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AUDUBON SOCIETY

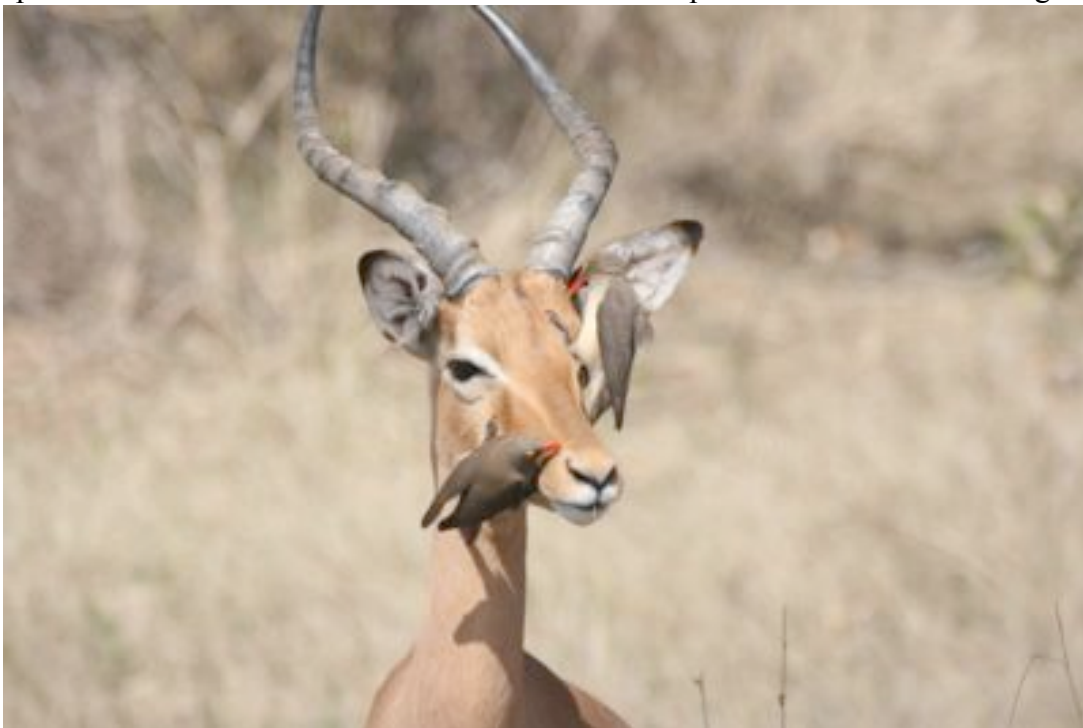
NEWSLETTER
September/October 2009

South Africa: WAS International Field Trip Report

Article and photos by Bryn Martin

Our South African guide, Rainer, climbed up the small tree to get a better look at the Boomslang, an extremely poisonous snake. We (4 WAS members: me, Mike Sefton, Dea Armstrong and Victoria Moessner) were a little worried, but Rainer assured us that while the toxin would cause a person to bleed out of every small cut they may have, it was slow-acting and we would have plenty of time to drive the few hours to a hospital in Cape Town and, besides, the snake wasn't that aggressive. Still, we were worried, not the least because this was only our 5th day birding in South Africa (out of 16) and, really, we needed him. There were so many amazing birds to be seen and without an expert, we would find ourselves having a little difficulty with the identifications. Of the more than 415 species of birds seen on this trip, only 12 of them are also found in the ABA area (including the usual introduced species found *everywhere* in the world). Luckily, we didn't lose Rainer. The Boomslang saw him climbing up and started slithering away through the branches. Rainer either realized that an agitated Boomslang was not what he wanted to get close to or felt it was too far out in the smaller branches to access. Either way, he rejoined us on the ground.

South Africa is a large and ecologically diverse country and we were lucky enough to see a large swath of it. From the southwestern coastline around Cape Town with its attending African Penguin colonies and three species of endemic cormorants to the northeastern tropical rainforests and its magnificent Trumpeter Hornbills,



this place had everything. We visited the Wakkerstroom grasslands where we saw Blue Bustards and Southern Bald Ibises, but spent a lot of our time on our feet beating the bush, looking for small, cryptically-colored (and endemic!) larks that would flush and fly to a distant patch of grass, where we'd repeat the process.

(Continued on pg. 4)

*Red-billed Oxpeckers
cleaning parasites off
of an Impala*

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President's Letter

By Ray Stocking, WAS President

In the early morning hours on August 1, the beloved Trumpeter Swans in Scio Township were apparently hit by a car. The male and one of the cygnets died immediately. There were no witnesses, and there was no evidence that a crime had taken place. Originally, it was reported by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) that the swans had been shot, but that was later proven not to be the case. The tragedy happened only two weeks after we had published a photo of the swan family in our July/August newsletter. The ensuing outcry from the community was overwhelming. The news spread fast and far before the day came to an end. In grass roots fashion, a group of local residents formed in the hope of finding the person or persons responsible. Ultimately, this group would include over 800 concerned friends.

The following day, I was asked to provide a comment to the local press on behalf of the Washtenaw Audubon Society. What could I say? I was deeply saddened. However, I did not have enough information and decided that my official comment would be one of thanks and appreciation to those who had come to the aid of the surviving adult female swan (who was eventually euthanized) and the cygnet. I felt I could not join in support of a reward fund until I had more details. As far as I knew, there still was no proof that a crime had taken place.

A week later, the MDNR issued a press release stating that the male adult swan and female cygnet found dead the first morning died of massive blunt trauma consistent with being struck by a vehicle. The adult female swan that was found alive also suffered from blunt trauma. My worst fears had come true. They were killed while sitting at the side of the road. Many others among us who watched these swans raise their young year after year at this location feared the same outcome.

There is little more the Washtenaw Audubon Society can do to pursue the matter at this time. The group of friends mentioned earlier managed to gather a reward of \$5,000 with the hope of putting those responsible in front of a judge. Sadly, I am not aware of any leads generated by the offer of this reward.

With that said, I would like to once again acknowledge several people and organizations who were involved in the selfless efforts to help the two birds who did survive:

Bird Center of Washtenaw County - Carol Akerlof
Washtenaw Audubon Society - Sherri Smith
Howell Nature Center - Maxine Biwar
Ann Arbor Animal Hospital - Dr. Robin Webster
Humane Society of Washtenaw County
Mallard Marsh - Carole Dangler

Please consider making a donation to any of these organizations for their heroic efforts. Or, just send them a note of thanks for what they did. I applaud each person who so passionately did everything they could to help the surviving birds.

Welcome Monty Brown!

I am pleased to announce that Monty Brown, one of the regulars at our many field trips and monthly gatherings, has agreed to take on the Field Trip Coordinator position for Washtenaw Audubon Society. This role is critical to Washtenaw Audubon and requires an enormous amount of effort to put together all the field trips offered each year. You will see later on in this newsletter that Monty has been hard at work all summer planning the fall, winter and spring trips. I am very excited that he has chosen to help us in this capacity, and I look forward to joining many of you on these outstanding trips. Thank you, Monty! And, welcome aboard!

Good Birding!
Ray

Rare Bird Alerts

Michigan Bird Report

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

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



Publication

WAS Newsletter is published in Jan., March, May, July, Sept. and Nov. Email or send submissions by the 15th of the month prior to publication to:
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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR 2009 NATIVE SEED COLLECTING!

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Division, Stewardship Unit is once again in need of volunteers to harvest native prairie seed at several state parks and recreation areas in Lower Michigan. Prairie wildflower seed will be collected for later planting by the State Park Stewardship Unit. These seeds are used to restore native tallgrass prairie, lakeplain prairie, and oak savanna ecosystems.

Prior to European settlement, southern Michigan supported vast expanses of prairie and oak savanna. Today prairies and savannas persist only in tiny remnant patches, many in state parks. Seed collection is a key step in restoring these lost landscapes, but it is one that requires many hands. This is a unique opportunity to learn about these rare landscapes while doing something positive to help restore and preserve them for future generations. It's fun, easy, and a wonderful experience for the entire family and people of all ages!

WORKDAY DETAILS:

All Saturday workdays are from 10 AM to 1 PM

All Sunday workdays are from 1 PM to 4 PM

Volunteers are asked to bring a clean, dry, empty gallon milk jug to collect seed and wear sturdy shoes. Hiking distance will vary. Prairie remnants are often very sunny places so a hat, sunscreen and drinking water are also recommended. If you are allergic to bees, please bring your sting relief kit. An adult must accompany children between the ages of 5 to 15 and a parent or guardian must sign a liability waiver for anyone under 18. If you belong to a group or organization that cannot attend weekend workdays, special arrangements may be made for weekdays.

Please register by mailing or faxing in a registration form. Forms are available on our web site:
<http://www.michigan.gov/dnrvolunteers>.

Contact Laurel Malvitz-Draper at malvitzl@michigan.gov or 248-359-9057 for more information.

Dates and locations for seed collecting:

Algonac State Park

October 11th - Meet at the main entrance in the day use area parking lot.

November 8th - Meet at the shot gun range parking lot.

Brighton Recreation Area

October 25th - Meet at the Teahen Road entrance (look for DNR truck). Roadside parking.

Fort Custer Recreation Area: October 17th & 25th - Meet at the park headquarters.

Highland Recreation Area

October 10th & 18th plus November 1st - Meet at the Silo Field Trail Area parking lot on Livingston Road.

Island Lake Recreation Area

October 4th & 18th & 31st - Take the only park road (approx. 15 minutes from entrance); look for signs (half mile to 1.5-mile hike)

October 14th 3:30 – 6:30pm (Wednesday) - Meet in the parking lot by the JC Penney store at Green Oak Village Place mall, take US 23 - Lee Road exit.

Pinckney Recreation Area: October 17th - Meet at the Halfmoon Lake parking lot on Hankerd Road.

Sterling State Park: October 17th - Follow the park road and look for signs to direct you.

Waterloo Recreation Area: October 24th



*Birding at Cape Town's beautiful Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens
From left to right:
Mike Sefton, Victoria Moessner, Dea Armstrong and South African guide Rainer Summers*

(South Africa continued from pg. 1)

We visited wetlands that not only were filled with unique waterfowl like African Pygmy Goose and Maccoa Duck (a southern African relative of our Ruddy Duck), but very occasionally also hosted Hippos and Crocodiles. Even pastured farmland held wonderful surprises, such as the elegant, stately, ethereal (what adjective describes it?) Blue Cranes (at one location we counted a group of about 100!) We also visited Kruger National Park, one of the largest and most famous of all of Africa's national parks. An incredible amount of birds graced us there, but we were equally blown away by the mammals on display. We got incredible (and incredibly close) looks at such animals as giraffes, elephants, lions, antelope, rhinos, cheetahs and even the very rare and secretive African Wild Dogs (hunting, no less!) It was also there that Rainer truly showed his skills on a night-drive that our group had signed up with through our campground. The vehicle was also filled with tourists from all over and Rainer commandeered one of the spotlights. We'd be driving along and he would easily spot the smallest of eye-shine or the smallest of animals creeping through the foliage. During the drive, we saw, among other things, a Leopard, a Pearl-spotted Owlet, an extremely fortunate look at a Serval(!) and several bushbabies (nocturnal primates similar in size and shape to lemurs that would leap from branch to branch).

Birdwise, South Africa has the largest number of endemics of any African country. Of the roughly 64 birds only found in South Africa, we saw 50. Extended, of the 169 birds only found in the southern part of Africa, we saw 127. One of the reasons that South Africa has so many endemics is that it has two ecosystems found only there. The first of these is called Fynbos. Surrounding the Cape Town area, it makes up the smallest of the



Cape Sugarbird

world's 6 floral kingdoms (another example of a floral kingdom closer to home would be the Boreal Forest). Fynbos is made up of shrubby vegetation which thrives in nutrient-poor conditions. While it does not have the diversity of birds found in a tropical rainforest, it does make up for this in endemism. We saw most of these endemics, such as the Cape Sugarbird (pictured here--a whole Family of birds endemic to southern Africa), the Cape Rockjumper (very unique *(continued on the next page)*)



*Birding in the desolate Karoo ecosystem
Pictured: Mike Sefton and Dea Armstrong*

(Continued from the previous page)

and scientists still aren't sure where to place it taxonomically) and the Orange-breasted Sunbird. The other ecosystem unique to southern Africa is the Karoo, a semi-desert of open, stony plains and scattered small vegetation. While this area held even less bird species than the Fynbos, the birds one finds there are extremely endemic to this habitat. While most of the endemics we saw there were little larks, chats, and canaries, we

also got some great looks at some Karoo Bustards and very numerous Pale Chanting-goshawks.

One thing that surprised me about South Africa was the cold. Yes, I know it's the last piece of land before Antarctica and I know it was Winter there, but I guess I expected the cold to be in the minority, yet practically every morning we needed to bundle up. Sometimes, for more than just the morning! Cape Town was rainy and while this only stopped our birding once during the trip, when it came down it was freezing! The most surprising aspect of this to me, though, was the day we traveled up Sani Mountain Pass into the tiny country of Lesotho. The goal there was to see the higher-elevation specialties such as the Ground Woodpecker, Lammergeier, Cape Vulture and Sentinel Rock Thrush. We saw these, and a number more, but I did not expect to have a picnic lunch in deep snow with an Alpine vista as far as the eye could see. It's these little surprises and revelations that make travel a wonder to me.

Overall, the experience was simply incredible and I cannot recommend more highly the country or the tour company we went through (Rockjumper Birding Tours). All in all, we saw 31 species of raptors, 8 species of bustards, 8 species of owls, 8 species of woodpeckers, 15 species of larks(!), 13 species of sunbirds and 15 species of weavers. We saw representatives of several Families of birds only found in Africa such as ostrich, hamerkop, secretarybird, guineafowls, turacos, mousebirds and bush-shrikes. We were also fortunate enough to see a few extremely rare species such as the Taita Falcon and the Cape Parrot. But each birder takes away from any trip their own unique favorites: the African Finfoot silently paddling among the vegetation, the huge pair of Spotted Eagle-owls sitting on street lights calling to one another, the stately Wattled Crane, found at the last minute before we were about to give up on it, that required 5+ scope views. The list goes on and on. If you are interested in hearing more about the trip and, especially, seeing a lot more of the photos taken, please join us for a presentation on the trip at the WAS program in October (further information on the back page of this newsletter).



Nyala at a waterhole

Washtenaw Audubon Society Butterfly Hike

Article by Roger Kuhlman

Photos by Rick Neubig

On Sunday July 12, Washtenaw Audubon Society held a two hour butterfly hike at Mattheai Botanical Gardens in Ann Arbor co-led by John Swales, Roger Wykes, Cathy Carroll, and Roger Kuhlman. The weather that day was quite delightful for butterflies, people and rattlesnakes. A spectacular turnout of 48 people showed up to see some good butterflies.

For the day a total of 28 species were found. The most common species seen were Great Spangled Fritillary, Little Wood Satyr, and Common Wood Nymph. Among the more uncommon butterflies seen were Dion Skipper, Broad-winged Skipper, Gray Comma, Mustard White, Mulberry Wing, and Harvester. In looking for butterflies, we covered a number of different wet and dry habitats. Much of the butterfly action could be found at several flowering plants including Common Milkweed, Butterflyweed, Wild Bergamot, Canadian thistle, and another thistle species. At one good patch of Common Milkweed we saw many Great Spangled Fritillaries (GSF's in butterfly lingo), Little Glassywing, Delaware Skipper, and Northern Broken Dashes. As we walked along the trail that follows Flemming Creek we went by a number of sedge-filled wetlands some of which are partly forested. Here the butterflying was quite good and we found Appalachian Eyed Browns, a few Little Wood Satyrs, Northern Pearly Eye, a single Mustard White, one Gray Comma, Eastern Comma, Mourning Cloak, Dion Skipper, Broad-winged Skipper, Baltimore, and Banded Hairstreaks. Almost all the Banded Hairstreaks seen were sunning themselves on goldenrod plants on the edge of the trail when they were not erratically flying about looking for mates.

(Continued on the next page)



Appalachian Eyed Brown (Above, left)

Ebony Jewelwing (Above, right)

Banded Hairstreak (Bottom, right)

Dion Skipper



(Continued from previous page)

About noon the butterfly trip officially ended and most people went home but a small group of butterfly enthusiasts pressed on for another 3/4 hour to see a couple of more habitat types in the northeast section of the preserve grounds. We were rewarded by finding the only Mustard White, Silvery Checkerspot, Gray Comma, and Northern Pearly Eyes of the day. Also this group of people got to have the rattlesnake experience. We were walking around in a sedge meadow when I noticed a small dark skipper on a large patch of Crowned Vetch. I slowly walked around the Vetch trying to get a better view of this butterfly. Suddenly the person following me said there was a snake on the ground in the vegetation and we heard a rattling sound. Actually there were two rattlesnakes there where a moment earlier I had just passed through and I must have disturbed them. Later as I was leading the group out of the meadow we encountered a third rattlesnake that also rattled and appeared to be a little more aggressive. It was quite a treat seeing these rare Michigan snakes.

Butterflies seen on trip:

Little Glassywing, Great Spangled Fritillary, Monarch, Banded Hairstreak, Appalachian Eyed Brown, Cabbage White, Mulberry Wing, Eastern Comma, Broad-winged Skipper, Silver-spotted Skipper, Summer Azure, Dion Skipper, Baltimore Checkerspot, Delaware Skipper, Little Wood Satyr, Mourning Cloak, Common Wood Nymph, White Colias (white form female Colias species), Clouded Sulphur, Northern Pearly Eye, Mustard White, Silvery Checkerspot, Gray Comma, Alfalfa Butterfly (aka Orange Sulphur), Tawny Edged Skipper, Northern Broken Dash, Black Swallowtail, Peck's Skipper and Harvester.



Great Spangled Fritillary

Pte. Mouillee Field Trip *By Sarah Toner and Ellie Shappirio (Photos by Ellie Shappirio)*

Jim Fowler led a driving trip in Pte. Mouillee State Game Area on August 23rd. Twenty participants enjoyed this Washtenaw Audubon Society sponsored trip. The weather was great: 65°, partly sunny with a modest breeze, and few biting insects. There were clouds of gnats and midges which were being eaten by swallows.

Highlights included a lone American Avocet, 130+ Great Egrets with 2 Snowy Egrets, 2 Stilt Sandpipers, 1 Baird's Sandpiper, 3 American White Pelicans, 2 Sanderlings, at least 6 Black-bellied Plovers, 2 Semipalmated Sandpipers and a flyover Bobolink.

Additional species: Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Canada Geese, Green-winged Teal, Redhead, Lesser Scaup, 12+ Great Blue Herons, Bald Eagle, Killdeer, Semipalmated Plover, 15+ Greater Yellowlegs, Least Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Solitary Sandpiper, Ring-billed Gull, Caspian Tern, Tree Swallow, Bank Swallow, Barn Swallow, Yellow Warbler, American Robin, American Goldfinch, Red-winged Blackbird. The trip did not find a previously reported Wilson's Phalarope.



About 100 of the perhaps 130 Great Egrets hanging out together. Two of these are Snowy Egrets. (See if you can spot them!)





*Pte. Mouillee trip leader, Jim Fowler, looking for what appears to be a White-rumped Sandpiper.
Photo by Ray Stocking.*

Hudson Mills WAS field trip *By Karen Markey*

On this warm sunny Saturday morning (September 12), a group of 20 birders did a great job helping each other find fall migrants atop the highest treetops at Hudson Mills Metropark. It was a real challenge to find the birds, but we persevered and everyone chipped in. Flickers were numerous and conspicuous. Thanks to Sarah for spotting the RED-HEADED WOODPECKER fly over. No warbler species was especially plentiful. I believe it was Don Chalfont who spotted the neat Scarlet Tanager who was partially scarlet and yellow. Thanks to Dea Armstrong for bringing both Warbler and Eastern Field Guides and helping everyone with field marks when she wasn't finding birds.

Trip total (key: h = heard only):

Canada Goose, Sandhill Crane (h), Cooper's Hawk (possibly), Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Red-headed Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-pewee (singing), Eastern Phoebe, Blue-grey Gnatcatcher, Tufted Titmouse, Black-capped Chickadee, Blue Jay, House wren, Eastern Bluebird, Wood Thrush, Swainson's Thrush, Yellow-throated Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo (1 still singing), White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren (h, singing every song in his repertoire), House Wren (h), Grey Catbird, Cedar Waxwing (fewer than usual, but still numerous!), Black-throated Blue Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Blackpoll, American Redstart, Scarlet Tanager (3 total), Eastern Towhee (h), Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Field Sparrow, American goldfinch, American crows(begging in the parking lot)

Big Day on a Bike *By Harold Eyster*

Andy Johnson arrived at my house just east of Chelsea at 5:30 am on July 27th. We put on our backpacks, and got on our bikes and rode out into the seemingly impenetrable blackness. We were doing a 'Big Day on a bike.' We biked east on Trinkle Road, and heard our first bird, an Eastern Woodpecker on the bridge. Continuing, we heard a Wood Thrush, Indigo Bunting and Eastern Bluebird. On the corner of Trinkle and Lima Center Roads, we were delighted to hear a Sedge Wren. Passing Lima Center road, we listened for owls, and saw a Screech, heard Yellow-throated Vireos, and a Swamp Sparrow. As we came up to Trinkle Marsh, the sun was beginning to rise. The marsh was upholstered in fog. Nearly 40 Wood Ducks were swimming on it. We also saw Purple Martin, Great Egret, Green Heron, Killdeer, Mourning Dove, Eastern Kingbird, Red-winged Blackbird, Song Sparrow, Willow Flycatcher, Wood Duck, Common Grackle, Tree, Barn, and Northern Rough-winged Swallows, Yellow Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Marsh Wren, Cedar Waxwing, American Robin, and European Starling.

Our next stop was the corner of Dancer and Liberty roads. En route we saw Rock Pigeon, House Finches, Baltimore Oriole, Gray Catbird, House Wren, Sandhill Crane, House Sparrow, Belted Kingfisher, Eastern Phoebe, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Chipping Sparrow, Blue jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Savannah Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Brown-headed Cowbird and American Goldfinch.

Arriving at the woods on the corners of Dancer and Liberty roads, we were delighted to hear both Black and Yellow-billed Cuckoos, probably the first time I've ever had them in the same place. We also saw Eastern Towhee, Canada Goose, Orchard Oriole, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Red-eyed Vireo, Field Sparrow, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, White-breasted Nuthatch, Tufted Titmouse, and Red-bellied Woodpecker.

We were finally driven away by hordes of mosquitoes. Our next stop was Miller-Smith woods, where we saw nothing. On the way to Four Mile Lake, we saw Wild Turkey, Sora, and Virginia Rail. We got to Four Mile Lake at 9:30 AM and saw Mute Swan, 5 Green Herons, Great Blue Heron, Chimney Swift, Turkey Vulture, Hairy Woodpecker, 3 Marsh Wrens, an albino Cowbird begging from a Red-winged Blackbird and 14 Great Egrets. We were pleasantly surprised when a Bald Eagle flew over the lake.

On the corner of Trinkle and Lima Center roads, we saw a Red-tailed Hawk and a welcome American Kestrel. Then on Pinecrest Lane we found an Eastern Meadowlark, and all of the Michigan swallows. I think that it's the first time I have seen all 6 of them at once. We ended the day at Pierce Lake where we searched for Mallards without luck, but we did manage to hear a Carolina Wren.

So from 5:30 am to 12:30 pm we biked about 30 miles in Lima Township, and saw 74 species. Our biggest misses were Warbling Vireo, Mallard, Scarlet Tanager, and sandpipers.

We were both tired, so we decided to do some car birding. First, we drove to Schneider Road and were rewarded with a flock of Mallards (finally!) Blue-winged Teal, Least Sandpiper, Lesser Yellowlegs, and Pied-billed Grebe. At the legendary 'Sparrow Field' on Sharon Valley road, we saw Henslow's and Grasshopper Sparrows sitting in the same bush: what a treat! Then we drove to Meyers Road and saw 2 Northern Mockingbirds.

After we picked up Red-headed Woodpecker, we drove to Park Road and saw 3 Solitary Sandpipers. On Embury Road, we heard a Veery, an Acadian Flycatcher, and a Scarlet Tanager. On Ropke Road we saw a singing Hooded Warbler. Our last stop was Stinchfield Woods, where we heard a Red-breasted Nuthatch and the Yellow-throated Warbler. Our total for the day was 92 species from 5:30 am to 5:30 pm.

Birding at Magee March in the Fall: Is It Worth the Trip?

By Kenn Kaufman

Editor's Note: Someone recently posted a question on "Birders" about Magee March along the Lake Erie shoreline in NW Ohio and if it was worth going down there in the fall like it is during the spring. Kenn Kaufman, noted author of several bird books and board member of the Black Swamp Bird Observatory, replied to the question with a resounding YES! With permission, we are republishing his reply here for the benefit of the Washtenaw Audubon members.

The boardwalk at Magee Marsh (and other nearby migrant traps on the Lake Erie shoreline in n.w. Ohio) is not as productive in fall as in spring, but it's still very good, with a lot more migrants than one could hope to see anywhere away from the lake shore. Most days in September we can find 12 to 20 warbler species along the boardwalk, and there will be stretches of several days when we find more than 20 warbler species there every day. The area is also very good for other songbird migrants.

September is the best month there, with warblers present in good variety throughout the month, flycatchers peaking during the first week, vireos spread out through the month, thrushes concentrated in the last half of the month. Best variety is between September 10 and 20, although there may be some very good days before and after that as well, especially just after a weather front comes through. Sparrows start to show up in excellent numbers at the end of September, but by then the diversity of warblers is dropping off.

I wrote a few updates on the migration -- and on tips for seeing warblers in fall -- last September on the birding pages of the Black Swamp Bird Observatory; you might find it worthwhile to read some of these posts: http://cranecreekbirding.blogspot.com/2008_09_01_archive.html

As we get into September, we should have updates on the current birding conditions on the observatory's birding pages at <http://www.bsbo.org/Birding/>

Thanks for your interest in this area; I hope this information is useful.

Kenn Kaufman
Black Swamp Bird Observatory

Magee Marsh is located at 13229 West State Route 2, Oak Harbor, Ohio 17 miles West of Port Clinton and 25 Miles East of Toledo. GPS co-ordinates for the Bird Center Parking Lot are **N 41.61118 and W 083.18838**

First Arb walk of the Season *By Sarah Toner*

Sixteen people attended the Washtenaw Audubon Society Arb. walk on September 3, a beautiful morning. The temperature was about 55° at 8:00 am, but it had warmed to 65° by 10:00 am when the warblers and other birds became active in the Heathdale area.

Highlights included Great Crested Flycatcher, Black-and-white Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler and Chestnut-sided Warbler. A female Prairie Warbler may have been seen.

Additional birds: Mallard, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Ring-billed Gull, Eastern Wood-pewee, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Gray Catbird, American Robin, Eastern Bluebird, Cedar Waxwing, Tennessee Warbler, possible Common Yellowthroat, Song Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, American Goldfinch and House Finch.

Upcoming WAS Field Trips (September–December 2009)

By Monty Brown, Field Trip Coordinator

In July I agreed to take over the responsibility for organizing field trips from Cathy Carroll. Cathy's innovations include the Thursday morning migration walks in Nichols Arboretum during the fall and spring. (See the first listing below for more information.) We all owe Cathy our thanks for her work over the past three years, and I am especially grateful for the encouragement that she showed me and other new members during her tenure. For those who will miss Cathy, look no further than the October 3 listing below.

Washtenaw Audubon field trips are free and open to the public unless otherwise indicated. (For trips with constraints on the number of participants, WAS members may be given priority in registering.) We try to announce trip dates well in advance to help those interested plan their schedules, but this means that often plans must be altered as the trip dates get closer. We will be in touch through our Twitter service, the birders@umich.edu listserv and/or our webpage at www.washtenawaudubon.org/fieldtrips.php with updates as needed. We look forward to seeing you at our events. If you have a suggestion for a field trip, please e-mail me.

**Sept 3.-
Oct. 29
(Thursdays)** **Fall Migration Walks at Nichols Arboretum:** This will be the 4th year of these popular, leaderless walks to monitor and observe fall migration at The Arb. Every Thursday morning in September and October, participants will gather at 8:00 am at the end of the Riverview Drive cul-de-sac near the eastern edge of the arboretum. Spontaneous order ensues, as birders choose a route or routes and take on the challenge of finding migrants, many of which will be in their first-year plumage. Along the way, birders can enjoy marvelous fall scenery and crisp weather. The walks go until roughly 11:00 am, but everyone can join or leave the group as his or her schedule warrants.

Sat. Sept. 19 **Hawkfest Hike: Lake Erie Metropark** (Leader: Mike Sefton) This trip will take place in conjunction with the Hawkfest weekend at Lake Erie Metropark, which features live raptor exhibits, crafts, games, and many other activities. (For more information on Hawkfest, go to http://www.metroparks.com/news/p_news_story_12.php or call the park's Marshlands Museum at 800-477-3189 or 734-379-5020.) There will be carpooling from Briarwood Mall to this event. Meet at section 4 in the Sears lot. Check the WAS field trips page for updates on precise meeting times and a location at the Metropark where those who are not carpooling can meet the rest of the group. A Metroparks vehicle entry permit is required to enter Lake Erie Metropark (\$20 annually for regular admission, \$12 annually for seniors, or \$4 daily).

Field trips (continued)

Sat., Oct. 3

Crosswinds Marsh for Migrating Sparrows (Leader: Cathy Carroll) Meet at 8:00 am in the main [Crosswinds Marsh parking lot](#) off Haggerty Road (between Waltz-Oakville and Willow roads. The parking lot is closer to Waltz-Oakville Road). Note that this trip will require 2-3 miles of walking, although the terrain is not difficult. The trip will go until about noon; it could be a little shorter or longer depending upon the bird activity. Bring enough fluid and snacks to sustain you for a full morning of walking and birding. Of course, weather in early October is unpredictable, so please dress with an eye on the forecast.

Sun., Oct. 11

The Big Sit: Independence Lake County Park (Leader: Don Chalfant) This is a low-key international competition that Don has participated in about a dozen times now. The task is to try to see or hear as many bird species as possible while remaining in a circle of 17 feet in diameter (around 220 square feet). For the rest of us, it is an opportunity to observe the birds and to learn from Don about identifying by both eye and ear a wide variety of species. One of the advantages of this event is that the timing can suit your schedule. You can arrive before dawn to join Don for his owling, or sleep in and come later. It is also a great outing for those with restricted mobility. For those staying for any significant amount of time, we recommend that you bring food and a folding chair, in addition to your binoculars. The park is in Webster Township off of Jennings Road, north of North Territorial Road and west of US 23. For more info about The Big Sit, see <http://www.birdwatchersdigest.com/site/funbirds/bigsit/bigsit.aspx>.

Sat., Dec. 5

Gull Trip to Salem Landfill (Leader: Rob French) This annual trip to the dump is a favorite for many WAS members. Because access to the landfill is highly restricted, we rent a van for the trip and have to limit the number of participants. WAS members are given priority, but we will keep a list of non-members who tell us they would like to go, and if there is still space available, we then open it up to them as well. Meet at 9:00 am in the parking lot of Huron High School across Fuller Ct. from Furstenburg Park. This trip will take about 4 hours. Dress warmly! Those who wish to attend this trip need to send their names and a contact phone number to fieldtrips@washtenawaudubon.org.

Sat., Dec. 19

Christmas Bird Count (Eight designated zones in and around Ann Arbor)--all day event (Organizer: Jacco Gelderloos) Volunteers are always needed to help with this annual bird count. Each of the eight zones has a designated leader, who will be assisted by several other birders. Go to www.washtenawaudubon.org and click on Christmas Bird Count, where you will find links to maps showing the zones, as well as lists of the zone leaders and their contact information. For general information or to find out which areas may be most in need of your help, send a message to Jacco at jjgelderloos@yahoo.com, or call him at 734-973-9422. The event will begin before dawn for those who are up for owling, but you can also start in around breakfast time. Zones vary in the amount of time needed to survey them adequately, but most groups will finish sometime in the mid-to-late afternoon. It generally is not necessary to participate the whole time, although it is helpful to indicate your time constraints at the time you volunteer. There will be a potluck dinner in the evening where all participants are welcome to join in the tabulation of results. The organizer and venue for the dinner, as well as other details, are yet to be determined. Check the field trips page of the WAS website for updates as the event draws nearer. (<http://www.washtenawaudubon.org/fieldtrips.php>)

Washtenaw Audubon Society 2008-09 Financial Report

submitted by Elvera Shappirio

| Description | Checking | Savings |
|-----------------------------------|----------|-----------|
| Balances as of June 30, 2008 | 1,166.10 | 11,074.99 |
| Checking Receipts | 2,861.00 | |
| Checking Expenditures | 6,207.92 | |
| Transfers: Savings to Checking | 4,000.00 | -4,000.00 |
| Savings Interest | | 56.91 |
| Transfers: CD interest to savings | | 590.98 |
| Balances as of June 30, 2009 | 1,819.18 | 7,722.88 |

Checking Account Receipts

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| Member Dues | 2,115.00 |
| Memorial donations | 125.00 |
| Eagle scout donation | 100.00 |
| Extra trip payments for van cost | 35.00 |
| Donations | 486.00 |
| Total Receipts | 2,861.00 |

Checking Account Expenditures

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------|--------------------|
| Newsletter printing and postage | 2,295.08 | |
| Speakers, program expense | 200.00 | |
| Grant: woodpecker habitat | 100.00 | |
| Telephone service | 302.19 | |
| Earth Day fee | 186.00 | |
| Special group liability insurance | 75.00 | |
| Liability insurance (two years) | 550.00 | billed late>7/1/08 |
| Banking costs (checkbooks) | 25.00 | |
| Corporate filing fee | 20.00 | |
| Grants:River Rouge Bird Observatory | 350.00 | 1st of 3 yearly |
| Logos, two | 500.00 | |
| Web site costs | 177.45 | |
| Christmas Count expenses | 268.00 | |
| Property costs: Searles drain fee | 22.99 | |
| Projector | 873.97 | |
| Trip van rentals | 129.24 | |
| Postal box fee | 58.00 | |
| Safe deposit box | 35.00 | |
| Deposit error | 40.00 | |
| | 6,207.92 | |

Savings Account Receipts

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Interest on Regular Savings Account | 56.91 |
| Interest on \$15000.00 CD | 590.98 |
| (Interest included in smaller CD) | 128.70 |
| Total Savings Account Interest | 776.59 |

Investment Account

The investment account includes two CD's, one valued at \$15,000.00 and one at \$5086.95 * The interest on the \$15000.00 CD is transferred to the regular savings account on a monthly basis. The interest is retained in the other CD.* (\$128.70 in 2008-09) 8 months since maturity. The \$15,000.00 CD matures Sept. 2010, current interest rate 1.8% The \$5086.95 CD matures Oct. 2009, interest rate 3.8%.

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.

Oakland Audubon www.OaklandAudubon.org

Oct. 24: Haenhle Sanctuary - Crane Viewing

Nov. 14: Belle Isle - Ducks 101 field trip

Nov. 10: Birding in Vietnam program

Macomb Audubon www.geocities.com/macomb_audubon

Sept. 19: Hawkfest field trip (Lake Erie Metropark)

Oct. 3: Kensington Metropark field trip

Oct. 5: Morocco program

Jackson Audubon www.jacksonaudubon.org

October 6-October 18: Cranes, Color & Cabernet Festival

Oct 8 : Journey of the Cranes program

Nov. 12: Bird Photography program

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 677-3275 if you have questions about the program.

- Wed., Sept. 16** **Gardening with Native Plants:** Join Darrel Morrison for a program on using native plants in your garden. Darrel Morrison, one of the leading advocates of native gardening in the US, is a former professor of landscape architecture at the University of Wisconsin, and is retired from the University of Georgia where he was Dean of the School of Environmental Design. This is a joint program with Wild Ones, the Michigan Botanical Club, and the U-M Matthaei Botanical Gardens.
- Wed., Oct. 21** **South African Safari:** Join Bryn Martin for a program on the second WAS foreign field trip, which was to South Africa in August of this year, featuring photos of the birds, animals, people, and landscapes of this beautiful country. Bryn teaches high school in Livonia and is a world birder.
- Wed., Nov. 18** **Birding the Soo:** Join Gary Siegrist and Lathe Claflin for an exciting program on winter birding in the Sault Sainte Marie area of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Gary and Lathe have led many field trips in this area and have great pictures of the birds and winter landscape. See Snowy Owls, Great Gray Owls, Northern Hawk Owls, Evening Grosbeaks, Gray Jays, Boreal Chickadees, Sharp-tailed Grouse, and other winter wonders. Gary is the People for Wildlife Coordinator for the Dahlem Conservancy in Jackson, MI. Lathe is a professor emeritus of the University of Michigan Medical School and past president of Washtenaw Audubon.

No program in December. Help with the Christmas Bird Count on December 19, 2009. See pg. 13 of this newsletter.

Washtenaw Audubon Society

PO Box 130923

Ann Arbor, MI 48113-0923