



WASHTENAW
AUDUBON SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

May/June 2011

Me Gustan las Pedorreras! (Birding the Dominican Republic)

By Bryn Martin

Most birders that know of the Tody family cannot help but love them (as would I guess most non-birders, as well). The reason is a mix of the way that they look (stunningly colored, plump little balls of cuteness), their boldness (very approachable, affording even amateurs like me close, eye-level photos) and their rarity. They are not endangered by any means—quite common on their home turf. By rarity I am simply referring to the fact that they are only found on some of the Caribbean islands and only birders who have ventured to Jamaica, Cuba, Puerto Rico or Hispaniola will have the chance to make their acquaintance. In my non-birding off-time I am a high school teacher and spend a lot of my time around teenagers. This may explain a fourth reason the Todies appeal to me: because of the noise their wings make when they fly, their nickname in the Dominican Republic is *pedorreras* (translation: little farters)! The Todies, among many other fascinating local birds is what drew me to the DR and what made the trip a huge success for both me and the other 6 participants who joined Washtenaw Audubon Society's 3rd international field trip.



Broad-billed Tody

Photo by Jean Jacques Gozard

The Dominican Republic occupies the eastern 2/3 of the large Caribbean island of Hispaniola. The western 1/3 of the island is the country of Haiti and on one of the days our route had us driving a road that skirted the border. Haiti is the poorest country in the western hemisphere and much of that is a result of mismanagement.



After bushwhacking through the undergrowth for about 45 minutes, the group finally finds the elusive Hispaniolan Crossbill. (Of course, we then found ourselves lost trying to find our way back to the car!)

The movie *An Inconvenient Truth* showed an aerial view of part of the border between the two countries and it was stunning. Sad to say, where we drove, we saw the exact same thing. The DR side was protected, thick vibrant forests full of rare endemic birds. The Haitian side was clear cut and barren.

Birdwise, the DR has the highest number of endemics of any of the Caribbean islands: 30, with another Hispaniolan endemic found only in Haiti. This was one of the biggest draws when considering where to organize the next international field trip. And I'm happy to report that our amazing guides were able to get us on every single one of these endemics! We organized the trip with Jean Jacques Gozard of Amazilia Tours, who also worked with a local guide named Miguel Landestoy who knew multiple places for every single bird and seemed to know people everywhere. (Contin. pg. 6) ¹

Contact

President

Sue Johnson
(734) 995-1821
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) 276-9372
Ddarm@umich.edu

Past President

Ray Stocking
(734) 973-3155
rstocking@gmail.com



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Bryn Martin
6241 Runnymede
Canton, MI 48187

President's Letter, Sue Johnson

What a wonderful migration season it has been...and still is. By many accounts, this has been a Spring for the record books. The White Wagtail at Point Mouille seemed to kick-start the season with excitement. And while I did make a point of venturing out to Cell 3 through what turned out to be a strong wind and driving rain, I was not one of the fortunate. But as with most bird chases, I was rewarded with new birding friends. And as if the world isn't small enough, I met a couple from Ohio who had birded with my son in Ecuador just weeks prior.

Sadly, my record with the rare birds did not improve much after the Wagtail. I missed the Kentucky Warbler in the Arb and the Golden-winged and the Kirtland's Warblers at Dolph. And while these birds eluded me so far this spring, many others have not. It's hard to beat the brilliant maize of the Prothonotary, or the electric orange of the Blackburnian at the top of a tree bathed in sunlight, or a Northern Parula in full song, just 18 inches way. It doesn't have to be rare to be thrilling. The intimacy of Dolph affords so many close encounters, it's been hard to stay away.

And I have tried something new this Spring. With a personal goal to learn more bird songs, I have visited Dolph almost every day for a 20 minute stint before work, or a slightly longer visit after work- and what a wonder it has been. I am making gradual progress. Repetition, it turns out, is a wonderful teacher. If you've stepped into the woods anywhere in the last few weeks, you've seen your share of Yellow-Rumped Warblers, less affectionately known as this year's "trash bird." I've seen a Yellow-rumped from every possible angle imaginable and it's taught me a lot about other warblers as well. Even though I am guilty as the next birder of projecting my wish list on to this everyday bird- it is decidedly not a Kirtland's or a Yellow-throated Warbler.

By the time this newsletter reaches you, many of our migrating friends will have passed through Washtenaw County. I hope you've enjoyed this year's bounty. How fortunate we are to be in an area so rich in natural resources with so many enthusiastic fellow-birders to join with us on the trail. May is a wonderful month!

Happy Birding,

Sue

The **Tuesday Evening Birders** went to Dolph! (**May 10**) The group of 17 fit fairly well into the skinny trails, and had a nice variety of warblers. Although we didn't refind the Kirtland's, Connecticut, Kentucky, Mourning, or Prothonotary, we did have a Bay-breasted, Blackpoll, and a Blackburnian. The highlight of the evening was an Olive-sided Flycatcher. We had 15 warbler species (Lath also had a flyover Pine). Additional highlights: Green Heron, Least Flycatcher (identified by whit note), Empidonax sp. (possibly same Least), Eastern Phoebe, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Yellow-throated Vireo, Blue-headed Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Carolina Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Gray Catbird, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Palm Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, American Redstart, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Baltimore Oriole

Rare Bird Alerts

Michigan Bird Report

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

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

Harrier and the Tropicbirds *By Sarah Toner*

What do you get when you combine four teenage birders, a 24-hour bird marathon in some of the best birding spots in the US, and a lack of sleep? Answer: The Great Texas Birding Classic!

In April, I was honored to be chosen to be a member of the American Birding Association's Tropicbirds team. Each year, the ABA picks four teen birders to compete in the Great Texas Birding Classic, which raises money for young birder programs and conservation. After hearing the news, I started studying Texas birds and constantly listening to bird songs so that I would be prepared when I left Ann Arbor.

I was the first to land in Houston on Thursday morning, where I met our awesome chaperones, Chip Clouse (Director of the ABA's youth programs) and Jen Brumfield, who leads tours for Tropical Birding. After picking up my first lifer (three Upland Sandpipers sitting on airport grounds), we then picked up Ethan Gyllenhaal, a sixteen-year old larophile (lover of gulls). Galen Frank-Bishop flew in next from Massachusetts, and then we picked up the final member of our team, Maia Paddock, from Pennsylvania, and drove to our hotel in Beaumont. Since this was my first trip to Texas, I got several drive-by lifers, from common birds like Great-tailed Grackles to the White Ibis that flew over.



Boat-tailed Grackles at Anahuac
Photo courtesy Maia Paddock

After checking into the hotel, we drove to Anahuac NWR, scouting some shorebird fields along the way where we saw some crucial birds like Whimbrel, White-faced Ibis, White Ibis, and Upland Sandpiper. Northern Harriers were everywhere, and I was nicknamed "Harrier" for calling out every single one of the twenty along the way. We drove a short loop around Anahuac, getting cooperative bitterns, rails, and other obliging marsh birds, as well as some lingering White-crowned and Lincoln's Sparrows.

Next up was Rollover Pass, and it was full of birds. We spent an hour scanning through the flocks, shooting pictures of fly-by terns every which way, trying to transform a dwarf Marbled Godwit into a Bar-tailed, and searching for reliable Caspian and Gull-billed Terns, while a Peregrine shuffled the flock every ten minutes. As we were cleaning those up, Ethan took fifteen minutes studying an odd-looking Laughing Gull that turned out to be a Franklin's Gull. After a long first day of scouting, we relaxed and played around with our cameras while enjoying delicious shrimp gumbo at the Tropical Birding House.

On Friday, we scouted the Pineywoods and surrounding areas. We got most other target birds, such as Prairie, Prothonotary and



Poses at Tropical Birding, left to right: Maia's "Challenge Accepted," My "Harrier Girl Ready to Fight," Galen's "Poker Face," Ethan's "Challenge Accepted."

Photo Courtesy Maia Paddock

Worm-eating Warblers, and Brown-headed Nuthatch. "Powerbirding" at Jasper Fish Hatchery yielded a very territorial Yellow-throated Warbler, several good shorebirds, and a Ruby-throated Hummingbird, all of which made us decide that, despite a possible time crunch, we should return there on the Big Day. Even though it was mid-afternoon, Martin Dies Jr. State Park had plenty of warblers. Yellow-breasted Chat, Northern Parula, and Great Crested Flycatcher were all good birds there, as were the fly-over Anhingas. I spotted a Bald Eagle nest at the Sam Raymond reservoir and a low-flying Swallow-tailed Kite (named Fred) over the small town of Fred, validating my reputation as a raptor spotter.

We slept for four hours before rising at eleven to drive to our first spot, an under-birded state park with a perfect marsh. While scouting, we had found short sedge that was great for Black and Yellow Rails; some taller, wetter cattails for Virginia and Sora; and, in the distance, some freshwater marsh that looked good for King.

(Continued on the next page)

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On Thursday, it had been full of birds, including a Sora that replied to Jen's call in the middle of the day, a singing Blue Grosbeak, Sedge Wrens, and Swamp Sparrows, all of which could call or sing at night. At midnight on Saturday, however, it was eerily quiet. A dark shadow half-mile away turned out to be a distant Great Horned Owl, but no bird made a sound. As we were waiting for Chip to bring us a scope, we saw the eye shine of an odd creature in the middle of the path. Too tall to be an otter, it seemed almost panther-like. We joked that it was a Demon Fox, whose presence was keeping all the birds silent.

After nearly two hours of silence, broken only by our attempts at rail calls, we gave up and headed to Boykin Springs in the Pineywoods. As we drove there, we noticed a red Kia Soul following us. We realized that it was Jeffrey Gordon, President of the ABA, who was tailing us to give live, on-site updates to the Facebook community. We instantly adopted the name "Red-tail" for the car, and we periodically checked behind us to make certain that we didn't lose him. Meanwhile, our bad luck with night-birds continued. Although we got plenty of Chuck-will's-widows (including a road-killed bird), Barred Owls, Whip-poor-

wills, and Eastern Screech-owls remained silent. Finally, as the sun began to rise, some diurnal birds began to sing. We waited at the Red-cockaded Woodpecker's nest site, while Bachman's Sparrows and Brown-headed Nuthatches tuned up. After forty-five minutes of waiting, we heard the Red-cockaded's "excited yelps," as Ethan described them, and saw a pair coming out of their roost hole. It was a lifer for most of the team, and we paused the competition so that everyone could enjoy the sight. Afterward, we jumped back into the race and found a small group of migrant warblers at our Prairie Warbler spot, including Blue-headed Vireo, Nashville Warbler, and Yellow-breasted Chat. We hurried to pick up other breeding Pineywoods warblers, such as Swainson's Warbler, before continuing on to Martin Dies Jr. State Park, where we grabbed a few more migrants, in addition to two precious Great-crested and Least Flycatchers. While we were scanning for a Purple Gallinule, we saw TWO Swallow-tailed Kites that seemed to showcase our luck with Swallow-tails.



Roadkilled Chuck-will's-widow. Photo courtesy Ethan Gyllenhaal.



Fred the Swallow-tailed Kite in Fred, TX
Photo courtesy of Ethan Gyllenhaal

We continued on to the Jasper Fish Hatchery, where we picked up a few missing shorebirds and a nice fly-over Hooded Merganser. After running through a few more quick stops for the Bald Eagle nest, various swallows, and other new birds, we raced to our shorebird fields, finding them better than when we had scouted them! We expected Long-billed Curlews at Rollover Pass, but it was nice to check them off our list this soon. American Golden-plovers, Buff-breasted Sandpipers, and Pectoral Sandpipers were also exciting and unexpected finds.

After realizing we were several hours late, we took a brief roll through Anahuac, getting the same sparrows and marsh birds, but missing Sora and Clapper Rail, before hurrying on to High Island. Boy Scout Woods was crowded with birders, but not with warblers, and after slowly picking up a dozen new warblers, we realized the warblers were too few and far between. We gave up and headed to Rollover Pass. The water level had receded, and so the shorebird and tern density had shrunk as well. We picked up a few new birds, but couldn't find Thursday's Gull-billed Terns, Caspian Tern, or Franklin's Gull. We found some other good birds, such as a

we abandoned Rollover and hurried to the famous Bolivar Flats. Our luck finally seemed to be turning when, driving in, we saw a Barn Owl face sticking out of its box. Wilson's Plovers seemed to be everywhere, and Baird's Sandpipers were twenty feet from us as we sifted through the shorebird flocks, desperately trying to get every species possible in a ridiculously short amount of time. Ethan found a possible Lesser Black-backed Gull x Herring Gull hybrid, but, for the sake of the team, he left it unidentified so that we could race to one last spot before our sunlight ran out. On the way there, I was falling asleep when Ethan spotted an odd-looking raptor crossing the road. It turned out to be a White-tailed Kite, a lifer that I fortunately woke up in time to see.



Photo courtesy of Jen Brumfield

We reached Bob Road, where someone had reported a Western Sandpiper the day before. The setting sun was casting rusty light over the shorebirds, not helping with our task of picking out a Western from among the many peeps. We began to give up just as a Clapper Rail called, a new much hoped-for bird for the day, but we left without a Western as the sun finally sank below the horizon. After a quick check of the list, we made a detour to the High Island rookery at dusk. We simply wanted to see a Roseate Spoonbill, but this stop was actually worth a lot more. A Barred Owl flew up to a telephone wire, a Swainson's Thrush called, and we could just barely make out the pink shoulder patches of the Spoonbill.

With as many diurnal species as we could hope for in the bag, we set our sights to filling in our nocturnal lists: we still needed Virginia Rail, Sora, and Eastern Screech-owl. By that time, I was teetering in and out of sleep, and Galen was on his way there. Ethan ate the caffeine equivalent of two cups of coffee and entered a caffeine high, so he started poking everybody in the car. Fortunately, we didn't need too much brain activity or focus to listen for the silent rails.

We counted our checklists and realized we were at 179, so we decided to bird until we reached 180 or midnight. As a last, desperate act, guided by Chip's GPS, and with half the team asleep in the back seat, we went to a random park called Double Bayou and listened. Maia picked up a distant Screech-owl, so Galen and I were roused awake and ushered out of the car in a dreamy haze to hear not one, but two duetting Screech-owls, taking our tally to 180. Our scouting had included the sighting of an IHOP, into which we stumbled to fill our stomachs and groggily enter our totals before crashing at the hotel.

The next morning, we hung out together at the hotel before leaving for the awards ceremony in Orange. We met the adult teams, and enjoyed a great brunch and the presentation of the adult winners. Finally, they started announcing the results for the teams in the youth division, until only our team and one other were left. In second place, came a team with...147 birds! We started grinning and high-fiving before the Powerpoint had even loaded our names. Afterwards, we visited a cool museum that displayed some of John James Audubon's works. We then went to a botanical garden with an active heron rookery where we relished our last few hours of photography and being together as a team. Before the Big Day, Chip had agreed to shave his head if we won, so we picked a

nice spot and brought out the clippers.

All too soon, it was time to fly home. We said good-bye to Maia first, and then dropped off Galen and then Jen. Ethan, Chip, and I had a little more birding time between flights, so we went to a nearby park that had a singing Cerulean Warbler and some Summer Tanagers.

I had to say good-bye to Chip and Ethan before I was finished birding Texas, but I look forward to many more lifers when I return. All in all, I had 46 ABA-area lifers, including my 400th: the White-tailed Kite that I nearly missed. It was a great trip with some great young birders, and, best of all, new friends. Very few trips are as good at making lasting friendships as a Big Day. ~Harrier out. 5



Finishing our mission
Photo courtesy of Maia Paddock

(Dominican Republic continued from pg. 1)

I cannot recommend our guides more highly. They were great. In addition to guiding, Miguel does biological research for the government (birds and herps--on many occasions when the birding was slow, Miguel would find us a rare lizard, catch it with his bare hands and allow close looks). Miguel is at the cutting edge of much of what is known about the ecology of many of Hispaniola's unique birds, pointing out information from our field guides that is now out of date. It was fascinating not only to see the special birds of this place, but to learn from someone this intimately knowledgeable.

One of the main reasons that the DR is home to so many endemics is because of its diversity of habitats. It is both home to the highest point in the Caribbean (over 10,000 ft.) and the lowest point (150 ft. below sea level). We visited a variety of habitats, but the majority of our time was spent in the southwestern corner of the country. We based ourselves in the seaside town of Barahona and took a series of excursions up into the endemic-rich Sierra de Baoruco. One morning had us up at 3:30 am to make the long drive up to be at the highest elevation at sunrise along one of the absolute



worst roads I've ever ridden in my life (and that's actually saying something...) But the special birds at the top made all of the jarring and head-bumping worth it! Secretive La Selle's Thrushes hopped along the road in the early-morning light while todies, Hispaniolan Trogons, Antillean Siskins, Rufous-throated Solitaires and Hispaniolan Spindalises flitted about in the trees. A little more work and we were rewarded with views of the highly secretive Western Chat-Tanager (unlike any tanager I'd ever seen and, understandably in a unique genus only found on this island).

Yes, the island had 30 unique species, but that is only part of the story. As with the Chat-Tanager, there were many genres of birds also

restricted to the island. The Flat-billed Vireo is so unique that for the longest time scientists didn't know what it was and classified it in the flycatcher family. One charismatic individual was the Hispaniolan Lizard-cuckoo, a member of a genus of birds endemic to the Caribbean. *(Photo above)* Arguably the most unique species has to be the Palmchat *(photo above right)* as it is designated to its own individual Family. The DR is home to an addition 20 species restricted to the Caribbean and we were lucky enough to see all but one of them (a nonresponsive nightjar). Of course, endemism also creates species with a higher than average chance of becoming threatened and one of the highlights of the trip was seeing the severely endangered Ridgway's Hawk *(photo right)*, with only about 100 pairs left! We ended the trip with having seen 134 species. Nothing compared to Peru or Africa 6 but the number of specialties more than made up for this.



Audubon Meets Ford Nature Lovers *Article and photo by Rodolfo Palma*

Washtenaw Audubon and a group of nature lovers from Ford Motor Company came together on April 9 for a bird-watching trip to Gallup Park and Nichols Arboretum.

More than twenty-five hardy souls, a mix of both new and experienced birders, arrived at Gallup on a rather chilly morning for this event. Cathy Carroll and Eric Huston led the group, and opened with birding basics for the beginners, such as how to use binoculars, which the novices were able to practice with the help of a cooperative group of Pied-billed Grebes. Then the group followed the leaders in the search for all of the other birds we could find.

The birds jumped left and right, and they hid.

They sang there, they sing here, and they hid.

We saw a blotch of color in there, some motion in the foliage farther, and the birds hid.

But, no matter what the birds did, Cathy and Eric located them, and little by little we started catching up with those hyperactive birds. By the end of the field trip, several people had become birders.

Now they know what a Downy Woodpecker looks like, how wonderful Bluebirds are to behold, and how sweetly the Cardinal sings.

Beginners' luck was with all of us, since an early-migrant Black-and-White Warbler provided one of the clearest views of all in this expedition.

Next time the novices take a stroll in a park, or just walk in the neighborhood, they will know how to look for birds, and maybe, just maybe, will be rewarded with the views of a magnificent Mallard, or a glorious Goldfinch. We showed, one more time, that if you look for birds and are patient, you will see them.

Thanks to Cathy and Eric for this great hands-on introduction to birding and nature. In total, we found about 28 bird species. Here is the list: Pied-billed Grebe, Great Blue Heron, Mute Swan, Canada Goose, Mallard, Bufflehead, Turkey Vulture, Blue Jay, Downy Woodpecker, Eastern Phoebe, Barn Swallow, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Tree Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, Eastern Bluebird, Black-and-White Warbler, Northern Cardinal, American Tree Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird, American Goldfinch, Pine Siskin, White-throated Sparrow, Field Sparrow, and Yellow-rumped Warbler.



Exhibit of Audubon's Art Comes to Michigan *By Monty Brown*

The Grand Rapids Art Museum has opened "Birds of America: Audubon Prints from Shelburne Museum," which will run through August 14. The exhibition includes 30 of John James Audubon's timeless hand-colored and engraved prints, on loan from a Vermont museum of art and Americana. A complementary exhibition, "Understanding Audubon: Birds of America in Context," features objects that bring to life Audubon's world and artistic process. These materials include a bound edition of *Birds of America*, Audubon's masterwork, displayed next to other ornithological volumes.

Some readers will recall that only two years ago the Ella Sharp Museum in Jackson also presented an exhibition with numerous Audubon prints. Of the 30 prints on display in Grand Rapids, however, only 7 were also shown at the Sharp Museum. On another level, the fact that two Audubon exhibits have been mounted in Michigan in three years speaks loudly about both the interest in birds and the fascination with Audubon's art in our state.

For more information, visit <http://www.artmuseumgr.org/home/page/Birds+of+America>.

Hiking the Waterloo Bog Trail

By Monty Brown

On a Sunday morning in mid-April, WAS members gathered at the Eddy Discovery Center in Sylvan Township to hike the Waterloo Bog Trail with leader Dan Sparks-Jackson. Many of us know Dan from Tuesday Evening Birders, where he has often “hosted” stops on the grounds of Fraleigh’s Nursery, his employer, and at Trinkle Marsh. Dan also is a frequent poster to the Birders@UMich.edu listserv, where he often reports on bird sightings in the eight westernmost townships of the county.

A theme of many outings this spring has been challenging weather, and this date was not an exception. In the latter part of the roughly 2.5-hour hike, we even had snowflakes. The temperatures and wind no doubt kept many birds hunkered down in shelter. Still, Dan and the group found a number of nice birds, and Dan’s expertise with flora was a treat for everyone as well. On the bird side, Pine Warbler was a target species, and the group got good views of a couple of them near the south end of the trail, at the Michigan United Conservation Club’s Cedar Lake campground. Other highlights among the sixteen total species observed were male and female Wood Duck, both kinglet species, and Sandhill Crane. The notable plants included Swamp Rose, wild strawberry and blueberry, Liverwort, Leatherwood, red Pitcher Plant, some saprophytes, and Tulip Poplar.

This will be a site that we want to return to, either to revisit the bog trail or to explore one of the other six trails that begin around the Eddy Discovery Center, which is part of the Waterloo State Recreation Area.

A Kirtland’s Warbler Visits Dolph Nature Area

By Dea Armstrong

Dolph Nature Area is well known as a premier warbler hot spot in the spring. However, the May 10 visit of a male Kirtland’s Warbler was a first for the site and a real find by ace birder Don “The Man” Chalfant. With fewer than 1800 pairs of male birds, the Kirtland’s Warbler is one of the rarest warblers in the world. The species is listed as endangered in both Michigan and the US. Kirtland’s Warblers winter in the Bahamas and breed mostly in areas of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and the northern part of the Lower Peninsula in areas with Jack Pines. They are rarely seen on migration in Michigan or elsewhere, so the many birders that came to Dolph on May 10 to see this bird consider themselves quite fortunate. This is only the 15th sighting of the bird in Washtenaw County since 1875. The last sighting was in 1984 in the Arboretum.

Dolph Park Kirtland's Warbler found by Don "The Man" Chalfant on 10 May 2011, photographed by John Lowry. Yet another reason Don is called "The Man."



WAS Biennial Elections-June 15, 2011

Every two years, according to our bylaws, we are obligated to hold elections for the Board positions of president and vice-president. Both Sue Johnson, president, and Mike Sefton, vice-president, have agreed to run for the next two-year term. If you wish to nominate someone for either of these two offices, please contact past-president, Ray Stocking at rstocking@gmail.com or at his other contact information listed in this newsletter. In addition to these two elected Board positions, there are other opportunities to serve that are by invitation of the Board, not election. This is a wonderful opportunity for you, as a member, to engage in Washtenaw Audubon with your area of expertise.

In particular we have two current needs.

1. We are interested in creating a board level position to focus on technology and communication. This Board member would be responsible for all aspects of IT and communications to the WAS membership. This person would liaise with WAS President, Newsletter Editor, Membership Representative and Webmaster to ensure all IT functions, including membership database and website details, are maintained and accurate at all times; provide data updates to board regarding emailed newsletters from email distribution program. Attendance at bi-monthly meetings is not required, but IT updates will be required to President prior to each board meeting.

2. As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, we occasionally have questions that would benefit from legal counsel. It would be a great help to Washtenaw Audubon to have a member or two who would be willing to assist us in this way, simply by letting us know they're willing to be consulted on occasion, on a pro bono basis. It may well be that on any given matter, this volunteer would advise us to seek further legal counsel.

We will hold elections at our June 15th meeting. Nominations for elected office must be received by June 10, 2011. Anyone interested in serving in a non-elected capacity is invited and encouraged to contact any member of the current Board.

Tuesday Morning Bird Walks

Today's walk (**April 6**) was spectacular, with 47 species and 22 birders. Highlights were a dozen or more Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers (making it a 4-woodpecker day), several Wood Ducks flying overhead, a pair of Cedar Waxwings performing the "berry-passing" courtship ritual, 30 or so Golden-crowned Kinglets, at least 5 Fox Sparrows some of which were singing, a singing Winter Wren, flyover Pine Siskins, and FOY Pine Warbler, Eastern Phoebe, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Barn Swallow, Belted Kingfisher, Brown Creeper, and Field Sparrow. Several birders at the end were treated to a Red-tailed Hawk flying to a close branch with half a squirrel in his talons. Thanks to Harold Eyster and everyone else who helped spot the birds. A few additional birds seen: Cooper's Hawk, Tree Swallow, Carolina Wren (heard only), Eastern Bluebird, Hermit Thrush, Eastern Towhee, White-throated Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Common Grackle

About twenty-five people made up the main portion of the Thursday Morning Bird Walk on **May 12**, which had a great day with 15 species of warblers, including several stunning Blackburnian Warblers, fleeting glimpses of Indigo Buntings, a cooperative Scarlet Tanager, and other warblers and colorful birds. After most birders left, Roger Wykes, Jim Buschmann, and I had a Mourning Warbler, Ovenbird, and an Orange-crowned. It was an incredible day of birding, with 72 species! Additional birds: Wood Duck, Cooper's Hawk, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Least Flycatcher, Great Crested Flycatcher, Eastern Kingbird, Yellow-throated Vireo, Blue-headed Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo, Carolina Wren, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Eastern Bluebird, Swainson's Thrush, Gray Catbird, Cedar Waxwing, Tennessee Warbler, Nashville Warbler, Northern Parula, Yellow Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Palm Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, American Redstart, Common Yellowthroat, Canada Warbler, Field Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Baltimore Oriole

On **May 3** the **Tuesday Evening Birder** field trip visited Trinkle Marsh and some spots along the part of Fletcher Road south of I-94. Highlight of the evening was great looks at a Sora at our last stop for the night. Other highlights: Wood Duck, Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead, Northern Shoveler, Ruddy Duck, Common Moorhen, American Coot, Sandhill Crane, Greater Yellowlegs, Lesser Yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpiper, Spotted Sandpiper, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Tree Swallow, Barn Swallow, Horned lark, Nashville Warbler, Yellow Warbler

Upcoming WAS Field Trips (May--June, 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.

Thursdays in May **Weekly Spring Migration Walks in Nichols Arboretum** These leaderless walks are a great opportunity to join with other birders of all skill levels. This season's walks will go through May 26. Park and meet at the Riverview Court cul-de-sac off of Geddes Road at 8:00 AM. The walks go until roughly 11:00, but anyone can join or leave the group as his or her schedule requires.

Every Tuesday in May **Tuesday Evening Birders:** Leaders: Dea Armstrong, Lathe Claflin, Mike Sefton. Dea and the Lathe-Mike combo will alternate in leading these outings. The leaders scout locations and scan bird reports during the day, and then in the evening take the group to the action. Meet at 6:00 p.m. at the Miller Road/M-14 park-and-ride lot, where everyone will consolidate into fewer vehicles for a 6:15 sharp departure. These outings end at dusk.

Sun., May 22 **Peak Migration Walk, Dolph Park:** Leader: Don Chalfant. Dolph Park is one of the county's best spots for birding. Over the past couple of years, WAS spring field trips to this location have yielded Red-headed Woodpecker; Wilson's, Orange-crowned, and numerous other warbler species; Bobwhite; and a variety of other fine birds. This walk is scheduled on this date in the hope of catching the peak of spring migration. We hope that the birds and the weather will cooperate. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at the parking lot on the east side of Wagner Road, north of Liberty, south of Jackson. Bring binoculars and bug spray and dress for the weather. Paths at Dolph are often fairly narrow and can get crowded. PLEASE do not bring strollers or dogs.

Sat., June 4 **Stinchfield Woods Annual Census:** Leader: Karen Markey. Stinchfield Woods is 777 acres of conifer plantations and stands of native hardwoods--mostly oaks and hickories. This census on this property typically yields species such as Pine and Black-throated Green Warblers, Blue-headed Vireos, and Red-breasted Nuthatches. Also heard or seen are Wild Turkeys, Hooded Warblers, Ovenbirds, and Acadian Flycatchers. Taking part in this bird count is a great way to observe migration into June, when many other sites in the county have already seen most of their migrants come and go. The count starts at 7:00 a.m. Participants will assemble at the top of the hill near the caretaker's house and the observatory, and divide into groups. NOTE: If you are interested in participating, please contact Karen at ylimeATumich.edu to sign up. Stinchfield Woods is north of Dexter. Bring insect repellent and dress appropriately.

Butterfly Bonanza

In late July or early August, Roger Kuhlman, Roger Wykes, and John Swales will once again lead a butterfly field trip. These trips have been very popular, and give us a great excuse to get outdoors at a time when there is not much rare bird activity in the county. This year the butterfly outing will be held at Leonard Preserve, just outside of Manchester. Please check the WAS field trip web page for updates on the exact date and for more information.

The New Michigan Recreation Passport is Great! CHECK YES!

When you renew your license plate this time around, be sure to check YES to get a \$10 recreation passport. The passport is good for the same amount of time as your license plate and the \$10 fee gets you into all 98 state parks and recreation areas (no more need to buy those annual or day passes!). As a bonus, your money helps preserve:

- 133 state forest campgrounds
- Nearly 1,000 miles of hiking, biking and skiing trails
- More than 1,000 boat launches
- Historic and cultural sites in state parks
- Parks in your own community

A few other facts:

- The Recreation Passport replaces the state park sticker.
- Motorcycle Passports are just \$5.
- Camping fees will remain in effect for state parks and in state forests.
- The Recreation Passport is valid for the duration of your license plate registration.

Questions? Call 517-241-7275

http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-10365_55798_56688-234626--,00.html

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.

May 18

Birding the Dominican Republic: Join globe-trotting birder Bryn Martin for a program on Washtenaw Audubon's most recent foreign field trip, to the Caribbean nation of the Dominican Republic on the island of Hispaniola. Seven intrepid birders from WAS visited the Dominican Republic in April to see some of the country's nearly 30 endemic species, birds found nowhere else in the world, including an endemic family. Bryn Martin teaches high school in Livonia and is an avid international birder.

June 15

Birding Humor With Don "The Man" Chalfant: Join Don for an entertaining program on birding humor. As those of you who are privileged to know Don are aware, he is a dedicated collector and teller of jokes and humorous anecdotes. Don has pulled together many of the best stories involving birds and birders, and will present them to us with appropriate illustrations. As surely as one good tern deserves another, you'll find much to amuse you in Don's presentation. Don "The Man" Chalfant is a retired Ann Arbor teacher, and boasts one of the largest Washtenaw County life lists, as well as impressive Michigan and ABA lists. Don has the signal distinction of being the only part-time Florida resident to have seen over 400 species in the Sunshine State.

Washtenaw Audubon Society

PO Box 130923

Ann Arbor, MI 48113-0923