

The Bonanza 2010 Butterfly Season in Washtenaw County *By John M. Swales*

What a butterfly year 2010 has been! In fact, probably close to 90 species of butterflies were found in the county this year. No, I didn't see all of these, but I did manage to come across 81—which is five more than my previous highest annual total. The basic numbers from my regular surveys at Greenview (flanked by South Seventh and Scio Church in south Ann Arbor) tell the story well enough. In 2009, I tallied 28 species there with just over a thousand individuals; in 2010, 37 species and nearly 1700 individuals.

The main reason for this increased variety was the hot weather across much of the country, which pushed unexpected numbers of immigrants further north than usual. In addition, regularly-spaced rainfall in the county prevented key nectaring sources, such as red clover, from drying out. This, in turn, tended to keep immigrants around, as well as being highly beneficial to the resident species.

Several southern immigrants, which typically reach Washtenaw in very small numbers (if at all), were quite abundant. These included Buckeye, Variegated Fritillary, Fiery Skipper and Checkered Skipper. For example, I counted 42 Buckeyes at Greenview between July 20 and September 21, and saw one as late as October 23 at the retention area near Eberwhite Woods. Earlier, there was a strong influx of Red Admirals in May, while Monarchs had a very good year in 2010. Mostly in July, three further immigrants from the south—American Snout, Gray Hairstreak and Little Yellow—were found in small numbers. In the reverse direction, at least three Inornate Ringlets made their way as far south as Washtenaw, one being located at the new West Park on Waterloo Rd. during the official Chelsea butterfly count on July 3rd. (However, the other potential visitor from further north, the beautiful Compton Tortoiseshell, failed to put in an appearance.)

(Continued on pg. 5)



Funereal Duskywing *(One of the rare butterfly species seen in Washtenaw Co. in 2010) Photo from wisconsinbutterflies.org*

When renewing your license plate you have an opportunity to support Michigan's state parks. To get a Recreation Passport, check YES on your renewal form to add \$10 when renewing your license plate. The Passport replaces the \$24 annual or \$6 daily window sticker you're used to receiving when entering a state park or boat launch. Instead, your license plate tab and registration will indicate your Recreation Passport purchase for easy access.

WAS membership renewals will henceforth be done twice yearly (on June 30 or Dec. 31). Your yearly membership will now be due on whichever of the two dates is closest to when your last membership expired. This is being done to simplify the renewal process. By changing dates, you will not lose months to your membership, but you may gain a few.

Contact

President

Ray Stocking
(734) 973-3155
President@washtenawaudubon.org

Vice President & Programs

Mike Sefton
(734) 677-3275
Vp-programs@washtenawaudubon.org

Treasurer

Ellie Shappirio
(734) 665-6613
Treasurer@washtenawaudubon.org

Secretary

Dana Novak
(734) 424-9305
Danacnovak13@yahoo.com

Field Trips

Monty Brown
Fieldtrips@washtenawaudubon.org

Membership

Sherri Smith
(734) 994-6287
Membership@washtenawaudubon.org

Newsletter

Bryn Martin
(734) 454-0439
Brynmartin@sbcglobal.net

Education

Dea Armstrong
(734) 668-2513
Ddarm@umich.edu



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Bryn Martin
6241 Runnymede
Canton, MI 48187

President's Letter

By Ray Stocking

Last May I announced to our board members that it was my intention to step down as president. I had considered the idea for several months before mentioning it to them, because serving as president of this organization is an enormous privilege for me and something I actually would like to continue doing. However, as my two beautiful children grow older and busier, and the shifting demands on my time increase, it is clear to me that I cannot be the kind of president I want to be, given the limited amount of time I have to dedicate to this important role. The moment has arrived to step aside and let someone else continue leading this outstanding organization.

Here, I would like to thank all of the past and present members who have served on the Washtenaw Audubon Society (WAS) board during my tenure. Ellie Shapiro, Sherri Smith, and Mike Sefton were there at my first meeting in September 2005, and are still serving today. I cannot thank them enough for the hard work they have put into this organization. Dea Armstrong joined the board a year later and not only became another trusted board member, but a dear friend as well. I am very grateful to Bryn Martin, Dana Novak, and Monty Brown for their roles on the board. They, too, have young children. I know this is not an easy task for them and appreciate the time they have given. And, to the field trip leaders, newsletter editors, secretaries, and others who have served as board members over the past five years and more, I extend my sincerest gratitude.

If there is one thing for which I hope my tenure will be best remembered, it is that I brought to Washtenaw Audubon some of the 21st century's most effective technological advances. Our webpage, which is the first source of information for many of our members and guests, provides an abundance of detail with the click of the mouse. When visiting our website you will always see the current field trips and monthly programs at the top of the page. I would like to thank Rob French for his ability to capture my vision of what our website should be, and for producing a first class site for all to enjoy. We also now have Facebook and Twitter accounts for sharing information with members and nonmembers at any given time. My personal favorite, of course, is that we now have the ability to join the Washtenaw Audubon Society, or renew our memberships, online!

Over the past two years I have promoted the idea of offering an online version of the newsletter instead of a print version. There are so many reasons to do this, including the desire to be more "green" and the significant cost savings to the organization. At the same time, we still produce the paper edition for those who prefer that version. However, I do believe the online edition is far superior to the paper edition, if only because of the vivid colors of the photographs provided by our members. And, I think we all like the idea of saving a few trees!

(Continued on the 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)

There are some changes still in the works as our transition to a new president takes place. We are revising our membership database, we are testing an improved voice mail system, and we are making even further enhancements to the WAS website. Simply put, Washtenaw Audubon is primed to remain relevant and informative for years to come. Yet, WAS also remains very much the same as it was when I stepped into the role of president back in 2005. We still offer outstanding programs and lead some of the best birding field trips in the state! Most of our events are free and open to the public. We are an organization serving the community for the continuing education about and enjoyment of our feathered friends. For this, I am most proud.

With all that said, I am so pleased to announce that Sue Johnson has agreed to be the next president of the Washtenaw Audubon Society. A long-time resident of Ann Arbor, many of you know Sue as Andy Johnson's mom and, while that is very true, Sue is also an avid birder and outstanding member of our community. We are so lucky to have her join us in this role. Welcome to Sue Johnson!

Finally, I would like to thank all of the birders out in the field who have taken me under their wing ever since I first joined Washtenaw Audubon. I am a much better birder today because of you . . . but, I still rely on you today to help me tell the difference between a Lesser and a Greater Yellowlegs. Some things never change.

I thank all of you for your support over the years.

Good Birding!

Ray

Field Trip to Belle Isle

(Nov. 14, 2010) *By Dea Armstrong*

About 30 hearty souls joined leaders Steve Santner and Fred Charbonneau for a tour of Belle Isle and the surrounding waters. We saw quite a few waterfowl but were unable to find a Saw-whet Owl in the woods behind the nature center. One of the best birds of the day, a Merlin, was seen by participant Margaret Wallen who waited in the car rather than walk out to a spot where Bald Eagles are often seen.

Bonaparte's Gulls showed all of us what graceful fliers they are when compared to the more common Ring-billed Gulls. Ruddy Ducks, Canvasbacks and Scaups were the most plentiful ducks. A list of the waterbirds we saw is below:

Double-crested Cormorant, Mute Swan, Canada Goose, Mallard, Gadwall, Ruddy Duck, Wood Duck (1), Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Greater Scaup, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser

Hudson Mills WAS field trip report: (9/11) *By Karen Markey*

On this cool hazy Saturday morning, a group of 26 birders did a great job helping each other find fall migrants amidst leafy middle- and tops-of-trees at Hudson Mills. Personally, I felt like a footnote being surrounded by several of the county's active and experienced birders Dea Armstrong, Don Chalfont, Harold Eyster, Lee Hefner, John Lowry, Bryn Martin and Sarah Toner who were so quick on the draw finding birds and helping others spot and identify birds.

Warbler activity was brisk and fast-paced with 15 species of warblers coming into view. We had great looks at male Black-and-White Warblers and a brilliant yellow Wilson's Warbler. Thanks to John for spotting the Brown Creeper and fly-over of a RED-HEADED WOODPECKER. After most of the group left at 10:30, a smaller group circled for another hour finding more mixed flocks with, thanks to Lee, good looks at Yellow-billed Cuckoo and quick glances at a Black-throated Blue Warbler. Thanks to Dea Armstrong for reviewing field marks when she wasn't busy finding birds and helping others. Thanks to Monty for offering his scope but I dissuaded him from bringing it because most fall migrants stay in view for a split second.

Additional noteworthy birds for the day (KEY: h = heard only):

Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Eastern Wood-Pewee (singing too), Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Blue-grey Gnatcatcher, Grey Catbird, Eastern Bluebird, Swainson's Thrush, Cedar Waxwing (numerous), Red-eyed Vireo, Philadelphia Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo (h), Black-throated Green Warbler, Blackpoll, Magnolia Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, American Redstart, Pine Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Ovenbird, Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak

64th Ann Arbor Christmas Bird Count Saturday, December 18, 2010

Ah, early November.... A chill is in the air, the leaves have mostly fallen off the trees, crows are starting to flock and juncos have arrived. All of these signs can mean but one thing: before you know it, it will be time for another edition of the Ann Arbor CBC!

What will this year's count bring? Records and new species (as in 2008) or a more average year (as in 2009)? Whatever happens, odds are participants will gather some surprising results and find a few unusual species. Some of the most interesting data points our counters compile are those that show larger trends, both positive and negative: have woodpecker numbers now stabilized after large increases in recent years (due to dead ashes related to emerald ash borer infestation?), and might we miss American Kestrel for the first time since the early 1950's? We won't know until after the results are in....

Your contribution to the effort is crucial, so all are invited to participate in the 64th annual Ann Arbor CBC sponsored by the Washtenaw Audubon Society. This year the count is **Saturday, December 18th**. 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!).

During a 3-week period each year, CBCs are conducted across the Americas (and increasingly elsewhere as well). Each count covers a circular area 15 miles in diameter; the Ann Arbor count circle is centered on the Foster Road bridge near the intersection of Maple Road and Huron River Dr. 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 (*check out the detailed maps on the WAS website*) 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 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 feeder watch coordinator Kurt Hagemester for more information, to sign up, or to get feeder watch forms.

The real fun and excitement happens 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 Nicole Sefton to let us know you're coming and to coordinate dishes. The LSC is located at 1831 Traver Rd, off Plymouth Rd in Ann Arbor. Area leaders will have maps/directions if you need them; plan to gather there around 5:30-6:00 p.m.

Please remember that the CBC is run entirely by volunteers and can always use your help. Consider helping out with the potluck set-up and clean-up: we can always use people who arrive early at the potluck site 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.

Ann Arbor Christmas Bird Count

Area Leaders	Phone	E-mail
1 John Swales	(734) 995-1139	jmswales@umich.edu
2 Rob & Nancy French	(734) 994-8418	rwfrenchjr@comcast.net
3 Roger Wykes	(734) 769-6482	
4 Cathy Carroll	(313) 595-4562	songsparrow@wowway.com
5 Mike & Susan Kielb	(734) 239-6064	makielb@comcast.net
6 Jacco Gelderloos	(734) 973-9422	jjgelderloos@yahoo.com
7 Don Chalfant	(734) 665-3120	screech-owl@comcast.net
8 Mike Sefton	(734) 677-3275	mseft@yahoo.com
CBC Compiler:	Jacco Gelderloos (734) 973-9422	jjgelderloos@yahoo.com
Feeder Watch Coordinator:	Kurt Hagemeister (734) 663-9746	khagemeister@sbcglobal.net
Potluck Coordinator:	Nicole Sefton (734) 677-3275	seftonn1344@yahoo.com
Ann Arbor CBC Web Site:	http://www.washtenawaudubon.org/aacbc/	
National Audubon Society:	http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc/index.html	

(Butterfly Season continued from pg. 1)

In addition to all of these arrivals, there were two major surprises. On September 23rd, at the landfill behind Sanford Rd Park near Milan, Roger Wykes and I found a tiny Dainty Sulphur, this being just the third county record, as far as we are aware. Even more dramatic was a Funereal Duskywing nectaring on Blazing Star that Roger and I identified on August 20th at the excellent Leonard's Preserve in Manchester. Alas, we didn't have a camera with us, and by the time we had returned with a net from the car, it had moved on. This is essentially a Texan species, but it is also known, at least on occasion, to be a great traveler. Exceptionally, in 2010, Funereal Duskywing has also been reported from Wisconsin and from Point Pelee. The August 20 sighting is, at least unofficially, only the second record for the state, the other being at Whitefish Point on 18 August, 2001 (*fide* Jack Reinoehl).

The picture has been a little more mixed for the scarce and highly localized resident species. Good numbers of Poweshiek Skipper and Dorcas Copper were located at Park Lyndon North and, in the second half of August, several Leonard's Skippers were identified in the prairie at (appropriately!) Leonard's Preserve. On the other hand, only two Hoary Edge were seen at their traditional site off Hankerd Rd., and the tiny colony of Silvery Blues at Sharon Valley SGA may be lost.

In sum, I have been butterflying in Washtenaw County for 20 years now, and in that time, 2010 has been the most exciting year to date for Lepidoptera. It remains to be seen whether 2011 will produce a more normal year, or whether the bonanza will continue.

Upcoming WAS Field Trips (December--April, 2011)

By Monty Brown, Field Trip Coordinator (fieldtrips@washtenawaudubon.org)

Washtenaw Audubon field trips are free and open to the public unless otherwise indicated. For more information, go to our webpage. Changes and updates will be made via our Twitter service, the birders@umich.edu listserv and/or our web page at www.washtenawaudubon.org/fieldtrips.php with updates as needed. If you have a suggestion for a field trip, please send an e-mail.

Sat., Dec. 4 **Gull Trip to Salem Landfill** Leader: Rob French. Because access to the landfill is highly restricted, we rent a van for the trip and limit the number of participants. WAS members have priority, but if there is still space available a few days before the trip, we then open it up to as many nonmembers as we can accommodate. Meet at 8:45 a.m. in the parking lot of Huron High School across Fuller Road from Furstenburg Park. This trip will take about 4 hours. Dress warmly! Please also note that if the activity at the landfill is not up to par, the group may move on to one or two other sites. If you want to attend this trip, send your name and a contact phone number to fieldtrips@washtenawaudubon.org.

Sat., Dec. 18 **Ann Arbor Christmas Bird Count** Coordinator: Jacco Gelderloos. Volunteers are always needed to help with this annual bird count. (*See details on pg. 4 of this newsletter.*)

Feb. 4–6, 2011 **Winter Birding around Sault Ste. Marie** Leaders: Lathe Claflin and Gary Siegrist and jointly sponsored by the Jackson and Washtenaw Audubon societies. Snowy and Great Gray owls, Sharp-tailed and Ruffed grouse, Boreal Chickadee, grosbeaks, and crossbills are some birds that make driving to the Upper Peninsula worth the effort. The weather can be rough, but no matter, the birding is reliably excellent. The event begins on Friday evening and ends during the day on Sunday. The number of participants is limited, and reserving a space is mandatory. There is a \$20 charge for the trip, and individual participants are also responsible for their own transportation, food, and lodging costs. For more information or to register, please call Lathe (517-522-3949) or Gary (517-522-5990).

April 16--23, 2011 **Dominican Republic** Leader: Bryn Martin WAS will be embarking on its 3rd international field trip, this time to the beautiful Caribbean island-nation of Dominican Republic! The biggest draw to birding the Caribbean are the number of endemics on each island and the main focus of this trip will be to see as many of these specialties as possible. DR has the highest number of endemics of any Caribbean island (around 30) and these include a trogon, 2 todies (a family of birds *only* found in the Caribbean), 2 parrots, an owl, 4 tanagers and a crossbill. Ridgway's Hawk, another endemic, is one of the world's rarest birds (around 100 breeding pairs) and we will be visiting one of its last strongholds. DR also has the Palmchat, a species of bird that is so unique that it has been classified into its own Family. In addition to the island endemics, DR has over 20 other species that are endemic or near-endemic to the Caribbean alone. Plan on seeing 110-125 species of birds on this trip. The trip is currently almost half-full. Current price is \$2700 per person, but it will go down when additional people sign up (down to \$1780 per person if we get 6 more people sign up.) For additional information, a detailed trip itinerary, a list of what is and is not included, or list of birds, please do not hesitate to email Bryn Martin at brynmartin@sbcglobal.net. We hope that you will have the opportunity to share with us in this great trip! **How to reserve a spot:** Send an email to Bryn Martin or call him--734-454-0439. This will hold your spot until you send me a **deposit of \$600**. The trip is limited to only 10 participants and it will be based on whoever gets their deposits in first. First preference will be given to current WAS members, but if there are still openings, it will be opened up to non-members as well.

Thursday Morning Arb Walks

The Thursday Morning Arb Walk on **September 2nd** had a great day, despite spurts of rain and bad lighting. The dozen participants enjoyed a good movement of warblers, with birds seemingly swarming around trees. Two roosting Nighthawks were seen, and hummingbirds were spotted all around the Arb. 10 warbler species were seen, with Blackburnians and Tennessees in the highest numbers. The full species list: Mourning Dove, Chimney Swift, Common Nighthawk, Northern Flicker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Blue Jay, American Crow, American Robin, White-breasted Nuthatch, Tufted Titmouse, Gray Catbird, Cedar Waxwing, House Wren, Carolina Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Red-eyed Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Yellow-throated Vireo, Cape May Warbler, Black-and-White Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Northern Cardinal, American Goldfinch. It was a great day with 37 species.

By Sarah T.

The Thursday Morning Arb Walk on **October 8** was great. Although only Yellow-rumps represented the warblers, both kinglets filled in for some nice flocks. A Bluebird perched on top of a tree was nice, as was seeing three species of raptors. But the best bird of the day was definitely when Dawn spotted a strange wren just feet from the path. After many fleeting glimpses, the birders determined that it was a Sedge Wren! About 16 people attended on this beautiful day, and also enjoyed a kettle of Turkey Vultures circling above. The complete list: Canada Goose, Mute Swan, Wood Duck, Mallard, Turkey Vulture, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Killdeer, Ring-billed Gull, Rock Pigeon, Mourning Dove, Belted Kingfisher, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Blue-headed Vireo, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Carolina Wren, House Wren, Sedge Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Gray Catbird, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Song Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Northern Cardinal, Red-winged Blackbird, Brown-headed Cowbird, House Finch, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow. A wonderful 40 species topped off the day. A birder returning to her car also saw/heard a Mourning Warbler and a Warbling Vireo.

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

Membership Dues:

_____ ADDITIONAL DONATION \$ _____

___ Individual/Household \$20
(with printed newsletter \$25)

Name: _____

___ Student \$10
(emailed newsletters only)

Address: _____

___ Senior \$10
(with printed newsletter \$15)

Phone: _____ Email: _____

___ Patron \$50

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, and 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.

- December** **No program.** Please join us for the Christmas Bird Count. (Details pg. 4)
- Jan. 19, 2011** **Hoopoes to Hornbills: Birding the Himalayas:** Join Will Weber for a journey to the Himalayas. Will has made over 20 trips to the Himalayas since serving as a Peace Corps volunteer in Nepal in the 1970s. Will Weber is the chair of Washtenaw Audubon's Safe Passage Committee, and he and Joan Weber are the owners of Journeys International, an eco-travel company specializing in cultural and wildlife tours to over 45 countries.
- Feb. 16, 2011** **Spring Migration in Veracruz:** Join Michael Kielb for a look at one of the greatest migration points in the world in the state of Veracruz, Mexico. Thousands of birds that winter in South America, Central America, and Mexico pass through a narrow migration corridor in Veracruz each spring on their way to breeding grounds in the north. Michael Kielb teaches biology at Eastern Michigan University and has made a number of trips to Veracruz during migration.

Washtenaw Audubon Society

PO Box 130923

Ann Arbor, MI 48113-0923