. 10)
- Wed., Jan. 21**      **Wanderings in Mexico:** Noted birder, raconteur, and boulevardier Michael Kielb has made many trips to Mexico. Join him for a tour of some of the more interesting locales as he describes the flora and fauna of our neighbor to the south. Michael Kielb is the co-author of *The Birds of Washtenaw County, Michigan*, and teaches biology at Eastern Michigan University and Washtenaw Community College.
- Wed., Feb. 18**      To be announced. Go to [washtenawaudubon.org](http://washtenawaudubon.org) for an update soon.

### Washtenaw Audubon Society

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